

CHAIRMAN'S DISPATCH!

A time for wreaths

Thus it hath pleased God to take from this transitory life unto His divine mercy the most noble Lord, Horatio Nelson . . . the Hero whom in the moment of victory fell covered with immortal glory. Let us humbly trust that he is now raised to bliss ineffable and a glorious immortality.

This time last year I wrote about how the nation pauses for two minutes on 11 November and subsequently on Remembrance Sunday to remember its brave service men and women and how the period between the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and the death of Lord Nelson on 21 October and 11 November each year is a natural one for a wider sense of Remembrance since it allows us to relate the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars with today's conflicts, not least the war in Afghanistan.

In turn this resonates with Nelson's call for 'humanity after victory' and the traditional version of The Immortal Memory, which is not for Nelson alone but for 'all those who fell with him'. In other words, as Remembrance Day now embraces the latest conflicts so it seems reasonable to honour those who in modern historical terms also served and fell for their country *before* the First World War. They too fought for our basic freedoms and personal liberties that interestingly have their routes in *Magna Carta*, which celebrates its 800th anniversary in 2015 at the very same time as the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. Moreover, their service, stories and leadership – not least Horatio Nelson's – continue to inspire those serving on today's front line.

You may therefore imagine my pride on Sunday, 21 October as I stood at the foot of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square to lay a wreath on behalf of The 1805 Club. For over 100 years, Sea Cadets have marked the anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar with a parade on Trafalgar Square incorporating a wreath laying ceremony. This year was the first year that the Club had been invited to join the wreath laying party and the Club's participation will be a permanent feature of this tri-service National Trafalgar Day Parade in future. The Reviewing Officer was Rear Admiral C J Hockley, Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland, and the Parade was made up of four Sea Cadet Platoons, two Royal Marines Cadet Platoons, platoons from Army and Air Cadets, The Massed Band of the Sea Cadets, Navy Board Cadets, the Sea Cadet PT Display Team and the Air Training Corps Drill Display Team. It was a moving occasion, which fortunately just avoided, wet weather routine'.

Almost at the same time former Council member Doreen Scragg represented The 1805 Club at the Royal Navy's annual wreath laying ceremony aboard Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar, HMS *VICTORY* at Portsmouth.

The following day, Club members joined other invited guests and stood in silence at The First Sea Lord's wreath laying at Nelson's tomb in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral. The ceremony, now three year's old, was redesigned by The 1805 Club and is organised by the Marine Society and Sea Cadets. It has established itself as an important annual occasion and this year was joined by officers from The Chinese Navy which has a sail training ship named after Nelson! A bugler from the Band of the HM Royal Marines sounded Last Post and Reveille and a Guard of Honour from the Royal British Legion lowered and raised their standards adding to the ceremonial solemnity of the occasion. The Legion is the nation's custodian of Remembrance, ensuring that people remember those who have given their lives for the freedom we enjoy today. Even though it has its origins in the First World War it chooses to honour Nelson.

Afterwards, the gathering turned to face Vice Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood's tomb and members of the Collingwood family laid a beautiful wreath of white and cream flowers in his honour. This part of the St Paul's ceremony compliments the wreath laying ceremonies at St Nicholas Church, Newcastle and the Collingwood Monument at Tynemouth.

Wreaths have much history and symbolism associated with them and since at least the time of Ancient Greece they have been used at funerals to represent a circle of eternal life. The 1805 Club chooses to lay Bay laurel wreaths because made from evergreens they symbolise strength, since evergreens last even through the harshest winters, and therefore victory of the eternal spirit over death.

Nelson and Collingwood have both been raised to 'a glorious immortality'. Maybe Nelson's has a wider and deeper impact, but Collingwood's grows in strength and 21 October 2012 celebrated the launch of The Collingwood Society. This new charity is the legacy from The Collingwood Festival 2010, which the Club did much to initiate when it proposed the Collingwood Weekend that took place in March 2010. The hard work and wonderful response by local bodies and people in the North East to the organisation of the weekend saw them go on to arrange another six months of activities, including a splendid souvenir Collingwood 2012 brochure. The Club acted as banker throughout and has been able to transfer the surplus monies raised by their efforts to the newly opened coffer of The Collingwood Society. None of us expected such a fine legacy when we first explored ways to commemorate the death of Collingwood way back in 2008. We now warmly wish our colleagues in Newcastle, Gateshead, Morpeth and Tyneside every success and look forward to developing a helpful and strong friendship between our two organisations in the future and in fact many of us may wish to join! All success to The Collingwood Society! If we

wish to look for a more recent example of victory of the eternal spirit over death then we have only to remember Penny Dalton who died on 5 October. Penny served the Club brilliantly as the UK editor of the *Kedge Anchor*, inspired by her lifelong enthusiasm for ships and the sea, which ranged from Forester and O'Brien to Gilbert and Sullivan! Penny's long fight with cancer can be an encouragement to us all, since, as with her hero Nelson, it was a resolute religious faith that gave meaning to her existence, which meant more to her than life itself.

We must also say farewell to Surgeon Vice Admiral Sir Godfrey Milton Thompson, who living in Menheniot where Lieutenant John Richards Lapenotiere Royal Navy is buried, played such an important role helping the Club with the conservation of his the grave and the ceremony of 'The New Trafalgar Dispatch'.

If I may end on a less melancholy note, I should like to highlight the success of this year's Trafalgar Dinner at Newhouse on 20th October. We had a splendid evening and one that was enjoyed by both guests of honour: Dr Dominic Tweddle, Director General of the National Museum of the Royal Navy, who gave 'The Immoral Memory—to Admiral Lord Nelson and all those who fell with him', and Michael Ellis, Britain's former Naval Attaché to Sweden, who talked about the Battle of the Nile using the Royal Navy's Command Support System with the new computer projector and screen recently donated to the Club by member Pat Davies (who has our thanks). And a big thank you to Kathy Clarke too, who organised the evening. A final thank you to Winston Leese, who has produced a lovely members silk tie of which there is a notice in this issue.

The last Club event this year is the lecture on Captain Bligh by Sir Arnold Wolfendale, former Astronomer Royal, on 24 November at the London Corinthian Sailing Club, Hammersmith. If you would like to come along please contact Vice Chairman Bill White.

May I and the Council of The 1805 Club take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. Yours aye,

Peter Warwick