

WILLIAM HOSTE—1780-1828

[The third of our series of articles on famous Pastonians—Ed.]

William Hoste, who, had his health been better, might have been as famous as Nelson, was born on August 26th, 1780, at Ingoldisthorpe. He was the second son of the Rev. Dixon Hoste, rector of Tittleshall-cum-Godwick.

After some schooling at King's Lynn he entered school here in 1787, with his elder brother Dixon, under the Rev. Joseph Hepworth. He left school on the outbreak of war in 1793 and in April that year went to sea, under Nelson, in the *Agamemnon*. He served under Nelson for five years and Mr. Hoste often received reports from Nelson on his son's progress. He was with Nelson in all his major encounters up to 1798 and the Admiral once wrote: "Your good and brave William's gallantry can never be exceeded."

He was made a Lieutenant in February 1798, and after the Nile action was given command of the *Mutine* brig. He sailed this to join the fleet off Cadiz, calling on the way at Naples, where he was received, and presented with a ring, by the Queen.

He commanded the brig, not without misgiving, until 1802, and news of his promotion to the *Greyhound* frigate completely, he said, restored his health after an illness.

November, 1804, saw him appointed to the *Eurydice* and in September, 1805, he joined the fleet and was promoted by Nelson to the *Amphion*, (a gun-tampion of which, commemorating Nelson's command of it in 1803, is hanging in the Nelson Room).

To his great disappointment he missed the Battle of Trafalgar, having been sent to Algiers on a mission to the Bey.

Throughout the rest of the war he was most successful and, in eighteen months of 1808-9, his ship took or destroyed 218 enemy vessels.

His greatest achievement was in an encounter with the French at Lissa, in 1811. This victory was one of the most brilliant successes of the war, won against heavy odds. It is significant that throughout his whole naval career he aimed to act as became a pupil of Nelson, and his signal at Lissa, as the two squadrons approached each other, was "Remember Nelson."

Two years later he was instrumental in the capture of the town of Cattaro and then of Ragusa.

His strength, however, was never great and he was compelled to return to England invalided. The days of his triumphs were over but his actions gave him a greater naval reputation than that held by any other officer of his age and rank.

In July, 1814, he was made a baronet, and he received the Order of the Bath in 1815. He died of a chest complaint, occasioned by a cold, in London on December 6th, 1828, and was buried in the church of St. John's Wood.

His widow, the Lady Harriet Hoste, published "Memoirs and Letters" of her husband in 1833, and these two volumes may be seen in the library.

Hoste was one of our greatest Pastonians and it was just that the School should have named Hoste House in memory of him.

J.O.C.