

## BEWARE THE PRESS GANG

There were never enough people to volunteer to join the navy in time of peace as well as war. So the navy's solution was to organise gangs of sailors to round up and force men into the navy. These gangs were known as 'press' gangs because they 'pressed' or 'forced' men into the navy.

The activities of the press gang were hated and often resulted in fights between the press gang and the local people. North and South Shields was one of the favourite hunting grounds for sailors. Even Collingwood, who didn't like the system was ordered to set up a press gang. Those pressed into the navy could do little about it. If they complained then they would suffer harsh punishments.

My brother and I soon had permission to go on shore (South Shields), but we soon found the place much changed. There was no joy. All the young men were pressed and taken away.

William Richardson



When the Press Gang tried to find men for the navy it often caused a riot

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Hire a room to organise the press gang - no more than 1s..6d per week (71/2 p)

Print notices calling for volunteers to join the navy between the ages of eighteen and fifty - no more than £1..10s (£1.50p)

Post the notices around the town

Hire a fife player and a drummer to march around the town

Food and lodging for the volunteers

Eight sailors to guard the volunteers

Instructions To Lieutenant Collingwood 1 April 1776