



## Press Release

### Launch of the Friends of Sir Harry

The Lymington Society is today pleased to be announcing the official Launch Event for a new organisation called the "Friends of Sir Harry", which is being formed to help maintain the Walhampton Monument to Admiral Sir Harry Burrard Neale and to keep alive the memory of his many achievements - both local and national.

Following the successful joint Lymington Society and Lymington and Pennington Town Council project to restore the Grade II\* Burrard Neale Monument at Walhampton, the Lymington Society is organising a Public Meeting at 6.00 pm on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> of February at St Barbe Museum and Art Gallery, Lymington, to officially launch the Friends of Sir Harry, the creation of which was an agreed condition for receiving the funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help with the restoration project, which is now almost completed.

The aim of the Friends will be to enable local people to join as volunteers or supporters to help ensure that the Burrard Neale Monument and other related memorials in the town are looked after and that the local and national achievements of Admiral Sir Harry Burrard Neale continue to be researched and appreciated in the years ahead.

We are also pleased to announce that Lord Montagu of Beaulieu has kindly agreed to be Patron of the Friends and will be attending the Official Launch Event for the Friends of Sir Harry.

Anyone wishing to join the Friends, as well as anyone interested in helping to preserve and maintain the monument, is welcome to join us for a short Drinks Reception followed by the official launch of the Friends of Sir Harry in the presence of our Patron, MP Sir Desmond Swayne TD MP, the Mayor Ann Corbridge, local Councillors and invited guests.

Sir Harry Burrard Neale Bt., GCB GCMG, 2nd Baronet of Walhampton, (1765-1840) was a 'local lad made very good', joining the Navy at 13 and progressing to be Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet. He achieved national prominence in 1797 for his role in helping to quell the mutiny at the Nore - an anchorage in the Thames Estuary - when, with the help of his loyal crew, he sailed his ship away under fire from the mutineers and raised the alarm. Sir Harry was also Mayor of Lymington and an MP for the town for no fewer than 25 years over a period of 45 years. He and his brother introduced gas lighting to Lymington in 1832. Sir Harry is buried in St. Thomas Church.

The Friends are planning an interesting programme of future events about the many and varied aspects of the life and times of Sir Harry, including his naval career, where he captured or sank 20 enemy vessels, his political career as an MP, as well as his local contributions as Mayor and as a major local benefactor and estate owner.

Chairman of the Friends of Sir Harry, Don Mackenzie, said today at the announcement:

*The joint project carried out by the Lymington Society and the Town Council to fund and carry out this major Burrard Neale Monument restoration scheme and the associated education programme, has been a major achievement for the Society and is an excellent example of how a charity and the council can work together for the good of the local community. We are very grateful to the council for their help with this project.*

*We are also very grateful to Lord Montagu for kindly agreeing to be Patron of the Friends and for attending the Launch Event, as we are to Lymington's MP, Rt. Hon. Sir Desmond Swayne, TD, MP, for lending his support. New Forest East MP, Julian Lewis MP, is also fully supportive, but is unable to be present at the launch.*

*We are now moving to the next phase in the project to build up a dedicated Friends organisation, whose aim will be to try and ensure that the monument and its lovely woodland setting, continue to be looked after in the years ahead and do not become neglected and overgrown as before.*

*Sir Harry's life was one of great service, - to the navy, to his country and to his local constituents, and in his lifetime he was held in great esteem, as can be seen from the fulsome praise written on his monument.*

*We hope to develop a team of volunteers and to undertake fundraising to keep the monument and the surrounding area in great shape in the years ahead. We also plan to organise a series of lectures and sponsor research to compile a detailed database and archive his life and times, which will be of benefit to future historians.*

*We welcome anyone who would like to support the project to join the Friends and help us to turn these aims into reality. Full details can be found on our website [www.friendsosirharry.org](http://www.friendsosirharry.org), where supporters can join online or volunteer to help.*

Ends

Don Mackenzie

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