

= HMS Temeraire (1798) =

HMS Temeraire was a 98 @-@ gun second @-@ rate ship of the line of the Royal Navy . Launched in 1798 , she served during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars , mostly on blockades or convoy escort duties . She fought only one fleet action , the Battle of Trafalgar , but became so well known for her actions and her subsequent depictions in art and literature that she has been remembered as " The Fighting Temeraire " .

Built at Chatham Dockyard , Temeraire entered service on the Brest blockade with the Channel Fleet . Missions were tedious and seldom relieved by any action with the French fleet . The first incident of note came when several of her crew , hearing rumours they were to be sent to the West Indies at a time when peace with France seemed imminent , refused to obey orders . This act of mutiny eventually failed and a number of those responsible were tried and executed . Laid up during the Peace of Amiens , Temeraire returned to active service with the resumption of the wars with France , again serving with the Channel Fleet , and joined Horatio Nelson 's blockade of the Franco @-@ Spanish fleet in Cadiz in 1805 . At the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October , the ship went into action immediately astern of Nelson 's flagship , HMS Victory . During the battle Temeraire came to the rescue of the beleaguered Victory , and fought and captured two French ships , winning public renown in Britain .

After undergoing substantial repairs , Temeraire was employed blockading the French fleets and supporting British operations off the Spanish coasts . She went out to the Baltic in 1809 , defending convoys against Danish gunboat attacks , and by 1810 was off the Spanish coast again , helping to defend Cadiz against a French army . Her last action was against the French off Toulon , when she came under fire from shore batteries . The ship returned to Britain in 1813 for repairs , but was laid up . She was converted to a prison ship and moored in the River Tamar until 1819 . Further service brought her to Sheerness as a receiving ship , then a victualling depot , and finally a guard ship . The Admiralty ordered her to be sold in 1838 , and she was towed up the Thames to be broken up .

This final voyage was depicted in a J. M. W. Turner oil painting greeted with critical acclaim , entitled The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last Berth to be broken up , 1838 . The painting continues to be held in high regard and was voted Britain 's favourite painting in 2005 .

= = Construction and commissioning = =

Temeraire was ordered from Chatham Dockyard on 9 December 1790 , to a design developed by Surveyor of the Navy Sir John Henslow . She was one of three ships of the Neptune class , alongside her sisters HMS Neptune and HMS Dreadnought . The keel was laid down at Chatham in July 1793 . Her construction was initially overseen by Master Shipwright Thomas Pollard and completed by his successor Edward Sison . Temeraire was launched on 11 September 1798 and the following day was taken into the graving dock to be fitted for sea . Her hull was fitted with copper sheathing , a process that took two weeks to complete . Refloated , she finished fitting out , and received her masts and yards . Her final costs came to £ 73 @, @ 241 , and included £ 59 @, @ 428 spent on the hull , masts and yards , and a further £ 13 @, @ 813 on rigging and stores .

She was commissioned on 21 March 1799 under Captain Peter Puget , becoming the second ship of the Royal Navy to bear the name Temeraire . Her predecessor had been the 74 @-@ gun third @-@ rate HMS Temeraire , a former French ship taken as a prize at the Battle of Lagos on 19 August 1759 by a fleet under Admiral Edward Boscawen . Puget was only in command until 26 July 1799 , during which time he oversaw the process of fitting the new Temeraire for sea . He was superseded by Captain Thomas Eyles on 27 July 1799 , while the vessel was anchored off St Helens , Isle of Wight .

= = With the Channel Fleet = =

Under Eyles 's command Temeraire finally put to sea at the end of July , flying the flag of Rear Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren , and joined the Channel Fleet under the overall command of

Admiral Lord Bridport . The Channel Fleet was at that time principally engaged in the blockade of the French port of Brest , and Temeraire spent several long cruises of two or three months at a time patrolling the area . Eyles was superseded during this period by Temeraire 's former commander , Captain Puget , who resumed command on 14 October 1799 , and the following month Temeraire became the flagship of Rear Admiral James Whitshed .

Lord Bridport had been replaced as commander of the Channel Fleet by Admiral Lord St Vincent in mid @-@ 1799 , and the long blockade cruises were sustained throughout the winter and into the following year . On 20 April 1800 Puget was superseded as commander by Captain Edward Marsh . Marsh commanded Temeraire through the remainder of that year and for the first half of 1801 , until his replacement , Captain Thomas Eyles , arrived to resume command on 31 August . Rear Admiral Whitshed had also struck his flag by now , and Temeraire became the flagship of Rear Admiral George Campbell . By this time the Second Coalition against France had collapsed , and negotiations for peace were underway at Amiens . Lord St Vincent had been promoted to First Lord of the Admiralty , and command of the Channel Fleet passed to Admiral Sir William Cornwallis . With the end of the war imminent , Temeraire was taken off blockade duty and sent to Bantry Bay to await the arrival of a convoy , which she would then escort to the West Indies . Many of the crew had been serving continuously in the navy since the start of the French Revolutionary Wars in 1793 , and had looked forward to returning to England now that peace seemed imminent . On hearing rumours that instead they were to be sent to the West Indies , around a dozen men began to agitate for the rest of the crew to refuse orders to sail for anywhere but England .

= = Mutiny = =

The first open clash between the mutineers and officers came on the morning of 3 December , when a small group of sailors gathered on the forecastle and , refusing orders to leave , began to argue with the officers . Captain Eyles asked to know their demands , which were an assurance that Temeraire would not go to the West Indies , but instead would return to England . Eventually Rear Admiral Campbell came down to speak to the men , and having informed them that the officers did not know the destination of the ship , he ordered them to disperse . The men went below decks and the incipient mutiny appeared to have been quashed . The ringleaders , numbering around a dozen , remained determined however , and made discreet inquiries among the rest of the crew . Having eventually determined that the majority of the crew would , if not actually support a mutiny , at least not oppose it , and that the Temeraire 's crew would be supported by the ship 's marines as well as the crews of some of the other warships in Bantry Bay , they decided to press ahead with their plans . The mutiny began with the crew closing the ship 's gunports , effectively barricading themselves below deck . Having done so , they refused orders to open them again , jeered the officers and threatened violence . The crew then came up on deck and once again demanded to know their destination and refused to obey orders to sail for anywhere but England . Having presented their demands they returned below decks and resumed the usual shipboard routine as much as they could .

Alarmed by the actions of the Temeraire 's crew , Campbell met with Vice @-@ Admiral Sir Andrew Mitchell the following day and informed him of the mutineers ' demands . Mitchell reported the news to the Admiralty while Campbell returned to Temeraire and summoned the crew on deck once more . He urged them to return to duty , and then dismissed them . Meanwhile , discipline had begun to break down among the mutineers . Several of the crew became drunk , and some of the officers were struck by rowdy seamen . When one of the marines who supported the mutiny was placed in irons for drunken behaviour and insolence , a crowd formed on deck and tried to free him . The officers resisted these attempts and as sailors began to push and threaten them , Campbell gave the order for the marines to arrest those he identified as the ringleaders . The marines hesitated , but then obeyed the order , driving the unruly seamen back and arresting a number of them , who were immediately placed in irons . Campbell ordered the remaining crew to abandon any mutinous actions , and deprived of its leaders , the mutiny collapsed , though the officers were on their guard for several days afterwards and the marines were ordered to carry out continuous patrols .

News of the mutiny created a sensation in England , and the Admiralty ordered Temeraire to sail immediately for Spithead while an investigation was carried out . Vice @-@ Admiral Mitchell was granted extraordinary powers regarding the death sentence and Temeraire 's marine complement was hastily augmented for the voyage to England . On the ship 's arrival , the 14 imprisoned ringleaders were swiftly court @-@ martialled in Portsmouth aboard HMS Gladiator , some on 6 January 1802 and the rest on 14 January . After deliberations , twelve were sentenced to be hanged , and the remaining two were to receive two hundred lashes each . Four men were duly hanged aboard Temeraire , and the remainder were hanged aboard several of the ships anchored at Portsmouth , including HMS Majestic , HMS Formidable , HMS Achille and HMS Centaur .

= = West Indies and the peace = =

After the executions , Temeraire was immediately sent to sea , sailing from Portsmouth for the Isle of Wight the day after and beginning preparations for her delayed voyage to the West Indies . She sailed for Barbados , arriving there on 24 February , and remained in the West Indies until the summer . During her time there the Treaty of Amiens was finally signed and ratified , and Temeraire was ordered back to Britain . She arrived at Plymouth on 28 September and Eyles paid her off on 5 October . Because of the drawdown in the size of the active navy as a result of the peace , Temeraire was laid up in the Hamoaze for the next eighteen months .

= = Return to service = =

The peace of Amiens was a brief interlude in the wars with Revolutionary France , and in 1803 the War of the Third Coalition began . Temeraire had deteriorated substantially during her long period spent laid up , and she was taken into dry dock on 22 May to repair and refit , starting with the replacement of her copper sheathing . Work was delayed when a heavy storm hit Plymouth in January 1804 , causing appreciable damage to Temeraire , but was finally completed by February 1804 , at a cost of £ 16 @, @ 898 . Command was assigned to Captain Eliab Harvey , and he arrived to take up his commission on 1 January 1804 . On putting to sea he sailed to join the Channel Fleet , still under the overall command of Admiral Cornwallis .

Temeraire now resumed her previous duties blockading the French at Brest . Heavy weather took its toll , forcing her to put into Torbay for extensive repairs after her long patrols , repairs which eventually amounted to £ 9 @, @ 143 . During this time Harvey was often absent from his command , usually attending to his duties as Member of Parliament for Essex . He was temporarily replaced by Captain William Kelly on 27 August 1804 , and he in turn was succeeded by Captain George Fawke on 6 April 1805 . Harvey returned to his ship on 9 July 1805 , and it was while he was in command that the reinforced Rochefort squadron under Vice @-@ Admiral Sir Robert Calder intercepted and attacked a Franco @-@ Spanish fleet at the Battle of Cape Finisterre . The French commander , Pierre @-@ Charles Villeneuve , was thwarted in his attempt to join the French forces at Brest , and instead sailed south to Ferrol , and then to Cadiz . When news of the Franco @-@ Spanish fleet 's location reached the Admiralty , they appointed Vice @-@ Admiral Horatio Nelson to take command of the blockading force at Cadiz , which at the time was being commanded by Vice @-@ Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood . Nelson was told to pick whichever ships he liked to serve under him , and one of those he specifically chose was Temeraire .

= = Battle of Trafalgar = =

Temeraire duly received orders to join the Cadiz blockade , and having sailed to rendezvous with Collingwood , Harvey awaited Nelson 's arrival . Nelson 's flagship , the 100 @-@ gun HMS Victory , arrived off Cadiz on 28 September , and he took over command of the fleet from Collingwood . He spent the next few weeks forming his plan of attack in preparation for the expected sortie of the Franco @-@ Spanish fleet , issuing it to his captains on 9 October in the form of a memorandum . The memorandum called for two divisions of ships to attack at right angles to the enemy line ,

severing its van from the centre and rear . A third advance squadron would be deployed as a reserve , with the ability to join one of the lines as the course of the battle dictated . Nelson placed the largest and most powerful ships at the heads of the lines , with Temeraire assigned to lead Nelson 's own column into battle . The fleet patrolled a considerable distance from the Spanish coast to lure the combined fleet out , and the ships took the opportunity to exercise and prepare for the coming battle . For Temeraire this probably involved painting her sides in the Nelson Chequer design , to enable the British ships to tell friend from foe in the confusion of battle .

The combined fleet put to sea on 19 October 1805 , and by 21 October was in sight of the British ships . Nelson formed up his lines and the British began to converge on the distant Franco @-@ Spanish fleet . Contrary to his original instructions , Nelson took the lead of the weather column in Victory . Concerned for the commander @-@ in @-@ chief 's safety in such an exposed position , Henry Blackwood , a long @-@ standing friend of Nelson and commander of the frigate HMS Euryalus that day , suggested that Nelson come aboard his ship to better observe and direct the battle . Nelson refused , so Blackwood instead tried to convince him to let Harvey come past him in the Temeraire , and so lead the column into battle . Nelson agreed to this , and signalled for Harvey to come past him . As Temeraire drew up towards Victory , Nelson decided that if he was standing aside to let another ship lead his line , so too should Collingwood , commanding the lee column of ships . He signalled Collingwood , aboard his flagship HMS Royal Sovereign , to let another ship come ahead of him , but Collingwood continued to surge ahead . Reconsidering his plan , Nelson is reported to have hailed the Temeraire , as she came up alongside Victory , with the words " I 'll thank you , Captain Harvey , to keep in your proper station , which is astern of the Victory " . Nelson 's instruction was followed up by a formal signal and Harvey dropped back reluctantly , but otherwise kept within one ship 's length of Victory as she sailed up to the Franco @-@ Spanish line .

Closely following Victory as she passed through the Franco @-@ Spanish line across the bows of the French flagship Bucentaure , Harvey was forced to sheer away quickly , just missing Victory 's stern . Turning to starboard , Harvey made for the 140 @-@ gun Spanish ship Santísima Trinidad and engaged her for twenty minutes , taking raking fire from two French ships , the 80 @-@ gun Neptune and the 74 @-@ gun Redoutable , as she did so . Redoutable 's broadside carried away Temeraire 's mizzen topmast , and while avoiding a broadside from Neptune , Temeraire narrowly avoided a collision with Redoutable . Another broadside from Neptune brought down Temeraire 's fore @-@ yard and main topmast , and damaged her fore mast and bowsprit . Harvey now became aware that the Redoutable had come up alongside the Victory and swept her decks with musket fire and grenades . A large party of Frenchmen now gathered on her decks ready to board the Victory . Temeraire was brought around ; appearing suddenly out of the smoke of the battle and slipping across Redoutable 's stern , Temeraire discharged a double @-@ shotted broadside into her . Jean Jacques Étienne Lucas , captain of the Redoutable , recorded that " ... the three @-@ decker [Temeraire] ? who had doubtless perceived that the Victory had ceased fire and would inevitably be taken ? ran foul of the Redoutable to starboard and overwhelmed us with the point @-@ blank fire of all her guns . It would be impossible to describe the horrible carnage produced by the murderous broadside of this ship . More than two hundred of our brave lads were killed or wounded by it . "

= = = Temeraire and Redoutable = = =

Temeraire then rammed into the Redoutable , dismounting many of the French ship 's guns , and worked her way alongside , after which her crew lashed the two ships together . Temeraire now poured continuous broadsides into the French ship , taking fire as she did so from the 112 @-@ gun Spanish ship Santa Ana lying off her stern , and from the 74 @-@ gun French ship Fougueux , which came up on Temeraire 's un @-@ engaged starboard side . Harvey ordered his gun crews to hold fire until Fougueux came within point blank range . Temeraire 's first broadside against Fougueux at a range of 100 yards caused considerable damage to the Frenchman 's rigging , and she drifted into Temeraire , whose crew promptly lashed her to the side . Temeraire was now lying between two French 74 @-@ gun ships . As Harvey later recalled in a letter to his wife " Perhaps never was a ship so circumstanced as mine , to have for more than three hours two of the enemy 's

line of battle ships lashed to her . " Redoutable , sandwiched between Victory and Temeraire , suffered heavy casualties , reported by Captain Lucas as amounting to 300 dead and 222 wounded . During the fight grenades thrown from the decks and topmasts of Redoutable killed and wounded a number of Temeraire 's crew and set her starboard rigging and foresail on fire . There was a brief pause in the fighting while both sides worked to douse the flames . Temeraire narrowly escaped destruction when a grenade thrown from Redoutable exploded on her maindeck , nearly igniting the after @-@ magazine . Master @-@ At @-@ Arms John Toohig prevented the fire from spreading and saved not only Temeraire , but the surrounding ships , which would have been caught in the explosion .

After twenty minutes fighting both Victory and Temeraire , the Redoutable had been reduced to a floating wreck . Temeraire had also suffered heavily , damaged when Redoutable 's main mast fell onto her poop deck , and having had her own topmasts shot away . Informed that his ship was in danger of sinking , Lucas finally called for quarter to the Temeraire . Harvey sent a party across under the second lieutenant , John Wallace , to take charge of the ship .

= = = Temeraire and Fougueux = = =

Lashed together , Temeraire and Fougueux exchanged fire , Temeraire initially clearing the French ship 's upper deck with small arms fire . The French rallied , but the greater height of the three @-@ decked Temeraire compared to the two @-@ decked Fougueux thwarted their attempts to board . Instead Harvey dispatched his own boarding party , led by First @-@ Lieutenant Thomas Fortescue Kennedy , which entered Fougueux via her main deck ports and chains . The French tried to defend the decks port by port , but were steadily overwhelmed . Fougueux 's captain , Louis Alexis Baudoin , had suffered a fatal wound earlier in the fighting , leaving Commander Francois Bazin in charge . When he learned that nearly all of the officers were dead or wounded and that most of the guns were out of action , Bazin surrendered the ship to the boarders .

Temeraire had by now fought both French ships to a standstill , at considerable cost to herself . She had sustained casualties of 47 killed and 76 wounded . All her sails and yards had been destroyed , only her lower masts remained , and the rudder head and starboard cathead had been shot away . Eight feet of her starboard hull was staved in and both quarter galleries had been destroyed . Harvey signalled for a frigate to tow his damaged ship out of the line , and HMS Sirius came up to assist . Before Sirius could make contact , Temeraire came under fire from a counter @-@ attack by the as @-@ yet unengaged van of the combined fleet , led by Rear Admiral Pierre Dumanoir le Pelley . Harvey ordered that the few guns that could be brought to bear be fired in response , and the attack was eventually beaten off by fresh British ships arriving on the scene .

= = Storm = =

Shortly after the battle had ended , a severe gale struck the area . Several of the captured French and Spanish ships foundered in the rising seas , including both of Temeraire 's prizes , the Fougueux and the Redoutable . Lost in the wrecks were a considerable number of their crews , as well as 47 Temeraire crewmen , serving as prize crews . Temeraire rode out the storm following the battle , sometimes being taken in tow by less damaged ships , sometimes riding at anchor . She took aboard a number of Spanish and French prisoners transferred from other prizes , including some transferred from the Euryalus , which was serving as the temporary flagship of Cuthbert Collingwood . Harvey took the opportunity to go aboard the Euryalus and present his account of the battle to Collingwood , and so became the only captain to do so before Collingwood wrote his dispatch about the victory .

= = = Return to England = = =

Temeraire finally put into Gibraltar on 2 November , eleven days after the battle had been fought . After undergoing minor repairs she sailed for England , arriving at Portsmouth on 1 December ,

three days before Victory passed by carrying Nelson 's body . The battle @-@ damaged ships quickly became tourist attractions , and visitors flocked to tour them . Temeraire was particularly popular on her arrival , being the only ship singled out by name in Collingwood 's dispatch for her heroic conduct . Collingwood wrote

A circumstance occurred during the action which so strongly marks the invincible spirit of British seamen , when engaging the enemies of their country , that I cannot resist the pleasure I have in making it known to their Lordships ; the Temeraire was boarded by accident ; or design , by a French ship on one side , and a Spaniard on the other ; the contest was vigorous , but , in the end the combined ensigns were torn from the poop and the British hoisted in their places .

Collingwood 's account , probably based largely on Harvey 's report in the immediate aftermath of the battle , contained several errors . Temeraire had closely engaged two French ships , rather than a French and a Spanish ship , and had not been boarded by either during the action . Nevertheless , the account was popular and a print was rushed out purporting to show Harvey taking the lead in clearing Temeraire 's decks of enemy seamen .

A number of artists visited the newly returned Trafalgar ships , including John Livesay , drawing master at the Royal Naval Academy . Livesay produced several sketches of battle @-@ damaged ships , sending them to Nicholas Pocock to be used for Pocock 's large paintings of the battle . Temeraire was one of the ships he sketched . Another visitor to Portsmouth was J. M. W. Turner . It is not known whether he visited Temeraire , though he did go aboard Victory , making preparatory notes and sketches and interviewing sailors who had been in the battle . The story of the Temeraire had become firmly ingrained in the public mind , so much so that when the House of Commons passed a vote of thanks to the men who had fought at Trafalgar , only three were specifically named . Nelson , Collingwood , and Harvey of the Temeraire .

= = Mediterranean and Baltic service = =

The battle @-@ damaged Temeraire was almost immediately dry @-@ docked in Portsmouth to undergo substantial repairs , which eventually lasted sixteen months and cost £ 25 @, @ 352 . She finally left the dockyard in mid @-@ 1807 , now under the command of Captain Sir Charles Hamilton . Having fitted her for sea , Hamilton sailed to the Mediterranean in September and joined the fleet blockading the French in Toulon . The service was largely uneventful , and Temeraire returned to Britain in April 1808 to undergo repairs at Plymouth . During her time in Britain the strategic situation in Europe changed as Spain rebelled against French domination and entered the war against France . Temeraire sailed in June to join naval forces operating off the Spanish coast in support of anti @-@ French forces in the Peninsular War .

This service continued until early 1809 , when she returned to Britain . By now Britain was heavily involved in the Baltic , protecting mercantile interests . An expedition under Sir James Gambier in July 1807 had captured most of the Danish Navy at the Battle of Copenhagen , in response to fears that it might fall into Napoleon 's hands , but precipitating war with the Danes . Captain Hamilton left the ship , and was superseded by Captain Edward Sneyd Clay . Temeraire now became the flagship of Rear Admiral Sir Manley Dixon , with orders to go to the Baltic to reinforce the fleet stationed there under Sir James Saumarez . Temeraire arrived in May 1809 and was sent to blockade Karlskrona on the Swedish coast .

While on patrol with the 64 @-@ gun HMS Ardent and the frigate HMS Melpomene , Temeraire became involved in one of the heaviest Danish gunboat attacks of the war . A party of men from Ardent had been landed on the island of Romsø , but were taken by surprise in a Danish night attack , which saw most of the Ardent men captured . The Melpomene was sent under a flag of truce to negotiate for their release , but on returning from this mission , was becalmed . A flotilla of thirty Danish gunboats then launched an attack , taking advantage of the stranded Melpomene 's inability to bring her broadside to bear on them . Melpomene signalled for help to the Temeraire , which immediately dispatched boats to her assistance . They engaged and then drove off the Danish ships , and then helped the Melpomene to safety . She had been heavily damaged and suffered casualties of five killed and twenty @-@ nine wounded . Temeraire 's later Baltic service

involved being dispatched to observe the Russian fleet at Reval , during which time she made a survey of the island of Nargen . After important blockading and convoy escort work , Temeraire was ordered back to Britain as winter arrived , and she arrived in Plymouth in November 1809 .

= = Iberian service = =

After a period under repair in Plymouth , Temeraire was recommissioned under the command of Captain Edwin H. Chamberlayne in late January 1810 . The Peninsular War had reached a critical stage , with the Spanish government besieged in Cadiz by the French . Temeraire , now the flagship of Rear Admiral Francis Pickmore , was ordered to reinforce the city 's water defences , and provided men from her sailor and marine complement to crew batteries and gunboats . Men from Temeraire were heavily involved in the fighting until July 1810 , when Pickmore was ordered to sail to the Mediterranean and take up a new position as port admiral at Mahón . Temeraire was thereafter based either at Mahón or off Toulon with the blockading British fleet under Admiral Sir Edward Pellew . Chamberlayne was replaced by Captain Joseph Spear in March 1811 , and for the most part the blockade was uneventful . Though possessing a powerful fleet , the French commander avoided any contact with the blockading force and stayed in port , or else made very short voyages , returning to the harbour when the British appeared .

Temeraire 's one brush with the French during this period came on 13 August 1811 . Having received orders to sail to Minorca , Spear attempted to tack out of Hyères Bay . As he tried to do so , the wind fell away , leaving Temeraire becalmed and caught in a current which caused her to drift towards land . She came under fire from a shore battery on Pointe des Medes , which wounded several of her crew . Her boats were quickly manned , and together with boats sent from the squadron , Temeraire was towed out of range of the French guns . She then sailed to Minorca and underwent repairs . During this period an epidemic of yellow fever broke out , infecting nearly the entire crew and killing around a hundred crewmen . Pellew ordered her back to Britain , and health gradually improved as she sailed through the Atlantic .

= = Retirement = =

Temeraire arrived in Plymouth on 9 February 1812 and was docked for a survey several weeks later . The survey reported that she was " A well built and strong ship but apparently much decay 'd " . Spear was superseded on 4 March by Captain Samuel Hood Linzee , but Linzee 's command was short @-@ lived . Temeraire left the dock on 13 March and was paid off one week later . Advances in naval technology had developed more powerful and strongly built warships , and though still comparatively new , Temeraire was no longer considered desirable for front @-@ line service . While laid up the decision was taken to convert her into a prison ship to alleviate overcrowding caused by large influxes of French prisoners from the Peninsular War campaigns . Conversion work was carried out at Plymouth between November and December 1813 , after which she was laid up in the River Tamar as a prison hulk . From 1814 she was under the nominal command of Lieutenant John Wharton . Despite being laid up and disarmed Temeraire and the rest of her class were nominally re @-@ rated as 104 @-@ gun first rates in February 1817 .

Temeraire 's service as a prison ship lasted until 1819 , at which point she was selected for conversion to a receiving ship . She was extensively refitted at Plymouth between September 1819 and June 1820 at a cost of £ 27 @,@ 733 , and then sailed to Sheerness Dockyard . As a receiving ship she served as a temporary berth for new naval recruits until they received a posting to a ship . She fulfilled this role for eight years , until becoming a victualling depot in 1829 . Her final role was as a guard ship at Sheerness , under the title " Guardship of the Ordinary and Captain @-@ Superintendent 's ship of the Fleet Reserve in the Medway " . This final post as flagship of the Medway Reserve involved her being repainted and rearmed , and she was used to train boys belonging to The Marine Society . For the last two years of her service , from 1836 to 1838 she was under the nominal command of Captain Thomas Fortescue Kennedy , in his post as Captain @-@ Superintendent of Sheerness . Kennedy had been Temeraire 's first @-@ lieutenant at Trafalgar .

= = Sale and disposal = =

Kennedy received orders from the Admiralty in June 1838 to have Temeraire valued in preparation for her sale out of the service . She fired her guns for the last time on 28 June in celebration of the Coronation of Queen Victoria , and work began on dismantling her on 4 July . Kennedy delegated this task to Captain Sir John Hill , commander of HMS Ocean . Her masts , stores and guns were all removed and her crew paid off , before Temeraire was put up for sale with twelve other ships . She was sold by Dutch auction on 16 August 1838 to John Beatson , a shipbreaker based at Rotherhithe for £ 5 @, @ 530 . Beatson was then faced with the task of transporting the ship 55 miles from Sheerness to Rotherhithe , the largest ship to have attempted this voyage . To accomplish this he hired two steam tugs from the Thames Steam Towing Company and employed a Rotherhithe pilot named William Scott and twenty five men to sail her up the Thames , at a cost of £ 58 .

= = Last voyage = =

The tugs took the hulk of the Temeraire in tow at 7 : 30 am on 5 September , taking advantage of the beginning of the slack water . They had reached Greenhithe by 1 : 30 pm at the ebb of the tide , where they anchored overnight . They resumed the journey at 8 : 30 am the following day , passing Woolwich and then Greenwich at noon . They reached Limehouse Reach shortly afterwards and brought her safely to Beatson 's Wharf at 2 pm . The Temeraire was hauled up onto the mud , where she lay as she was slowly broken up . The final voyage was announced in a number of papers , and thousands of spectators came to see her towed up the Thames or laid up at Beatson 's yard . The shipbreakers undertook a thorough dismantling , removing all the copper sheathing , rudder pintles and gudgeons , copper bolts , nails and other fastenings to be sold back to the Admiralty . The timber was mostly sold to house builders and shipyard owners , though some was retained for working into specialist commemorative furniture .

= = Legacy = =

The immediate legacy of the Temeraire was the use of the timber taken from her as she was broken up . A gong stand made from Temeraire timber was a wedding present to the future King George V on the occasion of his marriage to Mary of Teck , and is held at Balmoral Castle . A barometer , gavel , and some miscellaneous timber are in the collections of the National Maritime Museum , and chairs made from Temeraire oak are in the possession of the Royal Naval Museum , Portsmouth , Lloyd 's Register , London and the Whanganui Regional Museum , Whanganui . An altar , communion rail and two bishop 's chairs survive in St. Mary 's Church , Rotherhithe . A ship model of the Temeraire made by prisoners of war uses a stand made from wood taken from her , and is currently in the Watermen 's Hall in London . Other relics of the Temeraire known to exist or have existed are a tea caddy made for her signal midshipman at Trafalgar , James Eaton , and sold at auction in 2000 , the frame for an oil painting by Sir Edwin Landseer titled Neptune , and a mantelpiece made for Beatson 's office , supported by figures of Atlas supposedly taken from Temeraire 's stern gallery . The mantelpiece can no longer be traced , nor can a plaque once fixed to Temeraire 's deck commemorating Nelson 's signal at Trafalgar , nor a wooden leg made for a Trafalgar veteran from Temeraire 's wood . John Ruskin foreshadowed the fate of the Temeraire 's wood in an essay which claimed that " Perhaps , where the low gate opens to some cottage garden , the tired traveller may ask , idly , why the moss grows so green on its rugged wood , and even the sailor 's child may not answer nor know that the night dew lies deep in the war rents of the wood of the old Temeraire . "

= = = Art = = =

Temeraire features in a number of paintings and prints , the earliest commemorating her role in the

battle of Trafalgar . She can be seen at least partially in paintings of the battle by Clarkson Frederick Stanfield , John Christian Schetky , Nicholas Pocock , Thomas Buttersworth and Thomas Whitcombe . A fictionalised depiction of her launch was produced by Philip Burgoyne . Later representations of the retired Temeraire were also popular . Though no known contemporary image of her in the prison ship role exists , she was painted while a guardship on the Medway in 1833 by Edward William Cooke , and by William Beatson and J. J. Williams while laid up at Rotherhithe in 1838 . More recently she has been the subject of paintings by Geoff Hunt . The most famous painting of Temeraire was made by J. M. W. Turner and titled The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last Berth to be broken up , 1838 . Turner depicts the Temeraire on her last voyage , towed up the Thames by a small black steam tug as the sun sets (or dawns) . In choosing his title Turner created an enduring appellation , as previously she had been known to her crew as the " saucy " Temeraire . Turner presented it for exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1839 with an accompanying excerpt , slightly altered , of Thomas Campbell 's poem Ye Mariners of England .

The flag which braved the battle and the breeze ,
no longer owns her .

Turner 's painting achieved widespread critical acclaim , and accolades from the likes of John Ruskin and William Makepeace Thackeray . It was Turner 's particular favourite ; he only lent it once and refused to ever do so again . He also refused to sell it at any price , and on his death bequeathed it to the nation . It hangs today in the National Gallery , and in 2005 it was voted the nation 's favourite painting in a poll organized by BBC Radio 4 's Today programme .

= = = Poetry and songs = = =

The Temeraire became the subject of a number of poems and songs commemorating her life and fate . An early work by James Duff written between 1813 and 1819 referenced her role as a prison ship , and was set to music in 1857 under the title The Brave Old Temeraire . More generally , an anonymous poem entitled The Wooden Walls of Old England appeared in Fraser 's Magazine shortly after Temeraire 's arrival at Rotherhithe , and lamented the fate of the great sailing warships . Turner 's painting created an enduring interest in the story of the Temeraire and several poems appeared in the decades following her breaking up . Gerald Massey wrote The Fighting Temeraire Tugged to Her Last Berth , Herman Melville produced The Temeraire , and Henry Newbolt wrote The Fighting Temeraire , with its closing lines

Now the sunset 's breezes shiver ,
And she 's fading down the river ,
But in England 's song forever ,
She 's the Fighting Temeraire .