

THE CHAIRMAN'S DISPATCH!

Changing regime. Constant objectives

The 1805 Club is on the threshold of its 20th anniversary in October and in the next issues we shall look back over our progress and achievements, which have been marked by many changes and developments, and this year is a landmark in its own right.

Most significantly, the Club welcomes Admiral Sir Jonathon Band as its new President. Jonathon was, until a little over a year ago, First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff and Aide-de-Camp to The Queen. Graduating at Exeter University, his naval career spanned 42 years and in 2008 he was appointed a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath (GCB).

It is a terrific honour for the Club that he agreed to accept this appointment. I believe this is a reflection of his recognition of what the Club has achieved in the past 20 years, and his keen understanding of the importance of the historical legacy of the Royal Navy that the Club's conservation activity helps to highlight.

Jonathon's reputation brings a new dimension to The 1805 Club and strengthens its association with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. It was fitting that at the Members' Forum last May, John McCarthy, the son of the Club's late first President, Lily McCarthy CBE, endorsed her successor wholeheartedly.

I am sure we all extend a very warm welcome to Jonathon and look forward to furthering the objects of the Club under his Presidency.

At the non-executive level the AGM also confirmed the appointment of our two new Vice Presidents, Rear Admiral Joe Callo USN Rtd and Dr Agustin Guimera-Ravina. Their counsel and support brings an international dimension that reflects both the spread of our membership and the naval historical importance of the United States and Spain to the story of the sailing navy during Georgian era.

The composition of the Council has also changed significantly in 2010. While we are very sorry to see the departure of Paul and Penny Dalton, the UK's former and superb KA editors, and the dauntless membership secretary Linda Ebrey; we are equally pleased to welcome Kathy Clark as events officer and Barry Scrutton as the new membership secretary. Vice President Ken Flemming has taken over the UK editorship of the KA and may I congratulate him on his splendid 'first issue', while not overlooking the dedication and vital role of the editor-in-chief, Randy Mafit.

Conservation remains the beating heart of the Club and the record of activity over the past 20 years will be featured in the next KA. Meanwhile, the need for the conservation role reminds us how the Club continues to fill the gap between the work of bodies like the Commonwealth War Grave Commission and the Royal Navy's own Heritage Strategy, albeit that by comparison with these august institutions it still but scratches the surface. The future challenge is considerable. Nevertheless, two more conserved graves, those of Admirals Sir Thomas Bladen Capel and Sir Robert Otway, were formally re-dedicated at a ceremony led by the Club's Chaplain, Peter Wadsworth on 10 July at Kensal Green Cemetery.

Every conservation project is guided by the provisions of our Conservation Guidelines, which have just been revised by Adrian Attwood at DBR (London). DBR, is the leading conservation company responsible for many of Whitehall's historic buildings and also Trafalgar Square and Nelson's Column. DBR has kindly agreed to support the work of the Club by updating our guidelines as and when required, and by offering *ad hoc* advice. We are very grateful for this *pro bono* professional input and anticipate a long and happy association.

Research is a vital part of the conservation process and I must praise the fantastic detective work of Randy and Dana Mafit, which finally led them to Captain Jonas Rose's burial at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, and the elusive grave of post Captain William Birchall at St Sidwells Church, Exeter – no mean achievement from their desk in Oregon, USA!

The reason the Club was founded 20 years ago was to ensure that men like Capel, Otway and Birchall were remembered for their service to the defence of their country, a tradition of service stretching back more than 200 years which still inspires the 'fighting spirit' of the Royal Navy today.

Britain's naval past is one of the most fascinating and absorbing strands of our history. It has shaped our culture and national identity and by conserving the graves of our forbears we not only honour them, but also remind ourselves of the continuing importance of the Royal Navy, and the sea generally, to our economy, freedom and way of life - a fact that seems to be too readily overlooked these days.

With best wishes to you all,

Peter Warwick