



THE CHAIRMAN'S DISPATCH

The Boast of Old Northumberland

When Nelson sailed for Trafalgar
 With all his country's best,
 He held them dear as brothers are,
 But one beyond the rest.
 For when the fleet with heroes manned
 To clear the decks began,
 The boast of old Northumberland
 He sent to lead the Van.

Himself by *Victory's* bulwarks stood
 And cheered to see the sight;
 "That noble fellow Collingwood,
 How bold he goes to fight!"

[From *Northumberland, "The Old and Bold"*
 By Sir Henry Newbolt]

Almost two hundred years to the date of this issue of *The Kedge Anchor* a very weary sailor who had suffered serious strains to both his health and happiness wrote in a letter to his sister:

You will be sorry to hear my poor dog Bounce is dead. I am afraid he fell overboard in the night. He is a great loss to me. I have few comforts, but he was one, for he loved me. Everybody sorrows for him. He was wiser than (many) who hold their heads higher and was grateful (to those) who were kind to him.

That 62 year-old sailor was Vice-Admiral Lord Cuthbert Collingwood. Referred to by biographer Max Adams as 'Nelson's own hero', Collingwood has recently emerged from under the shadow cast by his great friend. His five years in command of the prestigious Mediterranean Fleet after Trafalgar are now seen as a culmination of an active and successful career, which revealed his mastery of strategy and diplomacy and instinctive judgement when dealing with foreign powers and affairs. This deftness is revealed in a letter to one of his captains, to whom he writes, 'We must take care that those nations whose hearts are really with us, and who on the first happy change would be openly on our side, may not, by any intemperate act of ours, be thrown into the hands of the enemy.'

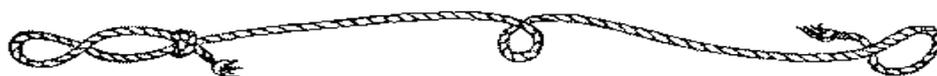
British ministers and the Admiralty held him in such high esteem they kept him on station and even refused his requests for leave. Given virtually a free hand by the Admiralty and the poor communications with his political masters, Collingwood's strategic vision and understanding of the region, including the importance of North Africa, became the very essence of British government policy.

His overtures to the Turks, his support for the Spanish, Portuguese and British involved in the fight against the French in the Iberian Peninsula, his blockade of Toulon, and his initiative in seizing the Ionian Islands from the French are fine examples of his actions. He may not have been involved in any spectacular naval engagements after Trafalgar, but then who was? But his renown for seamanship and gunnery was more than a match for anything the French could deploy as is seen from the way in the last few months of his life he intercepted and destroyed a French convoy running supplies into the garrison of Barcelona.

As historian Piers Macksey wrote, 'The scale (of the Mediterranean theatre) was heroic, and over the vast canvas towers the figure of Collingwood.'

If Collingwood had one weakness it was his inability to delegate and relax. The stress of the workload weighed heavily until towards the end of 1809 his health began to deteriorate. By February of the following year he could hardly walk. He was 'so weak that application to business is impossible'. At last the Admiralty allowed him to come home but two days into the voyage from Port Mahon he died. Collingwood never saw his wife or precious daughters again, nor did he listen to the blackbirds in his beloved Northumbrian garden.

He was laid to rest next to Nelson in St Paul's Cathedral. Every year wreaths are laid at Nelson's tomb on 21st October and last year for the first time, members of the Collingwood family paid homage to their ancestor at the same time as well. We hope this will become a regular tradition.



The 1805 Club is proud to have initiated and helped re-design the St Paul's Cathedral Trafalgar Day ceremony, at the heart of which is the wreath laying by the First Sea Lord. The Dean of the Cathedral leads the ceremony and this year over sixty people, more than half of whom were Club members, attended and then gathered for refreshments in the crypt afterwards. Concurrently, Linda Ebrey represented the Club at the traditional and moving ceremony aboard HMS *Victory*. Moreover, a few days earlier at the Seafarers' Service at Portsmouth's Anglican Cathedral, Alison Henderson laid the wreath for The 1805 Club and The Nelson Society.

However, it will be Collingwood who dominates next year and again the Club can take pride in the fact that its ideas and exertions have created a major event in Newcastle in his honour. In the same way as The Homage to all Heroes of Copenhagen and Nelson 250 we began by making overtures to local people. The authorities and institutions in Newcastle, Gateshead, Tyneside and Morpeth have risen to the occasion and with the Royal Navy in full support a stunning event is planned for 6 and 7 March 2010. It includes a special package of 'extras' for Club members.

I believe it is fair to say that the death of Collingwood will be seen as the last great naval bicentenary of the Napoleonic period. Be there if you can!

The Club's AGM in May will not be far behind and our superb Membership Secretary, Linda Ebrey has kindly given plenty of notice that she will not be seeking re-election. Linda has written a piece for this issue of the *Kedge Anchor* (page 4) and I would urge you all to read it while at the same time considering whether you might like to take over her role. It is a vital job for the Club and Linda is the best person with whom to discuss the opportunity. I know that she would be thrilled to hear from you if you felt you could succeed her.

We are also losing our marvellous UK editors of *The Kedge Anchor* so, again, if any of you feel this is something you would enjoy doing, please get in touch with me.

While it is always sad to lose people it is also good to welcome new faces and I am very pleased to announce that we have two new Vice-Presidents, subject only to formality of the members' ratification at next year's AGM. They are Rear Admiral Joe Callo USNR (Ret.) and Dr Agustín Guimerá.

Joe lives in New York City and following a distinguished naval career has emerged as a prominent naval historian, writing about Nelson and 'America's first sea warrior' John Paul Jones. He is well-placed to help the Club commemorate the naval operations during the bicentenaries of the War of 1812.

Agustín, has become one of Spain's leading naval historian's and has supported the Club for the past decade. He is based at the Instituto de Historia, Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales in Madrid. He is keen to foster closer links between the Club and Spain, a country which played such a significant part in Nelson's career and the final demise of Napoleon.

By the time you read this dispatch we shall know whether the Union flag from the *Spartiate* was saved for the nation. The 1805 Club was part of the consortium bidding to achieve this. We shall also have our heads buried in this year's terrific issue of the *Trafalgar Chronicle*! Congratulations to editors Anthony Cross and Huw Lewis-Jones.

And of course congratulations to Randy and Dana Mafit and Paul and Penny Dalton for yet another fine issue of the *Kedge Anchor*.

With kind regards to you all and very best wishes for Christmas, the New Year and COLLINGWOOD 2010!

Peter Warwick
Hon Chairman