



## Century-Old Letter Found on Victory

Taking up planks during repairs on the Middle Gun Deck of Nelson's old flagship Victory, in Portsmouth Dockyard, workmen have discovered a letter written to a Marine named Joseph Hyleard in March 1827 from Netherhampton, near Salisbury.

Although discoloured with age, the missive appears to have survived its century of burial in the great old ship, which was, even at that far distant date, flagship at Portsmouth, quite well and most of it, including the postmark and part of the sealing wax is still decipherable. It reads as follows:

March 8, 1827

Dear Freind,

I have taken the opportunity of writing these few lines to you to beg one favour to know whether you could go to the office to know whether Martha Hagferd's (?) freind do live, and send and let me know as quick as possible. There was a sergeante went through Salisbury with a deserter, but I do not know who he was. He sent me a note to send to his freind to know whether his freinds ever heard the death....

(Here the letter is torn and undecipherable).

The letter is signed "William Holly" with a postscript "Direct to me William Holly, Netherhampton, near Salisbury, Wilts."

It is addressed to Joseph Hyleard, Royal Marines, Portsmouth Barracks.

The penmanship is good but the word "friend" is misspelt throughout. The letter is now in the possession of the Admiral Superintendent.

**Portsmouth Evening News, Wednesday, 20 February 1935**

### OPC Note:-

There are several William Holly's listed in Netherhampton at that time, one in particular was William Holly listed as farmer, who went with his family, free passage to start a new life in Australia in 1840