

### Midshipman George Castle

How would you like to go to sea? Sounds exciting, doesn't it? Visiting strange countries and fighting the French to return home as a hero. The only problem is: You have to leave home at a very early age, between 11 - 13 years of age;

Your parents would have to be rich;

You would have to know someone important in the Navy who would speak up for you.

This is what happened to one young boy, George Castle.

### Who was George Castle?

George's father, Samuel Castle (1758-1815) was a Durham solicitor involved in the law. Castle used his friendship with men in business, J. E. Blackett, to write to Admiral Collingwood to get his son George Castle (1790-1826) into the navy as a young officer (midshipman). Young George, just 13 years old, became one of Collingwood's midshipmen on *HMS Venerable* in 1803. He later fought in *HMS Royal Sovereign* at Trafalgar and wrote a vivid account of his experience in a letter to his sister.



Midshipmen were usually the sons of wealthy or aristocratic families training to become commissioned officers. They usually joined the Navy at the age of twelve to fourteen

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London