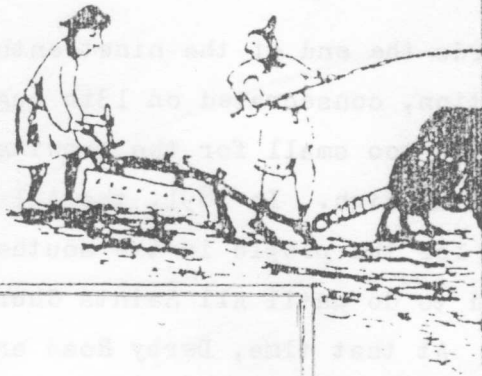
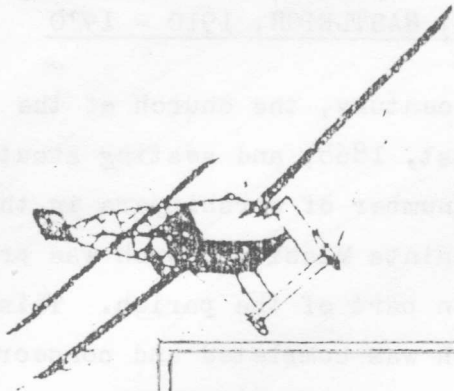


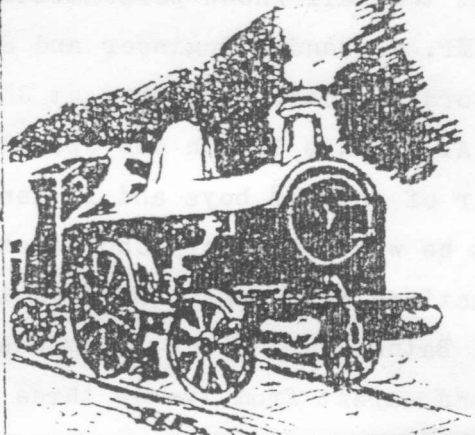
# A Keppel in the Cottage.



*Eastleigh & District  
Local History Society*

OCCASIONAL PAPER No. 35

*Ipse Henricus  
tenet  
est lere in  
domina*





Caricature of the Little Admiral in 1890, aged 81, by Arnold Cecil Keppel, eighth Earl of Albemarle. (Reproduced by kind permission of his son, the present Earl.)

## A KEPPEL IN THE COTTAGE

Henry Keppel came into the World on 14th June 1809 in the Kensington residence of his father William Charles Keppel, fourth Earl of Albemarle and his mother, Elizabeth, née Southwell, daughter of Edward, 20th Lord de Clifford.

His grand-uncle, Viscount Augustus Keppel had been a national hero in the preceding century and a brief history appears later in this pamphlet. Two of his elder brothers were successively fifth and sixth Earls of Albemarle but that title was forever to elude him as he was sixth in line.

He joined the Royal Navy on 7th February 1822, being escorted to the Naval College at Portsmouth by none other than Thomas Garnier, Rector of Bishopstoke, to whom he was related, for Thomas' elder brother William, a prebendary at Winchester Cathedral, was married to Caroline, youngest daughter of the present Earl. An amusing incident during the journey was recalled years later by the then Sir Henry. The Rector had thoughtfully brought some pears to eat en route but found to his dismay that he had sat on them. Young Henry was not to be deterred by this set back however and happily ate them all.

Following initial training at Greenwich he was appointed to the 'Tweed' of twenty-eight guns, his first voyage taking him to Capetown. His early years were spent in study and his perseverance was rewarded by a promotion to lieutenant on 29th January 1829.

In the following year he was appointed to the 'Galatea' under Capt. Charles Napier and following a term of home duty orders were received to sail to the West Indies. Whilst anchored off Barbados he foolishly jeopardised his career by breaking an arrest order to attend a dignity ball. Fortunately, the incident was overlooked, and he next saw service on the 'Magiciene' under James H. Plumridge, sailing to the East Indies, where they were involved in a conflict between the East India Company and the Rajah of Nawning.

Following promotion to commander on 20th January 1855 he was appointed to the 16 gun brig 'Childers' which was ordered to the southern coast of Spain to assist the Queen Regent's stand against the Carlist forces. When hostilities finally ceased, they sailed on to the coast of West Africa to commence patrol duties.

On 5th December 1837 he was promoted to captain and two years later married Katherine Louisa Crosbie, daughter of General Sir John Crosbie, G.C.H.

The August of 1841 saw him commissioning the corvette 'Dido' for the China station where he served with distinction during the latter part of the 'Manchu War' under Sir William Parker. When peace came in the August of 1842 he was sent to Singapore as senior officer for that part of the station. Whilst there he made the acquaintance of Sir James (Rajah) Brooke with whom he travelled to Sarawak, remaining for 18 months whilst assisting in the suppression of the notorious Borneo pirates. Using the East India Company's steamship 'Phlegethan' to assist the 'Dido' he destroyed the pirate stronghold and 300 pirates. These experiences provided the background for his first book which was entitled 'Expedition to Borneo' and published in 1846.

Following two years on half pay Keppel's next appointment was to the frigate 'Meander' in which he returned to Singapore and again met up with Brooke. During this period he visited the Australian continent before returning to England in 1851 via the Straits of Magellan. His second work entitled 'A Visit to the Indian Archipelago' was published in 1853, the same year that he was appointed to the 'St. Joan d'Acre', at the time considered the best line-of-battle ship in the Royal Navy. In this vessel he was to serve with distinction in the Baltic Campaign of 1854.

International tensions then took Keppel to the Black Sea where in July 1855 he was attached to the 'Rodney', taking charge of the naval brigade ashore before Sevastopol and remaining until the Russian army evacuated the city. To the Baltic and Crimea medals was now added the French Croix Legion D'Honneur, the third class, of the Medjidie and shortly after on 4th February 1856 he became a C.B. (Companion of the Bath).

In the autumn of that year he commissioned the frigate 'Raleigh' in the rank of commodore becoming second-in-command on the China station. Among his lieutenants were Lord Gilford and Prince Henry of Hoheanloe and his midshipmen included Lord Charles Scott and The Hon. Victor Montagu. During the passage to the east war broke out again in China and the ship sailed on with all speed. As they approached their destination the vessel struck an uncharted pinnacle rock and became a total loss. Fortunately no lives were lost and Keppel was acquitted at the subsequent court martial. He then raised his pennant on the steamer 'Hong Kong' and proceeded up the Canton River where on the 1st June 1857 he commanded operations against the rebellious population's navy in Fat-Shan Creek. As a result of his actions 70 enemy war-junks were burnt or otherwise destroyed despite the carefully prepared defences and resistance of the Manchu Chinese forces.

Sir Henry did not escape lightly, however, his vessel being sunk with five crew listed as killed or injured. He was complimented on his actions by the commander-in-chief, Sir Michael Seymour, who subsequently recommended that he receive some form of recognition for his achievement and a captured gun was sent back to England for him to keep as a memento of the campaign. In the following August he was promoted to his flag and sailed for home.

It is at this point that Sir Henry or Harry as he was known to his associates arrived on the Bishopstoke scene, for in the June of 1858 he is recorded as having purchased 'The Cottage' (presently Itchen House, Riverside) from Mr Peter Welles for £1,500. His sister Caroline had become aware of the forthcoming sale whilst staying with her father-in-law at the Rectory and accordingly advised her brother of the imminent availability of 'the pretty little cottage'. When Sir Henry arrived he found a little girl swinging on the gate. Her name was Zoe and her mother was the subject of a painting by the artist Swerton which together with some good Italian furniture was included in the sale.

The summer of the first year was spent refurbishing the property, including the stables, of which achievement Sir Henry was particularly proud. He also arranged to divert a stream from the River Itchen which incidentally separated his flower and kitchen gardens, to run through his summerhouse wherein by a system of tanks and trays he developed a hatchery for trout. From this enterprise Frank Buckland successfully stocked the rivers of Tasmania and local property owners with fishing rights quickly recognised the potential of the idea.

In September of that same year Sir Henry was appointed groom-in-waiting to Queen Victoria but he resigned the position in May of 1860 in order to hoist his flag as Rear Admiral on the frigate 'Forte' being appointed commander-in-chief Cape station. Sadly his wife had died at Bishopstoke the previous June and no doubt he hoped this overseas appointment would ease his solitary situation. In that same year whilst on patrol duties in the 'Brisk' his midshipmen, now including Keppel Garnier, third son of Thomas Garnier, he successfully intercepted the Chilian registered slaver 'Manvela' with 846 captives on board. His stay in Cape Town was to be short-lived, however, as he did not see eye-to-eye with the Governor Sir George Grey and he transferred to the Brazilian command.

Promotion to vice-admiral followed in January 1864 and in December 1866 he was selected to serve as commander-in-chief of the China station where he raised his flag on the 'Rodney'. Keppel had not been present when the Taiping Rebellion had come to its end but he effectively led a combined Western Naval force to subdue the many pirates who operated the length of the China coastline. After receiving promotion to admiral on the 3rd July 1869 he returned home to enjoy some well earned leave.

In April of 1870 he was awarded an admiralty good service pension and in May became a G.C.B. (Knight's Grand Cross order of the Bath, Military Division). From November 1872 to 1875 he was commander-in-chief Devonport and on 5th August 1877 Admiral of the Fleet. In the following March he was appointed first and principal naval aide-de-camp to the Queen and by special order-in-council his name was retained on the active list of the Navy. He was noted for his personal charm and exuberant vitality and was on good terms with the Prince of Wales, later to become Edward VII, having received special permission to associate with members of the Royal Family. His local duties since 1865 had included those as County Magistrate for the Winchester Petty Sessions Division. Being a popular character, cartoon portraits had appeared in Vanity Fair in 1876 and 1903 and his bust by Count Gleichen was presented to the United Services Club by the King in 1905.

His death in London in January of 1904 was followed by interment at Winkfield, Berkshire, with a memorial service at the Chapel Royal, St. James. Sir Henry was laid to rest alongside his second wife, Elizabeth Jane West, whom he had married in 1861, she having predeceased him in 1895. Sir Algernon West, his brother-in-law, had been present at the funeral and commented, "*surely neither Westminster Abbey nor St. Paul's ever witnessed a more important ceremonial*".

In 1899, Sir Henry had published his last known work under the title 'A Sailor's Life under Four Sovereigns', this taking three volumes and from these Sir Algernon published extracts in the Times as a personal tribute to the popular admiral. From the second marriage had come two children - Maria Walpole who married Captain (later Vice-Admiral) Frederick Tower-Hamilton, R.N. and Colin Richard who became a Rear Admiral.

Sir Henry obviously retained fond memories of his times at Bishopstoke for he bequeathed the funds to construct the magnificent West Tower of St. Marys Church and a stone tablet above the doorway commemorates the completion as follows:- "*This tower is built to the Glory of God and in memory of Admiral of the Fleet The Hon. Sir Henry Keppel G.C.B. O.M. Churchwarden of the parish 1881-1895, October AD 1909*", with the family coat of arms above. The tower, housing five bells, was built in three stages, having a clock and battlements and architecturally complimentary to the existing church building which was constructed in 1891 in the style of the 14th century.

I now append the promised note concerning Augustus Keppel.

The family, who have a recorded history stretching back to the time of the Knights of Jerusalem in 1101, had originated in Holland and were supporters of William of Orange when he was invited to accept the English throne. Later, as William III, he made Arnold Joust van Keppel, Lord of Vroost - Earl of Albemarle for services rendered, the family seat, Quidenham Hall, being located in Norfolk.

Augustus, a son of the second earl, was born on April 25th 1725 and entered the Royal Navy as a boy. He gained a great deal of seafaring experience whilst accompanying Anson on his circumnavigation of the globe during the years 1740-44. In 1759 he commanded the 'Torbay' against the French at the Battle of Quiberon Bay and by this time had become a noted protégée of Lord Hawke.

In July 1778 France had begun to openly support the American Independent cause against the rule of George III and decided a trial of strength was necessary. Accordingly a French fleet sailed from Brest under the command of Monsieur d'Orvilliers who had raised his flag in the 'Bretagne'. This predatory force then prowled in the western approaches of the English Channel. Lord Sandwich, mindful of the danger, was moved to counter the threat and the now Admiral Keppel was sent to Portsmouth to organise a British response. He was able to secure the use of the 100 gun 'Victory', recently arrived from the Medway and with other such vessels that were available this scratch fleet set off down the channel.

The two lines of battleships eventually met off Ushant with Keppel in pursuit. As the British squadron drew closer d'Orvilliers turned his whole fleet, thus making it difficult for a positive engagement. As they passed in opposite directions the British force concentrated on damaging the guns whereas the French aimed for sails and rigging.

Casualties were relatively light on both sides but the French sailed on with the British unable to effectively give chase. The Battle of Ushant was indecisive at a time when the position in America had become critical and Keppel was requested to explain his lack of all-out victory. Fortunately, his friends rallied round, emphasising the poor condition of his fleet and questioning the level of support given by his second-in-command. The verdict of the court-martial went in favour of Keppel and the guns of the 'Victory' were fired in a bout of enthusiasm which gripped the whole nation. The cost of the bell ringers beer at Portsmouth was a full five shillings.

But for Augustus the slur was sufficient to put an end to his active service and he joined Howe in retirement. In 1782 he became a viscount replacing Sandwich as First Lord of the Admiralty, a fitting end to a career devoted to the Senior Service. He died, aged 61, on the 2nd October 1786. The admiral's popularity is still celebrated by a 200 year old 'watering place' on the Hard at Portsmouth, 'The Keppels Head Hotel' and at least two naval vessels have borne the proud name, the last being an anti-submarine frigate, Type 14, F 85, built 1956 and sadly in 1977, laid up awaiting disposal.

MALCOLM DALE

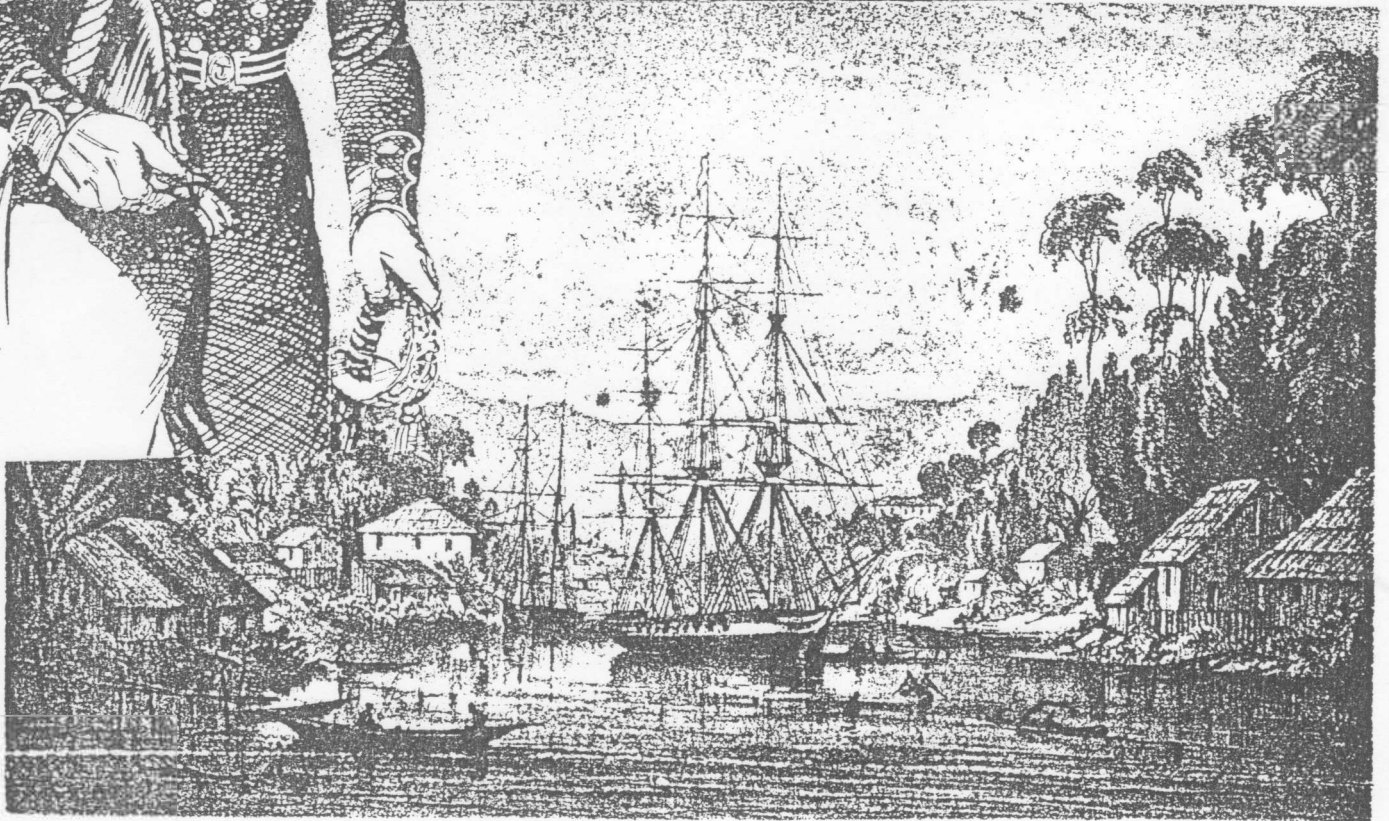
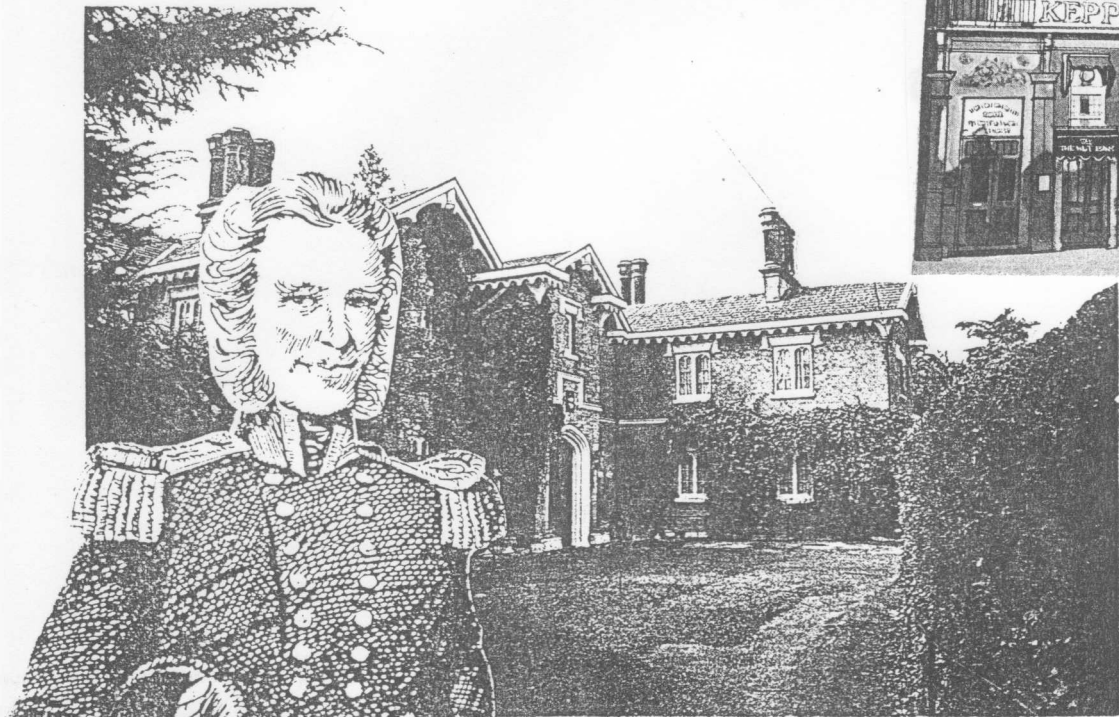
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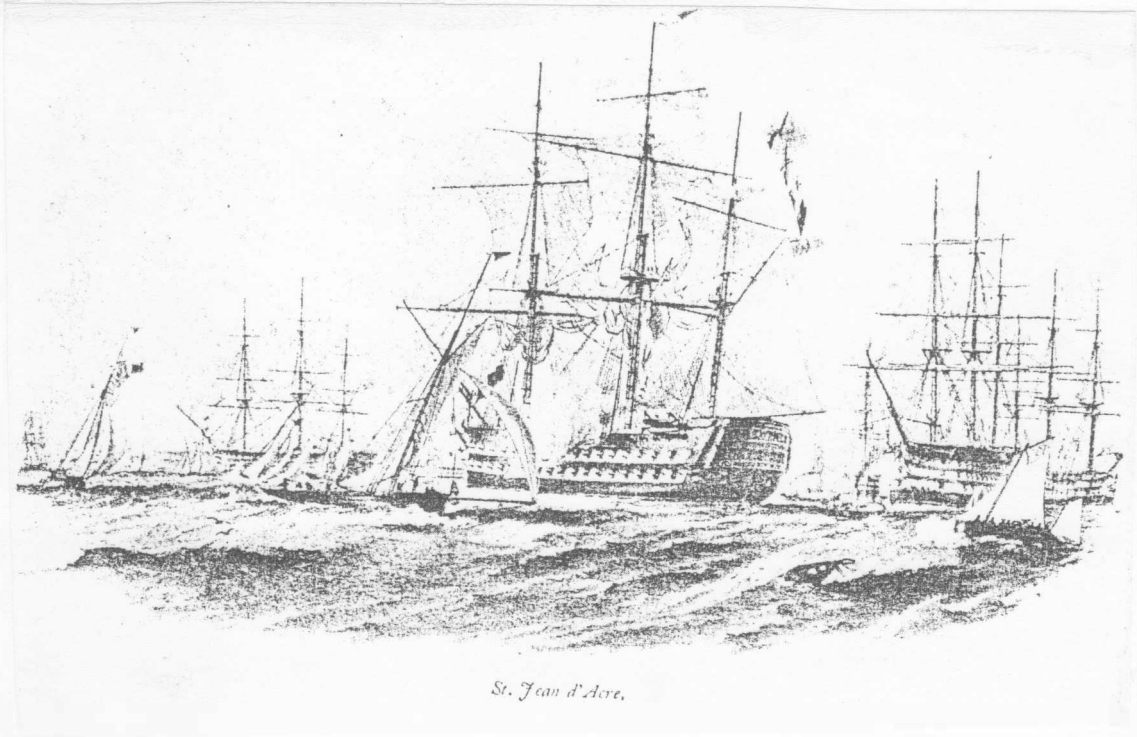
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*St. Jean d'Acre.*

THE GREAT BRITISH FLEET AT ST. JEAN D'ACRE, 1840.