

THE KEDGE ANCHOR

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THE 1805 CLUB LAUNCHES THE TRAFALGAR CAPTAINS MEMORIAL



"SURROUNDED BY FRIENDS"

An important message from the Chairman

On 1 October 1805, Nelson wrote to Emma Hamilton to report his safe arrival off Cadiz three days before. He told her of the famous dinner party at which he had explained to his assembled captains the plan he had devised for fighting the next battle – a plan so exciting that some of those present had burst into tears. And, he told Emma, they all assured him, "You are, My Lord, surrounded by friends whom you inspire with confidence."

Very few of the men gathered in the *Victory's* Great Cabin had served with Nelson before. The fleet off Cadiz had been hurriedly assembled to deal with the crisis, using ships drawn from many different sources. And yet, in a striking feat of leadership he was able to meld them into a single body of enthusiastic friends in just a few days.

That remarkable achievement of Nelson's has been the inspiration behind the ambitious project that The 1805 Club Council has been discussing over the last few months and which I would like to share with you now. We wanted to find a special way of marking 2005 – a way that would be distinctive to the Club; a scheme that no-one else would be likely to do and

which, at the same time, would reflect our core aims and objectives.

THE TRAFALGAR CAPTAINS MEMORIAL

The 1805 Club's Special Project for 2005

Our aim is nothing less than to locate the graves and memorials to the 3 admirals and all the commanding officers (29 Captains and 4 Lieutenants) who served at Trafalgar. Having located them, we will make an exact record of them, including full transcripts of the inscriptions. Where necessary, we will restore them.

We will then publish the results of our survey in three ways:

- An 1805 Club Special Monograph
- A Schools' Information Pack (one for each captain, to be distributed to schools close to each grave/memorial in the hope that they will "adopt" their local captain in 2005)
- A new Website

Finally, during 2005, we will arrange a number of special events at some of the key graves/memorials, to draw attention both to the captains themselves and to the work of The 1805 Club.

So we will have a restoration project, a major publication initiative and a series of events – all linked by a single theme.

I hope that you will agree that this is both an imaginative and a challenging scheme. And, having carefully considered the practicalities, we believe that it is within our capabilities. We will need to raise special funds, but the project has been deliberately designed so as to make it attractive to a number of fundraising bodies, especially those with an educational purpose. *(continued on inside page)*

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We will also need to enlist the practical assistance of our members. For, if we are to carry out the major task of recording every grave and memorial, we will need to ask individual members to take part by producing the records for a grave near them. We hope that a number of you will feel moved to join in, as your personal contribution to the build-up to 2005. We will be preparing a special proforma, and guidelines, to help you with this task.

At this stage, however, I am not asking for any commitment from you – either of time or of money. This is simply the “Preparative” signal! I want first to try out the idea to see if it excites you and attracts your support. If the feedback is positive, we will launch the Project formally at the AGM in Greenwich on 26 April. So do please let me, or any of the Council, know what you think.

Let me end with a challenge. How many of the Trafalgar Captains can you name without looking them up? Unless you have made a particular study of the battle, I doubt that you will be able to get beyond 10 or perhaps 12 at the most. Sadly, the majority of these gallant men are now forgotten, overshadowed by the memory of their great commander. *The Trafalgar Captains Memorial* will seek to redress the balance so that when in 2005 we commemorate the bicentenary of their great victory, *all* the Trafalgar leaders are honoured – especially in the places where they now lie, or are memorialised. Then, as on that late September afternoon in 1805, Nelson will be, once again, “surrounded by friends”.

Colin White

