John Richards Lapenotiere and the HM Schooner Pickle

by Peter Hore

John Richards Lapenotiere was born at Ilfracombe in Devon in 1770: how he acquired the s at the end of his middle name is not known, possibly it was the surname of some actual or putative benefactor [1]. His family appears to have come to Britain at the time of his great-grandfather, Frederick De La Penotière, who was, allegedly, the son of a French nobleman, and who, according to another source, was a Huguenot who had settled in Holland, and, probably, he came to Britain with William of Orange or one of his followers in 1688. Frederick said to have been a colonel in the English army: he married Bridget, daughter of Reverend the Hon. John Fielding, a canon of Salisbury cathedral and, according to Marshall (the author of a biography of naval officers), fifth and youngest son of William, third Earl of Denbigh and chaplain to King William III [2].John Richards Lapenotiere's first patron was allegedly Rear Admiral the Hon. John Leveson Gower, though what the connection was it not quite clear. Apparently John Richards Lapenotiere first went to sea aged 10 in the hired armed ship, Three Sisters, Captain Wayburn, "under the protection of his father, Lieutenant Frederick Lapenotiere. [3]" The Three Sisters was based in Leith, but in rapid succession between 1782 and 1784 Lapenotiere appears then to have served under a Captain Montgomery in the 28-gun Boreas [4] and the Concord [5] on the West Indies station. However, against the names of all these ships in his memorandum of services, a Navy Office clerk has written *not certain* [6]. It is possible that he was entered in the books only and he may not have served in any of these ships.

However, in 1785, when he would have been 15 years old he is shown as a Gentleman Volunteer in a hired merchant ship, *King George*, under the command of Lieutenant Nathaniel Portlock, who had sailed in Captain James Cook's third and last voyage into the Pacific Ocean, as Master's Mate in the *Providence*: the Mate was William Bligh [7].In 1785 Portlock was chosen to lead a commercial expedition to the north west coast of America, the expedition being sponsored by one Richard Cadman Etches under the auspices of the King George's Sound Company [8]. Their business, for which they purchased a ship of 320 tons, and a snow of 200 tons, was to exploit the knowl-

1 John Richards are Lapenotiere's given names though some records omit the 's' in Richards. In the 19th century some members frenchified their surname by reverting to an apparently older form *de la Penotiere* and in the 20th century others have shortened it to *La Penotiere* or plain *Penotiere*.

2 *Royal Naval Biography*, Supplement, Part II by John Marshall (Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, London, 1828).

3 Marshall: Lieutenant Frederick Lapenotiere entered the navy under the patronage of Daniel, seventh Earl of Winchelsea, then First Lord of the Admiralty, but who unfortunately died before his protégé had been long at sea. Lieutenant Lapenotiere was distantly related to the Countess of Winchelsea.

4 Information about ships is taken from William Laird Clowes' seven-volume *The Royal Navy: a History from the Earliest Times to 1900*, volumes IV and V (first published 1899 and 1900 and reprinted by Chatham Press 1997), and David Lyon's *The sailing navy list: all the ships of the Royal Navy, built, purchased and captured 1688-1860* published by Conway Maritime Press 1993.

5 The Concord referred to here is probably a troublesome French 36-gun frigate, *Concorde*, eventually captured on 15 February 1783 in the West Indies: it is unlikely that Lapenotiere was present at this action.

6 PRO ADM 9/3

7 Nathaniel Portlock (-1817) Commander in 1793, Captain 1799, died at Greenwich, after a short but severe illness, on 12 September 1817. He wrote *A voyage round the world, but more particularly to the North-West coast of America: performed in 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788, in the King George and Queen Charlotte*, (Geo Goulding, London, 1789) G S Ritchie

8 The Admiralty Chart: British Naval Hydrography in the Nineteenth Century (Pentland Press, Edinburgh, 1995) p50. When Cook's expedition, after the deaths of Cook and Clerke, reached Macao on their homeward journey they were offered fantastic sums for sea otter … so high were the prices that the men … despite their years of hardship … tired desperately to persuade their Captains, now Lieutenants Gore and King, to return to Nootka.

© creative multimedia communication 2002

edge they had gained and to make a fortune by selling American furs in China. Since Marshall says that "several young gentlemen, who had evinced an inclination to engage in a seafaring life, were put under Mr. Portlock's care, for the purpose of being initiated in the knowledge of a profession which requires length of experience, rather than supereminence of genius " and that "Amongst these youngsters was Mr. John R. Lapenotiere, whose great-uncle, Samuel Salt, of the Middle Temple, Esq. M. P. was at that time Deputy-Governor of the South Sea Company, and a warm patron of the new undertaking" it rather appears that the *King George*, not the *Three Sisters*, was Lapenotiere's first ship. Anyway, between sailing from Gravesend on 30 August 1785 and returning to Margate on 24 August 1788, Lapenotiere circumnavigated the world visiting the Sandwich Islands, the northwest coast of America and China. The King George's Sound Company, also known as Etches' Company, fared rather better than the seven or eight other expeditions which took place in the same years, because they had a licence from the South Sea Company, and here we may see a connection between Lapenotiere's great uncle and Lapenotiere's presence among the *young gentlemen* of Portlock's expeditions. The Company did well but did not, however, make themselves very rich [9].

Lapenotiere next served three years, 1788-91, in home waters as a midshipman in the 14-gun brig *Scout*, Captain Charles Cobb, and the 74-gun ship *Magnificent*, Captain Richard Onslow, without seeing any action. Meanwhile William Bligh's first expedition to take breadfruit from the Pacific to the West Indies, had ended in mutiny [10]. Bligh, chosen to lead a second breadfruit expedition, selected his new officers, crew and ships with extra care. One of the lessons which had been learned was not to send singleton ships on long voyages, so this time Bligh's *Providence* was accompanied by the 110-ton *Assistance* commanded by Nathaniel Portlock [11]. By now Lapenotiere might have expected to be a lieutenant himself, but he served in the *Assistance*, on a new circumnavigation, as Able Seaman. [12]

In 1793 Lapenotiere joined the 36-gun frigate *Santa Margarita*, Captain Eliab Harvey, as Master's Mate, in Admiral Sir John Jervis's squadron in the West Indies. A year later Jervis's ships with troops embarked sailed from Barbados in February arriving off Martinique where a month long siege developed. By mid-March only two forts continued to resist when Jervis landed "a division of 300 seaman and marines to drag up guns and mortars to assist the army ashore." Captain Harvey distinguished himself in reducing Fort Bourbon, but it is not known whether Lapenotiere was ashore too. Marshall's biography implies that Lapenotiere served sometime directly under Jervis in his flagship, but the record shows that he was scarcely a month in the 98-gun *Boyne*, at the end of which he was made lieutenant, aged 24, in April 1794 and given the command of the 8-gun brig *Berbice* [13]. Lapenotiere's first command does not seem to have been a great success and by 1795 he was back in a ship, as first lieutenant of the 28-gun *Resource*, Captain Frederick Watkins [14].Though not mentioned in Marshall, Lapenotiere next served 1797-9 in the 74-gun *Ganges*, Captain Robert McDougall, in the North Sea and 1798-9 in the *Inconstant*, Captain Milham Ponsonby, in the Channel. By now Lapenotiere had a well-developed ability to miss great events, such as the mutinies at Spithead and the Nore and the Battle of Camperdown: he had served under several well-known commanders in famous ships, but always just after or just before any famous actions, and his career was in the doldrums.

However, in 1800, Lieutenant Lapenotiere obtained the command of the hired cutter 8-gun *Joseph*, and in her, according to Marshall, Lapenotiere "was several times engaged with the enemy, near Brest, and then employed in

9 Marshall and Portlock's *Voyage Round the World* p 382: That the King George's Sound Company have not accumulated immense fortunes may perhaps be true; but it is no less certain that they are gainers to the amount of some thousands of pounds; and that the voyage did not answer the utmost extent of their wishes, undoubtedly was owing to their own inexperience; for when the King George and Queen Charlotte arrived at Canton, and even a month after that period, prime sea-otter skins sold for from 80 to 90 dollars each. Of this quality, these ships had at least 2000 on board, besides a large quantity of furs of inferior value but though we could have sold our cargo with ease, we were not at liberty to dispose of one single article; the sole management of it being vested in the hands of the East India Company's supercargoes; and at length the skins just mentioned were sold for less than 20 dollars each.

10 There is no denying his difficult character, but he was also gifted seaman and a courageous fighter, commanding ships at two of the most significant battles of the Great War 1793-1815, the 64-gun Director at the Battle of Camperdown in 1797, and the 54-gun Glatton, anchoring next astern of Nelson's own Elephant, at Copenhagen in 1801.

11 PRO ADM 51/4525.

12 Portlock *Voyage Round the World*, p 382. Richard Hough *Captain Bligh and Mr Christian: the Men and the Mutiny* (Hutchinson and Co, London, 1972)

13 Wrecked, under her next commander, off Dominica on 3 November 1796, as was the next *Berbice*, foundered off Demera on 6 January 1806.

14 On 10 December 1796 the *Resource* and the 32-gun *Mermaid* took the 16-gun *le Général Leveau* off San Domingo.

© creative multimedia communication 2002

affording protection to the Mediterranean trade. On each of these occasions, his gallant conduct obtained him the high approbation of his commander-in-chief, Earl St. Vincent and Sir James Saumarez: that of the Admiralty was also conveyed to him, in a flattering letter from the former officer." The *Joseph* was paid off in the Spring of 1802 and Lapenotiere, aged 32, took command on 24 May 1802 of another small vessel, the 10-gun schooner *Pickle*.

The *Pickle*'s original name had been *Sting*, "a clever fast sailing schooner of about 125 tons, coppered and in every respect suited to the Service" and she was purchased in the West Indies in December 1800 for £2,500. Sting was built, almost certainly, at Bermuda in 1799. She was 73 ft overall, 56 ft 3_ on the waterline, 20 ft 7 in breadth, and 9 ft 6 in depth and measured 127 tons, and armed with six carronades, either 18 or 12 pounders. In January 1802 the *Sting*, which has been used as a tender the line-of-battle ship *San Pareil*, was renamed *Pickle* and commissioned under the command of Lieutenant Thomas Thrush [15]. As the Peace of Amiens faltered and the Royal Navy redeployed its ships for a renewal of the war against France, the *Pickle* was ordered across the Atlantic.

The *Pickle*'s complement was nominally 35 officers and men, and her muster book for 1805 reveals some interesting statistics [16]. Actually she carried 42 men at Trafalgar, and with passengers, deserters, discharges, etc, some 56 names are shown on her muster list. The youngest, a volunteer, was aged 14 and the oldest, an Irish ordinary seaman who deserted before Trafalgar, aged 40. Most men were in their early twenties. Typical of the British fleet off Trafalgar, just under half of her crew were English, and of these, about a quarter of the whole, were from two counties, Devon and Cornwall. Another quarter was Irish, and, at 5%, the largest non-British contingent was Americans [17]. Contrary to popular belief the number of pressed man was not large: just three men were noted as *prest*. However, MacKenzie *Pickle* was not a happy ship, and in October 1803 a plot was alleged to seize her and the boatswain's mate, one of the schooner's few senior rates, was accused of mutiny: the charge was dismissed but he received 100 lashes for insolence, desertion and disobedience. In May 1804, off Ferrol, another conspiracy to desert to the French was alleged, the would-be deserters having taken an oath to "aid and assist Bonaparte with all his power and might on every occasion" and swearing on a book entitled *The Rights of Ireland* [18]. *Pickle* was part of Admiral Cornwallis' blockading fleet off Brest, where her duties regularly took her inshore, scouting the numbers and readiness of the French Fleet and stopping coastal trade [19]. When the line-of-battle ship 74-gun *Magnificent* sank after striking on the Pierres Noires on 25 March 1804, the *Pickle* rescued some of her crew.

So far Lapenotiere's quarter of a century in the Navy service had been undistinguished and he was still only a lieutenant, but the war with France had another ten years to run and maybe he still had a chance of fame and fortune yet.

Writing from Stonehouse Pool (on the east side of the entrance to the Homoaze) on 5 January 1805, Lapenotiere petitioned the Admiralty for a corporal and six marines "in lieu of seven seamen … in order that she may be furnished with regular centinels who may be of great utility in preventing … desertion [20]." By the end of the year 15 of the 56 names on the muster list had been marked *R* for run or deserted. A Norwegian called John Ellingson, the ship's carpenter, had deserted, with a compatriot, on 1 December 1804, and been recaptured five weeks later, on the same day that Lapenotiere wrote asking for his marines. Ellingson jumped ship again, in Plymouth in September 1805, and was not

15 The author is grateful Ian MacKenzie of the Admiralty Library for nearly all this information. The *Sting* was purchased by Admiral Sir Hugh Seymour, the Commander in Chief at Jamaica, in defiance of the very strict Orders ... from their Lordships forbidding me to purchase vessels into his Majesty's Service. The *Sting* had already served some time as a hired vessel, acting as tender to the flagship at Curacao (which was then in British hands having been taken from the Dutch), carrying despatches, troops and provisions. The admiral presumably reasoned that it was cheaper to buy from her the Jamaica merchant-owners for £2,500 than continue to charter her at £10 per day.

16 PRO ADM 36/16150

17 Though the numbers in this sample are small, work on a 21,000 sample, which forms part of a new Trafalgar roll, supports the thesis that Pickle's crew was a microcosm of the British fleet.

18 Again, the author is grateful to Ian MacKenzie for this information.

19 Following Lapenotiere's luck, *Pickle* does not appear to have taken much in the way of prizes.

20 PRO ADM 1/2989

© creative multimedia communication 2002

heard of again. In that age, of course, desertion was the normal way for a man to leave a ship he did not like. However, marines were in short supply in 1805 and Lapenotiere was told that he would get his marines "when the ship's for which Marines are required have been furnish'd [21]." Meanwhile Lapenotiere cannily carried seven extra seamen on his books.

Sailing from Europe in mid January, by March 1805 the *Pickle*was back in the Caribbean, presumably as part of the general movement of ships designed to gather intelligence on and to checkmate the French fleet. From Jamaica on 10 March 1805 he was ordered to take, "under your Convoy such of the trade as are bound through the Passages … to make the best way to New Providence [in the Bahamas] and deliver the accompanying despatches to His Excellency Governor Cameron … repair to Bermuda … and … pursue your Voyage to Plymouth, without a moments loss of Time [22]." The reason for the diversion via Bermuda was to deliver two lieutenants who were "appointed to command two Schooners building there [23]."

On 9 March 1805 Sub Lieutenant Robert Gould, a Scot from Dundee and second in command of the *Pickle*, exchanged into the 14-gun *Superieure* [24], and the *Pickle* received instead one George Almy as Acting Second Master and Pilot. Almy gave his age as 30 and his place of birth as Newport, America (as opposed to Newport, Shropshire). The Almys were in the nineteenth century an old established family in New England and some still live in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, but, so far, George Almy has not been identified. There were other Americans in the Pickle: in Bermuda on 23 April, one of the pressed men, Thomas Barcombe of New York, was discharged. Then on 12 May in the Atlantic, the *Pickle* stopped a merchantman and the following day John Oxford, also of Newport, America, was entered the *Pickle* as Able Seaman. This is curious incident: the meeting at sea is unlikely to have been prearranged and *Pickle* was not short of seamen, so was the meeting by chance and did Almy recognise the ship and hail his fellow townsman, who then volunteered (and received his £5 bounty for doing so) [25] ?

In July 1805 on passage from Plymouth to Gibraltar, *Pickle* got into a scrap. As she was becalmed in the Straits in the afternoon of 19 July, she was attacked by two, well-manned Spanish gunboats who kept up a heavy fire with grape and shot until the wind sprang up and the *Pickle* could reply with broadsides and in her turn began to chase the Spaniards towards Tarifa. When the wind fell again and the Spaniards were reinforced by seven other gunboats, the tables turned again. Lapenotiere tacked towards Tangier, but the Spaniards under oars were quicker and got within gun range again, keeping up a continuous fire from *Pickle*'s stern arc where she could bring no gun to bear. Anchoring under the Fort of Tangier, one of the gunboats anchored near the *Pickle* and the others remained loitering outside the bay. The *Pickle*'s rigging was damaged and one man slightly hurt by splinters, but that was all the damage, and when a regular breeze sprang up again *Pickle* was easily able to evade the watchers and rejoin the fleet. Cuthbert Collingwood, reading Lapenotiere's despatch thought he had acted with "great spirit and propriety opposed as he was to a sort of force … [Spanish Gun boats, which swarm here] … which with his short Guns, he could give no annoyance at the distance they kept." It seems that the *Pickle* was only a fast sailer in heavy weather, because Collingwood in his despatch referred, in the light airs prevailing, to *her indifferent sailing* and inability to come up with the enemy. Their Lordships of the Admiralty acknowledged Lapenotiere's action but confined themselves to an expression of approbation [26] .

21 Such was the shortage of marines that even in October, a few days before the inevitable battle, marine officers were being sent home from Nelson's fleet for service elsewhere.

22 PRO ADM 1/2989

23 The lieutenants' names were Fitton and Rowe. Six 16-gun schooners were built in Bermuda of Bermuda cedar in 1803-11, the *Indian* in 1805 and the *Bermuda* and the *Martin* in 1806.

24 *Superieuse* is the name in the muster book, but evidently the *Superieure*, unlisted in Lyon but presumably captured from the French, and variously rated in Laird Clowes as 16, 14 and 12 guns.

25 Almy did not give his age when he first signed to Pickle's muster list, but in all subsequent entries he is shown under Age on time of entry in this ship as "30" — which would indicate he was born in 1775. If true, this would make him one of the oldest men onboard. Almy was discharged from the ship on 22 February 1807 and a new master's log was started on 23 February 1807. However, Almy was not shown as superseded in the ship's muster list until July 1807. A few months later John Oxford was marked *R* in Plymouth, with a large sum in wages owing to him.

26 PRO ADM 1/411

© creative multimedia communication 2002

Back in Plymouth on 3 September 1805, Lapenotiere asked for a Sub Lieutenant to fill the vacancy in the *Pickle* which had existed since Gould had left in March and "as there is no Person onboard … capable of rendering any Service in Case of an Accident happening to me [27]." The Admiralty appointed John Kingdom, though by 16 September Lapenotiere had angrily scratched through the letter *not joined*: in fact Kingdom arrived onboard on 20 September and the *Pickle* sailed almost at once with another draft of seamen for various ships of Nelson's fleet off Cadiz.

Pickle had one last service to perform before the coming great battle when she intercepted, a few days previous, a Portuguese vessel attempting to take advantage of the high prices in Cadiz by smuggling in a cargo of bullocks from Tangier to the French and Spanish fleet who were short of provisions.

During the battle itself, Pickle, the second smallest British ship present, was stationed to windward of the weather column which was led by the Victory. Of Nelson's famous signal, Almy laconically entered in his log "at ten the commander in chief made signal to prepare for action with a no. of other signals [28]." *Pickle* has a grandstand view of the battle, but took no part in the fighting. Instead, according to Marshall, Lapenotiere rescued about 100 men and two women who had thrown themselves into the sea from the French 74-gun *Achille* who was on fire (there was also a British line-of-battle ship called *Achilles*). Allegedly, "one of the Women thus saved was floating on an oar, and perfectly naked, a seaman immediately pulled off his trowsers and gave them to her: when she got on board the schooner, she immediately began to relate with much seeming pleasure, the number of men she had sent to the bottom, for endeavouring to take the oar from her; and she appeared as happy and contented as if nothing had happened, although her husband had fallen in the battle." This story seems to been embellished over time: the ship's muster list shows 160 prisoners taken onboard, though where the tiny *Pickle* would have put so many is source of amazement, and Lapenotiere himself made no reference to any of them being female. Undoubtedly there were many women in both fleets, though they had no official status and did not appear on the muster lists for pay or victuals. Many were the wives of the ship's standing officers, and some, exceptionally, may have been there for more romantic reasons, a few perhaps even one or two disguised as men, and, statistically, some must have been among the survivors. Writing within a few days of the Battle of Trafalgar, Captain Robert Moorsom of the *Orion* gave a more sober and reliable account of Jeannette as she became known [29]:

I must tell you an anecdote of a French woman the *Pickle* Schooner sent to me about Fifty people saved from the *Achille* which was burned & blew up amongst them was a young French woman about five and twenty & the wife of one of the Main Topmen when the *Achille* was burning she got out of the gun room Port & sat on the Rudder chains, till some melted lead ran down upon her, and forced her to strip & leap off; she swam to a spar where several men were, but one of them bit & kicked her till she was obliged to quit & get to another, which supported her till she was taken up by the *Pickle* & sent on board the *Revenge* amongst the men she was lucky enough to find her Husband — We were not wanting in civility to the lady; I ordered her two Pussers shirts to make a Petticoat & most of the officers found something to clothe her; in a few hours Jeanette was perfectly happy & hard at work making her Petticoats.

There were of course other versions of Jeanette's' story, and if all of them were true, Jeanette must have had a considerable wardrobe of clothes before she was landed in Gibraltar.

27 PRO ADM 1/2989

28 PRO ADM 52/3669 The following dates are taken from Almy's journal, remembering that in the contemporary Royal Navy the date changed at midday.

29 NMM AGC/M/5

© creative multimedia communication 2002

There is an other story about the prisoners which was reported in the *Naval Chronicle* and repeated in Marshall [30]. It was that the French prisoner had mutinied or in the words of the *Chronicle* "immediately rose upon the crew of the Pickle, and were about to exchange elements with them; but our tars having no stronger inclination for the water than those whose lives they saved by rescuing them from it, were obliged to use the bravest resistance, to get rid of the favour intended them, which after some time they effected, and overcame the French savages." The author added "and as I had [this story] from Lieutenant Lapenotiere, you may rely upon its authenticity." There is an echo of this in Marshall, according to which "the prisoners, one night, were heard conversing about the practicability of taking the *Pickle* into Cadiz, they being nearly treble in number to her crew [31]." In some ships, like the captured Spanish 80-gun *Neptuno*, the prisoners were released to help save the ship from wreck and then took back their own ship, but this was not the case onboard the *Pickle*, and the story the prisoners, whether *immediately* or *one night* later, mutinied seems to be no more than a general vilification of the French.

Admiral Collingwood succeeded to command of the fleet on the death of Lord Nelson, and his report of the battle was written at the height of the storm which followed, in the cabin of the 36-gun frigate *Euryalus*, Captain Henry Blackwood [32]. On the morning of 27 October he gave a copy to Lapenotiere with orders for home and Almy noted "at 12 wore and made sail to the NW & parted company with the Commander in chief up main topmast set the gaff top sail." Two days later Collingwood sent the 8-gun cutter *Entreprenante* in to Faro, with duplicate despatches to send overland to the Admiralty via the British embassy at Lisbon. On 29 October the *Pickle* hove to speak to the 22-gun *Nautilus*, again according to Almy's log, "the Captain of the Notlis (sic) came on board … Cape St Vincent distance 8 or 9 miles": the two ships kept company until the *Nautilus* was seen shortening sail near the Rock of Lisbon and went up river. On 3 November *Pickle* met the 74-gun *Superb* and was summoned onboard, where he broke the news of victory and of Nelson's death. *Superb*'s captain was Richard Keats, one of Nelson's favourite officers and it was to Keats that Nelson had first, in the garden of his house at Merton, confided his battle plan for when he should meet the French. As the *Pickle* continued northward, Keats and every man in the *Superb* "was conscious that he had missed a rendezvous with history and … suffered a personal loss."

The *Pickle* reached Falmouth on 4 (5 by modern reckoning) November, where "at 9.45 Shortened sail and hove to & out Boat our Commander landed at Falmouth with his Dispatches." The story of Lapenotiere's ride of 266 miles in just under 37 hours, of waking Lord Barham, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and his interview with the King belongs elsewhere [33].

At last Lapenotiere was promoted Commander, and the Patriotic Fund gave him a sword worth 100 guineas, which stayed in the family for over a hundred years [34]. He also received as share of the prize money, though much smaller than the share received by the captains of the line-of-battle ships. More important, he was entitled to a "the usual emolument given to the bearer of despatches of importance", though he had to petition for his reward. By 25 November he was back in the *Pickle* in Stonehouse Pool and in his first letter to William Marsden, secretary of the Admiralty, Lapenotiere asked politely enough for his reward, though Marsden did deign to answer himself. In a second letter Lapenotiere pointed out, plaintively that he was not inspired by "sordid motive … [but] I am a Man who has been 26 years an officer in the Service, am a family man, and have never had any other dependence than

30 *The Naval Chronicle,* volume XIV page 381 (*The Naval Chronicle* volume III 1804-6 pages 234, consolidated edition by Nicholas Tracy, Chatham Publishing, London 1999)

31 Actually four times the crew of the Pickle if there were 160 prisoners, though there is always the possibility that the muster book overstated the number of rescued men (and perhaps some women) in order to claim extra victuals.

32 Collingwood was never allowed home after Trafalgar, and instead the Admiralty sending him into the Mediterranean to continue the blockade on the remains of the French fleet at Toulon. There his companion was *Bounce*, his dog, and there, worn out, he died in 1810. Only then was he allowed to join his friend in St Paul's.

33 PRO ADM 1/2989 This file contains a note of the expenses for the journey, £46 19s 1d and is endorsed 6 Nov Mr Wright to pay the amt and allow the usual charge for his return.

34 PRO ADM 169/618 In 1932 this sword was presented to the Royal Naval Hospital by the executors of Miss Grace P G Lapenotiere, and is now in the collection of the National Maritime Museum.

© creative multimedia communication 2002

the Pay I receive from Government." Marsden was unmoved. Poor Lapenotiere had to write again, pointing out that he had been informed by two other Captains, that they had received £500 for the same service "beside their commissions". What happened next is unclear, besides more gossip in the meeting rooms of Plymouth, but somehow Lord Barham got hold of Marsden's next internal memorandum, in which he (Marsden) admitted that Lapenotiere was "clearly entitled to the £500 gratuity", and Barham wrote across it: "He must have it". On 2 December Lapenotiere was told to apply directly to the Treasury.

The reward for the *Pickle*'s crew was more despatch duties. However, under the command of Lieutenant Daniel Callaway she captured, in January 1807 a French privateer cutter, *la Favorite* of 14 guns and a crew of twice her size, and Callaway was promoted in April 1807. *Pickle*'s career came to an end on 27 July 1808 under the command of Lieutenant Moses Cannadey, when she grounded on the Chipona Shoal off Cape Santa Maria, on her approach to Cadiz. She quickly filled and sank, but all were saved.

In 1806, Commander Lapenotiere was appointed to the 16-gun brig *Orestes*, with complement of 95 officers, men and boys. In keeping with Lapenotiere's luck, the *Orestes* missed the Second Battle of Copenhagen in 1807, but formed part of a squadron which after the battle was stationed in the Sound to protect trade. There Lapenotiere suffered a dreadful accident. While in the Elsinore Roads, he was frequently *"obliged to stand in so close with the enemy's batteries, for the purpose of ordering away the different vessels that have anchored there daring the night … [and] … exposed to their fire … This happened again yesterday; and in firing one of the after guns, by some unforeseen accident, it communicated to a drawer, containing the powder-horns and a few cartridges, the exp1osion of which, I am sorry to say, has so far disabled me, as to prevent, I fear, my being able to perform my duty, for some time to come."* His injuries seemed quite horrific, though like the heroes of the age he seems to have recovered quickly: *"The skin of my face, ears, and neck, is completely burnt off; and the greater part of the hair off my head, the skin of which I fear must follow. But what concerns me most, is, that I am in some danger of losing my right eye likewise. The whole of the right side of my head is much contused, by a piece of plank forced against it by the explosion. I am at this moment obliged to keep my bed."*

After his recovery, Lapenotiere and the *Orestes* were employed in the Channel, where his luck seems to have changed a little. He captured a 12-gun privateer, *la Concepcion*, and retook an American ship bound to Plymouth with timber. On the 9 May 1810, with *la Favorite*, he took the 10-gun French schooner *la Dorade*. On the 27 October Lapenotiere took the 16-gun French privateer *le Loup Garou*. According to Marshall "she kept up a smart fire for about thirty minutes … a remarkable fine vessel, well found in every thing, and calculated to do much mischief to our trade." Admiral Sir Robert Calder wrote that "this capture does very great credit to the captain, officers, and men of the Orestes, from the prompt and neat manner in which it has been effected, without any loss to his Majesty's service; and confirms the good opinion I have long since entertained of Captain Lapenotiere as an officer, whilst serving under my command at different times [35]."

Lapenotiere obtained post rank on 1 August 1811 but it was too late: he had had his *fifteen minutes of fame*, and retired to live quietly in Cornwall with his wife, Mary Ann, daughter of the late Lieutenant John Graves, whom he had married in 1805. They had seven children, at least one of whom was in the navy by 1828 [36].

35 Marshall

36 *Nelson Chronicle* Vol 5 part 3 July 1994 p58: Lt John Good Lapenotiere RN, son of JRL, buried in was buried in St George's Churchyard, Douglas, Isle of Man.

© creative multimedia communication 2002

Lapenotiere had spent a lifetime in the Royal Navy, he had twice circumnavigated the globe, he had known several famous officers who were potential patrons, but, by the standards of many of his contemporaries, he had not succeeded. But for the chance of carrying Collingwood's despatches from Trafalgar, and for arriving first with them, modern readers might never have heard of him. Most of his descendants appear to have emigrated to Canada and the USA, the only permanent memorial which Lapenotiere has left in Britain is a boundary marker in the wall of the garden of his house at Menheniot [38].

38 The Royal Navy did not however forget the Pickle and the part she played in bringing the news from Trafalgar. Since 1808 there have been a further eight ships of the name:

1. French l'Eclair, privateer schooner captured 1801 at Gaudeloupe, renamed Pickle in 1809, sold 1818.
2. Pickle class schooner, built Bermuda 1827, broken up 1847
3. Slaver brig Eolo, taken in 1852 by the Orestes and renamed, sold 1854 – someone seems to have had a sense of history!
4. Mortar Vessel, built May 1855, renamed MV-22 in October 1855
5. Albacore class wooden steam gunboat, built May 1856, broken up 1864
6. Ant class iron steam gunboat, built November 1872, became dockyard lighter in 1906
7. German whaler captured 1914, served on East Coast of Africa, sold 1920
8. Algerine class minesweeper, built August 1943, sold to Ceylon as the Parakarama 1959 and broken up 1967.

© creative multimedia communication 2002