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## Biography of Admiral Sir Nesbit Josiah Willoughby (1777-1849)

Nesbit was the grandson of Edward Willoughby of Aspley and Cossall, Nottinghamshire and descended from Edward, the second son of [Sir Percival Willoughby](#) . He entered the Royal Navy as a midshipman in 1790 and from 1793 to 1799 saw service in the East Indies. In 1801 he fought in the Battle of Copenhagen on board the *Russell* . Following a brief dismissal after a court martial for quarrelling with his captain, Willoughby re-entered active service in the Napoleonic Wars, serving in the West Indies, the Sea of Marmara, and Mauritius. He was badly injured during the naval battle off Mauritius in 1810 (during which his ship, HMS *Nereide* , was lost), and pensioned off, but feeling himself capable of more service, volunteered with the Russian army in 1812. He was captured by the French and spent nine months imprisoned in France before escaping.

Willoughby took command of the *Tribune* from 1818 to 1822 and then retired from the Navy. He was knighted in 1827, and again, in error, in 1832, and was appointed as a naval aide-de-camp to the Queen in 1841. In his later years he concerned himself with trying to further the interests of junior officers. In 1839 he published *Extracts from Holy Writ and various Authors, for Soldiers and Seamen* , described by the *British Critic* as 'a pious and well-intentioned compilation from a very heterogeneous set of authors'. Sir Nesbit was promoted as a Rear-Admiral of the Blue in 1847, and of the White in 1849. He died in London on 19 May 1849.

### Family

He was unmarried.

### Archive Collections

- Admiral Willoughby's papers survive in the second accrual of the Middleton Collection ([Mi 2 F](#) ) held at Manuscripts and Special Collections at the University of Nottingham
- [British Library](#) : Letters to WR O'Byrne, 1843-46
- [City of Westminster Archives Centre](#) : Letters (8) to John Philippart, 1837-43 (D. MISC 109)

### Published Sources

- A memoir of Sir Nesbit Willoughby appears in Marshall, J., *Royal naval biography* , suppl. 2 (1828), 111-95

- Middleton, E.M. Willoughby, Baroness, 'Sir Admiral Nesbit Willoughby, Admiral of the Blue', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society* , 9 (1905), 57-78 [King's Meadow Campus East Midlands Collection Periodicals]
- Mason, Michael, 'Willoughby the immortal: an account of the life and actions of Rear-Admiral Sir Nesbit Willoughby, Kt., C.B., K.C.H. (1777-1849)' (Oxford, 1969) [King's Meadow Campus East Midlands Collection Not 99.V38 WIL]
- Laughton, J.K., rev. Michael Duffy, 'Willoughby, Sir Nesbit Josiah (1777–1849)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* , Oxford University Press, 2004 [available online to subscribers, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29600> ]