

ART. XIV.—*A Naval Diary of the Seven Years' War from Flookburgh.* By J. C. DICKINSON, M.A., B.LITT.

AT a recent sale the writer was able to acquire a manuscript volume of topographical notes compiled in the middle of the last century by the Cartmel antiquary Thomas Field. Of the contents the most interesting unpublished item is the diary now printed.

The writer of this was one Thomas Court who seems to have lived at Flookburgh, though the name is not a local one and Mr. T. Hardwick informs me that there is no mention of his birth in the Cartmel Parish Registers. But he may well have migrated to North Lonsdale from Westmorland where, Mr. McIntire informs me, a family of the name is found about this time.

The references to local shipbuilding and colonial trading in J. Stockdale's *Annals of Cartmel* and the memorials in Cartmel church to local men who died in the Baltic and West Indies show that Flookburgh was a busy if unimportant seafaring centre in the eighteenth century. This subject, however, remains very obscure and the diary printed below, in spite of its curttness, makes a welcome addition to our knowledge of it.

Nothing is known of the fate of the original diary, so that it is necessary to rely wholly on Field's transcript which unfortunately is far from perfect. At the end of it he notes "1855 August 9th, Thomas Court has wrote his Life at Sea with so many abbreviations and Sea terms that I have had great difficulty to make a copy legible," and the various gaps and obscurities in the text testify to the truth of this remark.

The text is printed as given by Field. All capital letters, abbreviations and unorthodox spellings have been

retained, but something has been done to remedy the almost complete lack of punctuation. The corrupt place-names are so unintelligible that no certain correction is possible and they are printed unaltered.

A COPY OF THOMAS COURT'S HISTORY OF HIS
LIFE WHILE AT SEA.

Left Mr . . . Surgeon & Apothecary Burton beyond Lancaster on the first of May 1756, having served my legal apprenticeship of seven years.

The 9th of August left Flookburgh.

23 Septem^r left London and went to Plymouth and got a Warunt for 2^d Mate of the Falkland.

13 October at Plymouth; repaired on board Admiral Mostyn's Flag the Magnamine. By his Order sailed for the Bay of Biscay and met with the Falkland on the 23^d. Had a very bad cruise, the weather being desperate, our ship being very sickly with the Scurvy and Fever.

25th was seized with Fever and sent to sick quarters at Plymouth. The ship went into Dock. From thence went up to Portsmouth and attended the execution of Admiral Byng. Employ'd to and fro in the Channel & to the Downs.

In 1757 Sailed from Plymouth as Convoy to some Transports to S. Carolina. Stop'd at Cork for a few days. From Carolina sailed to Barbadoes.

27 April 1758 At Antigua per Warrant from Com^r Moore, was at the siege of Guadeloupe which was attacked the 22 January 1759. Took 17 Prizes major part Privaters, the time we stay'd in this Country And on 20th October 1758 took a Dutch Snow named Jupiter. His Maj Sloop Antigua in C^o Mess Maxwel & Clery Agents at Antigua not yet paid.

These two last Prizes viz Informal privateer and the Brigantine C^o rose upon us in the night to take the Ship, but were soon quelled being to windward of Barbadoes.

Carried them there but not being likely to sell well there purposed going to Antigua with them When the governor laid an embargo upon all private Vessels.

We weigh'd on 1st January 1760 when the forts began to fire at us and the Prizes to hinder our taking them away. They shot away the Mast & head & Flag staf and through the Colours, but we got clear and sold them at Antigua.

Went express to England of the death of Governor Gen^l Crump Guardeloupe. Sailed 22 March. Hove down the ship above 6 times in that pestilential hole English Harbour. Arrived at Spithead 22^d April; had excessive bad weather the first part of our Passage. Went up the River to Woolwich to Dock.

The interim went down to Lancashire on . . . 16 June at Flookburgh.

Returned 1st July for London. Went on board the Amazon and down the River to Sheerness where Cap^t Norton left her and got the Assistance . . . Basil Spitt Esq^e took command of the Ship.

27 July 1760 Went Convoy to some Troops to the Weser; from thence to cruize on the Coast of Scotland. Arrived in Leith Road Edinburgh Castle 3 Miles on the 12th August.

October 8th sailed for Sheerness and docked there.

Cruized the North Sea and on 22^d November being with a violent Storm which continued the Sea being very large and hollow grounded as they term it, the Ship was water logged and laboured very much and it was thought necessary to heave the guns overboard to lighten her 16 of which was accordingly done.

24 arrived in Dover Road England. Employd on the coast of France in C^o with the Solebay and looking out for the (?)

The 31st January 1761 Saw a sail under the French land, which we chased and took after a little repulse from a Four Gun Battery on Shore and her own defence. She

run (*sic*) ashore about 3 miles from Callis Cliffs, was a French Privateer named Cheviot from Dunkirk, 18 Six Ponders & 172 Men. Cary'd her to the Downs. Mr. Benson Agent & Mr. Douglas in London wrote to Mr. Tolmin to receive . . . having ended our Cruize & on the 14th February chased a French Privateer into Calais, the Wind on Shore and blowing fresh & Calais Guns reaching over us was obliged to leave her.

The 12th March sailed for Holland to bring over Major General York.

The 24th Moored in Helvoit Sluys Road.

The 19th G York the Ambassador came on board from . . . We saluted him with 13 Guns . . . sailed for England; while we lay there 7 of our Men at Noon day jumped into the Cutter along side, having the precaution to hide away the Matches and being very misty and Hazy the Centinals Muskets Musquits (*sic*) would not go off nor could a Match for the Guns be found in time, so that they ran the Boat upon the strand and got safe off.

22 Moor in the Tolling ground Harwich and landed the Ambassador.

5th April 176- cruized in Yarmouth Roads 1 Mile from the Shore.

The 9th moored in the Humber.

The 20th in Yarmouth Roads again and discovered a Marine of the name of William Pritchird who proved to be a Woman about 18 years old from Wales who had followed her lover.

25 Moor'd in Harwich Harbour Languard Fort.

4th May sailed from the Nore Convoy to the Catherine yatch for Holland. Anchor'd Helvoit.

17 the Princess (*sic*) of Nasau & Winterburgh came to view us in their Yatch and attendance. We saluted them with 17 Guns coming and going, they returned the Salute.

22 June M. Van Boriel came on board and embarked in the Yatch for England. Sail'd the 24th She went up the River to Greenwich and we to Sheerness Dock.

Having pass'd for Surgeon was in hopes by Mr. Toulmin's Inter^t to get a Warrant.

24 July moored at Spithead; had a recommendation to James Douglas in the Westindies.

7 August sailed from I^o (*sic*) Yarmouth Isle of Wght for do.

18th arrived in French Road Maderia.

18 Sep^r arrived at Barbadoes. Found here the Repulse Frigate with Com^d Dress (*sic*) pendant on board. Presented the recommendation to him and was promised his favour . . . Com^d Douglas came on board D⁹ hoisted his broad Pendant and accompanied him to Guardalope. Went a cruze of the Granades.

October 9 Took a Brigg under Dutch Colours name John Joan Peter; consigned her to Antigua; P. Warner Agent—not paid.

21st November Took a French schooner in Ballast; consigned her to Guadaloupe-paid.

9 December chased a French Privateer Sloop 14 Guns; fired several broadsides at her with Grape and round as she passed by us close a head but she got away.

12th December chased a French Privateer Sloop from Eustata Bound to Martinico: consigned her to St Kitts; P Bringle Agent—paid.

December 17th Hauled in for St Eustatia Road seing a large Ship with English colours, then fired at a Vessel under Sail and brought her too in the Road, for which they fired at us from the Shore and carried away part of the Head and gammoning of the Bowsprit but did no further damage.

1762 January 16 in company with Admiral Rodney and the fleet at Negropoint Martinico. D' was stationed of St. Prires (? Pierre). The French fired several shot at us from the Shore but they did not reach us.

26th Was stationed to windward of Martinico to look out for the expected French fleet. The . . . was obliged to get off our Station to Barbadoes for Wood and Water.

In the interim the French fleet but past our station but finding that the Island was taken, sailed to leward.

March 27 In English Harbour where we were blown (? a gap here).

April 16 Sailed out of the Harbour.

21st Anchored in St. Paris (? Pierre), Martinico. Found there Admiral Rodney in the Marlborough and as St James was sent to Jamaica wrote to the Admiral for my discharge. He said I could not have it but if I liked to take a turn in his Ship which I intended to accept I might have the first opportunity.

May 30 Read the Declaration War against the King of Sardinia to the Ships Company. Cruizing of Porto Rico in the Night fell in with a Brigg. We chased. She fired her stern chasers at us. Took her, she was from Bordaux bound to St Domingo; consigned to St. Kitts; Agent Bromly Agent (*sic*) Her name the St. Clair; found that the Admiral was at Martinico.

Aug^t went into try part to* heaving down; transported alongside the Kingsale Hulk and bygan to inload and board her. But she made Water so fast that she sank alongside with most of Our stout . . . on board . . . Amongst the Islands all the months viz. August September October in bad weather and November at Granada. December Went to English Harbour to heave down.

March 63 went again to Barbadoes for convoy to the Tortugas fleet.

17th Sailed . . . saw the Margarittas & so burnt that all my skin . . .

Bought a Turtle with upwards of 500 eggs in its Belly. Some time laid to on the spanish Main viz Cape Kildare dist^t 17 or 18 leagues

April 10 sailed from do. the 16 . . . Poila R China Ricca (? ?)

20 Past by us a French Ship and two Sloops.

* (*sic*) ? a place-name in the original.

May 9th went into English Harbour to heave down with a spar Deck, and had the agreeable news to prepare for England. In the interim of Admiral Rodney's remembrance, the Cap^t being sick on shore And our Surgeon detained by him, would not be spared from the Amazon. Told us in 3 months of our expected time to go Home when was thought too late to get Perferment But as it fell out there was two vacancies happened whereby I might have been warranted.*

May Went into Prince Ruperts Bay to Wood and Water.

9th Went to Engl^h Harbour to heave down with . . . Received orders to fit out to go home with Am' Rodney.

. . . of the Blue in the Foudroyant and Levant and as usual sailed fro S^t Johns to S^t Kitts & left the 4th July.

The 9 Aug sounded 80 fathoms.

10 saw Silly distance 4 leagues.

In a few days got up to Spithead to be paid off.

3^d September 1763 Paid off by Richard Temple.

1855 August 9th Thomas Court has wrote his life at Sea with so many abreviations and Sea terms that I have had great dificulty to make a copy legible.

* The sense is not clear and the punctuation purely hypothetical.