



Captain John Quilliam by Bryan Kneale 2005

John Quilliam was born in 1771 to a farming family in Marown, Isle of Man. Rather than work on the land, however, he decided to go to sea. He was 'impressed' from the Merchant Navy into the Royal Navy during the years that Britain was at war with France. He displayed remarkable courage in battle at Camperdown and was promoted from Midshipman to Lieutenant. Under fierce battle conditions at Copenhagen several officers were killed and wounded. Taking command, John Quilliam caught the attention of Admiral Nelson, who promoted him to the rank of First Lieutenant, and took him on board his flagship, HMS Victory.

The turning point in the Napoleonic War was at Trafalgar, 21st October 1805, when Nelson destroyed Napoleon's fleet. During the battle, the Victory's tiller was shot away but, under heavy fire, Lt. Quilliam managed to rig up an emergency method of steering the vessel. For his resourcefulness he was promoted to Captain.

After the war, Captain Quilliam returned to the Island. He married a member of the Stevenson family of Balladoole, Arbery, and resided at Ballakeighen. He became an MHK, and put his sea-going skills to improving boat design for the Peel herring fleet. He died at the White House, Kirk Michael, in 1829 and was buried in Kirk Arbery Churchyard.