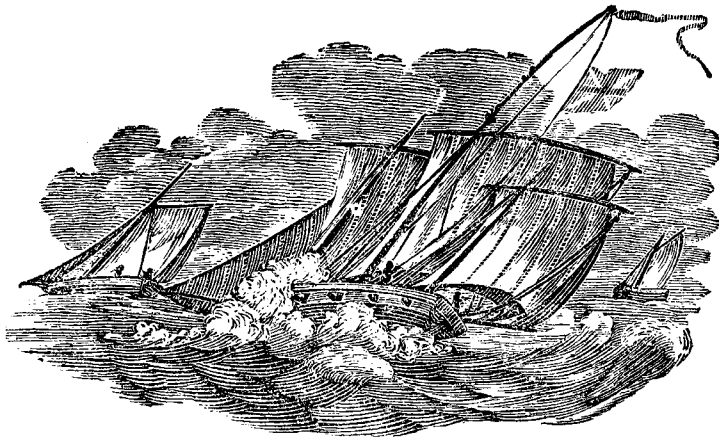


Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01845-6 - The Naval Chronicle, Volume 6

Edited by James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur

Excerpt

[More information](#)

*BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS OF*  
**SIR JOHN LOCKHART ROSS, BART.**  
*VICE-ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE.*

Methought he bore him in the thickest troop,  
 As doth a Lion in a herd of Neat;  
 Or as a Bear encompass'd round with Dogs,  
 Who having pinch'd a few, and made them cry,  
 The rest stand all aloof and bark at him.      SHAKESPEARE,

In waves and bloody wars doth honour dwell;  
 And will be found, with peril and with pain:  
 Nor can the man that molds in idle cell,  
 Unto her happy mansion attain.  
 Before her gate high God did sweat ordain,  
 And wakeful watches ever to abide.      SPENSER.

**I**T was a memorable part of Egyptian wisdom, never to determine on the characters of men, exclusively of the Tomb. While life remains, the fallibility of our nature baffles the final decision of truth; the vices of to-day may be lost in the virtues of to-morrow; and a long series of honourable years has, sometimes, been known to terminate in crime and dishonour. The Biographer of living characters has a difficult and indecisive task to perform; though his labours have their use, they are, at best, inadequate; his materials are imperfect; he sees only in part, and he is conscious also, that the history which he gives, may be examined by the eye of him who is the object of it:

Vol. VI.

B

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01845-6 - The Naval Chronicle, Volume 6

Edited by James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur

Excerpt

[More information](#)

while the Biographer of the dead has the whole of his subject before him; the qualities and actions of the distinguished person, on whose life he is to give the award of praise or of condemnation, are already placed in the balance, and he has only to observe which of them kicks the beam, and to determine from the event. That decision, when pronounced in favour of departed merit, pays, it is true, the tribute of sensibility to virtues that are no more; and is accompanied with the painful regret, that they no longer display their exemplary and cheering lustre; that they are sunk into the gloomy grave. It is, indeed, with that sensibility and regret which we reflect on the pre-eminent character now before us; while we look for consolation in the justice with which these pages will record it.

Sir Jolin Lockhart Ross was the fifth son of Sir James Lockhart of Carstairs, and was born on the eleventh of November 1721, at Lockhart Hall in the County of Lanark. His five brothers were William, James, George, Charles, and Thomas. Having manifested a predominant inclination for the sea-service, he was recommended, in his fourteenth year, by Lord Archibald Hamilton, to Captain Osborn, who then commanded his Majesty's ship the *Portland*, of fifty guns. He was accordingly entered on board that ship on the twentieth of September 1735, and sailed soon after for Constantinople. They arrived there in the January following; and after putting into Minorca and Gibraltar, returned to England in November 1736, when, the ship being paid off, our young sailor was sent to Watt's Academy in Little Tower Street, London, where he continued, in a course of professional and other improvement, till June 1737: he was then recommended by Lord Hyndford to Captain Charles Knowles, and entered on board the *Diamond*, of fort guns, commanded by that officer, and then lying at Deptford: she soon after sailed to Spithead, from thence to the coast of Guinea, and arrived at Barbadoes in the following October. After some months stay there, and having hove his ship down in English Harbour Antigua, Captain

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01845-6 - The Naval Chronicle, Volume 6

Edited by James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur

Excerpt

[More information](#)

OF SIR JOHN LOCKHART ROSS, BART.

3

Knowles proceeded to Jamaica in February 1738, where Mr. Lockhart was so reduced by a fever and the common disorder of the country, that his return home was considered as essential to the preservation of his life. He accordingly took his passage in a Merchantman bound for Glasgow, where he arrived in the month of December, and remained at his Father's house till he was perfectly recovered.

In April 1739, he was entered on board the *Romney* of fifty guns, commanded by Captain Medley, who sailed in the following May for Newfoundland, and, after being some months on that station, proceeded to Leghorn, Genoa, and Cadiz. In January 1740, he returned to Spithead. Having been particularly recommended to Captain Frogmore, of the *Tryal Sloop*, Mr. Lockhart, in April following, entered on board that vessel, which sailed in May for Leith, and convoyed the regiment commanded by Colonel Douglas to Spithead. After the sloop had been fitted out for the South Seas as one of the squadron commanded by Commodore afterwards Lord Anson, Captain Frogmore was appointed to the *Lively* of twenty guns, and took his young favourite sailor with him; who felt no common disappointment at an exchange of situation, which excluded him from a voyage, whose object was the circumference of the Globe. After recovering from a very severe fever, in January 1741, he was removed with Captain Frogmore into the *Ruby* of fifty guns, then on the British Station; but was, in a short time, fitted out at Portsmouth for the coast of Guinea, which she afterwards left for the island of Barbadoes, where she arrived in January 1742. Here Mr. Lockhart was very violently afflicted with the disorder called the dry belly-ache, and that life was for some time in great danger, which afterwards produced so much honour to the naval character of his country. The *Ruby* arrived in England in July, when she was paid off, and her officers and men turned over into the *Northumberland*, of seventy guns, commanded by Captain Watson.

In February 1743, Mr. Lockhart, whose activity, professional improvement, and admirable conduct, had gained

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01845-6 - The Naval Chronicle, Volume 6

Edited by James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## 4

## BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS

him the esteem and applause of the several officers under whom he had served, was, as his merits well deserved, advanced to the rank of lieutenant, and immediately appointed to the command of the *Deptford's* prize of twelve guns, then at Plymouth: within a few months he was removed into the *Dover*, of forty guns, commanded by Captain Rogers; and, in January 1744, coming from Plymouth to the Downs, was very providentially saved from being dashed to pieces in Fresh-water Bay in the Isle of Wight. After fitting out at Sheerness, the *Dover* sailed in May with a convoy for *Elsineur*, and returned in September. Captain Rogers being removed into the *Pembroke*, Captain Collings succeeded him in the command of the *Dover*; and soon after took a French privateer of fourteen guns, off the Humber, which Lieutenant Lockhart was appointed to conduct up to *Deptford*. In October the *Dover* was again ordered with a convoy to *Elsineur*, when a hard gale of wind and thick weather coming on in the *Cattegatt*, she lost her rudder, and was most providentially saved, with all her equipage, by the wind's suddenly moderating, and shifting eight points: Captain Collings then proceeded to *Copenhagen*, where the ship was hove down, a new rudder fitted to her, and being got into the inner road, was frozen up in the ice, which breaking suddenly, she was forced on shore, but soon got off without any other damage than a shattered rudder: that loss being soon supplied, she sailed from *Copenhagen* with a convoy on the first of May 1745, and on the second of June arrived off the Humber.

The same ship was fitted out again at Sheerness, and in September sailed with a convoy for *Lisbon* and *Gibraltar*. She left the latter place about the middle of October, to convoy transports with two regiments on board for *Cape Breton*; but was compelled, by hard gales of wind, to put into *Virginia* on the twentieth of January 1746. On the tenth of April she renewed her voyage with the transports, and arrived at *Louisbourg* by the end of the month.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01845-6 - The Naval Chronicle, Volume 6

Edited by James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur

Excerpt

[More information](#)

OF SIR JOHN LOCKHART ROSS, BART.

5

Here Lieutenant Lockhart's professional merit was again rewarded by an appointment to be third lieutenant of the *Chester* with Admiral Warren, who sailed in June for Boston, and from thence to Annapolis Royal, where he remained till September, and then returned to Boston. He in November set sail for England, and arrived at Spithead on the 1st of the following month. The same ship being fitted for sea in February 1747, she sailed for the Downs, where a party of the ship's company, among whom was Lieutenant Lockhart, in going ashore, narrowly escaped being drowned, the boat being overset on the beach.

On the return of the *Chester* to Spithead, our distinguished sailor was advanced to be second lieutenant of the *Devonshire*; of sixty-four guns, having Admiral Warren's flag on board. In a short time after, being in company with sixteen sail of the line commanded by Admiral Lord Anson, on the fifteenth of May they fell in with the French fleet and convoy; the *Devonshire* engaged the French Admiral in the *Serieux* of sixty-four, and the *Invincible* of seventy-four guns, until they struck; four other ships of sixty, and one of fifty guns, were taken, with twenty sail of merchant ships, with which the British fleet proudly returned to Spithead; and, having refitted in a few days, sailed again under the command of Sir Peter Warren, accompanied by six sail of Dutch men of war under Admiral Serwer. They returned to Spithead in September, and Admiral Warren sent Rear-Admiral Hawke to the westward with part of the fleet.

Sir Peter Warren now hoisted his flag on board the *Invincible* of seventy-four guns, and removed all his officers, and consequently Lieutenant Lockhart, with most of the petty officers and seamen of his former ship, into her. He sailed soon after, but a westerly wind drove the fleet back to St. Helens, where the admiral found himself so debilitated by the scurvy, that he procured leave to go on shore, and to send out the English fleet, under the command of Captain Mostyn, to join Admiral Hawke.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01845-6 - The Naval Chronicle, Volume 6

Edited by James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur

Excerpt

[More information](#)

At this period, Captain Pettigrew, who commanded the *Vulcan* fire-ship, having obtained leave of absence, on account of the ill state of his health, Sir Peter Warren ordered Lieutenant Lockhart to take the command of her, and he accordingly went out in that capacity with the squadron under Captain Mostyn: they joined Admiral Hawke on the 1st of October, who now commanded a fleet of sixteen sail of the line: Captain Mostyn having sprung his bowsprit was sent away to Lisbon.

On the sixteenth at day-light, Cape Finisterre bearing S. S. W. forty leagues, a large fleet of ships were seen a-head. At eight A. M. it appeared to consist of eight sail of the line, and three hundred sail of merchantmen; the admiral now made the signal for the line of battle, and soon after for a general chase; and at ten, the British ships being within gun-shot of the enemy, he threw out a signal to engage; the result was, that the French lost six ships of the line, but night coming on, the *Tonnant*, having the French Admiral on board, was towed off in a very disabled state by the *Intrepid*, they both being engaged by some of the English ships, when the night separated them. Lieutenant Lockhart, seeing these two ships the next morning from the main-top of the *Eagle*, Captain Rodney, which was the leewardmost ship, repaired on board the admiral to inform him of the discovery, when he was appointed to take the temporary command of the *Kent* man of war, on board of which he returned with the fleet to Spithead on the 28th of October.

When Lieutenant Lockhart had brought the *Kent* to Spithead, he returned to be first lieutenant of the *Invincible*, with Admiral Sir Peter Warren, who, in April 1748, sailed to the westward with seventeen ships of the line: he cruised as far as Teneriffe, and having watered and taken in wine at Madeira, returned to Spithead. In a short time after, the career of our naval glory was closed, for some time, by the conclusion of a peace with France and Spain.

The *Invincible* was paid off in November, when she was commissioned again as a guard-ship in January, and

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01845-6 - The Naval Chronicle, Volume 6

Edited by James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur

Excerpt

[More information](#)

OF SIR JOHN LOCKHART ROSS, BART.

7

Lieutenant Lockhart retained his situation on board her; she being still considered as Admiral Sir Peter Warren's ship.

In April 1752, she sailed for Gibraltar, in company with the *Tyger*, Commodore Stephens, each ship carrying a regiment out for that place, which they left there, and embarked another regiment from thence for England, with which they arrived at Spithead on the twentieth of July.

On the following morning, one of the soldiers, who had been ordered to assist the ship's steward in the Bread Room, carelessly stuck a lighted candle in the corner of it, and left it burning, so that the place took fire: on hearing the alarm, Lieutenant Lockhart hastened to discover the seat of danger, and, by his active exertions, extinguished the flames just as they had communicated to the rosin: if the fire had continued one minute longer, the ship and six hundred persons then on board must inevitably have perished; as the bread rooms were round the magazine of powder, containing at that time three hundred barrels.

In November the ship was paid off, and in April 1753, Lieutenant Lockhart took that opportunity to visit Scotland; where, though he cannot be strictly said to have carried the laurels of victory, he may be truly described as bearing with him the reputation of having, by his conduct and bravery, assisted others to obtain them.

In September 1754, he came up to London, and on the fifteenth of December, a war with France being universally expected, and Sir Peter Warren having died in 1751, Lord Anson, then first Lord of the Admiralty, put the *Prince*, of ninety guns, then at Chatham, into commission, for his flag, and appointed Captain Saunders, after Admiral Sir Charles Saunders, Knt. of the Bath, to command her, and Mr. Lockhart to be her first lieutenant: the latter accordingly joined the ship on the first of January 1755, fitted her out, and carried her to Blackstokes; from thence he conducted her to Spithead about the beginning of April; and, on the seventh of

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01845-6 - The Naval Chronicle, Volume 6

Edited by James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur

Excerpt

[More information](#)

May, was appointed commander of the *Savage* sloop, of twelve guns and seventy men: he cruised in her to the westward, under Admirals Hawke, Byng, and West, and in August received orders to seize French ships. Such orders he was ever ready to obey with the greatest alacrity, and took a *St. Domingo* merchantman, valued at thirty thousand pounds, and several Newfoundland bankers.

In November he was ordered to the Downs under the command of Admiral Smith, and, on the 15th of March 1756, was made post and appointed to the command of the *Tartar*, of twenty four guns, nine-pounders, four guns four-pounders, and two hundred men, built in a merchant yard at Deptford.

We have now considered this rising Officer through all the subordinate gradations of his profession, and doing honour to them all. We have seen him the favourite of all his Commanders, and the frequent object of their particular confidence. He had been selected, for particular occasions, by Anson, by Warren, and by Hawke. The history, therefore, already given of him, must fill the mind of the reader, who may not instantly recollect his subsequent prowess, with an expectation of his future actions; and these pages will not disappoint him.

On the 15th of May, while Captain Lockhart was lying at Long Reach, war was declared against France, when he was ordered first to the Downs, and afterwards to Spithead, where he arrived on the 5th of June: he then received orders to cruise under the command of Captain Duff, then in the *Rochester*, off the Isle of Bas, and afterwards under the command of Captain Wheeler.

On the 20th of September he chased and engaged two French frigates of twenty-eight guns, and drove them into Morlaix. He now represented to the Lords of the Admiralty, that, while on this active service, when he and every man under his command were constantly under arms and at their quarters in a state of preparation for engagement, there was no time for a minute attention to the hourly expenditure



Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01845-6 - The Naval Chronicle, Volume 6

Edited by James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur

Excerpt

[More information](#)

OF SIR JOHN LOCKHART ROSS, BART.

9

of stores, and that his Officers were better employed as seamen and fighting men than in book-keeping: their Lordships therefore, in consideration of the services which they expected from his courage and conduct, were pleased to order that Captain Lockhart and his Officers should be dispensed from passing their accounts. An indulgence of which, we believe, there is not a similar instance in the records of the Navy.

On the 1st of October he received orders from the Admiralty to cruise between the Isle of Bas and the Lizard, for the protection of the trade, and with full liberty to dock according to his own discretion. He continued on that station until November 1758, when his ill state of health, the consequence of his indefatigable attentions to his duty, rendered it necessary for the preservation of a life so important to his country, to apply to the medicinal waters of Bath. During this period of service, from the 20th of September 1756 to the 19th of October 1758, he took nine privateers, from thirty-six guns and three hundred men, to eighteen guns and an hundred and seventy men, amounting in all to two thousand five hundred prisoners of war, and two hundred and twenty guns, while he had only five men killed and two wounded in the different engagements.

Captain Lockhart's first capture was the *Sancta Maria*, a privateer new from the stocks, carrying twenty-four guns, and two hundred men. He afterwards engaged a French privateer carrying twenty nine-pounders, called the *Mont Ozeir*. He next fell in with the *Duc d'Aquitain* French privateer, mounting twenty-six guns, all of them heavier than her own. After an encounter of an hour and twelve minutes, the enemy surrendered, having had fifty of her crew killed and wounded. He also made prize of a private ship of war called the *Count de Grammont*, carrying eighteen guns and one hundred and seventy men. Several other privateers of inferior force, though not one of them had less than eighteen guns and an hundred and seventy men, were

Vol. VI.

C

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01845-6 - The Naval Chronicle, Volume 6

Edited by James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur

Excerpt

[More information](#)

captured by him, but his most brilliant action was yet to come.

The *Melampe* frigate had been fitted out at Bayonne for the express purpose of cruising in the supposed track of the *Tartar*, and gave Captain Lockhart an opportunity of achieving a victory, which, for comparative brilliance, was not surpassed during a war fatal to the naval power of France. The French ship possessed a force very superior to that of the *Tartar*, carrying thirty-six guns twelve-pounders, and three hundred chosen men. Some accounts have even added that one hundred of the crew were the sons of merchants, who presented themselves as volunteers in a cruise of such importance to the commercial interests of their country. After a chase of thirty hours, Captain Lockhart brought the enemy to an engagement, which was contested for some time with great obstinacy, but the *Melampe* at last struck her colours to the superior courage and discipline of the British Commander, and his gallant crew. The perfidious Frenchman, however, stung with the disgraceful and mortifying event of a contest so unequal on the part of the British ship, after having hailed the *Tartar*, acknowledged his surrender, and submissively sued for quarter, made a desperate attempt to board her; it was, however, vigorously repulsed, and fifty Frenchmen were either killed or drowned in the prosecution of this dishonourable effort. It is stated in the official account, that when the *Tartar* first began the chase, she was in company with several of the King's ships, but during the action itself, and indeed at the time when the enemy surrendered, it is doubtful whether any of them were in sight even from the mast head.

When the relative force of the two ships is considered, the *Tartar* carrying twenty-eight guns and two hundred men, and the *Melampe* thirty-six guns, of a superior calibre, and three hundred men, and the little difficulty with which the conquest appears to have been obtained, we cannot be surprised at the terror which the very name of Captain