

VICE ADMIRAL SIR RICHARD GRINDALL KCB 1750-1820

Ref.25



Vice Admiral Sir Richard Grindall, KCB, is buried, together with his wife and two of his sons, in St Nicholas Churchyard in Wickham. His career was distinguished and included involvement in the American War of Independence, the French Revolutionary War

and the Napoleonic Wars in which he fought with Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar.

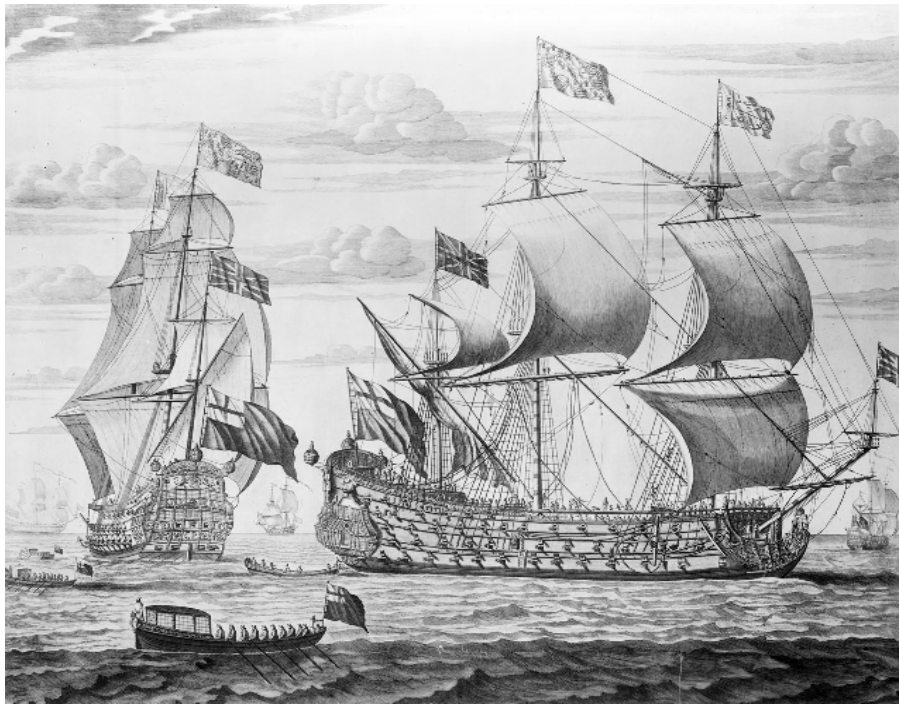
Sir Richard was born in 1750. We pick up his career in the Royal Navy on 7 January 1772 when he joined HMS *Resolution* as an Able Seaman on Captain James Cook's second voyage (1772–75).

Having begun his career on the lower deck, it was not until 1776 that he achieved the rank of Lieutenant. Aged 26, this was almost a decade later than the average age to achieve the post, reflecting the fact that he started his career in a lowly position.

Sir Richard spent most of his career in ships of the line. 1781 saw him serving in HMS *Barfleur* with Samuel Hood in the West Indies. Here, off Martinique, he got his first taste of action.

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In 1783 he was promoted to Post Captain and at the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War he commanded the frigate, HMS *Thalia*. His time in this ship was uneventful. In 1795 he transferred to command HMS *Irresistible* in which ship he engaged the French Brest fleet in the battle of Groix, losing his right arm in the action. Thereafter, he used a combined knife and fork to eat his meals.



From 1795 to 1803, Sir Richard was employed on blockade and convoy tasks. Following the Peace of Amiens, he was given command of the huge battleship, HMS *Prince*. This was an old ship with poor sailing qualities and had a reputation of "sailing like a haystack", confirmed when Sir Richard joined Lord Nelson off Cadiz in 1805 for the Battle of Trafalgar.

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HMS *Prince* was such a poor performer that she was passed by her whole division before coming into contact with the enemy, taking over two hours to cover the three miles necessary for her to join the action.

By the time she arrived the battle was largely over, most of the enemy fleet being in British hands or scattered. She did manage to engage the Spanish flagship *Principe de Asturias* and the already burning *Achille* but was not herself attacked and therefore suffered no damage.

After the fight, Sir Richard launched his boats and rescued hundreds of survivors from the water, including many from the sinking *Achille* and 350 men from the sinking *Santissima Trinidad*.

Too slow to engage effectively in the battle, HMS *Price* was useful in the storms that followed it, saving a number of other undamaged ships which, but for her efforts,



would have been lost in the storms. She was also crucial in the task of re-supplying the battered ships of Nelson's fleet and in the towing of those that needed such assistance.

Sir Richard was made a Rear Admiral and Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath in the general promotion which followed the Trafalgar action. But there were not enough posts available for the promoted officers and Sir Richard never commanded at sea again.

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When Sir Richard Grindall died in 1820, he was buried in St Nicholas Churchyard with two of his sons who pre-deceased him. He was later joined by his wife, Katherine, in 1831. The inscription on the grave is now illegible, but records show it once read as follows:

LH upright:

HERE LIES DEPOSITED THE REMAINS OF MR EDMUND GRINDALL, MIDSHIPMAN RN, YOUNGEST SON OF VICE ADMIRAL GRINDALL AND KATHERINE HIS WIFE, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE 21 SEPTEMBER 1811 AGE 20.

RH upright:

HERE LIES DEPOSITED THE BODY OF LT FESTING HORATIO GRINDALL, RN, 3RD SON OF VICE ADMIRAL GRINDALL AND KATHERINE HIS WIFE, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE 23 MAY 1812 AGE 25

Gravestone:

ALSO THE REMAINS OF SIR RICHARD GRINDALL, ADMIRAL RN, WHO DIED 23 MAY 1820 AGE 69, ALSO KATHERINE HIS WIFE WHO DIED 6 FEBRUARY 1831 AGE 72



To view information regarding Sir Richard's awards for his part in the Battle of Trafalgar, (his Patriotic Fund sword and Gold Medal click **HERE**

To view the Last Will and Testament of Dame Katherine and Sir Richard Grindall click **HERE**

