

ADM36/10882 Muster - the Sprightly 1789-91

Thomas Copplestone; entered ship 21 July 1791. No age or place of birth given, but under 'Whether prest or not and whence' is Fowey. Given 'Lieut's servant'.

He would have been about 14 in 1791, having been baptised 1777. He says he entered the Sprightly in 1789, but there is no mention at this time.

Also on the Sprightly through the whole of this Muster is William Copplestone, Carpenter's Mate in 1789 and Carpenter at 11 Feb 1791. This man was son of John and Elizabeth (Gerrans) of Fowey, born 1758 (his age is given 33 in the Muster). He was brother of Richard Copplestone, miller of Fowey, gt-gt-grandfather of Leonard Copplestone in Shrewsbury.

ADML/5409 Court Martial (Précis)

10 Sept 1810. Mr. Thomas Mitchell Copplestone, Acting Master of the Horatio for Neglect of Duty. Sentence: Dismissed the Service.

On board Hibernia in Portsmouth Harbour, 10 September.

(Gives names of the Court)".... general neglect of duty, but more particularly on or about the morning of the 8th and night of the 9th August and also for presuming to give orders to the men placed for the purpose of looking out during the night contrary to Captain Scott's positive orders; and having heard the evidence, produced in support of the charges and by the Prisoner in his Defence and what he had to allege in support thereof and having maturely and deliberately weighed and considered the whole the Court is of opinion that the Charges have been proved against the said Thomas Mitchell Copplestone and they adjudge him to be dismissed from His Majesty's Service accordingly." (12 signatures)

In the evidence Henry Gibbs, Master's Mate, said TMC was officer of the watch in late July and early August and was 'sitting in the Larboard Topsail Halyard Rail asleep and I was obliged to speak two or three times to him before he awoke.' He said on the morning of 8th August Mr. C. was Officer of the Watch and laying in the Weather Quarter Hammock netting asleep with a flag under his head. Several others questioned and one said TMC told the look out men not to report to him until 7 bells during his watch. (They were supposed to report every $\frac{1}{2}$ hour).

A Midshipman said TMC was laying down nearly all the time, particularly on 8 and 9 August. A seaman said he was sitting, but he wasn't sure whether he was asleep or not.

TMC threw himself on the mercy of the Court and produced testimonials of 20 years' service. In Feb 1807, left behind from the Ariadne he helped save the 'Snipe' and was recommended by Admiral Douglas. Also recommended by Captains Tom of the Gorgon and Jackson of the Superb for his exertions when the Gorgon went ashore at Gottenburg in the winter of 1808. Had the Honor of being in action 14 Feb 1797 off Cape Vincent when Master's Mate. He was strongly recommended to Lord Keith 'of who I received my first appointment as Master in 1801 for my services in Egypt. Acting Master of Zebra (Sir Sidney Smith). Asked leniency and a 'sentence which will ever be a warning to me in the future'.

ADML/4432

Pro C 135

Reigate, Surry at the Grapes Inn

Most Honorable Lords, I most humbly beg leave to inform your Lordships of my being dismissed from His Majesty's Service by a Court Martial from H.M. Ship Horatio as Master on the 9th Sept 1800. I beg leave to inform Lordships I have been in H.M. Service ever since the year 1789. Twenty as an Officer, Eleven of the latter as Master including my acting time, the former as Master's Mate and 3 years as a youngster during which time I have never been six months unemployed but always in Actual Service. I have also had the honor of being recommended to the Honorable Boards by Admirals Russel and Douglas for saving H.M.'s. Brig Snipe and part of the crew when she was on shore on Yarmouth Beach and the Certificate from the Commander is now in the Navy Office also with one from my Captain Farquhar of HMS Ariadne of which I was then Master (Admiral Hollaway) has at different times recommended me as being a Volunteer on every expedition I had an opportunity. Therefore I trust your Lordships will take my services into your considerations and place me once more in my former rank as Master, for believe me, my Lords, my Zeal was and ever will be for the good of His Majesty's Service.

I also beg leave to enclose part of my Certificate the remainder of which was lodged in the Navy Office by my Agents. I have now no support for myself, my wife and Family, but from a few friends. I have been under the Surgeon's Hands ever since I left the Horatio until this last month, I now feel myself able to take charge of any of H.M. Ships the Navy Board may think proper to appoint me if your Lordships will have the goodness to take this humble Petition into your consideration.

I have the honor to be my Lords, Your Lordships' most
Humble and obedient Servant

T.W. Coppelstone
Late Master H.M. Ship Horatio

To the Rt.Hon.
the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty
London

February 13th 1812

Same Ref. Pro C 145 ('Pro' = Promiscuous Letters. 'C' = initial letter of name)

Grapes Inn, Reigate, Surry Feb 17, 1812

Honoured Sir; I hope you will Excuse the liberty I have taken in addressing you this But my Humble Petition which I sent to their Lordships on the 12th instant requesting to be reinstated as Master I committed a great Error in the date of my Court Martial which I hope is the reason their Lordships could not comply with my request. I beg to inform you the charge proved against me was actually done for the good of H.M. Service but proved Contrary to the Captain's Orders. Therefore my good Sir, if you will have the goodness to Intercede with their Lordships in my behalf you will save a wife and two children from the workhouse and myself from ruin as I have been all my life-time in H.M. Service and have now no way whatever to get a living. I can further assure you that all the Different Admirals and Captains I ever had the Honor of being under their command have given me satisfactory recommendations from one to the Other, trusting this will have a little weight with you and if their Lordships cannot reinstate me, if they will be pleased to appoint me Midshipman of a Signal Port or Telegraph it would be an ample satisfaction for my past services with the greatest submission, I have the Honor to

be, Sir, your most Humble and very
Obedt Servant

To J.W. Croker Esq.
Sec of the Admiralty

Thos. Mitchell Coppelstone
Late Master of the Ship Horatio

Comment: He was formerly of the Horatio but was dismissed by Court Martial in 1810 for drunkenness*. His case came under consideration a few days since and all the papers about him here sent to Sir Jos. Yorke and he was then told that his request to be reinstated could not be granted.

*(This is bad - the officer couldn't have read the papers; there was no mention of 'drunkenness' in his Court Martial).

ADM/4444 Pro C 240

15 Duke Street, Adelphi
April 1st 1815

Honor'd Sir,

Having been invalided from the Romulus Hospital Ship at the Island of Bermuda I beg leave respectfully to inclose the Report of Survey and again on my arrival at Haslar Hospital re-surveyed I therefore beg you to be pleased to move their Lordships to place me on the Half pay List. I remain

Honor'd Sir

Your most Obedient Humble Servant

Thos Mitchell Coppelstone

Late Master of His Majesty's Schoop Childers

John Wilson Croker, Esq.
Admiralty Office

Received April 4. 'Usual gra(ant?)' JWC

Stonehouse near Plymouth May 17 1819

Sir,

I this morning received a letter from your office respecting a Tender for supplying the Marine Infirmary with (Fryers?) &c. I beg to inform you it was directed to me by mistake but I have forwarded it to the proper person And I sincerely acknowledge the Intended favour. I also most humbly beg the favour of you to inform me how I may apply for my being restored to the Rank I formerly held as a Master in the Royal Navy from my 1st appointment April 1806. As their Lordships was pleased to reappoint me as a Master in July 1812 after my Court Martial but not with my Rank since that time I have the honor to inform you my services have merited their Lordships' approbation by good Testimonials of my Conduct from my different Captains. I was the whole of the American War on that and the West India Station till as last I was invalided unfit for active service having been nearly 30 years in H.M. Naval Service and allways employed in active ships that I am now allmost worn out and Could I recover my lost time it will be of great service to me in case of being superannuated. I hope you will excuse this liberty as you have befriended me on several other former occasions and I trust you will do me this favour.

I have the honor to be
 Sir your most Obliged and Humble Servant
 T.M. Copplestone

Master R.N.

J.W. Croker Esq.
 Admiralty Office London

Comment: May 20th. What was the sentence of the Court Martial?
 Dismissed the Service, Sir, please see the enclosed papers.
 His request cannot be complied with.

My transcription of the back page of the Memorial photocopy:

July 9.12 Has any formal application been made Impressed the
 Court Martial.

I think the petitioner might be restored to the Service. His crime is not one of very serious import as the punishment he has already had is pretty severe. What has it been usual to do in such cases. He must
 If it is intended to restore him to his rank on the list he must Memorial, but if he is only to be employed again as a Master, directions to the Navy Board will be sufficient.

July 10. I think he ought not to be restored to his rank on the List but he maybe be again employed on a in
 Mr. Copplestone that he will never depart in future from a proper line of conduct and take a hint from his former trial.