

Admiral John Schank

John Schank was born/baptised on the **26th April 1726** in Castlerigg Kinghorn, Fife Scotland (Old Parish Records)

The Schank family were an ancient family who came from the Land of Schank in Midlothian. It was said that one Murdoch Schank discovered and looked after King Alexander 111's body. It was also said that Robert the Bruce who reigned from 1306 - 1329 awarded Murdoch Schank the estate of Castlerigg in Kinghorn in recognition of this service to the throne. Murdoch and his family appear to have taken up residence in Kinghorn in 1319. The genealogy of the Schanks from then until 1884 can be accessed via the link below under **References**.



John Schank Esq. Royal Navy

His Royal Navy career achievements:-

1757 - Joined the Royal Navy as an Able Bodied Seaman

1761 - Rated as a Midshipman

1766 - Passed his Lieutenant's examinations

June 1776 - Promoted to Lieutenant

November 1776 - Mentioned in despatches

April 1780 - Promoted to Commander

August 1783 - Promoted to Post Captain

September 1795 - Promoted to Captain

November 1805 - Promoted to Rear Admiral of the Blue

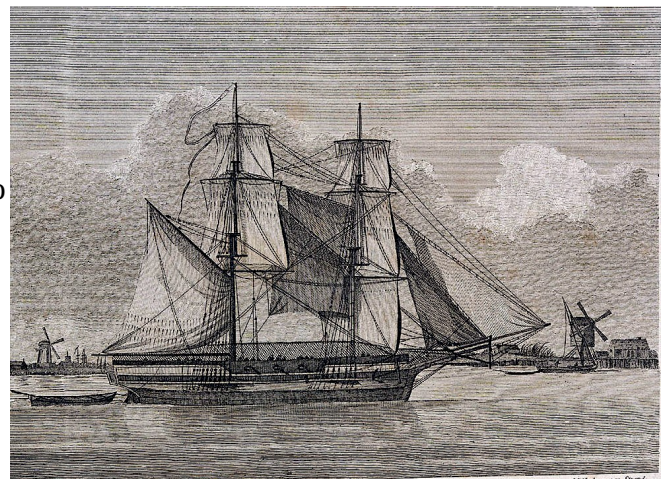
April 1808 - Promoted to Rear Admiral of the White

July 1810 - Promoted to Vice Admiral of the Blue

June 1814 - Promoted to Vice Admiral of the Red

July 1821 - Promoted to Admiral of the Blue

He was renowned for his skills in ship construction and mechanical design. In 1783 he brought before the Admiralty his design for ships with a sliding keel which allowed navigation of shallow waters. His design was tested successfully and incorporated by the Admiralty into several larger vessels, most notably HMS Lady Nelson, which explored parts of Australia. In December 1800 Mount Schank and Cape Schank, Australia were named after him by Lieutenant (later Captain) James Grant.



Lady Nelson on the Thames

John Schank's Naval career was curtailed in 1802 by failing eyesight but he continued to be promoted until his death in 1823

He spent his final years in Barton House, Dawlish, Devon. He died in Barton House on the 6th February 1823 at the age of 83 years (source Church Wall Plaque & Tombstone Epitaph)

Admiral Schank is acknowledged as being a Fellow of the Royal Society. I have searched the past Fellows' archives, of both the London and Edinburgh institutions, but could not find him.

John Schank is buried in the graveyard of St. Gregory's Church, 7 Church Street, Dawlish, Devon EX7 9QT

His burial is marked by an incised limestone tomb. The graveyard location is B71 the grave number is 89 and ID 1047. A link to the grave location map is below under **References**. There is also a wall plaque PP08 in the North Transept of the Church.

His recorded date of birth (1726) would suggest that he was 96 years old at the time of his death in 1823. His epitaph, however, states that he died aged 83 years. This discrepancy remains unresolved and suggests the need for further documentary investigation. See his birth and death records below under **References**.



Admiral John Schank's Tombstone St. Gregory's Churchyard

References:-

Commissioned officers' careers in the Royal Navy, 1690–1815

Dictionary of Canadian Biography - John Schank
http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/schank_john_6E.html
Scotland's People (Old Parish Records)

London Gazette - John Schank's Naval promotions

The Schanks' Family Tree, 1319 - 1884

Kinghorn Old Parish Church birth records & St. Gregory Church Dawlish burial records.