SARA CAPUTO

Scotland, Scottishness, British Integration and the Royal Navy, 1793–1815

ABSTRACT

With few exceptions, existing research in British social and maritime history has never focused on the presence and role of Scotsmen in the Royal Navy of the French Wars era (1793–1815), on their identification and self-presentation within this institution, and on attitudes towards naval warfare in Scotland more generally. Situating the problem within current debates on ‘four nations’ history and the development of British identity, this article aims to fill this gap. It will consider, in turn, the Navy’s institutional language and practices, individual experiences, and, chiefly employing as a case study the 1797 victory of Camperdown, achieved by the Scottish Admiral Duncan, public representations in the Scottish press. This will help to illustrate the often ambiguous relationship that Scots in the Navy—and particularly on the quarterdeck—could have with their homeland, and the powerful attraction, reinforced by the naval environment and administrative structures, which Englishness exerted on them. More broadly, it will be shown how the late Hanoverian Navy, as a markedly Anglocentric institution, acted as a key instrument of cultural, social and political assimilation of Scots into Britain, thus offering a valuable case study for an investigation of patterns of British integration.

During the wars with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, the ‘Scottish connection’ of the Royal Navy was prominent. The most powerful

1 The author would like to thank Dr Gordon Pentland and Dr Renaud Morieux for their extensive comments on drafts of this article, originally submitted as part of a MSc dissertation at the University of Edinburgh, and the SHR editor and the two anonymous reviewers who provided many useful suggestions. Emily Manson, Madison Marshall and the audience of the Cambridge Modern British History Workshop have also contributed helpful insight. Some revisions to the text were carried out while the author held a Robinson College Lewis–AHRC Studentship at the University of Cambridge.

SARA CAPUTO is a doctoral candidate at the University of Cambridge, Robinson College. Her current project, under the supervision of Dr Renaud Morieux, is jointly funded by an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant and a Robinson College Lewis Research Scholarship. It focuses on the foreign seamen who served in the Royal Navy during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and the legal, social, cultural and diplomatic context of transnational ‘encounters’ aboard British naval vessels.
Scot of the time, Henry Dundas, was Treasurer of the Admiralty for most of the period 1782 to 1800, and First Lord of the Admiralty in 1804–5. The country also produced some of the best known naval officers, including Adam Duncan, the victor of Camperdown (1797), George Keith Elphinstone, who conquered the Cape in 1795, and Thomas Cochrane, tenth earl of Dundonald, whose heroic feats and disastrous scandals have served as template for scores of naval novels. A biographical focus on ‘celebrities’, however, does not do justice to the story of the relationship between Scotland, Scottish identity and the Navy.

The topic remains, surprisingly, virtually unexplored. British naval history of the long eighteenth century has, in the past few decades, undergone a fundamental renewal, based on excellent and meticulous work by social historians; this has been matched, more recently, by cultural studies, particularly on the connections between the Navy and British patriotism in general. None of this literature, however, has focused on Scotland specifically, with the exception of three chapters in Brian Lavery’s naval history, a book on impressment in Orkney and Shetland, and some non-academic local history essays.

Scotland is not alone in being neglected: the Welsh in ‘Nelson’s’ Navy are only treated briefly in a naval history of Wales, while Ireland’s role, except for very recent work by Patrick Walsh, seems to figure only in passing, in studies of Irish radicalism and mutiny. The Celtic nations, overall, tend to slip away from sight, into the gap created by the imperfect superimposition of England and Britain, which is apparent not only in contemporary sources, as will be seen, but also in part of the modern historiography. Sarah Palmer and David Williams, for example,


begin their 1997 essay on ‘British Sailors, 1775–1870’ referring to it as ‘this study of English sailors between 1775 and 1870.’

The lack of secondary literature on a given topic could of course simply signify its lack of consistency, distinctiveness or relevance in a given historical context: an insistence on pursuing a mythical, uninterrupted ‘golden thread’, on the basis of a supposedly self-evident uniqueness, is a sin of much nationalist history. Indeed, as this article aims to show, ‘Scotland’ as such very often disappeared as a distinct entity, in the minds of contemporaries, as far as naval warfare was concerned. The story of how and why this occurred is worthy of attention, not with the aim of ‘rescuing’ a national narrative in places where it is submerged, but of avoiding the danger of opposite, equally nationalistic and equally simplistic narratives, obscuring differences and contrasting perspectives.

As argued by J. G. A. Pocock, the power of the English state, which translates into an administrative tradition and a set of records considerably stronger than that of any other of the ‘four nations’, tends to force the scholar writing ‘British’ history to revert to an Anglo-centric perspective. This can be particularly true in the case of a centralised institution like the Navy. Yet the study of British plurality within the latter, and its declensions, would certainly increase our understanding of its social structure and culture. While aiming to make a contribution in this sense, this article will also attempt to show the other side of the coin, namely the value that naval history can have for historians of Britishness, as a major theatre of British integration.

The scholarship on the meaning of Britishness, and Scottishness, in the century following the Union, with all the related nuances of class, education, religion, and Lowlands/Highlands differentiation, is of course remarkably vast. Particularly relevant is the debate surrounding the interaction between Empire and identity: if Linda Colley and, with some qualifications, Stephen Conway famously argued that warfare contributed to drawing together the different components of Britain, ‘forging’ a unified nation through opposition to the ‘Other’, scholars

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8 A recent non-academic volume, exploring Scotland’s naval history across the ages, offers a good example: plain descriptions of events connected to Scotland or Scotsmen are tied together by a general ongoing summary of the British context: John Sadler, *Blood on the Wave: Scottish sea battles* (Edinburgh, 2010).


like John M. MacKenzie have questioned an excessive emphasis on ‘negative’ identity, stressing instead how English, Scots, Irish, and Welsh had ‘separate’ ways of relating to the Empire. A third voice is provided by those historians, like Colin Kidd, who have emphasised the ultimately Anglophile and Anglocentric roots of eighteenth-century ‘North Britishness’. This article will unfold on the terrain delineated by the three poles of this debate, showing the extent to which, as far as the Navy was concerned, both Britishness and Scottishness could take an English shape.

The question of British identities is challenging to the historian, and the evidence can be at times contradictory, as is apparent from nearly any study dwelling on the subject. Indeed, it has been argued that ‘identity’ is an elusive and forced concept, when deployed as an explanatory ‘category of analysis’: more helpful is to split it into its different components—identification by others, self-presentation in the sense of the image one deliberately projects outside, and deeper personal, internal feelings of ‘self-understanding’ and ‘commonality’—and consider these separately. It would be entirely possible to ‘feel’ Scottish but not present oneself as such and be perceived as such, or conversely to not self-perceive or actively present oneself as Scottish but be labelled in that sense by observers, and so on. The late Hanoverian Navy is, for reasons that will be explored below, an excellent example of a context where these different meanings of identity could become easily disassociated. This article will accordingly treat each of them as a distinct issue, while bearing in mind their common reference to a general category: as will be seen, both among the men who served in the Navy, whether English or Scottish, and among the public witnessing its feats from home, there existed notions of what it meant to be ‘Scotch’. Scottishness can then be conceived of as a ‘category of practice’, to borrow Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper’s terminology, fuzzy as an analytical tool, but concrete in its historical presence when ‘deployed


by ordinary social actors'. These actors’ notions of Scottishness deserve a specific treatment, if only to examine the patterns along which they acquired or lost meaning, or melted into a wider sense of more or less Anglocentric Britishness.

Pocock’s insight that what he terms Scottish identity—or, we could say here, Scottish men and women’s self-presentation as Scottish—is intrinsically ‘tangential’, a free and ‘open-ended’ ‘matter of choice’, ‘ironic’ rather than ‘romantic’, can be expanded to fit into the broader framework currently emerging in the historiography on national allegiances, which sees them as situational, relative, and ultimately, to various extents, strategic. Such self-presentation, together with, when the sources allow to uncover them, the feelings of self-understanding underpinning—or not underpinning—it, will offer our principal object of study. At the same time, since in a mixed cultural context self-presentation can often be a reaction to external labels, this article will also examine the views that Englishmen in the Navy, and the Navy as an institution, held of Scots, and the ways in which Scottish naval service was interpreted by public opinion in Scotland itself.

The tight dialectic between identification and self-presentation was, it can be argued, particularly strong in the late Hanoverian Navy, because of its internal organisation: gathering together—and mixing—people from all corners of Great Britain (and beyond), it offers to the historian a privileged vantage point for the study of British interaction and integration. This is, to an extent, true of all the armed forces, but the position of the army was slightly more ambiguous. On the one hand, as shown by Colley and Conway, the geographical mobility of and within regiments was considerable, and J. E. Cookson has exposed the very pragmatic, political, and ultimately London-oriented strategies which animated the flourishing of Highland corps, including the recruitment of non-Scots. On the other hand, however, the ultimately ‘Scottish’ flavour of many units, regular and volunteer, poses some problems.

First, they became an enduring component of a specifically Scottish national pride. As Cookson himself recognises, Scotland’s}

15 Ibid., 4–6.
18 The word ‘institution’ here is intended to cover both the codified rules of naval administration and the ‘working practices’ coexisting with them. For this distinction see: Joanna Innes, ‘Afterword’, in Anne Goldgar and R. I. Frost (eds), *Institutional Culture in Early Modern Society* (Leiden and Boston, 2004), 350–3.
exceptional levels of volunteer recruitment, and consequent autonomy in self-defence, ‘endorsed what many wanted to believe about themselves’ and their kingdom’s relative independence and traditions. Simultaneously, and even if, in his view, mostly thanks to Tory engineering from above, through the efforts of the London and Edinburgh Highland Societies, the celebrated Scottish and especially Highlander regular regiments came to represent the nation’s ‘martial spirit’, and its ‘equal partnership’ with England within the Union. This, in a sense, promotes from the start the idea of separate parts of a whole, rather than a true ‘melting pot’, singling out the Scots in a way that, as will be seen, was almost never possible in the Navy.

Second, even without invoking notions of ‘Scottishness’ and ‘Highlandism’, a perspective ‘from below’ causes some difficulties, as well, to the historian looking for a transcending of regionalism within the army: the Highlanders’ military enlistment and experience often remained grounded in ‘localised conditions’, tied to land, personal circumstances, and ‘contractual’, kinship relationships with their officers. The Navy, with its much more haphazard recruitment, offers an arguably better example of geographical mixing. It is true that in the eighteenth century naval recruitment could sometimes happen locally, thanks to the personal connections of some captains, but, except for a handful of cases, this practice had mostly declined by the 1790s. By the time of the French Wars, Scotsmen prevalently joined (or were made to join) as individuals, not being bound to specific explicitly Scottish units, and, owing to the nature of the service, with little expectation of being deployed near home. As such, they became to an extent removed from immediate external forces tying them to ‘Scottishness’.

This article will try to assess whether any Scottish national patterns can be found, nonetheless, within the Navy: in an institution that does not structurally foster them, their appearance, in the form of

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26 Lavery, *Shield*, 86.
spontaneous grouping, special loyalty, or external self-presentation, immediately becomes significant as an indicator of a sense of community. On the other hand, precisely because of its structural fluidity as a ‘melting pot’, the Navy seems the most logical place where we should look for a sense of wider British consciousness. The period of the French Wars seems a convenient unit of analysis, because of the unprecedented mobilisation of both manpower and national feelings, but the sources will occasionally point towards continuities with earlier decades.

To what extent did the Scots, by the turn of the nineteenth century, belong in a British Navy, and to what extent did the Navy belong to them? What happened to their self-presentation and personal feeling as Scots, once they found themselves in it? In which ways were they labelled, officially and unofficially, by the state, by shipmates and ashore? Were there any substantial peculiarities in how the Scottish public related to naval activities and news, compared to the English? Overall, was there anything significantly different between the ways in which naval warfare bore material and ideological links to England and to Scotland?

These questions will be investigated considering, in turn, the naval establishment’s attitude towards Scotland, Scotsmen’s naval experiences, and finally, chiefly through an analysis of reactions connected to naval victories, how Scots at home thought of the British naval effort. The aim here is to set individuals’ narratives against the background on the one hand of the institutional practices of the Navy in which they served, and on the other of what survives of public opinion in the country at large. Sandwiched between these two larger contexts, their lives formed the trait d’union between the two, and were equally conditioned by both. It is only looking at all these complementary facets of the problem—the structure, the individual within it, and the broader external perceptions of both—that the topic can be analysed properly. As will be seen, the national self-presentation of many Scots in the Navy, tending to lean towards ‘Englishness’, ended up mirroring more general perceptions of what Scotland was to the Navy, and what the Navy was to Scotland.

Scotland seen from the Navy

By the end of the eighteenth century, Scotland’s status as equal partner with England was, in the naval sphere, rather ambiguous. A ballad, celebrating the four nations’ joint effort against French invasion, aptly summarises the roots of this question: titled ‘A Dialogue, between Paddy, Taffy, a Scot, and a Jolly Sailor’, it abounds with national stereotypes; interestingly, the ‘Jack Tar’ character is seen as a representative of, and coinciding with, England. The role played by the Scot (‘Sawney’) is another: ‘if in Scotland they landed, the brave Highland clan, / With

27 A Dialogue, between Paddy, Taffy, a Scot, and a Jolly Sailor ([London?], [1780?]).
their broad-swords would quickly destroy every man’. This land-based reputation was not entirely undeserved: by 1707 the Scots Navy had consisted of a grand total of three ships.

At the same time, however, some Scottish sources in particular depicted British naval power as springing precisely from the Union: as the Scot John Clerk of Eldin, son of one of the architects of the 1707 Act, put it in his then famous Essay on Naval Tactics:

occupied with disputes, while divided into two kingdoms, our attention was withheld from the rest of Europe; . . . But, as soon as these internal disputes began to subside, . . . this naval disposition broke forth with irresistible force; and . . . it has produced effects which have been the admiration of the world.

This passage might be interpreted as arguing that England’s naval power could only blossom when the Scots ceased to obstruct it, but in fact Clerk saw their contribution as more positive: the geography of the whole island for him conferred upon all inhabitants ‘a national character’, ‘distinguished by a hardy and persevering intrepidity’.

Listing glorious examples of English engagements with the Spaniards and Dutch, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he spoke of the ‘spirited and united [his emphasis] exertions of our seamen’.

Scottish claims to a special role in the armed forces provoked hostile responses in England, during the French Wars. Such claims would have been unthinkable in the case of the Navy: while more work is required before final conclusions can be drawn, existing research seems to indicate that Scottish seamen, with some exceptions depending on the stations, served in numbers at most roughly proportionate to the Scottish population of the time—remaining, therefore, a minority. Yet even the rhetoric of partnership put forward by men like Clerk met with concrete obstacles. While Scottish perceptions were, as will be seen, more complex, it has long been recognised that, in the eyes of eighteenth-century Englishmen, ‘England was Britain’, and Scotland a mere ‘province’.

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28 Ibid.
29 Lavery, Shield, 22–6, 69–70. For a brief survey of Scottish naval history from the Middle Ages to 1707 see: James Grant (ed.), The Old Scots Navy from 1689 to 1710 (London, 1914), vii–xxix.
31 Ibid., 7–8, 14–15, 21.
32 Ibid., 8–15.
34 Information on sailors’ birthplaces can be derived from ships’ muster books. For some data on the Scots see: Dancy, Myth, 50–3; Caputo, ‘Scotland’, 7–20; Lavery, Shield, 1, 48–9.
the fact that, historically, the Scottish fighting reputation was based on the individual warriors’ prowess, rather than on the (scarce) political and military efficiency of Scotland’s armies.36 Given that Scotland’s institutional naval record was even poorer, it is not surprising that the equation of Britain with England should have had particularly deep roots in the Royal Navy. Two examples well illustrate this.

One of the most famous sentences in British history is perhaps the ‘Trafalgar signal’, which Nelson ordered to transmit to the fleet before the battle: ‘England expects that every man will do his duty’.37 The stridency of that specifically English request is generally addressed only by commentators especially interested in ‘four nations’ history, like Davies and Lavery, who tend to explain it away simply noticing Nelson’s ‘carelessness’ (even if ‘he should have known better’), or blaming Lieutenant Pasco, the signal officer, and observing that this was not Nelson’s original wording.38 The issue, however, has a broader background, so far ignored, and far more important than rescuing the hero’s political correctness. Going back to Popham’s Marine Vocabulary, the standard signalling code then in use, we find that indeed this made no provision whatsoever for the mention of ‘Britain’, short of laboriously spelling it out. Unlike the word ‘England’ (n. 253), ‘Scotland’ was not deemed necessary, either, even though there was a code for ‘Scotch or Scots’ (n. 1768).39 Nelson’s or Pasco’s attitudes towards Britishness seem quite secondary, then, given that the service itself structurally neglected the concept.

There is a second way in which the treatment of Scotland appears unequal in Admiralty documents. Muster books of ships had to report the ‘Place and County Where Born’ of each man. Generally, this would have included the city, town or village, but sometimes only the county was listed (‘Essex’, ‘Ross-shire’, etc.), or the country, geographical area, colony or American state if a man hailed from abroad (for example ‘Denmark’, ‘West Indies’, or ‘Pennsylvania’). No sailor in the ships that fought at Trafalgar is listed as coming simply from ‘England’, and this is also true of at least six of the North Sea fleet vessels that were present at the battle of Camperdown (1797), analysed elsewhere by the present author.40 Several men, however, appear to originate generically from ‘Scotland’ (or ‘Ireland’, or ‘Wales’). This happens in ships commanded by both English and Scottish captains: at Trafalgar, this was the case for eighty out of 1,156 Scotsmen, and more precisely, for example, twenty-eight out of forty-six (60.87%) aboard HMS Orion, nine out of

36 Strachan, ‘Scotland’s military identity’, 315–32.
38 Davies, Britannia’s Dragon, 104–5; Lavery, Shield, 94–5.
39 Home Popham, Telegraphic Signals; or Marine Vocabulary (London, 1803), 19, 45.
40 For the Trafalgar seamen see: Bruno Pappalardo, ‘Trafalgar Ancestors’, The National Archives [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/trafalgarancestors/advanced_search.asp; accessed 4 Jul. 2015]. Complete data on the six Camperdown ships that were commanded by Scotsmen can be found in: Caputo, ‘Scotland’, 9–16, 54–79.
forty-nine (18.37%) aboard HMS *Temeraire*, and ten out of fifty-five (18.18%) in HMS *Revenge*, all commanded by Englishmen, but also, if we move to consider ships under Scottish captains, four out of thirty-six (11.11%) aboard William Gordon Rutherford’s HMS *Swiftsure*, three out of thirty-two (9.38%) in George Duff’s HMS *Mars*, and three out of thirty-eight (7.89%) in Philip Charles Durham’s HMS *Defiance*. In the case of Camperdown, much closer to Scottish waters, there are no similar occurrences aboard at least four of the ships, but nineteen out of 116 Scots in HMS *Venerable* (16.38%) and four out of fifty-eight in HMS *Monmouth* (6.9%) appear as coming from ‘Scotland’ generically.

Of course, these patterns may largely depend on each ship clerk’s idiosyncrasies, or level of diligence: in the *Venerable* muster book, for example, eighty-two out of 307 Englishmen (26.71%) only have their county name, and twelve out of fifteen Welshmen ‘[North/South] Wales’.

It is also difficult to establish to what extent this would depend on the men’s way of answering the question, or on an inability to understand and spell the names of remote Scottish localities. These occurrences are striking, however, because they reveal a rather flat, imprecise and generalising understanding of Scotland. This is particularly significant if we bear in mind the crucial role that, according to historians like Gérard Noiriel, the administrative language and practices of modern states have in the creation of homogeneous, centralised nations, radically affecting individual perspectives. It should also be added that, whilst most of these clerks were English, those aboard HMS *Revenge*, *Swiftsure*, and *Monmouth* in the year preceding Camperdown were all Scots (Table 1).

As will be seen in the next section, Scotsmen in the Navy were themselves directly affected by prevalent perceptions, and often partook in them.

What perception do these musters’ notations suggest? While the case might be different for Ireland, for Scotland the analogy with counties seems more accurate, here, than that with foreign countries: when the name of the Scottish town is indicated, it is often followed, in lieu of the ‘County’, by the clarification ‘N.B.’ (‘North Britain’, then


43 TNA, ADM 36/11649.

Table 1: Clerks’ origins, select ships from Trafalgar and Camperdown.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ship</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tr>
<td>HMS <em>Orion</em></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS <em>Temeraire</em></td>
<td>John A. Mathison</td>
<td>London, England</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS <em>Revenge</em></td>
<td>James Scott</td>
<td>Dundee, Forfarshire, Scotland</td>
<td>Captain’s Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS <em>Swiftsure</em></td>
<td>David Walker</td>
<td>Fifeshire, Scotland</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMS <em>Mars</em></td>
<td>John Millar</td>
<td>Chudleigh, Devon, England</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMS <em>Defiance</em></td>
<td>George Beck</td>
<td>Bristol, Gloucestershire, England</td>
<td>Captain’s Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMS <em>Venerable</em></td>
<td>John William Howard</td>
<td>London, England</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>(until 1 October 1796)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS <em>Venerable</em></td>
<td>Richard Stockings</td>
<td>London, England</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>(from 2 October 1796)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS <em>Monmouth</em></td>
<td>Henry Thonber</td>
<td>Colne, Lancashire, England</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>(until 24 September 1796)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS <em>Monmouth</em></td>
<td>J. C. Watts</td>
<td>London, England</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>(from 24 September to 16 October 1796)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS <em>Monmouth</em></td>
<td>Charles Brand</td>
<td>Dundee, Forfarshire, Scotland</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>(from 17 October 1796 to 9 October 1797)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS <em>Monmouth</em></td>
<td>John Healy</td>
<td>Sligo, Ireland</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>(from 9 October 1797)</td>
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*Data from: Pappalardo, ‘Trafalgar Ancestors’; TNA, ADM 36/11649; ADM 36/12858.
a common synonym for Scotland). In short, it seemed a widespread notion, among Navy clerks, even in the North Sea fleet, that Scotland was just a wide, uniform corner of their country. The equation of ‘Britain’ with ‘England’ then transformed it into something akin to yet another English shire.

Bearing in mind this context, we can now examine how individual Scots in the service negotiated their position, and their Scottishness, within it. The Navy, beyond figures and institutional policies, remained a body fragmented into small communities, with considerable mobility and interchange, but also distinct traits and dynamics, at any given time: it was to these communities that seamen primarily related, commission after commission.45

Strangers among strangers? The experiences of individual Scotsmen

There exist, in naval sources, some picturesque anecdotes about Scotsmen behaving in a distinctive or even stereotypical way. Often repeated is, for example, the story of how John Inglis, captain of HMS Belliqueux at Camperdown, ‘had neglected to make himself a competent master of the signal book’, and so:

found himself more puzzled than enlightened by it; and throwing it with contempt upon the deck, exclaimed in broad Scotch, ‘D—n me, up wie the hell o’ me an’ gang into the middle o’ t’.46

Aboard HMS Glenmore, in 1798, William Dillon allegedly struggled with the proverbial Scottish parsimony of Captain George Duff, whose invitations to dinner were animated by the ‘strictest frugality’, and of his lieutenants, mostly Scots, who lived on ‘salt pork and beef’ like the hands, and ‘would not join in anything leading to expense’.47

These examples, of course, are simply prejudiced outsiders’ observations of external peculiarities. If apparently some Scots remained distinguishable, it is interesting to see in which specific ways they were so, and, most importantly, to examine their own attitudes towards such distinctiveness. In most of what follows, it will be necessary to treat the officers and the men separately: however blurred the lines between the two categories may have been, at times, the social divide was real, and increasing in this period.48

45 On ships as a ‘microcosm of society’ see: Rodger, Wooden Walls, 29.
46 Charles Ekins, The Naval Battles of Great Britain, from the Accession of the Illustrious House of Hanover to the Throne to the Battle of Navarin (London, 1828), 257. See also: Camperdown, Duncan, 222; John Alexander Inglis, The Family of Inglis of Auchindinny and Redhall (Edinburgh, 1914), 166; Lavery, Shield, 87. John Inglis was born in Philadelphia in 1743, the son of Scottish immigrants, but spent most of his life in Scotland. See: Inglis, Family of Inglis, 130–78.
47 Quoted in Lewis, Social History, 72–3; Lavery, Shield, 85.
A first common marker of people's origin is dress. In his memoirs, for example, Captain Boteler mentions an Orcadian lieutenant who carried around his ‘blubber knife’ (whaling tool) in place of a dirk, and Dumbarton-born sailor Robert Hay, describing his first entry into the Navy, in 1803, lists the 'Kilted Highlander’ among other specimens of the lower-deck multi-ethnic ‘Babel’. However, Hay was aboard a ‘guard-ship’, lying in harbour and used as a first receiver of new recruits to be sorted, and he explicitly contrasts its chaos with the orderly seagoing vessels described later. Unlike commissioned officers, Navy ratings did not yet have a set uniform. Nonetheless, a kilt seems impractical for a sailor, especially if working aloft. Instances are recorded of captains and admirals dressing their personal barges' crews in their tartan, but these are mostly from later in the century. Indeed, while tartan was clearly a ‘Scottish’ symbol, the connection between patterns and specific clans was not yet fully developed in this period.

If the position of traditional dress then remains ambiguous, language, whether Highland Gaelic or Lowland Scots, was possibly the most distinctive feature of many Scotsmen in the service. This could be, especially in the former case, sported proudly. In 1812, aboard HMS Gloucester, where three out of five lieutenants, the purser and the captain of marines were all Scots, the first lieutenant of marines, Peter McIntyre, was ‘a Highlander, who spoke and wrote his native and ancient language at least as fluently as he did the English tongue’, and, according to the ship chaplain Edward Mangin, ‘was instructive and entertaining enough, from his knowledge of Highland poetry, Gaelic etymologies, etc.; and he also knew good deal of military history’. At least one of the marines, Peter Fraser, ‘though a great while in the service, and one of the best’, 'had acquired but a few words of English, and spoke only Erse'.

The Gloucester, given the heavy proportion of Scottish officers, must have been a peculiar ship, and Mangin, an Irishman, was an enlightened and open-minded individual, as his writings demonstrate. Examples like this, or the parsimonious Duff’s Glenmore, show that little undiluted nooks of Scotland survived in the service, thanks to
relatively straightforward kinship and patronage mechanisms. This situation, however, should not be taken as the norm: the story was often considerably different, especially on the quarterdeck.

In May 1791, thirteen-year-old William M’Leod, from Ross-shire, then a new ‘captain’s servant’ aboard HMS *Pegasus*, wrote home to his father. ‘They mock me a good deal for being a Scotchman but I dont [sic] mind it,’ he observed, and again, in February the following year, from HMS *Hannibal*: ‘they give me the Name of Sanders but I don’t mind that’.56 Almost identical is the story of Edinburgh-born sixteen-year-old Robert Ritchie, who, during the month he spent in HMS *Nightingale* in 1811, had to confront the Scotophobia of his messmates: ‘they seemed to have a particular itch to take me off—however their satire on Scotchman [sic], fell harmless on me’. The English midshipmen, he wrote, ‘seem greaty [sic] to despise the Scots’.57 A pattern emerges when we observe that similar derision and difficulties were encountered, chiefly because of linguistic issues, by a young Basil Hall. In 1802, when he first embarked, a 'little', 'testy' thirteen-year-old who ‘spoke broad Scotch’, he found that his ‘unfortunate speech, translated into various dialects of what they all thought Scotch, merely because it was not English, was sung out like a ballad, for the amusement of the whole fraternity’.58

These episodes took place independently, each at a decade’s distance from the next, in ships serving in different stations (HMS *Pegasus* at Spithead, HMS *Nightingale* in the North Sea, and HMS *Leander* setting off from Spithead to Halifax), and to three Scottish boys coming not only from different parts of Scotland, but also from different social backgrounds (respectively, the son of the sheriff of Ross-shire, of a shopkeeper, and of a baronet and Enlightenment philosopher).59 However, while they were rated differently in their ships’ musters—M’Leod a ‘captain’s servant’, Ritchie a ‘landman’, and Hall a ‘volunteer first class’—their writings and subsequent lives make it clear that they were all ‘young gentlemen’, familiarly termed ‘midshipmen’, hoping for a career on the quarterdeck.60 This seems to suggest a clear trend as to

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56 NLS, GB233/MS.19305 (MacLeod of Geanies: William MacLeod): Letters of 24 May 1791 and 20 Feb. 1792, fos 3–4, 9–10 [transcriptions – originals missing]. The Scottish surname ‘Saunders’ or ‘Sanders’ is often found used as a nickname for Scots in sources from the first half of the nineteenth century. See for example: *Five Hundred Curious and Interesting Narratives and Anecdotes – The Anecdote Book* (Glasgow, 1838), 58–9.


the mentality of young naval officers in training: the Scots among them quickly became targets of mockery, regardless of their social status, or of the part of Scotland they originated from.

This pressure to conform, it should be noted, did not necessarily come from Englishmen: some Scots were themselves at the forefront in disparaging, or at least mocking, their less integrated countrymen. Even if Ritchie’s mess contained at least three other Scots, as the muster book reveals, he reports with frustration that ‘only one' of them ‘supports Scotland’, a boy from Dundee (Table 2).\(^{61}\)

The others showed no national pride, and indeed one of them, whom Ritchie calls ‘a complete turncoat’, ‘denies he was born in Scotland, which pleases the English’, claiming ‘the honour of being born in Italy’.\(^{62}\) The boy, Camillo Corri, was the son of a famous Italian musician who had moved to Scotland in the 1770s, but, as Ritchie suspected, he was born in Edinburgh.\(^{63}\) Even aboard a ship like the Nightingale, then, based at Leith and where over a third of the crew was Scottish, a young Scottish boy was not safe from scorn (Table 3).

Hall’s story is again very similar: in his first days aboard, tormented by seasickness and toothache, he ‘reckoned with confidence on the support of my own countrymen, . . . led into this error by having often heard of the way in which Scotchmen hang together in foreign parts’.\(^{64}\) In fact, other Scottish midshipmen were the initiators of most of the mocking he received: upon hearing him use the word ‘tint’ for ‘lost’, which puzzled an English comrade, one of Hall’s ‘quizzing countrymen’ ‘burst into a laugh, and explained’ it, ‘adding “none but Sawney from the North” would have used such a barbarous word, unknown in England’.\(^{65}\) The nickname of ‘Saunders’, with which, much like M’Leod, Hall found himself labelled after this episode, was freely used by Scottish and English friends alike. So were those of ‘Mr Justice Gobble’ (a glutton in a Tobias Smollett novel), and, probably, ‘Experimental Philosopher’, mocking his scientific propensities but with clear reference to those of his nation—and more specifically, in this case, those of the educated, Lowlander part of it from which he came.\(^{66}\)

The finer boundaries between Highlands and Lowlands, or social

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\(^{61}\) NLS, GB233/MS.9292, fos 10–11.

\(^{62}\) ibid., 10.


\(^{64}\) Hall, *Fragments*, i. i, 81.

\(^{65}\) ibid., 82.

\(^{66}\) ibid., 85–8.
Table 2: Origins by rank and rating, HMS *Nightingale*, September–October 1811.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>Midshipmen, Master’s Mates, Volunteers First Class</th>
<th>Other petty and junior warrant officers</th>
<th>Warrant officers’ crews</th>
<th>Able Seamen</th>
<th>Ordinary Seamen</th>
<th>Landmen</th>
<th>Clerks, Stewards, Cooks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>4†</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8‡</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scottish percentage of total for each category**

|                        | 50%          | 14.29%       | 0%          | 6.25%       | 25.93%       | 50%       | 66.67%     |

*Source: TNA, ADM 37/3109.

†Ritchie, while rated ‘LM’ (‘landman’), has been counted here, since it is clear that he was a ‘young gentleman’. The same applies to William Rouse, an Englishman he mentions.

‡This is the total of young men whom I was able to identify. However, Robert Cullen, from the West Indies, had left by the time of Ritchie’s voyage, and two more of them were never aboard together: William Rouse, from Oxford according to the muster but in fact the son of a London bookseller, came to the *Nightingale* only halfway through the voyage, as a replacement for a Scottish master’s mate (also counted here) who had misbehaved. This leaves us with six of them as effective complement. Since from Ritchie’s entries it is clear that they were eight, probably two of them were rated as common seamen, like him, and thus cannot be identified. It is likely that at least one was English, however, because the Englishmen counted here are Rouse and Robert Nicolls [‘Nichol’ in the journal], often mentioned, but Ritchie also refers to another unnamed English boy, and further he speaks of how ‘the English’, plural, seemed pleased at Corri’s rejection of his Scottishness: Rouse was not aboard at the time, and Nichol, Ritchie says, ‘never… treated me with the malevolence of the others’, so was presumably not involved in the Scotophobic mocking. Overall, there are at least two ‘young gentlemen’ unaccounted for, probably both English. NLS, GB233/MS.9232, fos 5, 10–11, 33–4, 41–2, 45–6.
classes, were thus somewhat blurred into a more general stereotype of ‘Scottishness’.

Of course, not too much should be made of the often friendly banter of a few teenagers, but these boyish pranks reflected the more general linguistic, literary and cultural debate that raged, in the second half of the eighteenth century, on the question of the Scots language. If some Scots, most notably Robert Burns, defended the richness and uniqueness of the ‘Scotch tongue’, others, like David Hume and, as late as 1799, Hugh Mitchell, compiled lists of Scotticisms that were to be eradicated from correct speech, and were amongst the most vocal advocates of a purification of the English tongue, on the London model.67 While scholars such as James Basker see this phenomenon as having mostly subsided in the literary world of the later decades, evidence like that of our midshipmen shows that apparently its effects lingered among the gentle classes.68 As always, then, it would be fruitless to generalise on matters of self-presentation: some Scots were the first to consciously reject their Scottishness, be it out of convenience, conviction, or a blurred mixture of the two. In the naval service, and particularly in the midshipmen’s mess, the characteristic mechanisms of bullying and peer pressure probably helped to accelerate the process.

This said, a similar sense of condescension towards all things Scottish was not exclusive to youngsters, and was not necessarily the sign of a complete rejection of one’s origin, as much as of a slow remoulding of its significance. Basil Hall maintained strong ties with Scotland, mostly residing there, and his acquaintances included Sir Walter Scott, whom he greatly admired.69 He also peppered his writings with references to his Scottishness, as when speaking of the Irish Inishowen whiskey, ‘second only (which, as a Scotchman, I am bound to assert) to Ferntosh or Glenlivet’.70 Yet the complexity of his attitude towards Scotland, a mixture of self-irony and pride, is well captured precisely by the contradictory way in which, as a mature man, he described the shipboard mocking of his youth:

68 Basker, ‘Scotticisms’, 89–90.
Table 3: Origins aboard HMS *Nightingale*, September–October 1811. *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayr</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forfar</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haddington</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanark</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxburgh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shetland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Indies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Indies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(9 men without birthplace, 1 ambiguous; senior warrant officers are excluded, as are those commissioned officers for whom no birth certificate could be found).

*Sources: TNA, ADM 37/3109; ADM 107/21: Lieutenants’ Passing Certificates, 1797, 235–7; ADM 107/34: Lieutenants’ Passing Certificates, 1806, 80–2. The officers’ passing certificates, which in a few cases include birth certificates allowing to reconstruct their origins, were tracked thanks to the useful index in Bruno Pappalardo, *Royal Navy Lieutenants’ Passing Certificates (1691–1902)*, 2 vols (Kew, 2001).

... if the Scotch, in its best dress, be bad enough, it is truly savage in the mouth of a pretender; and I was doubly provoked to hear its Doric beauties marred by southern lips. 71

Already in 1819, he commented unfavourably on the uncouthness and narrowness of Scottish society, compared to London. 72 The Navy, in short, had taken a raw boy from Edinburgh and turned him into a well-travelled British gentleman, capable of selecting what he liked from different cultures, rather than being trapped in a monolithic, stylised national self-presentation.

His example is not isolated. Even among adults, fellow Scottish shipmates could be as quick to notice the lingering Scottishness as the English, and indeed, with a little more maturity, they found themselves...  

71 Hall, *Fragments*, i. i, 82. 
in a privileged position to reflect on its meaning. In 1779 the young surgeon James Ker, from Fife, observed of Dr MacSwine, surgeon’s mate, that he spoke ‘as broad Scotch as the first Day he was imported’. Ker’s experiences in the Navy, however, were seemingly leading him to interrogate the very nature of national traditions and differences. This is well captured in what he wrote that Christmas, after dinner, in a mildly intoxicated state (‘my Brains are so barren & clogged with Feasting’):

After the English Custom We feasted on turkey & Shine of Pork. In Fife I used to celebrate this Festival at Mr Barclay’s on a Goose the standing Dish in Scotland on this Season of Joy. Why these Dishes are used in Preference to Others I really forgett [sic] is [sic] there any Reason?74

This slow process of integration is even clearer for naval surgeons of the following generations. These are indeed a very useful case study, because no other group in the Navy was so notoriously Scottish.75 Tracking a sample of 123 surgeons who survived the war in the censuses for 1851, 1861, and 1871, M. John Cardwell and his collaborators have found that as many as forty-six of them (37.4%) came from Scotland, as opposed to only thirty-one Englishmen (25.2%).76 The numbers are of course small, covering only a portion of those who served between 1793 and 1815, but this result seems quite striking nonetheless. Scotland, indeed, was known as a source of surgeons: when HMS Director arrived in Leith in 1811 it recruited six assistant-surgeons at once: ‘only veer a raft on shore baited with burgo, and you would catch an assistant-surgeon,’ the youngsters aboard joked.77 This depended on the national and international pre-eminence of the Glasgow and especially Edinburgh Medical School, from 1806 seat of the only Chair of Military Surgery in Britain.78

For all the prestige of their education, however, personal accounts of young Scottish surgeons show that they did not necessarily fare much better than their fellow midshipmen when they first came into contact with English society. Particularly interesting is the attitude of the London examining boards towards Scotsmen. Already in 1778, Ker was warned that it was a ‘damned foolish conduct’ to attempt the examination without having attended ‘London Lecturers or Hospitals’, and his protests were initially dismissed as ‘damned nonsense’, because ‘they understand nothing of Surgery in Scotland,

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73 NLS, GB233/MS.1083: Naval Log of James Ker, Surgeon in the Royal Navy, 1778–82, fo. 60.
74 Ibid., 67.
75 Lavery, Shield, 95–9.
77 Boteler, Recollections, 15.
78 M. H. Kaufman, Medical Teaching in Edinburgh during the 18th and 19th Centuries (Edinburgh, 2005), 74.
they have no subjects & so can only teach comparative anatomy in your Country’. 79 Eventually, however, he passed rather well, and the doctor who examined him in ‘Physick’ paid a good deal of Respect to his ‘Education at Edinburgh & observed’ that he ‘had been brought up at the Feet of Gamaliel’. 80 Just before the wars, the mutual diffidence had not improved: when young Peter Cullen sat his exam in 1789, a rumour said that ‘the Faculty of London were not so well disposed towards candidates from Edinburgh, from a spirit of envy’.81 As it turned out, like Ker he found surprisingly few obstacles: prejudice was clearly rife in the service, at least until a newly-arrived Scottish surgeon had had the chance of proving himself, but it was also possibly reciprocal.

Once they had overcome the initial disorientation of being introduced into the British Navy, it is difficult to keep track of these men’s remaining links to their country. In another section of Cardwell’s study, however, considering this time a one-in-two sample of all surgeons with dates of seniority between 1793 and 1815, only forty out of 430 (9.3%) were found to have died in Scotland after the wars.82 Even if the comparison is imperfect, this figure being based on a larger group, it is remarkable how low the percentage is when set alongside the 37.4% seen above (proportion known to have been born in Scotland, out of 123 names). This is the case especially if we consider that, likelihood aside, nothing guarantees that all those found in Scotland at the time of death would have been Scots. Such a high rate of dispersal could be due in part to the necessity of residing where employment was more readily found, but, if in 1835 many of these men still figured on the ‘active list’, several also went into voluntary retirement.83 Moreover, the residence of some is listed well into the 1850s and 1860s (and beyond), when they would have been far too old to be still in activity.84 Thus, while the element of choice is mitigated by economic necessity, in proportions now impossible to reconstruct, we can still assume that the places where they settled mirror, to some extent, their personal preferences, and perhaps surviving family connections after decades away. Overall, the tale told by these figures is one of mobility and uprooting.

The geographical dispersion of military and naval personnel was a frequent occurrence. 85 Beside economic and practical constraints, freely joining the Navy—which was the case with officers—and remaining in it could already have indicated a certain wandering predisposition.

79 NLS, GB233/MS.1083, fo. 2.
80 Ibid.
81 Peter Cullen, ‘Memoirs of Peter Cullen, Esq.’, in Five Naval Journals, 49.
84 See for example the volume covering the oldest of these men: TNA, ADM 104/12: Surgeons Vol. I Part I, 1774–1807.
Service in foreign lands and with people from all over Britain (and the world) must also have changed these young men’s outlook. However, they were not the only ones to change: often, a feeling of national belonging might depend on contingencies and personal networks, rather than abstract, immutable values. In 1789 Peter Cullen, freshly arrived from Scotland, had found himself utterly disoriented in England, and had begun ‘to regret his leaving Scotland, and coming amongst strangers, at a heavy expense, and not knowing where to turn’, to the point that he had considered whether to ‘retrace his steps to his native country’. When he returned home for a visit, however, in 1800, he discovered that:

great changes had taken place in the short period of ten years’ absence. Very few of his old acquaintances were in the places, so that he appeared a stranger among strangers.

From what has been seen so far, it seems clear that considerations of class, society, economic interest, and even fashion, together with more general philosophical reflections, worked to smooth many officers’ ‘Scottishness’, both on the side of self-presentation, and, more deeply, as personal feeling of self-understanding. Unfortunately, the evidence surviving for lower-deck hands is much scarcer, but perhaps the social pressure put on them would have been lower. One of the few common sailors who left memoirs, John Nicol from Currie (near Edinburgh), certainly showed a constant attachment to his native land during his three decades at sea, in both the Navy and the merchant service. Far from being ashamed of his accent among his peers, and a living model of what Hall had been told about Scots ‘hanging together in foreign parts’, he always took a special interest whenever he encountered a fellow ‘countryman’ or ‘countrywoman’, exchanging tales of ‘Old Scotland’, while his ‘ears tingled’ and his ‘heart leapt for joy to hear the accents of’ his ‘native tongue’. Throughout his ‘wanderings’, he ‘could not bear the idea of bidding forever farewell to Scotland’, and indeed there he faithfully returned when his days at sea were over: ‘a piece of oaten cake tasted far sweeter in my mouth,’ he wrote, when describing one of his homecomings, ‘than the luxuries of eastern climes’. The young Robert Hay, too, seems to have found more support and patriotic pride among his lower-deck countrymen than derision and indifference: his chief rival in races aloft was an Irishman, and one day, when Hay was losing, one of the Irish boys called him a ‘bargue-eating cabogue of a Scotchman’, crying ‘Ireland’s eye forever!’.

87 Ibid., 103.
89 Nicol, Life, 113, 131–2.
us, Robert, d’ye hear what that garse kaming Erishman is saying,’ one of Hay’s Scottish friends then yelled:

ye’ll surely no let the laurels be torn frae the brows of auld Scotland by ony putato-eater that ever left the bogs. O Man, think of Auld Reekie, and make all the sail you can.91

As the memoirs ironically conclude, ‘this pathetic appeal to patriotism and national honour was irresistible’, to the point that Hay cheated to win.92 Nicol, too, had once found himself in a similar situation, an Irishman’s cry of ‘Erin go Bragh!’ making his ‘Scottish blood’ rise, and prompting him to jump into a free-for-all brawl that was taking place on deck.93 In contrast, it could be observed, the first fistfight that the young gentleman Ritchie had aboard the Nightingale was precisely against his renegade countryman Corri.94 Like Nicol, after several failed attempts, Hay eventually returned to his ‘native land’, a deserter, and there he spent the rest of his days.95

Isolated surviving examples like these, and that of the Erse-speaking Peter Fraser seen above, only offer an impressionistic picture, and they differ considerably in their tones and nuances: Hay shows considerably more sophistication and self-irony than Nicol. Moreover, it must be remembered that these are printed memoirs, published much later, and the reliability of this type of sources in ‘factual’ matters remains debatable, because they were heavily shaped both by personal and political agendas and by narrative patterns typical of oral storytelling.96 However, nothing in the episodes mentioned here seems to give particular cause for suspicion. It is indeed possible that Scotsmen’s ‘Briticisation’, or ‘Anglicisation’, even, would proceed at a higher rate on the quarterdeck, at least when captains like Duff did not artificially intervene on its composition. After all, the preoccupations around which the national affiliations of men like Ritchie, Corri and Hall, Ker and Cullen came to revolve—the ‘honour’ of being born in Italy, the erudite mocking based on parallels with literary characters, the finesses of language, the elaborate dinners and the academic and scientific rivalries—were mostly far removed from the horizon of the ordinary eighteenth-century British worker. In this sense, the evidence on the Navy seems to reflect the same patterns highlighted by Colley for British society more generally: the ‘élites’ were always ahead of the ‘poor’ in subscribing to a concept of common Britishness.97 The country

91 Ibid., 68.
92 Ibid., 68–9.
93 Nicol, Life, 48.
94 NLS, GB233/MS.9232, fo. 35.
95 Hay, Landsman Hay, 239.
97 Colley, Britons, 165–207, 394; cfr., on this, the criticisms moved to Colley in Marxist historiography: Finlay, ‘Keeping the covenant’, 122–3; Murdoch, ‘Scotland’, 107.
of origin may have mattered, in influencing people’s outlook, but the main labels and distinctions derived from other factors, socioeconomic and professional, splitting national identifications into different layers.

Similar nuances will have to be born in mind as we move to consider our final topic, the view of the Navy that Scottish men and women had from the land. Whilst conditioned by the environment aboard ships, indeed, the national self-understanding of the young men who joined the service was also affected by the ways in which the Navy was perceived or depicted at home.

*The Navy seen from Scotland*

It would be absurd, of course, to draw general conclusions about the overall attitudes of the ‘Scottish population’. Much like aboard the ships themselves, it is possible to identify at least two separate trends: on the one hand, forms of local or even explicitly Scottish, but at any rate non-British, self-understanding, potentially leading to reluctance towards involvement in naval warfare, or even open hostility. On the other, a widespread elite and more generally urban culture delighting in any association with the glories of the British service. Once again, class and geography—and in particular a broad ‘Highland/Lowland’ divide—seem to account for a good portion of this pattern.

Whilst the markedly ‘English’ structure and institutional ethos of the Navy, seen in the first section, were undoubtedly a powerful element conditioning the self-presentation of men in the service, Scottish sailors and especially officers could have equally chosen to resist it rather than acquiesce in it, insisting that they and their achievements be specifically recognised as Scottish. Systematic resistance, however, would only have been possible if backed and encouraged by a strong, coherent domestic national pride. This, it will be argued, was not in place. A sense and understanding of Scottishness, as will be seen, often transcending purely local allegiances, was present both among the Scottish civilians who related to the Navy and the English naval administrators who dealt with Scottish civilians, but its scattered and variegated manifestations were far from sufficient to counter the power of British propaganda and larger narratives. Most importantly, if this ‘Scottishness’ could be expressed in the form of hostility towards an ‘English’, extraneous Navy, it rarely seemed to translate into attempts to lay a distinctively Scottish claim on the latter’s achievements.

There were parts of the Scottish population that remained essentially uninterested in the vicissitudes of naval warfare, indifferent to its gains and, when touched by it, resentful of its costs. Even in the heart of the supposedly more ‘British’ Lowlands, off Inchkeith, Boteler recounts how ‘the Scotchmen’ had no qualms about making away with the copper buoy of one of His Majesty’s anchors.\(^\text{98}\) Naval impressment in particular was one of the most alienating forms of

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external encroachment, especially in self-contained cultural and social enclaves, where it compromised the internal economic balance without immediate returns.99

Naturally, resistance to press gangs was far from being part only of Scottish traditions. Indeed, as a phenomenon widespread throughout the British Isles, it has been used by historians like Nicholas Rogers, in direct contrast to Linda Colley, to make broader points about class tensions and seamen’s problematic position vis-à-vis allegiance to the British nation.100 Other scholars, examining it in an Atlantic context, have tied it to originally English traditions of workers’ radicalism, and their eventual contribution to American revolutionary disaffection.101 Shared transnational patterns of class struggle, moreover, were not the only common factor: the local authorities’ sympathising with runaways and deserters, or openly aiding and abetting them, occurred in England as well as Scotland.102 What seems particularly interesting, however, is the special disdain reserved to Scottish manifestations of resistance by functionaries of the Admiralty, and the special pride towards them displayed in surviving Scottish oral accounts.

Writing to a Navy captain in 1808, James Watson, naval officer in charge of impressment around Dundee, complained that ‘the power and jurisdiction of Magistrates of Boroughs, in Scotland, far exceeds that of their bretheren [sic] in England’, and that they were a clique of ignorant, nepotistically appointed shopkeepers, understanding ‘about as much, as a half fledged turkey’, and among whom ‘some individual, gifted with a larger portion, of the natural talents usually imputed to Scotchmen’, in turn reached the position of Provost.103 With these, and with the ‘tedious’ Scottish courts, he had to deal day after day, and he relates the case of a borough Provost who, when Watson sent a lieutenant to arrest three deserters, immediately ‘spread the word’, allowing their escape.104 The corrupt system of ‘juntos’ in Scottish burghs had long been a matter of debate in Scotland, but Watson’s observations have a peculiarly Scotophobic flavour.105

A radically different spin is put on a similar, but far darker, episode surviving in the traditions of the Isle of Mull: supposedly, a press gang

99 Robertson, Press Gang, 7–12; Maclean, ‘Hebridean Service’.
103 NLS, GB233/Acc.12166: James Watson to Captain Stratton, RN, 17 Jan. 1808.
104 Ibid.
105 For an example of condemnation of the system see: An Address to the Burgesses and Heritors of the Royal Burghs of Scotland, on the Present Imperfect and Arbitrary Systems of Election Established in the Burghs (Edinburgh, 1783).
was massacred by local fishermen, and the laird, Sir Archibald MacLean,
not only helped the leader to escape, giving him money, but when the
English captain came ashore to seek revenge he openly scorned and
threatened him, observing—or so the legend goes—that his men were
‘Highlanders’, ‘who would rather fight at any time than eat’, and his
loyal ‘kinsmen’ furthermore.106 For people like Watson, the peculiarly
Scottish administrative forms—and perhaps mentality and customs—
were a matter of special frustration, whereas in the local tales, especially
from the Highlands, the peculiarly Scottish system of clan patronage
and solidarity became a source of strength and effective resistance. It
seems clear, in this sense, that the story of Scotland’s interaction with
press gangs deserves to be written as a partly separate chapter in the
study of British naval manning.

The voices of the ‘uninterested’ sections of the population,
unfortunately, are mostly lost, often surviving only in the oral tradition.
As such, they are best studied by scholars with a deeper knowledge
of local history, and adequate linguistic skills.107 The voices that we
more easily hear, instead, are once again those of the literate society,
predominantly urban, which consumed printed materials and cultivated
connections with the naval establishment.

Beyond direct enlistment, these sectors of the Scottish civilian
population related to the naval effort in several ways, first and foremost
commercially, and sometimes they did so with a sense of their own
political, economic and even cultural separateness from England. For
example, Scottish mills traditionally contributed canvas for the Navy,
but a series of exchanges between some Dundee manufacturers and
Henry Dundas reveals underlying tensions.108 In 1804, the former
complained that Mr Turner, the English inspector of Admiralty canvas
supplies, had refused to purchase good quality Dundonian cloth,
pretending that there was none on offer, and then bought bad stocks
that, illegally, did not bear the makers’ name.109 This would be a routine
tale of embezzlement, but what changed matters was the fact that
Turner, before flooding the Navy with the poor quality canvas, had
it marked, simply, as ‘Scotch’: this was clearly perceived as a national
insult by Scottish cloth-makers, ‘bringing disgrace upon the whole
manufacture of this country’, and unfairly favouring the English.110
On the English side, equally, protests against the ‘influence, authority,
and injustice of the little dirty Scots borough of Dundee’ in canvas

107 Robertson’s study is a good example: Robertson, Press Gang. Knowledge of Gaelic
seems also indispensable.
108 Edinburgh, The National Records of Scotland [NRS], GD51/2/147/1–11 (Melville
Castle Papers: Letters and Papers on Admiralty and Naval Affairs): Letters Regarding
the Supply of Sail Cloth and Hammocks for the Navy, 18 May–20 Sep. 1804.
109 NRS, GD51/2/147/2: Isaac Watt to Sir Peter Murray, Dundee, 18 May 1804;
GD51/2/147/4: Isaac Watt to Lord Melville, London, 16 Jun. 1804; GD51/2/147/6:
Isaac Watt to Lord Melville, Dundee, 20 Sep. 1804.
110 NRS, GD51/2/147/6, [fos 2–3, 7–8].
provisioning quickly spun into considerations of how ‘Scotland’ was unduly favoured by the corrupt Scottish First Lord of the Admiralty (Dundas), receiving contracts five times more valuable than those offered to English manufacturers, while ‘the poor defenceless English weaver starves’.\(^{111}\)

Of course, reference to Scotland and England here was not simply a matter of each party’s proud self-presentation, and had clear instrumental value: on the one side national language could be deployed as a ‘rhetorical strategy’ to defend what was essentially a private commercial interest,\(^{112}\) and on the other it was adopted as a tool in the more general political attack against Dundas, as seen in contemporary cartoons that routinely depicted him in Highland dress.\(^{113}\) Nonetheless, the fact that all parties concerned found it natural to think in terms of country-wide units, conceiving of a ‘Scotch’—as opposed to ‘Dundonian’, or even mill-specific—manufacture, as a general category, reveals the existence and strength of such concepts. As has been recently argued by Julian Hoppit, eighteenth-century Scotland remained in many ways a separate economic entity, structurally and legally distinct from England.\(^{114}\) Yet the perceptions at play here, and especially the synecdoche of a particular local issue becoming a ‘Scottish’ problem, seem to transcend objective or institutional factors, reflecting instead an ‘imagined’ community, in both self-presentation and external identification.

The separate sense of Scottishness exemplified in cases like this, at any rate, had to coexist with complex and powerful messages of unity and common British glory, as is particularly evident in the public reception of news connected with naval affairs. If it is true that the press can give a very selective and distorted image of the beliefs of the population at large, it is often the only source surviving in sufficient quantities, and its very ubiquity might itself affect the balance of sentiments among the people.\(^{115}\) Therefore, whilst the problem of


\(^{113}\) See James Gillray, God Save the King,—in a Bumper, Or—an Evening Scene, Three Times a Week at Wimbledon, 27 May 1795; James Gillray, Hanging, Drowning, [Fatal Effects of the French Defeat], 9 Nov. 1795; Isaac Cruikshank, An Irish Union!, 30 Jan. 1799; The Tenth Report. Or—the Ghost of an Act of Parliament Appearing to the Forlorn Johnny M'Cree, 11 Apr. 1805.


silences remains, the language deployed in newspapers and pamphlets can give indications of some of the meanings that were attached, in Scotland, to naval warfare. The case study chosen here is the battle of Camperdown, fought on 11 October 1797, which ended with the Scottish Admiral Duncan’s crushing defeat of the Dutch; the focus will be on the Edinburgh papers, the most numerous and best preserved.

Some scholars have argued that Scottish heroes of the French Wars like generals Baird and Abercromby and Admiral Duncan were celebrated by contemporaries ‘as Scottish national heroes, successors to the reputation of Scottish, and solely Scottish, war leaders Sir William Wallace and King Robert the Bruce’. In the case of Duncan at least, however, this claim needs to be analysed in more detail.

The victory of Camperdown, first reported by the London Gazette on 13 October 1797, had a huge impact on popular sentiment across Britain, becoming a powerful political tool, with special emphasis, as characteristic of the period, on the glorified figure of the admiral. The celebrations were understandably particularly vocal in Scotland. The country enthusiastically participated in the wave of bell-ringing, illuminations, ‘feux de joie’ and subscriptions, with forms of organised and spontaneous rejoicing recorded in Edinburgh, Kirkcaldy, Moffatt, Glasgow, Stirling, Girvan, Perth, Dundee, Montrose, Denny, Aberdeen, Dumfries, Falkirk, Burntisland, and, allegedly, ‘almost every town and village in Scotland’. The notables of the county of Forfar lavished honours on Duncan, declaring their ‘pride and satisfaction’ ‘that a Native of this County has distinguished himself so gloriously, and rendered such essential service to his King and Country’. Dundee also specially celebrated its ‘gallant and worthy townsman’, with ‘universal joy’. At the same time, in the capital, poems were dedicated to the bravery of Captain Inglis, ‘just our ain door-neighbour’, and he received the ‘honorary freedom of Edinburgh’ from the ‘citizens of this Metropolis’, for ‘good services to his country in general and this

116 Allan and Carswell, Thin Red Line, 22.
120 The Edinburgh Advertiser: 31 Oct.–3 Nov. 1797, 281; 14–17 Nov. 1797, 314.
city in particular’. In February, Edinburgh rewarded both men with a magnificent procession. Beyond a purely local sense of pride, however, there is a marked ambiguity in the nature of the ‘country’ that they were seen to represent.

In some instances, even in England, a distinction was drawn, and the emphasis fell on how the victory had been achieved by ‘a gallant Scot’, as in a ballad commonly found in contemporary anthologies:

Old England proudly rears on Howe and Vincent’s fame,
Scotia her quota bears, and this distinguish’d name
Shall in her heart still live with glory and renown,
Mem’ry must ever give, Duncan off [sic] Camperdown.

At the receptions held to honour Duncan in the weeks after the battle, the ladies of the English high society ‘vied with each other in the taste and elegance of their attire’, as the papers tactfully put it, sporting ‘Tartan Turban Handkerchiefs’ decorated with anchors and celebratory inscriptions, or ‘Caledonian plaids’.

The explicit identification of Duncan as a Scot was naturally even more frequent in Scotland itself: as the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* proudly reported, for example, the celebratory illuminations decreed by the City magistrates on 16 October ‘were very brilliant and general’, the ‘joy’ being ‘heightened, no doubt, by the victory being accomplished under the auspices of a Scotsman’. The Provost and Magistrates of Edinburgh, on congratulating the King for the victory, expressed ‘a high additional pleasure’ due to the fact that the hero was ‘a countryman and a townsman’ of theirs, and the Grand Lodge of Scotland echoed them, manifesting ‘honest pride in the reflection’ that he was ‘one to whom our native country had the credit of giving birth’. The *Edinburgh Advertiser*, after dutifully listing the other two major naval victories, Howe’s and St Vincent’s, took advantage of the opportunity to remind its readership of ‘another gallant achievement by a SCOTS ADMIRAL this war’, Keith’s victory at the Cape. Occasional reports of Scotsmen basking in the victory were also published, like that of the shipmaster on Plymouth pier who allegedly, having heard the news, ‘said, in the Scots accent, “Weel, weel, my countryman Admiral DUNCAN has fairly

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122 Inglis, *Family*, 169.
124 *The Jovial Songster, or The Musical Miscellany* (London, [1800?]), 8–9; *The Myrtle and Vine; or, Complete Vocal Library*, 4 vols (London, [1800?]), i. 204–5; *The Patriotic Songster* (Kidderminster, 1799), 11–12.
125 *The Edinburgh Advertiser*: 10–14 Nov. 1797, 310; 14–17 Nov. 1797, 313; *The Caledonian Mercury*, 4 Dec. 1797, 3.
gi’en the Dutch fleet a few doses of the true genuine Scots Pills, faithfully prepared”.129

Such national pride, however, tended to fall into a broader rhetoric of British harmony, sometimes with comic results: nearly all the main Edinburgh papers observed with genuine delight how ‘the three most brilliant naval victories’ of the war had been due to an Englishman, an Irishman, and a Scotsman, thus identifying St Vincent as Irish. The search for symmetries went further, and arguably too far, when they added that ‘these gallant Officers have each beaten the enemy to which, relatively, their nations are nearest’, proceeding to place (laughably, unless they had the political correctness of considering Cornwall a separate nation) Ireland as ‘nearer Spain than either England or Scotland’, and then, with a logical backflip, Holland as ‘nearer Scotland than any other of our enemies’.130 Very similar is the spirit of a ballad published in Greenock a few years later, which, curiously, falls into the same misapprehension regarding St Vincent’s nationality.131 The only paper that spotted the mistake was the anti-war Scots Chronicle, which generally deplored the ‘miserable trash . . . fabricated’ by other newspapers to embellish the news, and sardonically observed that the admiral ‘was born in Northamptonshire’.132

In these examples Scotland remained a distinct entity, if not the exclusive focus of patriotism, but there was a clear struggle to firmly embed it within a composite British nation. Elsewhere, the assimilation was complete. In a poem published in Edinburgh in 1798, for example, the national theme was to the fore, but entirely couched in terms of Britishness: there was no mention whatsoever of England or Scotland, and Duncan, Howe, St Vincent and Elphinstone (Keith) were all listed together as defenders of their one common ‘country’.133 The rhetoric of Britishness, it has been shown, could be advantageous to Scots, and for example it had provided a conveniently inclusive framework for the celebrations of the English Admiral Vernon, in the 1740s.134 Scots, however, had no need to cast Duncan as a Briton, to partake in his glory. Yet this is precisely what most of the Scottish press did. Overall, Duncan was a British hero, and his merit had been to reassert Britannia’s rule over the main, and the ‘glory’ of ‘British arms’.135 The vast majority

130 The Edinburgh Evening Courant, 19 Oct. 1797, 3; The Caledonian Mercury, 19 Oct. 1797, 3; The Edinburgh Advertiser, 17–20 Oct. 1797, 254; The Herald and Chronicle, 19 Oct. 1797, 3. The mention of Spain, as opposed to France, confirms that this is not a reference to Howe (who, although English by birth, held an Irish title), but to St Vincent, and thus unquestionably a mistake.
131 The Four Admirals (Greenock, after 1805), 2–3.
133 Camperdown: Eulogy on the Illustrious Admiral (Edinburgh, 1798).
134 Wilson, ‘Empire, trade and popular politics’, 104.
of contemporary songs and poems, English, Irish, and Scottish alike, made no mention at all of his Scottishness, or at most, in the case of John Gorton's, had Britannia call him 'my northern hero'. While the city of Edinburgh and the freemasons were keen to remind the King of their 'ownership' of Duncan, this was not always the case: the Inverness 'Northern Meeting' of noblemen and gentlemen (chaired, incidentally, by William M'Leod's father, amongst others) addressed George III from 'these distant provinces of your Majesty's dominions', manifesting 'joy, gratitude, and national pride' for the success of 'your gallant Admiral Lord Viscount Duncan'. It seems clear, here, that the nation alluded to is not Scotland at all.

Beyond the dissolution of Scotland into Britain, anyway, there was one further step, and this, too, was often taken. English publications sometimes called Duncan the 'English Admiral' and 'English commander'. In general, they took care to refer to 'Britain' and 'Britons', but the fleet and ships were indifferently labelled as 'British' or 'English': 'Huzza! for the tars of old England, huzza! For the bold British tars', was the refrain of a contemporary ballad on the battle. Significantly, Scottish papers showed the same tendency, both when reporting verbatim from the London ones, or paraphrasing foreign intelligence (in many European languages no distinction is ordinarily made between 'England' and 'Britain'), and, occasionally, in the 'Edinburgh' column written afresh. Every newspaper printed the letter sent by the Dutch Admiral De Winter to his government to announce the defeat, but only the Scots Chronicle took care to use, in the translation, phrases like 'British fleet' and 'the British': the other papers all followed the English press, which naturally referred to the 'English'. Two weeks later, when the Caledonian Mercury published a translation of the Dutch Gazettes, this contained, besides twenty-six references to the Englishness of the opponents, an unamended mention of Duncan, 'the English Admiral'; even more strikingly,


137 The Edinburgh Advertiser, 10–14 Nov. 1797, 311.


the same appellative was repeated, in August 1804, in his obituary.\textsuperscript{142} The only way in which this could be explained, given that none of the readers would have been unaware that he was Scottish, is that this was an identifier for the side on which he fought, and the Navy in which he served, and that these were seen as primarily England’s.

Reporting word by word the London papers, the loyalist Edinburgh \textit{Herald and Chronicle} had no difficulties in stating, after the victory, that ‘England may therefore now, with more propriety than at any former period, be named the Mistress of the Sea’.\textsuperscript{143} As noted by T. C. Smout, the Scottish eighteenth-century polite classes often willingly adopted the equation of Britain with England, in their everyday language.\textsuperscript{144} It seems, here, that parts of them did so even in the case of the first great British victory which they could have claimed as specifically theirs.

In October 1798, when the news of the Nile reached Britain, Nelson was celebrated, as Duncan had been, with illuminations, bonfires, and ‘Highland reels’ in several Scottish localities: ‘one sentiment of gratitude and joy seems to have animated the whole inhabitants of Scotland’, the \textit{Caledonian Mercury} claimed.\textsuperscript{145} Still in May 1800, the organisers of an exhibition on ‘Duncan’s Victory, with motion’, on South Bridge, Edinburgh, stated that Camperdown would ‘continue to be our favourite theme of panegyric, our pride, and our boast’.\textsuperscript{146} By 1805, however; the battle had been almost entirely outshone by Nelson’s victories, and Scotland joined the rest of Britain, and indeed much of Europe and the Atlantic world, in celebrating Trafalgar: while there was no monument to Duncan in Edinburgh, the City Council immediately initiated subscriptions to build Nelson’s Monument on Calton Hill, started on 21 October 1806.\textsuperscript{147} The time of great nationalistic monuments to peculiarly Scottish figures would only come later in the century.\textsuperscript{148} Many Scots fought and died at Trafalgar, but this tower is not dedicated to them: the inscription on it declares it to be a reminder or Nelson’s ‘noble example’, by which the ‘citizens of Edinburgh’ wished ‘to teach their sons to emulate what they admire, and like him, when duty requires it, to die for their country’.\textsuperscript{149} How the focus was on Nelson the hero, rather than the battle as such, is well

\textsuperscript{142} \textit{The Caledonian Mercury}: 30 Oct. 1797, 2; 18 Aug. 1804, 4.

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{The Herald and Chronicle}, 19 Oct. 1797, 3. For the English original see for example: E. Johnson’s \textit{British Gazette and Sunday Monitor}, 15 Oct. 1797.


\textsuperscript{146} \textit{The Caledonian Mercury}, 15 May 1800, 1.


\textsuperscript{149} \textit{Nelson Monument}, x; Czisnik, ‘Representations’, 266.
illustrated by the plans of the original architect, Alexander Nasmyth: the tower was to bear the names, next to Trafalgar, of the Nile and Copenhagen, or even be flanked by two small pyramids inscribed ‘Nile’ and ‘Trafalgar’. For over a century, now, every 21 October Popham’s signalling flags have been raised on it, spelling over the skies of Edinburgh the message that ‘England expects that every man will do his duty’. The vague irony that this might have provoked a month after the 2014 Independence Referendum was probably much less apparent in the minds of most of Nelson’s contemporaries, at least of those whose feux de joie and illuminated windows left a trace in the historical record.

Here the argument might be forced into circularity by the nature of the sources: the Scottish press at the turn of the nineteenth century had heavy cross-border connections with English papers. Precisely these connections, however, so forcefully presenting to the citizens of Edinburgh, day by day, a nearly unbroken pattern of British (or English) pan-insular rhetoric, can in fact reinforce the present case. If a strong, Scottish Anglophobic patriotism had existed among the city elites of the time, a however minor part of the press would have expressed it, and catered for it. This, indeed, is what happened a century later, when the Navy’s Anglocentric language and symbolism sparked outrage and public debates. In the 1790s and 1800s, instead, whenever naval celebrations were audibly criticised, this was exactly along the same lines used by the opposition in England: in the name not of a separate Scottish national pride, but of political principles questioning the implications of extreme war-mongering patriotism (or even monarchy), rather than its national shade.

In London, after Camperdown, the radical Thomas Hardy refused to illuminate his windows, and these were smashed by the mob. As the loyalist papers cursorily mentioned, ‘West of Exeter Change not a single ray appeared’: ‘the rejoicing, however’, they assured, ‘was very general and sincere’. In Edinburgh itself, while the elites were anxious to portray the city as staunchly loyalist, as shown by Emma Vincent MacLeod, the magistrates had to warn against window-breaking, in the

150 Edinburgh, Edinburgh City Archives [ECA], McLeod Bundle A0010/0003, A. Nasmyth, To His Royal Highness George Prince of Wales... Engraving of the Monument Intended to Be Erected on the Calton Hill Edinburgh in Memory of the Gallant Nelson (n.d.); McLeod Bundle A0010/0003, Undated plan for the Nelson Monument.


152 Harris, Scottish People, 47–50, 70–1.


same notice that proclaimed the illuminations of 16 October.\textsuperscript{157} Indeed, ‘some houses preserved the sombre hue of the night’, according to the whig \textit{Scots Chronicle}, which saw little matter for rejoicing in the slaughter of hundreds of sailors, and observed that the money wasted on candles could have been more profitably used for the relief of their families.\textsuperscript{158} The latter was a common argument in the English whig press, too, as illuminations and naval celebrations in general were more complex and contested events than government sources let surmise.\textsuperscript{159} Less recorded than those of the whigs, among the opposition the ‘Jacobin’ voices of the United Scotsmen also reappeared in 1796–7; again, far from being narrowly ‘Scottish’, they were intrinsically embedded in ideological networks spanning not only the British Isles, but even Europe and the Atlantic.\textsuperscript{160}

Beyond ideologies, and on the more practical level of everyday life, it also remains doubtful whether the fishing communities who massacred press gangs could be included in the ‘almost every town and village in Scotland’ allegedly swept by patriotic joy. The localities mentioned in the newspapers, as can be seen, were nearly all in the broadly-defined Lowlands, leading to suspect the impact of regional divides. Very little, however, can be said at present of the allegiances of fishing and remote Highland communities, whose voices are generally more difficult to hear. What can be said is that in the country as a whole, among those who did celebrate, or audibly problematise, the victory, what was celebrated and problematised was, first and foremost, the naval glory of \textit{Britain}, occasionally synonymous with England, over and above that of Scotland as such.

\section*{Conclusion}

The handful of famous names that Scotland contributed to the British naval pantheon, around the turn of the nineteenth century, represents, as is often the case with ‘great men’ history, only the small tip of a far more variegated—and little-studied—iceberg. As such, constantly exposed to the elements, their experiences are liable to be reshaped and invested with layers of significance, and most notably nationalistic significance, that they did not necessarily have for contemporaries. Indeed, while military prowess was increasingly associated with Scottishness, no similar stereotypes developed in naval warfare: even in Scotland itself, the feats of men like Duncan were soon obscured by those of Nelson. The Hanoverian Royal Navy was manned

\textsuperscript{158} \textit{The Scots Chronicle}, 20–24 Oct. 1797, 3.
by people coming from all the ‘four nations’, but, perhaps unlike other aspects of the imperial machine, and particularly in the case of Scots, it seems to have acted more as a ‘solvent’ than as a ‘separator’.\textsuperscript{161} As such, it can be seen as a model for both forced and willing integration, and the complex interactions between the two. Furthermore, because the Navy was not an artificial ‘melting pot’ laboratory, isolated from the land, the experiences and self-perceptions of Scots in it reflected, and affected, those of public opinion ashore. While Scottish peculiarities were recognised and often felt by both English and Scots, the pressure of dominant British and Anglocentric paradigms, from the sea and from the shore alike, was too strong to allow much space for Scottishness to reclaim a distinctive role.

As an institution, the Navy seemingly received Scotsmen with little concern for their difference, or even with open contempt: though exceptions existed, this, together with the cosmopolitan experiences of sea travel, and perhaps personal predisposition, could gradually contribute to smoothing explicitly Scottish traits, first of all in Scotsmen’s self-presentation, but then, in the long term, also in their personal affections and self-understandings. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this effect was probably felt more on the quarterdeck, where young men were less often recruited or detained under coercion, and fashionable concepts of politeness and refinement strengthened the prejudice towards a ‘raw’ provincialism, real or assumed.

More was afoot, however, than a simple ‘British’ integration: the absorption of the Scots did not substantially affect the Navy’s self-perception and public representation as an \textit{English} body, as is apparent both from Admiralty documents and from newspapers and propaganda. In turn, this conception was often accepted by Scots, both those who opposed naval warfare as an alien form of encroachment and, most interestingly, those who became involved in it, directly or emotionally. The latter group, importantly, did not appear to see this ‘Englishness’ as a reason for detachment. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the equation of Britain with England could perhaps become a source of advantage and pride, especially when it allowed Scotland to partake in the glories of an emphatically and entrenchedly English naval tradition, a phenomenon analogous to that identified by Kidd in the case of English legal institutions.\textsuperscript{162} Thus, while the rhetoric of Britishness remained prominent, this could seamlessly move into Anglocentric language. Even a fiercely Scottish boy like Robert Ritchie could admire the ‘proud flag of Brittain swelling triumphant’ over the fleet, and yet casually speak of an ‘English frigate’.\textsuperscript{163} If the spirit of Britain was what animated their patriotism, at least in the naval sphere many Scots tacitly accepted that England remained at the helm.

\textsuperscript{161} For these terms see: MacKenzie, ‘Irish, Scottish, Welsh and English Worlds?’, 1246.

\textsuperscript{162} Kidd, ‘North Britishness’; Kidd, \textit{Subverting Scotland’s Past}.

\textsuperscript{163} NLS, GB233/MS.9232, fos 24, 26, 43, 49.