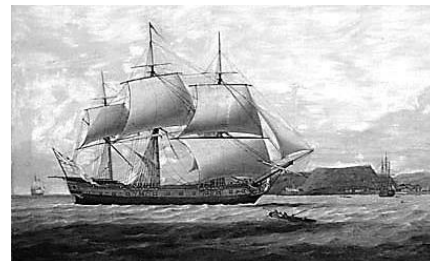


Roger Baskett, a well-travelled Tickhill gentleman

Roger Baskett, born in 1764, was the youngest son of the Revd Kingsman Baskett, Master of Pocklington Grammar School. Unlike his two older brothers, Kingsman Jnr born in 1758 and Richard born in 1761 who both studied at Cambridge University before being ordained, Roger went to sea, in particular serving on East Indiamen trading in the service of the East India Company which controlled a monopoly of trade with India and China. After experience as Chief Mate on the *Prince William-Henry* he captained the last two voyages made by this East Indiaman, in service from 1787 to 1801. The ports of call on these last two voyages were:

1796-8		1800-1	
5 June	Portsmouth	5 September	Portsmouth
4 September	Cape	23 September	Madeira
2 December	Madras	29 January	Madras
25 January	Kedgerree	30 March	Vizagapatan
7 April	Saugor	11 July	Cape
22 August	Cape	15 August	St Helena
17 November	St Helena	31 October	Downs
3 February	Downs		



The illustration, right, shows an East Indiaman off St Helena, an E.I.C. base since 1659

As Captain, Roger was required to keep a daily journal for these two voyages of the *Prince William-Henry*. His journal for 1800-1801 shows a meticulous recording of weather conditions and the ship's position as well as the names of all the crew and the main activities on board, from which sails were deployed to cleaning decks and whether 'strange sails' were sighted. He sailed in convoy with other East Indiamen and a frigate to help protect the valuable cargoes. On the outward voyage Roger's ship carried stores for the Navy and guns and ammunition for the E.I.C. in Madras and brought back for the E.I.C. 2,100 bags of saltpetre, 940 bags of sugar, 868 bales of unspecified goods (and many more bales not quantified - they most likely contained tea, cotton and silk), 383 boxes of spices and finally jewels, along with goods for Roger trading on his own account including over 2,000 gallons of Madeira wine. The ship also took dispatches from E.I.C. bases to the Company's headquarters in London. A few passengers with baggage were carried between the various ports of call.

After retiring from his naval career, when trading on his own account as well as receiving wages built up personal wealth, Roger moved from Pocklington to Tickhill where he bought a house, barns, stables and outbuildings on Northgate and various plots of land amounting to over 8 acres for £1553 in 1804. (The approximate present day equivalent of this amount using average earnings as a means of comparison is £1,390,000.) The same year he married Susan, eldest daughter of the Revd T Foster of Tinwell, Rutland. They had three daughters: Sarah born in 1808, Ethelred born in 1809 and Elizabeth born in 1812. (The girls married clergymen: in 1837 Sarah married the Revd Joshua Cautley, Ethelred married the Revd William Pinckney in 1842, and in 1844 Elizabeth married the Revd W T Clarke of Melton Mowbray.)

In 1807 Roger went to the hustings at York for the General Election and voted for William Wilberforce (Tory) and Lord Milton (Whig) as did a minority of Tickhill's voters (see Newsletter 31). From 1771 when he was 12 to 1776 when he moved to St John's College, Cambridge, Wilberforce lived in the Baskett household while a pupil at Pocklington Grammar School and so Roger would have had childhood memories of Wilberforce. When Wilberforce died in 1833, Roger contributed £3 to his memorial fund in Yorkshire - to open the Wilberforce Memorial School for the Blind at King's Manor in York, the first school for the blind in Yorkshire where an estimated 1,200 people were blind. The school took pupils aged 5-20 and taught them a variety of trades such as making blankets, brushes, baskets and mats. By March 1834 £7,400 had been raised. (One of the most generous donors was Henry Gally Knight of Firbeck Hall who donated £50, his wife gave £5 and his tenants a total of £16/9/6 according to the *Yorkshire Gazette* of 14 December 1833.)

Roger followed country pursuits typical of gentlemen of the time. He obtained a Game Certificate allowing him to kill game (hares, rabbits, deer, grouse, partridges and pheasants); the annual cost of a Game Certificate, for example in 1822, was £3/13/6. The names of all those who had paid for a Certificate were published in County newspapers such as the *Leeds Intelligencer* for West Riding residents.

Roger was buried in St Mary's churchyard on 26 March 1841 aged 77. There is no surviving gravestone or memorial to him. In 1851 his widow was living in Lincolnshire. She died in Stamford on 11 June 1852. Roger left his possessions to his widow listing them as linen, furniture, china, books, horses and carriages. Roger's friends included in his will each received 5 guineas: William Hammond of Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, London; William Bourne Esq of Kirk Ella; George Liddell Esq. of Sutton near Hull; Henry Borott Esq. of Doncaster and Mr William Wright, Surgeon of Bawtry. His will left apparently generous provision for two of his servants in recognition of their long service: Jonathan Jackson was to receive £400 and Elizabeth Smales £200 provided they were both in Roger's service at the time of his death, but the money was only to be given after his wife's death. Controversy was to surround the will in terms of the share of money allocated to Roger's three daughters, following the death of Roger's eldest daughter, Sarah, and it was not until 1855 that it was sorted out in the Court of Chancery.

Abstract of title and valuation of the land of Roger Baskett Doncaster Archives Ref.: DX/BAX/61781 Lots 1 & 2

Baskett, Roger *Will* National Archives Ref.: PROB 11/1948/154

Prince William-Henry Journal 22 July 1800 - 5 December 1801 British Library Ref.: IOR/L/MAR/B/389F