

On the 1st August 1835, the King and Queen [William IV and Adelaide] visited Greenwich for one of the biggest naval celebrations of the 19th century, to celebrate the 37th anniversary of the Battle of the Nile of 1798. It was water-bound as opposed to acted upon *terra firma* at the specific request of the King, and was a magnificent affair, celebrating Nelson for his sheer brilliant slaughter of the French fleet, an admiral quite recently buried in the City's Cathedral twenty nine years previously after his victory at Trafalgar. What was clearly missing from the pageant was Nelson's Nile flagship HMS **Vanguard**, and it is said that John Poole and colleagues saw this as lamentable, and vowed that the centre piece of Nelson's ultimate battle, Trafalgar, HMS **Victory** should be kept and revered for posterity as a national monument. William IV is said to have shown interest knowing at that time that Victory was "safe" and still afloat in Portsmouth, but he was already showing signs of illness and died less than two years later. The new monarch, Queen Victoria from 1837, had other interests on her mind. Moreover, during her long reign of 64 years she was never to witness a major British naval battle let alone a famous win, or, by comparison, a famous admiral. HMS **Vanguard**, after the Nile, had a very active and successful career at sea taking many French men-of-war as prizes. She was decommissioned and then recommissioned for various functions which included further flagship duties, but in the last ten years of her life she was domiciled in Plymouth, first as a prison ship and then as a gunpowder ship, finally being broken up in Devonport in 1821, twenty three years after her fame in Aboukir Bay, Egypt.

It had been mooted from the mid 1820's to the second quarter of the 1830's, that the **Victory** would have one of two possible fates, they being the breaking-up of the vessel or a reduction of the vessel from a first rater to a second rater with just 74 guns; a reduction of 30% or so. Both options met with an angry and determined response by the early supporters of "Save the **Victory**" ably led by John Poole and his champion the media, particularly the Brighton Gazette. As the industrial revolution gathered pace, all things British took on a new meaning, not only to Britons but to the world at large through countries having maritime access who could disperse traded goods throughout their hinterlands and into near neighbour land-locked countries. There was a growing need of even more British warships, but this time not to fight head-on battles as previously, but to protect trade routes over which Britain would become the most important country in the world; a change from 'Rule Britannia' to 'Pax Britannica', a peace-keeper for all who travelled upon the oceans and seas of our planet. Keeping what made us famous, whilst building to maintain that fame, took the imagination of the nation, and from this great Thames Pageant in 1835 onwards, keeping the **VICTORY** was assured. With such new found fervour, Poole's effort were not lengthy nor did his initiative involve raising a cash sum to cement the many promises made in the 1830's: that was to come many years later at the end of the 19th century under the leadership of the Society of Nautical Research. The 1835 saving of the Victory as a 1st rater, did not include a concept of restoring the ship - there was a subtle difference between saving and restoring - and saving at that time was very much subjective without a plan or costing for the intended length of the "saved period."