



THE KEDGE ANCHOR

THE CELEBRATION OF NELSON

THE CHAIRMAN'S DISPATCH

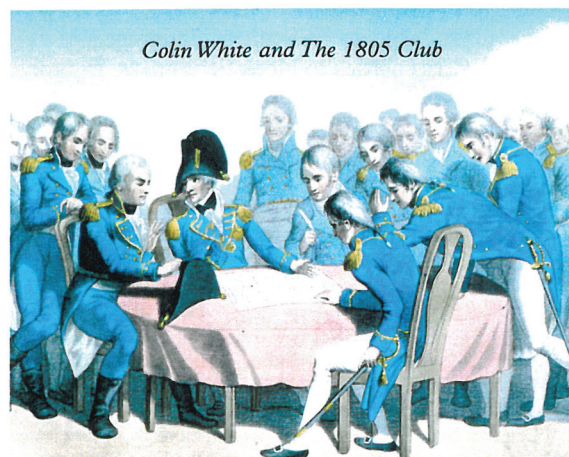
Clemence Dane wrote of Nelson that, 'He feels for, he fingers your heart'. The celebration of Nelson is a remarkable phenomenon and it is hard to think of any other historical figure in our long and wonderful history who has secured such a proud and un-revised position in the pantheon of British heroes. Almost without exception those who knew him agreed that there was something special about this 'affectionate, fascinating little fellow', as he was described by *Victory's* chaplain Alexander Scott. Nelson's extraordinary importance to the nation was evident from the instant the bittersweet news of his death and great victory at Trafalgar reached England.

Ernle Bradford entitled his biography of Nelson, *The Essential Hero*, but while the dead sailor has certainly attained the equivalence of the Greek hero and an ageless military champion, his significance in 2005 reaches far beyond the martial. This year, Nelson and his achievements are the hook for matters and concerns that not only commemorate his victory and celebrate his life, but also pay homage to the 50,000 people on both sides who took part in Trafalgar - a battle fought on a square mile of ocean that influenced the course of global history.

The sea is like no other battlefield. It carries no scars. The waves look today as they did to Nelson's eyes (until 1794!). Fire enjoys the same attribute. The flames that destroyed the French *Achille* would have burned as flames do today. Yet these constants are deceptive. Unhappily, the majority of people have forgotten how vital the sea is to our very existence.

The sea is absolutely crucial from an environmental perspective. The sea is also important because 95% of this country's trade is transported across the oceans, protected by the Royal Navy. The sea also gives millions of

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The Trafalgar Captains

Their Lives and Memorials

Cover of The 1805 Club's bicentenary project to be published in June: *The Trafalgar Captains—Their Lives and Memorials*

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THE CHAIRMAN'S DISPATCH *(continued from page one)*

millions of people pleasure and entertainment: whether they sail, motor or row, view the horizon from a cliff or listen to the breaking of the waves on a beach.

Maybe our descendents will look back as they prepare for the Trafalgar tercentenary and recognise that in 2005 'Nelson' and 'Trafalgar' were commemorated with imagination, relevance, and true purpose. The 1805 Club, through its membership of the ONCC (see footnote), has been a significant voice influencing the character of this year's *Trafalgar Festival*. Therefore, while our main purpose is and remains the conservation of graves, monuments and memorials of the Georgian sailing navy - things firmly rooted in the past - our outlook is to the future.

The Trafalgar Captains' Memorial is our flagship bicentenary project. It is going very well. The first tangible results for members will be available in June with the publication of *The Trafalgar Captains' Memorial*. Lavishly illustrated with fine photographs by Matthew Prince, this book is the collective result of the marvellous efforts of many members of the Club: those who went out and conducted the initial surveys, those who wrote the various parts of the book (not least John Curtis and Colin White), and those who continue to help with the conservation work. There are simply too many members to name them all individually in this short dispatch, but they are in Nelson's words, 'a fine set of fellows'. You make this Club what it is. I am proud to be your Chairman and thank you all. We are also indebted to Chatham Publishing for their vision in bringing this unusual work to the bookshops. It will be on sale in June at £12.99.

The Great Chase Dinner in HMS *Victory* on 13 May was sold out on day one! I am sorry for all of you who did not get aboard this time but assure you that we shall seek to arrange other evenings in 'the ship' in future, given the kind permission of the Second Sea Lord and Commander in Chief Naval Home Command. Meanwhile, I hope you will have seen that the Club has a new 'events officer': Lynda Sebbage. She has picked up where I left off and I know she is going to do a superb job. You have all been very kind to me over the past eight years and I know you will be the same to Lynda.

Another new name co-opted onto the Council is Alison Henderson. Some of you will recall that she looked after media relations at Flagship Portsmouth. She furthered her career with a move to the National Trust, where she is now looking after the Trust's contribution to the *Trafalgar Festival*, including *The New Trafalgar Dispatch*, with which the Club is proudly involved. We are very lucky to have somebody of Alison's professional skill and experience promoting the Club's activities at a time when there is so much Trafalgar 'noise' in the media.

In April, every member of the Club will receive a guide to taking part in the Trafalgar Weekend 21 - 23 October. This has been produced by Beacon Millennium and is packed full of ideas for how you can commemorate Trafalgar Day, from fancy dress parties to black tie dinners; from lighting beacons to services of commemoration. The 1805 Club would like all of you to video, photograph and record any Trafalgar events you attend or are involved with, large and small. This will be a little bit like the Mass Observation of the 1940s, but it could furnish valuable material for future social historians and may even form part of a future club project if there is enough material to go on.

Meanwhile, the Council looks forward to seeing you at Greenwich for the Club's AGM on 16 April, followed by this year's Cecil Isaacson Memorial Lecture given by Tim Clayton, author of *Trafalgar: The Men, The Battle, The Storm*.

Peter Warwick

The Official Nelson Commemoration Committee (ONCC) was formed in 1995 by the National Maritime Museum (NMM) and the Royal Naval Museum (RNM) and is the national co-ordinating body for the Trafalgar Festival. Its members represent the National Maritime Museum; Royal Naval Museum; Royal Navy; HMS *Victory*; Society for Nautical Research; The 1805 Club; The Nelson Society; Sea Cadets; King George's Fund for Sailors; Greenwich Foundation; Lloyd's of London; Nelson Museum, Monmouth; Norfolk Nelson Museum and Beacon Millennium Ltd. The ONCC Secretary and first point of contact is John Graves. The ONCC Chairman is Colin White and the Vice-Chairman is Peter Warwick.