



DOCKYARDS

The Naval Dockyards Society

Exploring the civil branches of navies and their material culture

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Aerial view of Devonport. (12.09.2008 Crown copyright – MOD 2013 licence)

Bad news for Devonport Heritage!

Full story starts on page 2.

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Bad news for Devonport Heritage!

The National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) have announced a total withdrawal of support for a major enhancement of museum facilities at Devonport, and for the creation of a Cold War centre, incorporating the nuclear submarine HMS *Courageous*.^{*} We have replicated below the surprise NMRN announcement made on 22 February 2023. This came as a total shock to those at Devonport and indeed to our Society. It amounts to a reneging on a very substantial commitment quite clearly made by NMRN, but financial pressures have forced the decision. As we went to press, plans were still afoot to possibly reopen HMS *Courageous* as a standalone museum attraction. I enjoyed a superb tour of the submarine back in 2019. The announcement has attracted surprisingly little press attention, although the *Herald* in Plymouth led with the headline 'PLAN FOR COLD WAR CENTRE SHELVED – bid for £15m museum is dropped over lack of funding'.

^{*} These plans were discussed in *Dockyards*, December 2022, p. 16.

Our Chair, Dr Ann Coats, summed the situation up well on the *Courageous* aspect:

‘Our Society has a long record of supporting Devonport Dockyard heritage via visits, articles, planning applications and local broadcasts. We were very excited by this project, as it promised a secure future for *Courageous*, and also refurbishment for the dry dock, which needs it. We are therefore very disappointed, while appreciating the financial constraints all museums are suffering post-Covid, that this support will not be forthcoming to a demonstrably enterprising project with far fewer resources.’

Richard Holme



***Courageous*
in No. 3 basin
Devonport, her
present location
(I Whitehouse
collection)**

The statement from NMRN on 22 February 2023:

‘With deep regret, the Museum announces that we are intending to withdraw from our activity at HMNB Devonport from the start of April 2023. We recognise the national importance of the naval heritage in Plymouth and the importance of the work done across the city.

Unfortunately, we are unable to continue to support, or to make the required commitment to extend, our care of the historic collection at the Devonport Heritage Centre. We are unable also to step up to our stated desire to provide operational support to the volunteers of HMS *Courageous* in making the submarine accessible, or to actively support the associated plans for a future Cold War Centre.

This has been a difficult decision but, like many heritage organisations, the Museum is facing significant financial pressures in 2023/24, which is requiring challenging decisions. In reviewing our future budget on 25 January 2023 our Trustees took the decision that, in accordance with strategy, we must focus on the sustainability of current activities, and on existing development priorities, and not add further unbudgeted pressures.

Devonport collection

The Museum has managed the Devonport collection on behalf of the Ministry of Defence since 2017 without any additional revenue funding to support. We have been proud to take on a collection of 100,000s of archive and artefact items, so assiduously assembled by volunteers, and to invest in preserving the collection through a period of major change within South Yard. Our employment of a professional curator has raised standards and enabled the continued application of 10,000s of hours of volunteer time and expertise. We want to pay tribute to their work and stress that the decision is no reflection on them. At the end of our involvement, thanks to their efforts, we leave the collection better managed, better conserved and better understood than before this investment.

However, at the point that the MOD is offering to transfer ownership of the collection outright to the Museum we find that the Museum is unable to make the major capital investment in buildings which is essential if the collection is to be preserved. Without the prospect of revenue to support activities, we are unable to extend our staffing and take on the responsibilities

and liabilities which come with ownership of the collection. With regret therefore on 21 February we have had to brief the Heritage Centre volunteers about our withdrawal.

We will continue to offer advice to the Royal Navy as it makes plans for the management of the collection without the NMRN, which will draw all our understanding of the collection's wider significance for both the history of the Navy and of Devonport and the region.

HMS *Courageous* and Cold War centre

In October 2021 the Museum's trustees agreed to support Phase 1 of a project to preserve HMS *Courageous* and develop the feasibility of placing the submarine as the centre of a new Cold War centre. This required the Museum in summary to

- Support the operation of HMS *Courageous* by generating revenue from ticket sales and merchandise
- Raise capital funding to develop into a capital phase 2.

During the challenging environment of 2022, it has not proved possible for the Museum to find the additional funds required or offer staff support to the operations of *Courageous* or support capital fundraising.'

Professor Dominic Tweddle, Director-general, 22 February 2023

Naturally there is huge disappointment from the team involved with HMS *Courageous* and we reproduce below their press release.

COLD WAR CENTRE & COURAGEOUS – PRESS RELEASE

The Cold War Centre Project Team regrets to announce that despite three years of research, discussions, investigations and negotiations the ambition to create a Cold War Centre, with HMS COURAGEOUS a decommissioned nuclear-powered submarine at its heart, cannot be delivered in the immediate future.

The two-year Covid shut down along with the current international and UK based financial crises have placed severe constraints on museum funding, Heritage Lottery funding and Grant in Aid from the MoD. This has led the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) to withdraw from the partnership to deliver the project and indeed from all naval heritage projects in Plymouth.

Nevertheless, much has been achieved:

- £40,000 was raised within eight weeks through a Crowdfunding appeal.
- This funded an objective Feasibility Study into the practicalities and costs of preserving *Courageous*.
- The work was carried out in early 2021 and identified that moving *Courageous* to 1 Dock as a public attraction is practical and achievable.
- A route map to obtain the necessary permissions from MoD and other stakeholders to allocate *Courageous* as a permanent maritime heritage display was identified and agreed in principle.
- *Courageous* could be moved into a restored No. 1 Dock, South Yard at a cost of between £3m – £5m (2022 prices).

Despite the loss of professional museum support and the consequent stalling of plans, we believe maintaining *Courageous* as a public attraction remains important. The Project Team will work with the Naval Base Commander (Devonport) and other organisations to ensure that *Courageous* is once again open to the public as soon as practical.

In the meantime, the project is working with Plymouth University of the Arts to create an archive of video interviews with Cold War submariners. It is also working with Birmingham University to create a virtual digital record of *Courageous* to make the experience of visiting the boat available to a much wider audience.

For more information and background contact:

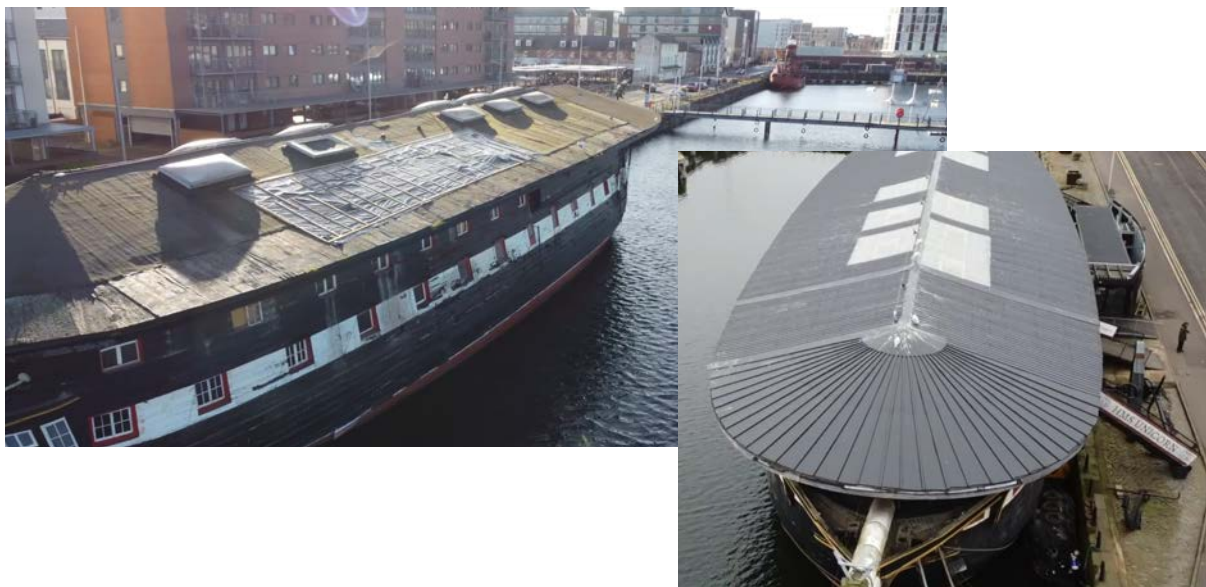
Commander Ian Whitehouse, Royal Navy – 07778 789104 / ian@fradds.co.uk

Welcome from the editor

Welcome to another issue of *Dockyards*. We naturally lead on the shocking news on the withdrawal of funding for heritage facilities for Devonport. Reading the NMRN announcement, readers will perhaps draw their own conclusions. Our very best wishes go to the Devonport volunteers and to the HMS *Courageous* team.

On a happier note, I am pleased to report that our Chair, Dr Ann Coats, became a Reader in Maritime History at the University of Portsmouth last year. Her profile **Ann Coats | University of Portsmouth** shows the breadth of her expertise and interests. Ann tells me that she is now a Co-Investigator of the 'Unpath'd Waters' Discovery Project (<https://unpathdwaters.org.uk/>) funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council programme **Towards a National Collection**, which aims to create new ways for audiences to access and interact with disparate historical collections. The University of Portsmouth work package 'People and the Sea' will test how we can enhance the significance of submerged and displayed shipwrecks for new audiences. Ann contributes as ever to this issue.

Good to hear also that most of the roof of HMS *Unicorn* at Dundee has been replaced, following storm damage in winter 2021; see the images courtesy of the Unicorn Preservation Society. These show the roof before and after the replacement. 2024 will see the 200th anniversary of this wonderful ship's launch at Chatham.



Further great news in this issue from the Isla del Rey in Minorca with a royal visit and continued success in their projects.

Clive Holden has contributed an interesting article on the naval barracks at Chatham. Clive has written five books on Kent military history and is Chair of the Kent Defence Research Group, see **Kent Historic Defences | Kent Archaeological Society** (kentarchaeology.org.uk) – the website has articles on aspects of Chatham Dockyard and dockyard defences.

Clive was one of a team of National Trust volunteers who have uncovered much of the Wanstone coastal battery on the cliffs near Dover. There were two 15in naval guns, the largest breech-loading guns on the UK mainland, nicknames Clem and Jane. Their installation started in 1941. Interesting information can be viewed on **Wanstone battery history | South East | National Trust**. NDS member Ian Buxton was helpful in tracing the origin of these guns. Numbers 17 and 18 were originally fitted on the battleship HMS *Royal Sovereign*, when commissioned in 1916. Gun 114 was a reserve barrel.*

* *Warships Supplement* (World Ship Society) no. 67, 1981 – 'The 15 Inch Gun in the Royal Navy' – Arnold Hague.



The guns themselves were removed and scrapped in the 1950s but rubbish has been cleared from the Jane site, exposing one of the two mountings. I was fortunate to visit Wanstone for an open day last year, see image above.



Another coastal defence for Kent was the various Thames forts. Again last year I was pleased to go on a most enjoyable seven-hour cruise from Queenborough with fellow NDS members Celia and Deane Clark to view three of them, see two images here of Red Sands Forts.

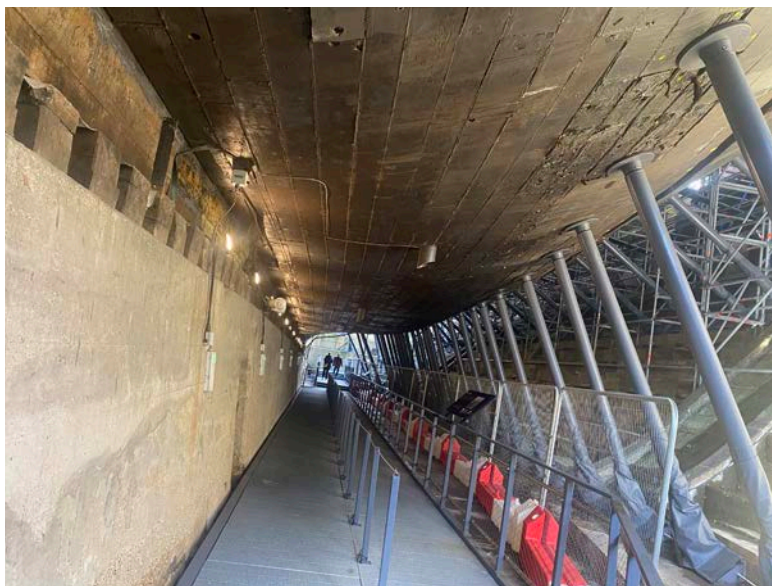


By the time you receive this newsletter, former NDS Secretary Dr Paul Brown will have received at Greenwich the Anderson Medal from the SNR for the best maritime book of 2022 for *Abandon Ship: the real story of the sinkings in the Falkland War*. Paul is a busy author and I've enjoyed seeing his latest book, *Elizabeth's Navy*, with some excellent photos of our late Queen's navy.

News from Malta is that the Maritime Museum, the former naval bakery, is being renovated. We plan a full report in our next issue.

We understand that Portsmouth Council is purchasing the Tipner magazine complex and this may lead to the old magazine buildings being renovated.

I was glad to make a rare visit to Portsmouth in November 2022, my SNR membership card giving me free admission to the Dockyard. It was marvellous to go on *Victory* for the first time since childhood and the highlight was viewing her from the bottom of her dry dock.



**Coppered hull;
gudgeons and pintles.**



As we went to press, I was saddened to hear of the passing on 13 May of Brian Hargeaves, a leading light in the World Ship Society and eminent naval historian who provided four images for this issue.

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I am always glad to receive articles or information for *Dockyards* and details of any research that members are carrying out or items they have had published.

Many thanks to Nicholas Blake and Rachel Smyth for their superb work in production of this newsletter.

Please note my new address 53 Tanners Hill Gardens, Saltwood, Hythe, Kent, CT21 5HX. Phone is still 07801 947339 and email richardholme8@gmail.com. Please do not use my old btemail account which I am closing.

Richard Holme

Convoys Wharf (Deptford Royal Dockyard) Community Consultation: The reality of developer-led consultation

Continuing the two-decades+ saga of Deptford Royal Dockyard's development, in 2015 Hutchison Property Group was granted outline planning permission and has since broken up the 40-acre site into smaller plots. Plots covered in this article are 1, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, 21 and 22. The process has drawn dissent.¹ Also see Emma Warren's article in *The Developer*: 'Deptford docks: "There will be no references left of what's there"'.²

Planning applications require Local Authority public consultation, including consultation with neighbouring residents and community groups.³ This article recounts recent experiences in Deptford.

Convoys Wharf S106: Draft Heritage Principles were presented online on 24 October 2022 to a small group of heritage organisations.* NDS welcomed the debate on heritage principles, but to be fully inclusive of Deptford's excellent community initiatives and 'wider community engagement' (p. 3), it would have been more effective to have invited a wider range of organisations to submit their ideas *before* this document was drafted. Only a limited number of organisations had the opportunity of commenting on the developer's document, which we first saw *after* the 24 October presentation, while Voice for Deptford (V4D) was not initially invited. Some of the discussion related to future use of the Grade II listed Olympia covered slipways.

On 4 November 2022, NDS responded (in italics below) to Hutchison's seven Draft Heritage Principles.

*

1) 'Inspiration & information **NOT** replication: the site heritage should be tastefully used to create a sense of place. It should not be a like for like recreation.'

This principle has been used by the architects to design character areas which do not by materials, scale or spaces reflect the built environment, community or culture of Deptford Royal Dockyard or the Victualling Yard. They typically reference international architectural styles in large blocks and superficially illustrate the use of brick, timber, cast iron, arches, rooflines and a canal becoming a 'water feature.'

Several comments in the workshop ruled out 'pastiche', which appears to be used as an umbrella term to exclude any material culture from Deptford Royal Dockyard or the Victualling Yard.

Your 'modern and contemporary' example of integrating John Evelyn's heritage was to engrave his words within the doorway of a modern commercial block. This seems facile and ineffective as a) who will notice and be able to read a mass of text within a doorway, and b) as it is in English it is culturally exclusive.

2) 'The site's connection to the river and the surrounding Deptford via gates and historic walls should be enhanced and celebrated where possible.'

We absolutely support this, but there is little evidence of routes and vistas tying entrances to the River Thames.

3) 'The Olympia Building, despite only serving its original function for 23 years, had many functions

* Section 106 agreements are legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, that ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken. They are most widely used to support transport infrastructure improvements, although there are also examples of obligations being used to support training initiatives, environmental improvements and corporate objectives as well as to mitigate the impacts of development. Planning Portal.

and uses, and serves as a microcosm for the wider development; this should be celebrated by restoring its edifice and connectivity to the water and the rest of the masterplan.'

The purpose of this structure was to cover building slips, from which ships would be launched into the Basin. It has lost its connectivity to the water and therefore this spatial relationship will be lost.

4) 'The Olympia Building will also serve as the focal point for the wider development through deference of nearby plots and the creation of a new public square.'

It is a worthy principle to make Olympia a focal point, but how do nearby plots defer to it? It will be surrounded by tall buildings. The unremarkable 'rill' connected to a 'suggested mirror pond' (p. 14) is a mere echo of the previous dominant presence of water.

5) 'Plant species and masterplan gardens will reflect the thinking and strategy of John Evelyn.'

This should be a straightforward principle to implement, incorporating Evelyn's abundant planting practices from his detailed writings and plans, and overseas plants transported in voyages.

6) 'We will celebrate the unique history of the site by developing character areas to give the broadest reflection of site activity over the past Millennium.'

These principles have not yet unlocked the potential for tangible and intangible interpretation through character areas, but even circumvent challenging stories such as slavery:

- *Due to its geology and position on the Thames, this site has experienced 10,000 years of maritime activity.*
- *It is the second oldest British royal dockyard, founded by Henry VIII in 1513 (500 years old).*
- *Innovation: it was the leading R&D dockyard on England's capital river until 1869; developing prototype ship designs; its Master Shipwright was the most senior and skilled of all master shipwrights; civil engineer John Rennie redesigned the basin mouth, caisson, and riverside wall c. 1814.*
- *Professional collaborations with surrounding private shipyards and the East India Company connected it to global British colonies.*
- *Knowledge transfer: Czar Peter the Great of Russia studied shipbuilding at Deptford in 1698 before building St Petersburg Dockyard.*
- *Deptford fitted out ships for major world exploration, circumnavigation and war, for Sir Francis Drake, Rear-Admiral George Anson, Captain James Cook and Joseph Banks, Commander William Bligh and Vice-Admiral Horatio Nelson.*
- *Monarchs from Henry VIII to George III visited Deptford; Queen Elizabeth knighted Francis Drake aboard Golden Hind in Deptford in 1581.*
- *Literary: The seventeenth-century diarist and horticulturalist John Evelyn and diarist and Navy Board official Samuel Pepys described many official visits and events in their writings.*
- *Documented workforce disputes epitomise the power of skilled male and female workforces to win concessions.*

7) 'We will ensure that specific plots reflect the character areas in which they sit.'

This has not yet been delivered. The rich historic images included in this document have not had a visible outcome in the character areas, which convey no Deptford uniqueness. The character areas do not distinguish their building plots, which cut across original building lines, so there is no sense of continuity to integrate the past with the present.

*

Proceeding with their community engagement, Hutchison Property Group then organised an event at Grinling Gibbins School, Deptford, on 5 December 2022. This was the first time I had met V4D's Malcolm Cadman and Marion Briggs face to face, and I was introduced to Phil Turner of Second



Above: Campaigners Philip Turner, Marion Briggs and Malcolm Cadman.
Above right: Artist's impression of the proposed Olympia Way at Convoys Wharf.

Wave, a Deptford youth arts group.⁴ It was also a while since I had caught up with Julian Kingston of The Lenox Project.⁵ The deputy mayor of Lewisham and three councillors were also present.

Presentations were made to the approximately one hundred strong audience by the Terrapin Group, who offer stakeholder engagement services and strategic advice on planning in London, Jonathan Sarfaty of Hutchison Property Group, and its architects Farrells⁶ and Jesticco + Whiles.⁷

Terrapin announced a programme of quarterly community engagement meetings outside official planning meetings. Jonathan stated that Hutchison would be working on 40 acres of the dockyard in 2023: 'one of the largest development sites in Deptford'. They would 'restore the riverside to Deptford' and build 3,500 houses including 525 'affordable' homes (no definition of which 'affordable' he meant). Building would begin in the east and move westwards, including 33,700m² of publicly accessible open space and 50,400m² of new leisure facilities: cultural, hotel, community and retail. I suppose retail does count as a leisure activity, but not for the people who work in the sector. It will also include the 'John Evelyn Legacy' with trees, linked to the Sayes Court site in Grove Street and Prince Street, extending the Thames Path.

We then separated into four breakout groups to discuss cultural themes. Malcolm, Marion, Julian, Phil and I joined a group with other locals, including Sayes Court Garden⁸ and MōSaF Museum of Slavery and Freedom⁹, to which NDS awarded a Heritage Grant in 2021.

According to Convoys' 'Feedback from 5th December', published on 20 March 2023, all four groups considered the following question: "How can Deptford's historic and cultural heritage be reflected in the development of plans for the Olympia Building, in particular in relation to the theme of . . . WORKSPACE . . . LEISURE . . . FOOD . . . COMMUNITY".

We had a productive discussion on the potential of using Olympia, the 1846 Grade II covered dual slipway, as a cutting-edge showcase exhibition centre for Deptford Dockyard's innovation, skills, nature, museums, technology, digital archives and slavery interpretation. Julian suggested it could highlight the connection between Olympia's covered slips, where ships were built, and The Lenox Project, which plans to build a replica of the 1678 *Lenox* and train young people through apprenticeships, and a museum of Deptford shipbuilding. MōSaF argued that heritage should be central. One aspect of the Hutchison's plans is that Olympia, the only surviving above-ground historical building, will be disconnected from its basin, which has disappeared, and the Thames waterfront, and will be surrounded by tall buildings. We regretted the fact that that Deptford people have been prevented for two decades, by Convoys' barriers, from connecting with the Thames.

When the discussion moved on to the four 'themes', which the organisers claimed had arisen from a previous community engagement meeting, one group member stated that these topics had been proposed by Hutchison at an earlier meeting, but they had been rejected. The breakout group rejected these 'themes' as being too vague to be meaningful to the community and suggested alternative community themes: 'Innovation + Skills', Creativity + Culture', Nature + the Environment'

and 'Continuity of Community'. We then discussed how active interpretation of these themes could deliver a unique and challenging character to the currently bland development and make it a destination. V4D urged more family-size homes (most planned have one or two bedrooms) and lower building heights to enable vistas from Deptford to the Thames. The Lenox Project had just launched its Business Plan and Funding Strategy under the S106 terms ('The Lenox Project, A lasting legacy for Deptford'). Julian said: 'We seem to have conceived the largest maritime project in the country.'

We asked if our suggestions would be reported to Hutchison, otherwise the community engagement process was 'not building trust', and it was a waste of our time to attend such box-ticking events. We were told: 'I will feed back to Jonathan [Sarfaty].' However, when Convoys published its feedback on 20 March, one of its 'top 3 actions that Convoys Wharf plan to take following this public engagement exercise' included 'An idea that was popular was to make the space a high innovation, highly creative place.' The Convoys Wharf team 'have taken this on board', and are consulting with the vice-chancellors of all Greater London universities to discuss opportunities for further education in Deptford and the site.

So they took up two of our words, but none of the vibrant and socially valuable plans offered by V4D, Lenox, Sayes Court and MōSaF for Olympia and the safeguarded wharf, and there is no change to the developers' bland and characterless commercial designs.

Since that meeting, The Lenox Project formally submitted its S106 business plan to Lewisham and the developer but both parties rejected it, due to infrastructure costs and planning constraints. It now seems that the 'safeguarded' wharf identified for the *Lenox* at the west of the site will lose half its space to housing, despite Mayor Siddiq Khan's 2018 review confirming the safeguarding. Hutchison have also apparently announced that they will include Lenox's 'meanwhile use' saker cannon project within their cultural statement, to be handled by Terrapin with no further consultation. Lenox has, however, partnered with the local skills centre to move their plans forward.

Additionally, V4D comments that Hutchison have granted a lease to a commercial company, Spaces and Stories, to set up infrastructure for the Green Shed, a one-storey building at the west of the site, to establish a meanwhile use programme. This refers to *the short-term use of temporarily empty buildings, often* for the benefit of the community, and was discussed on 24 October in relation to using Olympia to showcase local projects. V4D has a number of questions, including about the terms of the S106 agreement for meanwhile use. It seems that Hutchison no longer plan to use Olympia for meanwhile use displays.

Duncan Hawkins at the Convoys Wharf site, 2012. (R. Holme)



V4D also alerts NDS to a new Reserved Matters Application (Ref. DC/23/130727) for full planning consent on Plot 01. This plot includes the historic Tudor and Georgian storehouse foundations and buried double dry dock next to the Master Shipwright's House (which is not part of the development). It proposes to 'bridge the scheduled monument' foundations during construction of a U-shaped twelve-storey block of 247 one-, two-, and three-bedroom flats facing the river, with '15% of residential units to be affordable'. Very little of the documentation covers the oldest built heritage of the dockyard. The heritage design and access statement does not describe the double dock beyond indicating the dock gates, the heritage statement consists only of a cover page, and a landscape plan and masterplan illustrating a 'Dry Dock Garden'.

Despite two decades of critique and meticulously structured proposals to bring Deptford's diverse heritage alive by community groups, most of the site will be densely covered by apartment blocks which will not relate to the historic layout and vistas of Deptford Royal Dockyard. Community groups do not feel that their voices are listened to, due to the terms of the 2015 outline planning permission and the S106 agreement.

Dr Ann Coats, with Julian Kingston, Marion Briggs and Malcolm Cadman

Note by the editor – in March 2012, consultant archaeologist Duncan Hawkins gave a fascinating tour of the Convoys Wharf site to NDS members, including myself. Duncan is pictured on page 11 by the archaeological investigation then in progress, with the imposing Olympia Buildings in the background. Duncan subsequently wrote an excellent article on the excavations at Deptford 2000/2017 for our 159-page *Transactions* Volume 11, *Five Hundred Years of Deptford and Woolwich Royal Dockyards*, available on Amazon for just £6.99.

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- 3 1 April 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/consultation-and-pre-decision-matters#what-local-planning-authority-consultation-takes-place-before-a-planning-application-is-decided-and-with-who>
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- 5 <http://www.buildthelenox.org/>
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- 7 <https://www.jesticowhiles.com/>
- 8 <https://www.sayescourt.org.uk/>
- 9 <https://www.mosaf.org.uk/>

Haslar Hospital in the national press – and what wasn't said . . .

'Naval Gazing. Andrew Parker Bowles, the Queen's first husband, talks to Carol Lewis about transforming a military hospital into a village' *Sunday Times* 'Home', 19 March 2023 pp. 18–19.

'Once the biggest military hospital in Europe, it was also the oldest one in Britain when it was decommissioned in 2007. On the day we visit the vast, 62-acre site is deserted except for a few workmen and the chatter of Andrew Parker Bowles and Pat Power discussing the site's history, refurbishment of the buildings and their landscaping plans – interspersed with racing chat . . . The site is being transformed into a £200 million waterside village by Haslar Developments, of which Parker Bowles is chairman and Power a director.'

Martin Marks OBE and I, as authors of *Barracks, Forts and Ramparts. Regeneration Challenges for Portsmouth Harbour's Defence Heritage* (Tricorn Books 2020), which has a chapter about the former Royal Naval Hospital, exchanged a wry smile. Where were the residents of the fine Georgian

medical officers' houses, including MPs Caroline Dineage and Mark Lancaster, not to mention the occupants of the expensive flats in the converted Canada House, wrongly identified in a photograph?

No mention either of the SAVE Haslar Taskforce, the 20,000 people who marched through the town in 1999 demonstrating against the closure of the hospital, the 220-person deputation march in London, the 100,000-signature petition delivered to 10 Downing Street, or the "Veterans' Village, an entirely appropriate proposal to continue the strong historical connection and therapeutic use of the site for the armed services . . . open to all people who have served at sea – in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, merchant navy and Royal Navy and also retired members of the RAF. A long-term aim is to make Haslar an example of how business and charities can work together to produce something of national importance." Planning the future of Haslar Hospital as a nationally important Georgian ensemble required particular care – and design flair – sparking the intervention of HRH Prince Charles, as a former naval officer whose first command was HMS *Bronington* based at Gunwharf on the other side of the harbour. He and Prince William backed the Veterans' Village for naval veterans and their partners (the Boys and Girls in Blue), linked to the Royal Hospital in Chelsea (the Boys in Red).

In late 2009 this proposal convinced the MOD's Defence Estates whose chairman was Admiral Laurence, Princess Anne's husband, to sell Haslar Hospital to Our Enterprise Haslar at the low price of £3.5m on that basis – only for the backers of the Village to be rejected by the new owners.

Royal involvement had come earlier, in 2008, in the form of the Prince's Regeneration Trust's Enquiry by Design. Funded by the MOD, it came up with a Master Plan for the Hospital backed by Gosport Borough Council and English Heritage. The new owner was not party to the Enquiry's recommendations, which were ignored in their plans. In 2014, five years after the purchase, outline planning permission was given for a £100m development which included new build homes, retirement homes not linked specifically to naval veterans, a care home, a hotel and spa, office and business premises, restaurants . . . followed by detailed planning permission in 2017. Veterans enjoy therapeutic gardening in part of the historic cemetery, but there is no public access to it.

The maximum number of people living on the site was to be 1,500 in the original plans. But by September 2020 there were only 50 residents: as well as the MPs, retired naval officers, medical and police officers and a professor of maths from the University of Portsmouth. A reflection of how far from the original vision to care for veterans it had become, twenty-one years after it was sold, five properties were reportedly in 2020/21 sold for about £3m. The restored Canada House offered thirty-six 'luxury one- and two-bedroom independent living apartments with parking'. In September 2020 a two-bedroom house was for sale for £520,000. A two-bedroom flat in a new build was £475,000.

Another challenge at Haslar is how the vital seawall will be raised and financed to combat rising sea levels and storm surges.

The expectation that publicly owned land would be used to public and local benefit was completely absent – and there is no public access to this gated community. How we will visit Haslar Heritage's museum in the Old Medical Supplies Agency building of 1756, which is to be run in association with the National Museum of the Royal Navy which King Charles is apparently due to open – has yet to be revealed.

Dr Celia Clark

Barracks, Forts and Ramparts. Regeneration Challenges for Portsmouth Harbour's Defence Tricorn Books 2020 £30 + £5 post and packing) is available from Celiadeane.clark@btopenworld.com

Isla del Rey, Minorca – Spring 2023 report

As the days grow longer and the cold Tramontana wind gives way to early rays of warm sunshine, the winter months now seem to fade into memory and the anticipation of a busy summer season ahead inspires us with renewed energy.

Our highlight of the year so far has been the visit of King Felipe and Queen Letizia in January. It was arranged at fairly short notice after the announcement of their visit to Ciutadella for the opening of a pharmacy, and thanks to some close ties with our President they accepted an invitation to visit the old British hospital as well. Indeed, a memorable day for us all, they both showed considerable



Above: A group photograph of the royal visit.



Left: The King and Queen of Spain with Isla del Rey president General Luis Alejandro (rtd) on their January 2023 visit.

interest in our restoration work and made an effort to speak to as many volunteers as possible. It was a great privilege to host them.

The Isla del Rey in Mahon harbour has otherwise enjoyed a quiet few months and amongst the volunteers a bond of solidarity is strengthened by our communal commitment and willingness to turn a hand to whatever is needed to help restore the first purpose-built British naval hospital. At the end of Sunday morning's work we all join together for some refreshments and that's the time to exchange stories and news of all developments. Our numbers have been increased with new volunteers from as far afield as Australia, Holland, Belgium and Ukraine, all now living in Menorca, so we're a truly international team and our weekly reports and visits are offered in not only Spanish but English and French as well! Every month we have a cultural visit to some interesting location in Menorca, and each year we have an overseas trip organized to somewhere connected to Isla del Rey. Previous visits have included Florida in the US, Somerset in the UK, Belle Isle in France, and many more. This spring the plans are being finalized to visit Puerto Torres in Sardinia and see the site where the Italian battleship *Roma* was sunk almost eighty years ago.

I'd like to mention just one or two of the many amongst us who work unceasingly and discreetly for our benefit. There is Marcos Segui, now eighty-five years old, but known as the tree-whisperer. He quietly works away on his own every Sunday in a corner on the land above the harbour, clearing, tidying and replanting the wild olive trees which will provide shade for our visitors in the summer, especially those who visit the 'Cantina' of Hauser and Wirth. Another is Toni Arcas, who works all Sunday morning on narrow scaffolding with his head tilted back at forty-five degrees while restoring the faded *tetramorfos* of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John on the ceiling of the Catholic church.

Volunteers don't all go for the easiest jobs! One of our most dependable volunteers is Mike Puttock; for many years now he has arrived on the first boat at 8 a.m. to get to work on the gardens. Thanks to him we can all enjoy a stroll right around the coast of the little island along a charmingly created path where the protected and rare lizards can also run freely and hide safely in the stone walls. Every one of the volunteers makes a contribution, some work in a team or in pairs and some alone but each plays his or her part in the metamorphosis of the old building.

Recently, the Director's room has been refurbished complete with new ceilings. When I think back to before our work started, when all the beams of the floor had been stolen and it had collapsed, leaving only damaged walls covered in graffiti, I can hardly believe the change. Our President, General Luis Alejandro (a little bit optimistically at the moment), has been suggesting we could rent out these rooms at a lucrative price. I must admit they are starting to look very splendid and with amazing views right down the harbour; it would be something very different for a honeymoon! So, who knows?

The Hauser & Wirth Gallery on Isla del Rey opens on 2 April with some as yet lesser known international artists having an opportunity to display their talent, and the yellow catamarans will be providing transport again as usual. The gallery will then close from 29 May to 18 June in order to prepare the exhibition of this year's principal artist, Cristina Quarles.

More information can be obtained on their website: <https://www.hauserwirth.com/locations/25040-menorca/>

For up-to-date transport information you can check with Yellow Catamarans: <https://www.yellowcatamarans.com/en/home>

If you haven't yet had an opportunity to visit us, I hope you will find time before long. Between the historic hospital and the new gallery there is something for everybody and not to mention a very popular restaurant, La Cantina, to relax in afterwards.

Beverley Ward

Good news from the South Atlantic

The good news from the Falklands is that the groundworks (see image on page 16) have been laid for the new Lookout Gallery, expanding the Historic Dockyard Museum at Stanley. The initial estimated cost of £2m is fully funded now. The Gallery will allow better display of some of the Museum's larger artefacts and also some reserve collection items, which have not previously been exhibited. Also on page 16 is a photo of the ceremony on 12 November 2022, where commencement of works was commemorated at the Museum. Chairman of the Museum Trustees Richard Cockwell is pictured with Major General Vaux, in command of 42 Commando in 1982. As planned, this fell in 2022, the fortieth anniversary of 1982. Museum manager Teena Ormond comments:

Lookout Gallery is being built in an area that is being developed. There are already a couple of businesses to the west of the plot and the south. I expect the development will continue to the east.

The name 'Lookout' comes from a couple of prominent rocks to the south of Stanley (on top of the hill) west of the Lookout Gallery plot. In the days of sailing ships young lads would use that spot to look out for ships in distress heading towards Stanley. They would inform their employer (either the Falkland Islands Company or Dean) who would send off a boat with an Agent on board with the purpose of securing any business in the way of repairs or stores.

The Historic Dockyard Museum commemorates the rich maritime history of the Falklands, along with the social and natural history of the islands. See the website at falkland-museum.com. It opened its new site at what was the Government Dockyard in 2014. The museum director is Andrea Barlow. Before the Covid pandemic, annual visitor numbers were around 22,000 – to a substantial extent from cruise ships.

I am glad to be Treasurer of the Friends of the Falkland Island Museum and Jane Cameron archives – fimafriends.co.uk. Along with others, we contributed to the cost of the Lookout Gallery



The groundworks being laid (above left), the commemoration ceremony (left) and Cradock's telescope (above). Images courtesy of the Falkland Islands Museum, except the telescope by the author.

and from time to time purchase items of historic interest for the Museum. A couple of recent purchases might be of interest. Both relate to the 1914 Battle of Coronel when Admiral Cradock tragically was defeated by a vastly superior German force, led by Von Spee.

The first purchase relates to Cradock's telescope from a previous command when a captain, and a photo of it (with its leather case) is above. I was glad to pick this up at auctioneers Charles Miller in Fulham, a veritable Aladdin's cave of maritime memorabilia.

The second is a letter from the then governor, Allardyce, dated 26 November 1914, giving his thoughts on Coronel and its consequences. An extract follows.

One would have thought that at this outpost of Empire, one would have been in no immediate danger of the Teuton, but to one like yourself with a parallel knowledge of South America it is well known that the South American republics are simply honeycombed with Germans and that they have very large interests in Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. For instance, in the province of Rio Grande do Sol, there are no less than 500,000 Germans . . . As a consequence we were in trouble from the start by wireless, we heard of filibustering expeditions in our immediate vicinity, steamers with reservists on board, varying from 400 to 1000, hung round us for days, then a cruiser paid us a visit at night, but providentially mistook a blue light for a searchlight, and thinking a warship was in port cleared out. Yes, we have had quite an exciting time and as generalissimo I have much responsibility and worry. The colonists have turned up splendidly and we have several hundred volunteers. Then later we had our own squadron here under Admiral Cradock. I saw a great deal of him and we kept became great, indeed, intimate friends. Poor fellow, but he was . . . given an impossible task with the material at his disposal.

The naval action of Coronel was most disastrous, resulting in the loss of the *Good Hope*, and the *Monmouth*, and every soul on board! A terrible business. The heavy sea interfered with the firing of lower deck guns, but in any case, the *Scharnhorst*, and her sister ship, the *Gneisenau*, are armoured cruisers and much more powerful than anything opposed to them. As soon as the fateful tidings reached us about the night of the 4th (the action took place on the 1st), I expected an immediate raid on the colony by the cruiser squadron.

Governor Allardyce, given the threat of invasion and news of 'German barbarities in Belgium', encouraged the evacuation of all women and children to Camp, the country outside Stanley. The only defence for Stanley at the time was the grounded pre-dreadnought HMS *Canopus*. As history records though, heavy reinforcements had arrived from the UK by the time Von Spee's squadron did attempt to raid the Falklands on 8 December.

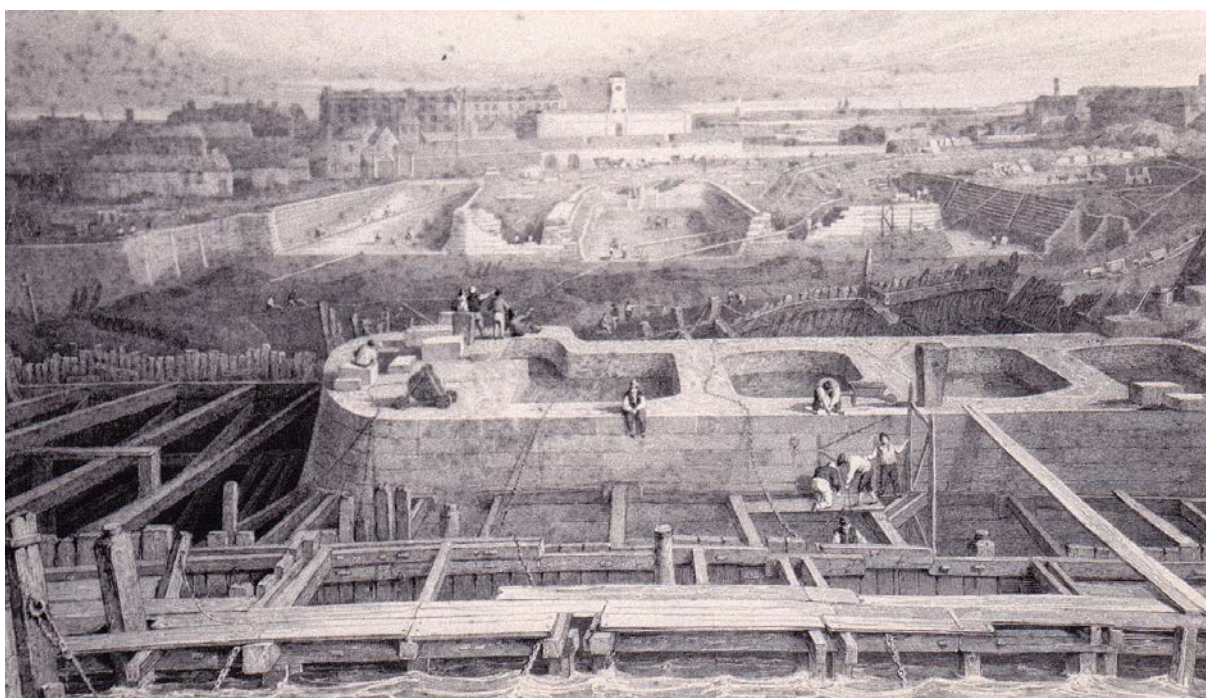
Richard Holme

Sir Edward Banks and his links with Sheerness

Located on the Isle of Sheppey on the south side of the Thames, up to the middle of the seventeenth century the area that was to become HM Dockyard Sheerness was unsettled marshland. War with the Dutch in 1665 caused the Admiralty to seek an alternative to its Chatham, Deptford and Woolwich yards, and work on a new dockyard at Sheerness commenced. The reclaimed land of the dockyard was protected from the elements by breakwaters made up from the hulks of old ships. Over time these rotted away. Drastic action was required and in 1817 work on a new dockyard was begun.

By 1823 an outer sea wall, the Great Basin and three new dry docks had been constructed and these were opened to great acclaim by the Duke of Clarence (Britain's first Lord High Admiral since 1709 and later William IV). By 1830 additional basins, dry docks, workshops, officer accommodation and a church had been added and the new dockyard, occupying some sixty acres, was largely complete. It is well known that the new dockyards, built between 1817 and 1830, were designed by John Rennie and, after his death, by his sons. It is less well known that the construction was undertaken by the contractors Jolliffe & Banks. While this was a partnership between Edward Banks and William Jolliffe, Edward Banks was its driving force and responsible for supervising all its contracts.

Construction at Sheerness around 1822.





Sir Edward Banks
(National Portrait
Gallery).

Sir Edward Banks

Edward Banks rose from humble origins to become one of Regency Britain's great entrepreneurs; he was knighted in 1822 and amassed considerable wealth. Banks had no formal education and started work as a navvy in Yorkshire. However, it is clear that he was capable of learning through observation and he possessed natural business acumen. He must have also been hard working and have had the ability to control several large complex projects at the same time. Importantly, through the Jolliffe family, he had good contacts with influential politicians. Political contacts were especially important as Jolliffe & Banks undertook a number of large public works projects of which the most famous were the construction of the Waterloo, Southwark and London Bridges across the Thames. Other public works included the construction of several prisons and work at Woolwich and Deptford naval dockyards.

There were a number of fairly discrete phases to Banks' career. Initially he was involved with constructing canals in Yorkshire. He then encountered the Jolliffe family and moved to Surrey to help them develop their limestone quarry in Merstham. In 1807 Banks formed a partnership with William Jolliffe that undertook increasingly large public works including Waterloo Bridge (completed 1817) and Southwark Bridge (completed 1819). The final phase of his career involved the construction of 'new' London Bridge (completed 1831) and undertaking massive drainage projects largely in the Fens. A common theme of these varied projects was Jolliffe & Banks working for the major engineers of the time, most especially John Rennie. There was also invariably a link with water where Banks' expertise in the use of cofferdams (the process of enclosing an area of water and then pumping it out to create a dry working environment so that construction work could be undertaken) often gave him a competitive edge when tendering for contracts.

While working at the Merstham quarries Banks developed a strong attachment with the nearby village of Chipstead and he and many of his immediate family are buried in a tomb in the churchyard of St Margaret's. Inside St Margaret's there is a marble bust of Sir Edward and a memorial stone decorated with delineations of one arch from each of his London bridges. It has a long inscription recounting his public works and extolling his character.

Sheerness Dockyard

Under contracts made in 1817, 1819 and 1825, Jolliffe & Banks agreed to build three dry docks at Sheerness as well as a great and a small basin, a mast pond, five docks and an outer sea wall. The Great Quadrangular Store was also constructed which, at the time, was the largest brick building

in the world. Officers' accommodation and a church were also built. In his autobiography Sir John Rennie (John Rennie's son) observed that the original intention was to use diving bells for building the foundations for the outer wall of the dockyard but Banks was confident that using cofferdams would be faster. This proved to be the case and Rennie concluded that about three years was saved as a result. Other engineers had considered it impossible to build heavy masonry on the mud and sludge but from their cofferdams Jolliffe & Banks were able to drive pilings into the sea bed and secure a firm foundation. The work was however very dangerous. Local folklore has it that the most perilous work was undertaken by convict labour from the nearby prison hulks. Banks was well paid for his work at Sheerness. The value of the various contracts exceeded £1.5 million – over £100 million in today's terms. Sheerness was by far Banks & Jolliffe's largest project.

Today, the once fine Regency dockyard has largely disappeared. The Royal Navy left Sheerness in 1960 and it was taken over by private enterprise. Sadly, many eminent buildings were demolished in the 1960s and 1970s, including the Great Quadrangular Store. Often, they were replaced by large sheds and by car and lorry parks. Thankfully the Commissioner's House, the clock tower and two Georgian terraces (Officers' Quarters) on the fringes of the dockyard have been restored. The church is also being restored. Sheerness' illustrious past is best shown by a model that John Rennie had made to illustrate what he was planning to achieve. This is not currently available for the public to see but it is intended that it will be displayed in the dockyard church when the restoration is complete.

Banks Town

Throughout his career Banks was alert to commercial opportunities beyond the construction industry. His ventures included owning a fleet of barges, and being a promoter, and one of the first directors, of The General Steam and Navigation Company – London's foremost shipping line until it was taken over by the P&O Steam Navigation Company in 1920. In later years Banks demonstrated an interest in speculative property development and building a resort in Sheerness was perhaps his most ambitious sideline. Between 1828 and the end of his life he seems to have spent a small fortune building a town near the dockyard at Sheerness with an aim of turning it into an exclusive resort. The motivation for this is unclear. The fact that initially the town was known as 'Banks Town' suggests that his aim might have been to leave behind him an enduring memorial to his wealth and achievements. If this was indeed his intention, he would have been disappointed with the outcome. Banks Town suffered from competition from nearby Herne Bay and Margate and was not a commercial success. Today the name 'Banks Town' has disappeared and the Regency buildings that remain have been absorbed into the rather depressed town of Sheerness. His partner, William Jolliffe, was not directly

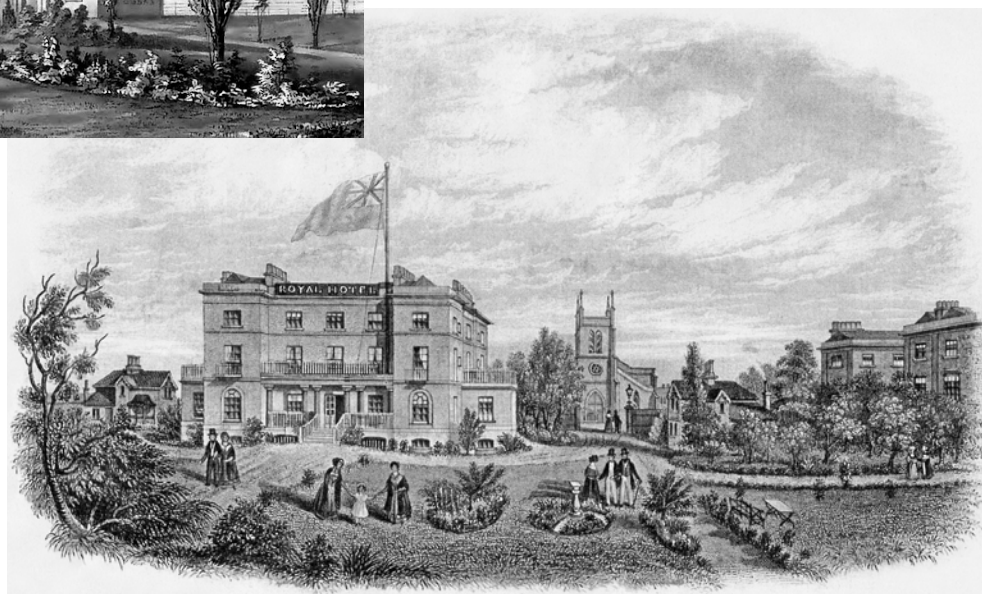
**Sheerness Dockyard
in the 1950s.**





Left: Sheppey Court – the country house of Sir John Banks.

Below: The Royal Hotel and, in the distance, Holy Trinity Church, around 1840.



involved in the project and, with the benefit of hindsight, might not have been displeased that Banks undertook this project by himself.

Banks will have spent a considerable amount of time on Sheppey while constructing the dockyard at Sheerness and he obviously liked the area. Perhaps the expanse of flat marsh land reminded him of his native Yorkshire. Around 1826 Banks acquired the estate of James Chalk, which was situated on the road between the village of Minster and Sheerness Dockyard. This included Red House Farmhouse; he had it demolished and built the rather grand Sheppey Court in its place, which he used as his country house.

The Chalk Estate included a small settlement known as Mile Town, which was quite close to the dockyard. It had about a hundred houses, the majority of which Banks now owned. In 1829 Banks spent £204 buying more land around Mile Town and he started the construction of a number of substantial brick houses including The Royal Hotel along a road he named 'Edward Street'. Presumably he used the large number of bricklayers who had been employed building the dockyard accommodation and storage. To encourage Londoners to visit the area he established a tri-weekly steamship service between London and Banks Town using the SS *Sir Joseph York*.

Banks' passion for his Sheppey project may have tailed off after a number of set-backs. The Admiralty decided not to acquire The Royal Hotel to house the Port Admiral, the navy opposed the building of a pleasure pier and the Home Secretary, Robert Peel, decided not to support the idea of changing the name of Sheerness to Port Clarence. Perhaps Banks realised he had over-reached himself. The Royal Hotel was eventually demolished but some of Banks' buildings remain today including The Crescent at the head of Edward Street (now called The Broadway) and a row of old houses named Banks Terrace. Banks also donated land and some money for the building of Holy Trinity Church but died before this was completed.

Jon Grant

(The author thanks Sheppey historian David Hughes for information for this article. Also all photos are from David Hughes' collection unless otherwise stated.)

Sheerness – the clock tower of the Great Quadrangular Store

The history of the Great Quadrangular Store has been covered in detail in previous issues.* Built in the late 1820s and the largest industrial building in the world when completed in 1829, it was tragically demolished in the late 1970s. The clock tower survives in the dockyard, opposite Dockyard Terrace, and I was fortunate to view the interior last year. Unfortunately my gammy hip prevented me ascending to the top of its interior, but some images below may be of interest.

Richard Holme



* Principally the article in *Dockyards*, November 2018, p. 10, by David Hughes.

British Newspaper Archive – Sheerness

Many readers will already use the British Newspaper Archive www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk for research purposes. It was good to see the *Sheerness Times Guardian* has been digitised and added to the archive. There are therefore over 14,000 pages of this newspaper online, from its inception in 1858 to the present day. A quick word search indicated several thousand references to the dockyard at Sheerness.

A couple of interesting examples are replicated below.

Fears of Sheerness dockyard being closed are covered quite often. One example in the issue of 7 July 1888 discussed evidence of the resulting major cost savings given to the House of Commons committee on naval estimates.

This has caused considerable uneasiness in the town . . . the Director of Dockyards gave it, as his opinion, “that unless the naval authorities thought it an advantage in time of war, Sheerness might be given up, for the work could be done at Chatham, and so save the incidental expenses at the former place, which amount to nearly £75,000 a year.” It is just twelve months since Lord Randolph Churchill startled the good Conservatives at Sheerness by openly advocating the closing of the dockyard, but as the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer was not then holding an official post, great importance was not attached to his words . . . We confess to not knowing much of the intricacies of dockyard accounts, and it will be interesting to know . . . how the £75,000 is made up. It is generally supposed among dockyard men that incidental expenses are chiefly made of salaries, but the cost of the salary establishment is not one third of this amount . . . The value of Sheerness as a naval station in the event of complications arising in the North Sea or Baltic cannot be overestimated. Access can be made to the harbour by the largest ships England possesses, at almost any stage of tide, and yet Professor Elgar would close the yard, and let the Navy rely upon a port, which frequently cannot be reached for a week at a time. If England was engaged in hostilities, the enemy might have been able to enter the Thames, while our ironclad fleet was lying helpless at Chatham.

Another report in the issue of 2 June 1860 covers ships and some labour aspects.

One of the docks in this yard contains one of the gunboats built by contract, namely the “Dwarf”. She lives like some abandoned wreck, a specimen of rot and bad workmanship, and containing we should say, not less than 100 rotten timbers. No workmen are employed upon her, as it is uncertain whether she will be broken up or not. In the adjoining dock lies the “Griffon” which has just been surveyed. This vessel was built by Mr Pilcher of Northfleet. She is a smart craft and reflects credit on her inspector (Mr Anstey) as well as on the builder for her execution. The “Orantes”, screw corvette, is in a very advanced state towards completion. She is a splendid specimen of naval architecture. There are upwards of 100 men employed upon her. Her launch is expected to take place in July. The “Collingwood” line-of-battle ship is being converted from a sailing to a screw ship. An Admiralty order has been received at this yard to the effect that the sailmakers’ work is in future to be measured by the leading man of sailmakers, instead of by a measurer – the duties not being sufficient to fully employ the latter. The leading men will not henceforth share in the task earnings but be paid 6d a day in addition to their ordinary pay. We have much pleasure in stating that the annual gratuity of £50 allowed by the Admiralty to one of the foremen of the yard has this year been awarded to Mr Benjamin Cheeseman. Orders have been issued that the whole of the Caulkers are to work extra hours, owing to the pressure of work.

Richard Holme

Chatham Dockyard Berthing Plan. 5 August 1956

From the 1930s to the 1990s, Navy Days were held at the main dockyards, with ships open to the public. They were usually held at the Easter and August Bank Holiday weekends. I was able to visit Portsmouth, Chatham and Devonport on many of those occasions from the mid-1950s – partly to show the taxpayer what they were getting for their money and partly for recruiting – until the RN became too small to put on such events. While the ships that were open were based in one area (at Chatham, Basin 3), it was often possible to slip past the barriers to walk around the refitting basins,

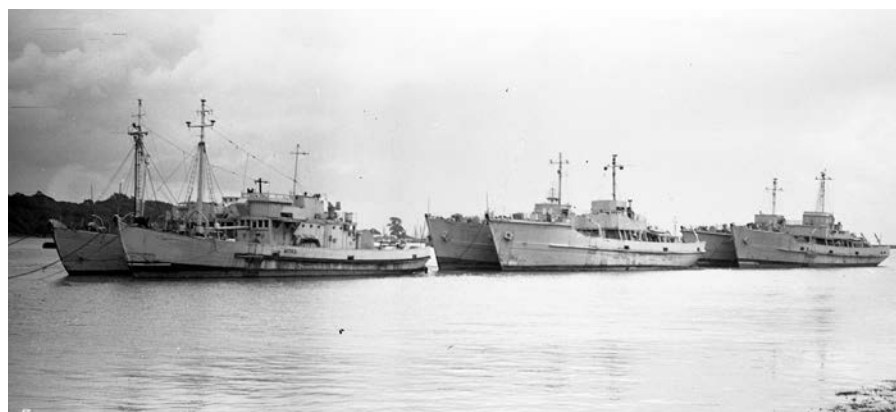


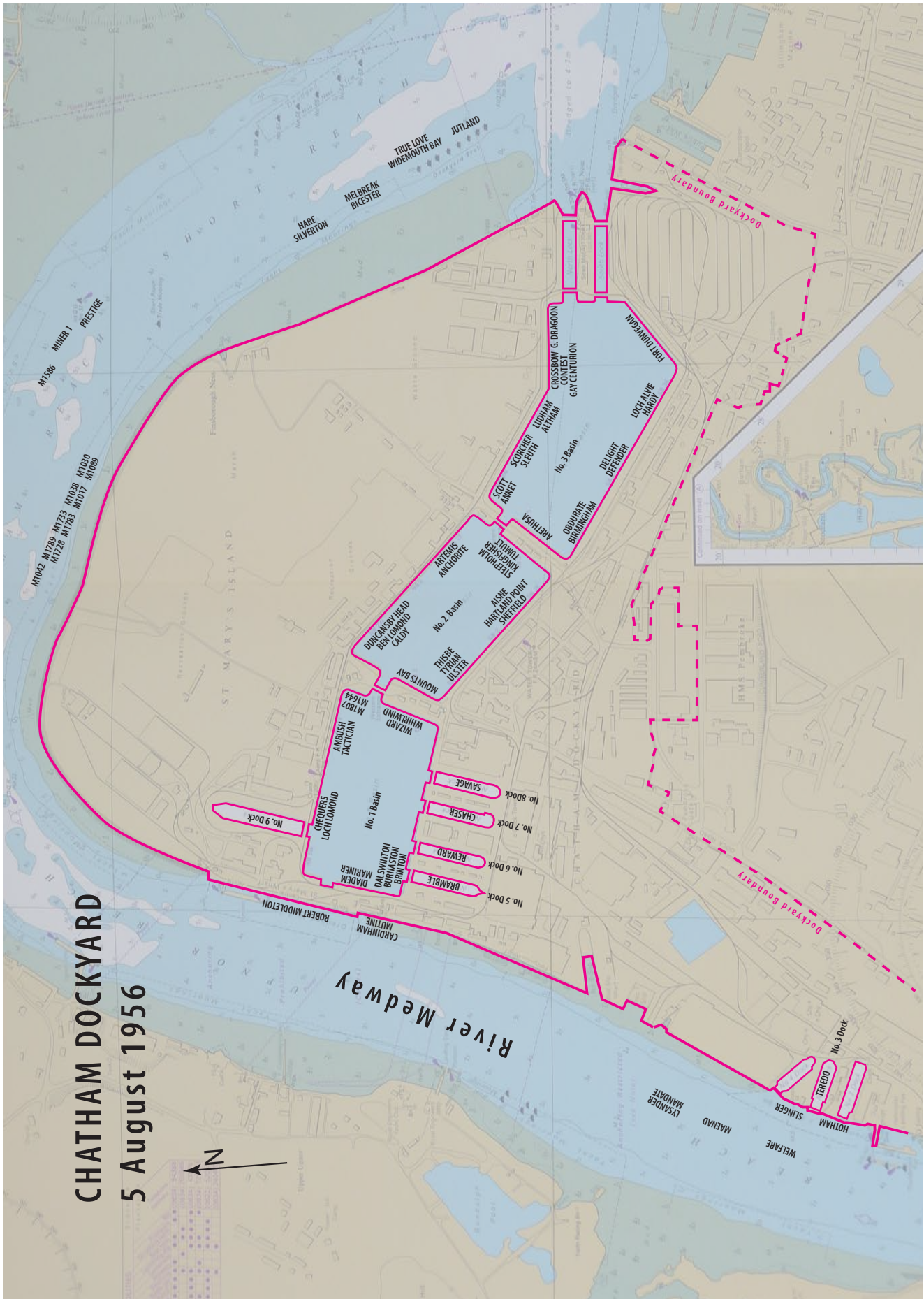
Basin 3 was used for displays at Navy Days. *Gay Centurion* carried out a mock torpedo attack, while submarine *Sleuth* in the background has just surfaced. The sailing ship is training vessel *Arethusa*, ex *Peking*. The 120-ton crane in the background is in Basin 1, having recently replaced the elderly sheerlegs. The one on the right in Basin 3 is a 40-ton travelling crane.



Cruiser *Birmingham* was the star attraction, dressed overall. She was the only Town-class with a flared bow, all the others had a knuckle. I went on board and met the Leading Seaman who had chaperoned us cadets from college who had sailed in her from the Medway to Gibraltar in July 1955.

Six wooden motor minesweepers moored in the Medway awaiting disposal. The two nearest are 105ft *M.1733* outboard and *1783*, the other four 126ft from left to right *1038*, *1017*, *1030*, *1089*.





to see what ships were berthed in other areas and dry docks. Boat trips were often run, so one could view the ships from the water or those moored in reserve anchorages. I would take photographs where possible, black and white then, and process them myself. I also sketched out a berthing plan, so it is that sketch I have used to show Chatham on Sunday 5 August, when the seventy-nine ships exceeded in number the entire RN today. The date is shortly before the redeployment for the Suez operation. Ian Johnston has made this splendid berthing plan based on an Admiralty chart of the 1970s.

Ships berthed:

DS = Destroyer Squadron, FS = Frigate Squadron, MS = Minesweeping Squadron, SS = Submarine Squadron, TS = Training Squadron, ORF = Operational Reserve Fleet, ERF = Extended Reserve Fleet

Aisne Destroyer. ORF
Altham Inshore minesweeper. 232 MS
Ambush Submarine, refitting
Anchorite Submarine. 3 SS
Annet Naval trawler
Arethusa Training ship Medway. Ex bark Peking.
Artemis Submarine. 5 SS
Ben Lomond Tank landing ship. Nore local flotilla
Bicester Hunt class escort destroyer. ERF
Birmingham Cruiser, refitting
Bramble Minesweeper, Fishery Protection Squadron, refitting
Brinton Coastal minesweeper. RF
Burnaston Coastal minesweeper. RF
Caldy Tank cleaning vessel, ex Isles-class trawler
Cardinham Inshore minesweeper. 232 MS
Chaser Submarine depot ship, ex LST
Chequers Destroyer, refitting
Contest Destroyer. 6 DS
Crossbow Destroyer. ORF
Dalswinton Coastal minesweeper. RF
Defender Destroyer. Home Fleet
Delight Destroyer. Home Fleet
Diadem Cruiser. Senior officer RF
Duncansby Head Living ship, ex maintenance vessel
Fort Dunvegan Stores ship
Hardy Frigate. 3 TS
Hare Ocean minesweeper. ORF
Hartland Point Stores ship. RF
Hotham US-built frigate for disposal
Jutland Destroyer. ORF
Kingfisher Submarine rescue ship, ex salvage vessel
Loch Alvie Frigate, for Persian Gulf
Loch Lomond Frigate, refitting
Ludham Inshore minesweeper. 232 MS
Lysander Ocean minesweeper. ERF
Maenad Ocean minesweeper. ERF

Mandate Ocean minesweeper. ERF
Mariner Ocean minesweeper. ERF
Melbreak Hunt-class escort destroyer. ERF
Miner 1 Coastal minelayer
Mounts Bay Frigate, refitting
Mutine Ocean minesweeper. ERF
M1017 Motor minesweeper. RF
M1030 Motor minesweeper. RF
M1038 Motor minesweeper. RF
M1042 Motor minesweeper. RF
M1089 Motor minesweeper. RF
M1586 Motor minesweeper. RF
M1644 Motor minesweeper. RF
M1728 Motor minesweeper. RF
M1733 Motor minesweeper. RF
M1783 Motor minesweeper. RF
M1789 Motor minesweeper. RF
M1807 Motor minesweeper. RF
Obdurate Destroyer. Nore local flotilla
Prestige Degaussing vessel, ex MMS1012. Conversion not completed
Reward Fleet tug
Robert Middleton Stores vessel
Savage Destroyer. Nore local flotilla
Scorcher Submarine. 2 SS
Scott Survey vessel
Sheffield Cruiser, refitting
Silverton Hunt-class escort destroyer. ERF
Sleuth Submarine. 2 SS
Slinger Tank landing ship. RF
Steepholm Wreck dispersal vessel
Tactician Submarine, refitting
Teredo Submarine, refitting
Thisbe Ocean minesweeper. ERF
Truelove Ocean minesweeper. ERF
Tumult Frigate. TS 2
Tyrian Frigate. ORF
Ulster Destroyer, converting to Type 15 frigate
Welfare Ocean minesweeper. ERF
Whirlwind Frigate. 5 FS
Widemouth Bay Frigate. ERF
Wizard Frigate. 5 FS



Nearest is Canadian built Algerine-class ocean minesweeper *Truelove*, which was scrapped the following year. Bay class frigate *Widemouth Bay* has had her two twin 4in removed but retains her kooncoted director. The white telltales on their bows are to show if they have taken on water.

Flagship of the Reserve Fleet, Dido-class cruiser *Diadem* was berthed on the western wall of Basin 1. Alongside was ocean minesweeper *Mariner*, with sister *Bramble* visible in Drydock No. 5.



On the south wall of Basin 3 are Loch class frigate *Loch Alvie*, with new Type 14 frigate *Hardy* inboard. Ahead are two Daring-class destroyers, *Delight* outboard and *Defender*, at that time neither displaying pendant numbers.

Preserved in reasonable condition such that she was transferred to Nigeria in 1959 is Algerine-class minesweeper *Hare*. Berthed alongside is Hunt-class escort destroyer *Silverton*, scrapped at Grays three years later.



Postwar, the RN had far too many ships for an affordable operational fleet. Those that were not scrapped in the 1940s were consigned to the Reserve Fleet, potentially available for emergencies. In the 1950s these were divided between modern ships in Operational Reserve with armaments kooncoted (covered with plastic to keep out moisture) and available at thirty days' notice, a Supplementary Reserve where ships would need to be docked and refitted before re-entering service and Extended Reserve, unlikely to be useful in a modern war and due for sale or scrapping. There was not enough berthing capacity for all the Reserve Fleet ships at dockyard ports, so many particularly escorts were laid up at commercial ports such as Cardiff, Penarth, Barrow and Hartlepool.

Dr Ian Buxton

HMS *Pembroke* – Royal Naval Barracks, Chatham (Part 1)

In 1862 work commenced on a vast extension to the Royal Dockyard at Chatham. The site chosen for the extension was an area of marshland to the north of the yard, surrounded by inlets from the River Medway, known as St Mary's Island. The marshland was drained and sealed off from the river allowing the construction of three huge basins and five new dry docks which would enable Chatham to handle the largest warships of the time.

Most of the unskilled building work was undertaken using convict labour. Old re-purposed warships known as prison hulks had been moored along the River Medway for many years to house convicts who were put to work on various menial tasks in the dockyard.

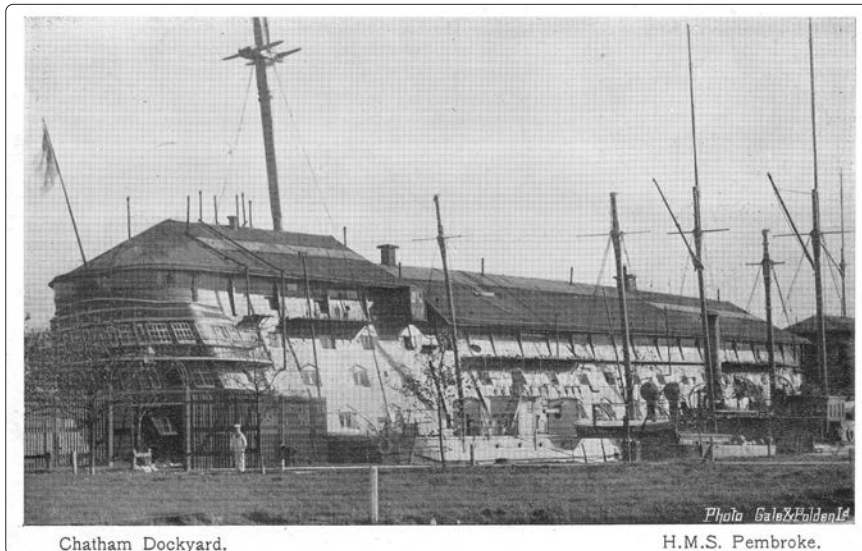
Years before any construction work on the extension commenced, the prison hulks had already deteriorated into almost uninhabitable wrecks, so a new purpose-built prison was constructed on St Mary's Island, opening in 1850, to accommodate the convict workforce.

The first phase of the dockyard extension works included the three new basins, the first of which, the Repairing Basin, was opened for use in June 1871. However, the work on the remaining phases continued for over thirty years. By the time the dockyard extension was completed in 1903, Chatham had become the most modern and important of the royal dockyards, now capable of handling a greatly increased number of the latest design of warships.

Meanwhile, a Royal Naval Depot had been formed at Chatham in 1890 utilising three redundant warships that were converted into accommodation hulks to house mainly RN ratings from the increasing number of ships undergoing repair or refit at the dockyard. The three vessels were the former HM ships *Pembroke* (housing officers, seamen and engine room artificers), *Royal Adelaide* (other engine room ratings), and *Forte* (other artisans and Royal Marines). *Pembroke* also acted as the depot's administrative HQ, and on Sundays church services were held in the ship with a choir of local boys singing to the accompaniment of a harmonium played by the choir master, Mr Mountstephen, a naval schoolmaster. In addition to these three, another ship, HMS *Algiers*, Chatham's Guardship of Reserve, provided accommodation for captains and their staff. Collectively the vessels making up the depot were designated as HMS *Pembroke* and were moored-up in the recently constructed No. 2 Basin, which had been built as a factory basin where engine and machine work could be carried out on warships.

The accommodation hulks were an obviously far from ideal concept in all respects: they were taking up mooring berths in the basin badly needed for warships, and the living conditions were little better than those in the old prison hulks, being almost as crowded, uncomfortable and insanitary. This unsatisfactory situation had to be resolved and when the Navy Estimates for 1895–96 were brought before the Committee at the House of Commons on 12 March 1895, the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, Edmund Robertson MP, announced:

What we propose to do at Chatham is to build new Naval barracks, at a cost, I think, of about £360,000, on the site of the old convict prison, providing accommodation for 3,500 officers and men. In doing that we are making such use of the existing buildings as may be practicable. Designs have been prepared, but the plans for the designs are not yet complete. Now as to the



Chatham Dockyard.

H.M.S. Pembroke.



19898

Royal Naval Barracks, Chatham.—The Terrace. Front View of Men's Blocks.

question of policy in this matter—the policy, I presume, of the late Board and the policy of the present Board is that those men should be housed in barracks rather than in hulks, for the following reasons. First of all, on sanitary grounds, I may also say on social grounds and on the ground of the men's comfort, it is better that they should be housed in barracks rather than in hulks. Another reason is this, that we want the room of the hulks; we want to employ for actual service ships the room in the harbours now occupied by the hulks.

Then, on 24 February 1896, the First Lord of the Admiralty, George Goschen, in referring to the Naval Estimates 1896/7, stated:

In view of the magnitude and importance of the works included in the Schedule of the Naval Works Act a separate department has been formed at the Admiralty to superintend their execution – the late Director of Works (Major Pilkington RE, CB) has been appointed Civil Engineer-in-Chief of the Department.

Major (Henry) Pilkington was knighted, promoted to colonel, and given the title Civil Engineer-in-Chief of the Naval Works Department. During his term of office Pilkington became responsible not only for the building of the RN Barracks at Chatham but a new RN Hospital at Gillingham as well.

Pilkington's design for the new barracks included six seamen's blocks arranged in three pairs each connected by a galley block. Two of the blocks were to be built on military land, near a corner

of the convict prison, at the time occupied by the Brennan Torpedo Factory. This factory had to be demolished, and then re-built at the site of Royal Engineers' Submarine Mining School near Gillingham Pier.

The estimated cost of the new barracks was put at £425,000. Work commenced in May 1897, undertaken by the main building contractors, Messrs Holloway Brothers of London. The first job was to demolish the old convict prison; the rubble was used for the foundations of the barracks' sports field. The initial phase of construction comprised the seamen's quarters, officers' quarters and ward-room, depot offices, drill shed, and the canteen. These buildings together with all their associated drainage, water mains, footpaths, roads, courtyards and the retaining wall were completed and taken over from the contractors on 26 March 1902.

The second building contract was for the warrant officers' mess, the main entrance, guardhouse and cells, post office, swimming baths and bowling alley. These, together with all their associated services, were handed over to the navy on 11 December 1902.

By the spring of 1903 the new barracks were ready to be occupied, taking the name HMS *Pembroke* from one of the original depot accommodation hulks. On 30 April, at 4 p.m., 4,600 officers, petty officers, and men from the old depot ships mustered at the dockyard's Pembroke Gate and then, led by the depot band, marched the short distance down Dock Road, through the main entrance of the new barracks to enter their new home. Once they all arrived on the parade ground and lined up, they were dismissed to their quarters by the Commanding Officer, Captain Lewis Wintz. That evening Captain Wintz gave a ball to celebrate the opening of the barracks. A special train left London for Gillingham at 7.15 p.m. and disembarked the guests at a specially built platform in the dockyard, from where they were transported by carriage through the dockyard's Alexandra Gate, and then the barracks' Main Gate to the officers' mess.

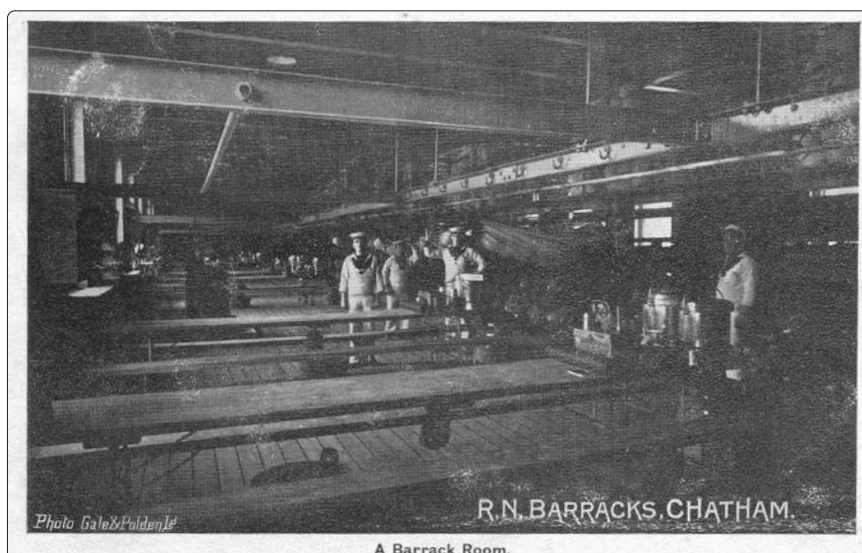
The barracks were built on two levels. The upper terrace was the site of the six seamen's accommodation blocks and the officers' quarters; and the lower level the site for the parade ground, drill shed, offices, swimming baths and skittle alley, canteen, and warrant officers' mess.

Although now occupied, the barracks were far from complete and construction work continued for several years. The Commodore's House was completed by the end of 1902 and Admiralty House, the official residence for the Commander-in-Chief of the Nore, was built in 1905. On 27 April 1905 the C-in-C Nore, Admiral Sir Hugo Pearson, laid the foundation stone for the barrack's C of E church. It was completed a year later and dedicated to St George by the Bishop of Rochester, the Rt. Rev. John Harmer, on 19 December 1906.



PARADE GROUND, ROYAL NAVAL BARRACKS, CHATHAM

PHOTO.
GALE & POLDEN. LTD



In 1904 the Admiralty decided to transfer the Royal Naval Gunnery School to Chatham, having abandoned plans to modernise its existing home at Sheerness where it had been based since 1892. The initial proposal was to take over St Mary's Barracks on the Lower Lines from the Royal Engineers and convert them for naval use, but this plan was deferred until 1941. Instead, new buildings were constructed at the RN Barracks to house the school, which transferred there in 1908.

Personal fitness was an important requirement for all naval personnel and regular intensive physical training was conducted on the barrack parade ground until a new gymnasium was built on the site in 1909. For those suffering illness or injury, the barrack's sick quarters was situated through a tunnel from the parade ground, under Lower East Road on a site below the Gunnery School. For those needing longer-term care or surgery a new naval hospital was built on the Great Lines at Gillingham, which was opened with great ceremony by King Edward VII in 1905. This replaced the old Melville Naval Hospital in Dock Road which was then taken over and used as barrack accommodation by the Royal Marines.

The final major building project to be completed was the Detention Quarters, which was built in 1911 on the high ground along Cumberland Road, overlooking the main barracks site. The DQs was a completely self-contained site with its own kitchens, gymnasium, chapel, drill shed, workshops, offices, and accommodation block, built on the three sides of a roughly triangular compound surrounding a small parade ground.

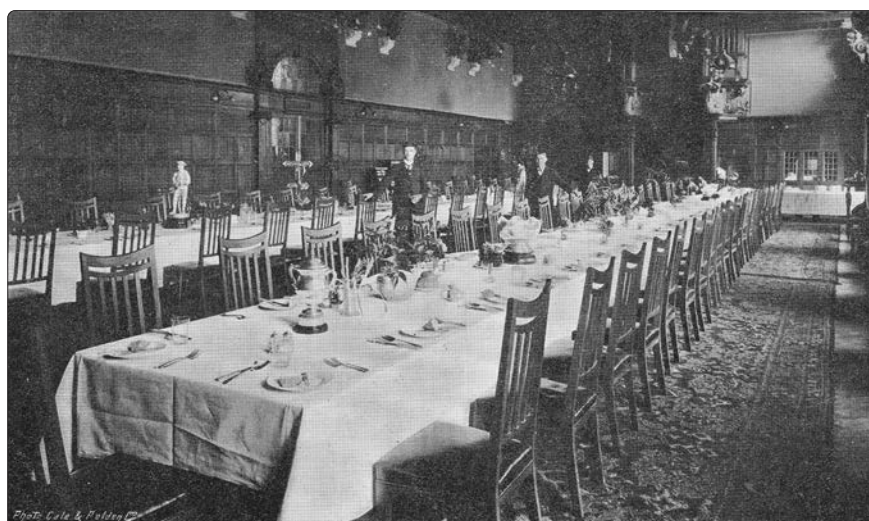
An Admiralty plan of the barracks site from 1911 details accommodation for 3,528 seamen, 26 marines, 908 petty officers, 112 officers, 84 warrant officers, the commodore, and 44 officers' servants; a total of 4,703 men. However, it was expected that in a war emergency situation this figure could increase to 7,720.

The six seamen's accommodation blocks were arranged along a terrace overlooking the parade ground and later took the names of famous admirals: Blake, Nelson, Anson, Grenville, Duncan, and Hawke. Inside the accommodation was laid out to mimic that on board ship. The 'mess decks' were floored with teak deck timbers from scrapped warships. The men slept in hammocks slung on hooks fixed to the wall and slinging rails were fitted between the roof support stanchions. A series of wooden trestle tables ran along and at right-angles to the wall, opposite the hammocks, with long wooden benches known as 'forms' for seating. The tables and forms had to be scrubbed every day, leaving little chance for them to ever fully dry out. Meals were served from the central galley building located between the pairs of accommodation blocks. The duty mess cook collected the food, brought it back to the mess and served it to the men, who sat and ate it at the trestle tables. Breakfast was served at 8 a.m. and consisted of a basin of thick cocoa and a slab of bread served with either pork fat, treacle or jam. Lunch was meat, usually mutton either roasted or stewed and served with potatoes. The rum ration or 'grog' was also normally served at lunch. The evening meal or supper was usually just bread, jam and tea, but sometimes some duty cooks would provide a hot dish using lunchtime leftovers.

By comparison with the functional seamen's accommodation, the officers' mess was palatial: a range of three fine buildings, with the central wardroom building flanked either side by the officers' accommodation buildings. The 'Baroque' style wardroom was a two-storey building with a raised basement and topped with an octagonal 'belfry' with clocks set into its front and side faces. It was accessed from a large porch on the first floor with short flights of marble steps each side leading up from the road. The porch parapet was supported by six 'Tuscan' columns. An arched doorway led through its double doors into a grand *piano nobile* with a mosaic floor. The entrance hall had a breakfast room to one side and an anteroom to the other, and an oak-panelled open-plan staircase decorated with carvings of warships through the ages. On the second floor, a wide corridor gave access to the magnificent mess room with a fine open woodwork roof. Other second-floor rooms included a billiard room and a library / reading room. The ground-floor basement housed the servants' quarters, kitchens, and stores. From the wardroom on the first floor, covered corridors led over bridges to the two accommodation wings each consisting of sixty bedrooms, with bathrooms, lavatories, and a servants' room. A rose garden, croquet lawn, and tennis courts were laid out in front of the officers' mess for the exclusive use of the officers and their ladies.

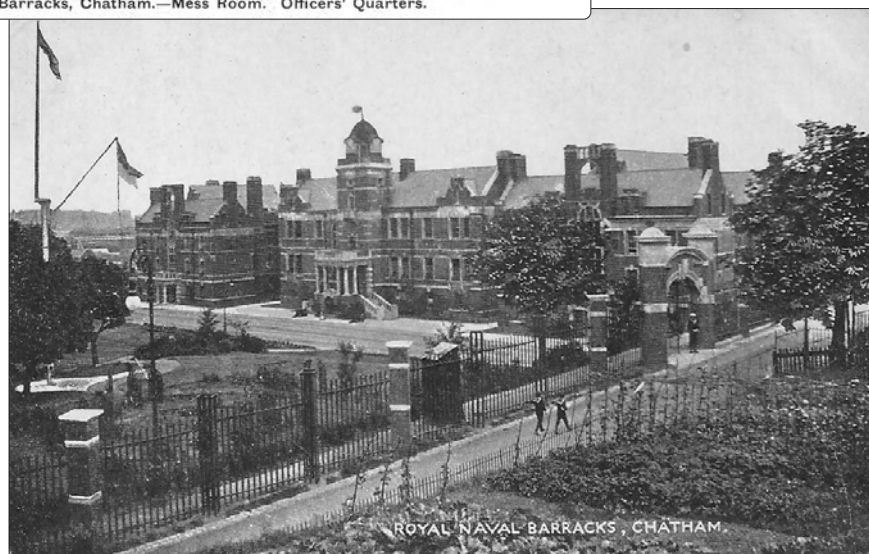
The warrant officers had their own mess but used the top floors of the seamen's blocks at night until it had been extended to provide their own sleeping accommodation.

The barrack canteen was a two-storey building. On the ground floor there were 'wet' and 'dry' canteens. The 'wet' canteen or tap room served alcoholic drinks, with a separate bar for petty officers, while the 'dry' canteen served soft drinks and snacks. The first floor housed two billiard rooms each with three tables, a library, and a reading room.



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Royal Naval Barracks, Chatham.—Mess Room. Officers' Quarters.



ROYAL NAVAL BARRACKS, CHATHAM.



Around the barrack grounds were displayed various figureheads retained from nineteenth-century warships. The first two could be seen as you entered the main gate, standing either side of the road: that from HMS *Royal Adelaide* on the left and HMS *Bulwark* on the right.

As you walked along Central Avenue you came to the terrace overlooking the parade ground. Three sets of double steps led from the terrace down to the parade and on the terrace wall by the central steps stood the barrack bell, to be rung as on board ship; to rouse the seamen from their slumbers at 6.15 a.m. and to mark time through the day. Looking across the parade ground you could see the twin towers of the administration block, one of which had clocks set into its faces while the other supported a time ball that was dropped at 1.00 p.m. GMT every day, except Sunday, as a time signal to ships moored in the river, allowing them to calibrate their on-board timepieces.

Off North Road, just opposite the administration offices, was the barrack dockyard gate. This allowed the naval personnel direct access to and from the dockyard without interfering with the dockyard workers, who mainly used the yard's Pembroke and Main Gates.

During his first tenure as First Sea Lord (1904–1910), Admiral Sir John 'Jacky' Fisher developed the concept of 'manning stations' for the Royal Navy. His idea was to improve the training and quality of all ranks of the service and to increase efficiency. The port manning system divided the country into three areas known as divisions. Men from the east coast of Britain, stretching from Kent up to the east coast of Scotland, were drawn into the Chatham Division. The headquarters of the Chatham Port Division was the naval barracks of HMS *Pembroke*. By the summer of 1914, the division was manning a third of the Royal Navy – 205 ships in total with the consequent increase of the number of sailors passing through the barracks. Such was the importance of Chatham now as the storm clouds of war gathered over Europe.

Clive Holden

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HMS *Drake* at Portsmouth in 1909

The armoured cruiser is seen on the North Slip jetty while the dreadnought HMS *Neptune* can be seen in the background on No. 5 building slip. *Drake* was a substantial and modern ship when completed at Pembroke Dock in 1903. However her obsolescence meant she was relegated to convoy escort duties by 1917. It was in that capacity that she was torpedoed and sunk by U-79 off Rathlin Island, Northern Ireland. Her wreck was the subject of several salvage attempts but in the early 1970s was blown up by the MOD as terrorists were diving on her to retrieve explosive.

Richard Holme (with acknowledgements to Paul Brown)



Triangle Girls Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Trust Project Launch Reception – Portsmouth – 29 March 2023

Triangle Girls worked in dockyards and arsenals during the First World War to replace men who had volunteered for or been conscripted into the armed forces. They were known as such because they wore a triangular badge inscribed 'On War Service' on their uniforms.¹ The badge was issued after conscription in 1916 solely for women engaged in urgent war work. This project was designed to bring to life the vital industrial dockyard work carried out by women, who were usually related to dockyard workers. It was the brainchild of the late Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust trustee and volunteer Colin Lay, who sadly passed away in June 2022. The project will be disseminated through a mobile touring banner display and the 'Colin Lay Resource Pack for Schools', which were also exhibited at this launch event. The materials are suitable for all ages of schoolchildren.

Rate Books, individual work records held and transcribed by Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust volunteers, show that around 2,000 female workers contributed to the war effort at Portsmouth by replacing men who had gone to war. The Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act 1919 discharged them so that men returning from the front could have their jobs back.

Hannah Prowse, CEO of Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust, welcomed everyone to the celebration and said how proud she was to launch this important achievement of the Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust (PRDHT) volunteers. She was pleased to celebrate the invaluable research work of volunteers drawn from PRDHT members and the local community. She congratulated the volunteers, Michael Gunton, Senior Archivist with the Portsmouth Library and Archive Service, and the University of Portsmouth's Dr Melanie Bassett and students for their excellent research.

She acknowledged the magnificent contribution that the Triangle Girls made in supporting the dockyard's vital role during the First World War. Hannah noted that 7.8% of the Portsmouth Dockyard workforce then were women – today the figure of women working in skilled trades is 5%, so the proportion has declined. The Triangle Girls project therefore delivers a powerful message from history and for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).



Dennis Miles (above left) Cheryl Jewitt and Ian Barbeary (above middle) and Hannah Prowse (above right).

Dennis Miles, Chair of the Board of PRDHT Trustees, then described how Colin Lay, a former headteacher, had proposed the project to the Historical Trust Board, together with his intention of applying for Heritage Lottery Funding. His chances were not rated highly, but after he had argued his case, the Board backed him.

Colin's wife Sharon Lay is the fourth generation of dockyard workers in her family and Colin had found her family listed in the Rate Books, inspiring the project. Following months of research and preparation, PRDHT was awarded £7,500 of National Lottery Heritage Funding in 2018 to research the women who worked in Portsmouth Royal Dockyard during WW1. Colin organised training sessions for volunteers with Portsmouth City Museum, the Imperial War Museum and the Arts Council Gateways Project.

Dennis Miles recalled that the Triangle Girls replaced semi-skilled workers, working on a wide range of lathes and drills and cleaning out boilers. 'They earned a reputation for doing very skilled work.' He related that some of the women fell on hard times after the war when the men returned. 'It was a case of saying, "Thank you – on your bike." No severance pay. No pension. And no vote. And a lot of these poor ladies finished up in workhouses because they had no relatives to return to because they had all been killed in action.'

Cheryl Jewitt, a PRDHT project volunteer, whose grandmother Clara Jones was one of these workers, interjected: 'And no medal.'

This is not the first time that the story of women's dockyard work in the First World War has been published. Ray Riley with Celia Clark wrote 'Women at Work in Portsmouth Dockyard 1914–1919' in the *Hampshire Industrial Archaeology Society Journal* (Spring 2014). Celia Clark's 'Women at Work in Portsmouth Dockyard 1914–19' developed this further in the Naval Dockyards Society's *Transactions* 12 (2019, pp. 1–33), working closely with PRDHT and Portsmouth History Centre. Her article, which covers women dockyard workers from the nineteenth century to the Second World War, ends with a comprehensive list of the primary and secondary sources consulted. Extracts from Celia's article are featured here. If you wish to obtain the full article, see <https://navaldockyards.org/transactions/>. It is available on Amazon or from avcoatsndschair@gmail.com.

Celia described nineteenth-century women workers in dockyard roperies and sail lofts, then noted published histories of women industrial workers in the First World War. She cited Gill Clarke's 2015 Imperial War Museum exhibition, *From Fields to Factories: Women's Work on the Home Front in the First World War*. Women were only permitted to perform some skilled men's work after the 1915 Treasury Shell & Fuses Agreement allowed women and boys to operate semi- or completely automatic machines and regulated their pay. Celia noted that 'dilution' was contentious with trade unions and involved:

1. The substitution of processes i.e. a single job done by a skilled man but subdivided.
2. The installation of specialised machinery.
3. The upgrading of existing labour.
4. The introduction of new labour.

Angela Woollacott's 1994 book, *On Her Their Lives Depend: Munitions Workers in the Great War*, was also discussed. It stated that 223,000 women were classed under government establishments (arsenals, dockyards etc.) and that 'it was mostly working-class women who learned new skills with machinery and experienced sharp increases in pay.' Celia also described the industrial work of Women's Royal Naval Service personnel who worked in British dockyards and naval bases in the First World War. The WRNS were also disbanded at the end of the war, then re-formed for the Second World War.

Celia's primary sources comprised an album of fifty professional photographs of the women and their employment records, both owned by PRDHT, and audio recordings which she made of them in the 1980s, available in Portsmouth History Centre. She recruited interviewees through an article in the local paper. In 1986 three survivors whom she had interviewed, Beatrice Hobby, Maudie Ralph and Daisy Pervin, were interviewed in a video, together with Valence Stubbs. Entitled 'Recollections: Women workers in HM Dockyard 1916–1919' it was made by Jan Dennis and Kathy Baker, financed by the Portsmouth Film and Video Co-operative and held at the Wessex Film and Sound Archive in Winchester. Celia wrote: 'These records have not as far as we know been mentioned in official histories. For those who worked in Plymouth and Chatham dockyards similar records exist.'

According to the preface to the album, Celia stated:

1,750 women, wearing triangular badges inscribed 'On War Service', worked on lathes; on planing, milling, engraving, buffing, auto and slatting machines; in cleaning, cutting and testing condenser tubes, making condenser fer-rules, cleaning out bottles for submarines and ships; in general bench work; and assisting the mechanics in cutting blades for condenser turbines.

She commented: 'arguably it was novel for large numbers to be employed in the so-called heavy industries.' Women were, however, 'absent from tasks where sheer strength was at a premium, that is, in the iron foundry, smithery and in the process of shipbuilding itself.'

In August 1914 'a total of fifty women were employed in Portsmouth Dockyard. A typed list filed with the photograph album shows the subsequent build-up of numbers.'

Owing to the impracticability of obtaining sufficient men to enable the work of the Constructive Department to be fully carried out, it was, in July 1916, decided to enter a number of women workers, and to train them for various classes of work within their capacity.

A start was made by entering the following numbers: ten for work at No. 1 Shipbuilding Shop, eight for work at Painters' Shop, eight for work at Mast and Boat Houses, seven for work at Joiners' Shop, four for work at Block Mills, four for work at Saw Mills, three for work at Plumbers' Shop and one for work at Mould Loft.

By the end of 1917, Portsmouth Dockyard women workers 'totalled 406, including other workshops: No. 3 Shipbuilding Shop, Smitheries and Testing Houses, Tool Shop, Gunnery Pattern Shop, Hosemakers' Shop, seven in the Dining Halls and Lavatories, and 104 'on Ships, &c, as Drillers.'

The Portsmouth women whom Celia interviewed and were later videoed in the 1980s 'shaped blocks, wired hoses, did oxyacetylene welding, wound electrical coils and drilled holes for hammock hooks afloat'.

Beatrice Hobby, born in 1891, married very young but lost her first husband Bill Penfold – gassed in the trenches, leaving her a widow with a six-week-old baby, so she had to work to support him. With experience of cardboard-box assembly at Leatham's Corset Factory from the age of thirteen when she left school, she was used to manual work. She was employed in block-making, hose-making and cleaning Carley floats.

Maudie Ralph's grandfather, father and brothers worked in the yard. She had six brothers, and enjoyed her time on ships, drilling hammock hooks for sailors on HMS *Edinburgh Castle* and the *Resolution*. Her husband who was in the Grenadier Guards was posted missing, though

his death was not confirmed for seven long months, despite her receiving a widow's pension as soon as he was missing. She had two little girls to support, and she 'had to do something', so she asked to go into the dockyard.

Miss Daisy Pervin, who was born in Southsea in 1896, left school at fourteen and volunteered to work in the dockyard in the early part of 1916 where she stayed for three years, after her father died, his pension with him. Daisy Pervin worked in the Engineers' Department in the Electrical Shop near Unicorn Gate, winding small magnetic coils of very fine wire, as fine as a hair, though others worked on bigger coils.

Mrs Valentine Stubbs was born in 1893 was recorded in the video, but not on audiotape. Her father who was in the navy went down on board HMS *Victoria* in 1893. She left school at fourteen and worked in a corset factory until she was nearly fifteen, then worked in the dockyard from November 1916 to March 1919. She did various jobs including working on a steam-powered boring machine, winding the wires round hoses, and welding as an oxyacetylene operator, a dirty but interesting job which was new technology then. Changing the carbide supply was a stinking task. She describes the flame coming out of the gun, with which she had to weld all the way down the seam and join it together.

Nellie Richards was born in Charlotte Street, Portsmouth, and went to school in Conway Street before starting work at fourteen in a cap factory in Queen Street as a machinist. Her husband died, and she answered an advertisement to work in the dockyard. In the Torpedo Shop she had to count parts and pack them in boxes. The pay was better than sewing sailors' caps. There were lots of other girls and the hours were 8am till 4pm. She wore blue dungarees and a hat. Her next job was on the floating docks where she had to clean the decks of ships. She also had to charge retorts, pull a lever down and use a tickler rod to take the clinker away, a heavy job raking the hot and steaming coke into skips, a man's job before the war.

The interviews reveal their working hours, the fact that they were paid the same basic rate as the men but not piecework, men's attitudes – sometimes hostile, sometimes supportive – work hazards and overtime.

Beatrice Hobby 'was proud of it, to wear a badge for doing war work . . . I used to think it was wonderful that women could go and do such hard work, because it was really hard work. We used to enjoy ourselves – and we got more money.' Miss Pervin said: 'We got our notice in 1919. They didn't require us any longer.'

Celia has written an outstanding account of the remarkable history of women dockyard workers which gives context to the Triangle Girls Project. PRDHT have brought a valued community story to local schoolchildren and also to the wider public through talks.

Dr Ann Coats

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- 1 <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30077027>

Great Grimsby Ice Factory and Kasbah

Arriving on the train from Lincoln on a bright sunny morning, I was glad to be welcomed at the station by Vicky Hartung, chair since 2010 of the Great Grimsby Ice Factory Trust (GGIFT) – www.ggift.co.uk. When Grimsby was the busiest fishing port in the world, the ice factory provided up to 1,200 tons of ice each day for the fleet. Now listed Grade II*, construction of the brick-built ice factory started in 1900 and the building was extended in 1910. Operations ceased in 1990 and since then the future of the factory has been in doubt; the site has been abandoned. The Trust has been campaigning for many years to save the factory, with some support from the Prince's Regeneration Trust and other conservation bodies such as SAVE Britain's Heritage and our Society.*

* For example, *Dockyards*, June 2018, 'Grimsby Ice Factory – endangered!'.

**Right: Ice factory
awaiting restoration.
(Richard Holme)**



**Below: Ice production
in progress. (GGIFT)**



**General views of the Kasbah
above, left and below.
(Richard Holme)**



Below: Peterson's Smokehouse awaiting restoration. (GGIFT)



However the great news is that its future has been secured by entrepreneur Tom Shutes, who bought the factory a couple of years ago. He has ambitious but viable plans to convert it into offices (some already pre-let) and a conference centre. A hotel in keeping with the style of the neighbouring buildings will be built next to it, in partnership with Hilton Hotels. This is purely a private venture by Mr Shutes, no public money is involved. We were not able to visit the factory as it is in a dangerous condition in parts but as we drove past it, I noted its magnificent, if dilapidated condition.

Moving on, we then entered the Kasbah area – www.thekasbah.co.uk – developed during the 1870s to support Grimsby docks, a ‘town within a town’ but now somewhat dilapidated like the factory. However, we enjoyed an excellent cup of coffee at Coffee on the Docks and heard that among others, the local MP and also the council were patronising it for meetings. Nearby it was excellent to see that other businesses were establishing themselves in restored buildings, including an artists’ creative. Now the future of the factory is assured, GGIFT is focusing its efforts on the Kasbah. With support from the local council and port owners ABP, it is restoring the Grade II listed Peterson’s Smokehouse, and an additional building, to be a smokery and offices, both to be let out. It was good to hear of generous grants of over £1 million, from the Lottery and Architectural Heritage Fund. Few of the buildings in the Kasbah are of significant architectural merit alone but collectively they are of huge significance. Walking around the streets, it was heartening to see the revival of activity in so many of the buildings.

It was a cold day with some snow still on the ground and I was glad to enjoy a lovely lunch in the warmth of Grimsby Minster and spend some time exploring the docks and adjacent areas.

In 2017 the Kasbah was declared a Conservation Area after an unsuccessful campaign to prevent the demolition of the Cosalt Buildings and its future looks bright, with the support of the council, ABP, and Historic England assured.

Richard Holme

Note by the editor – this article was written before our 2023 conference, when Dr Stella Jackson, Great Grimsby Heritage Action Zone Project Manager, spoke about the Kasbah.

Director Class paddle tugs

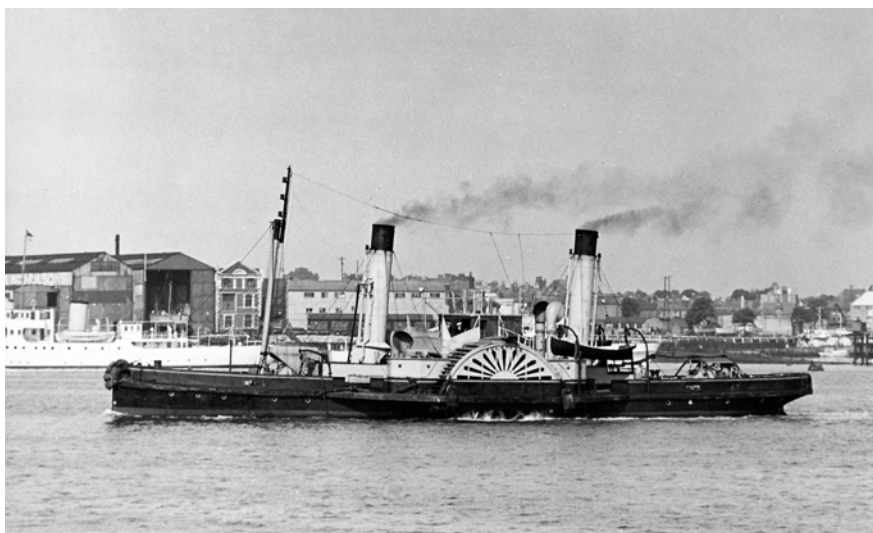
Steam paddle tugs first appeared in dockyards in the 1820s and probably looked something like the one in Turner’s famous painting *The Fighting Temeraire Tugged to her Last Berth to be Broken Up*. In 1952 there were still four survivors of the magnificent late Victorian Dromedary class, eight Edwardian Robust class and the one-off *Pert* of 1916 in dockyard service. Whilst most dockyard tugs had long been screw-driven, the navy still found paddle tugs useful for tasks such as securing beneath the overhang of an aircraft carrier’s flight deck and to provide cold moves (i.e., the movement of a vessel without its own power) for aircraft carriers and most other types of ship, except submarines. For cold moves the tug would be secured alongside the vessel so that the paddle wheels would be abeam of the vessel’s natural turning point. During harbour work the paddles could be used independently: the inside paddle could produce forward or reverse movement and the outboard paddle could be used to influence direction. At sea the two paddles had to be clutched together to prevent racing should one wheel be lifted out of the water.¹

However, the days of these venerable coal-fired tugs were numbered and, perhaps surprisingly, the Admiralty decided to order a replacement class which would also be paddle-driven. Seven tugs of the diesel-electric-powered Director class were ordered and came into service between 1956 and 1958. They were allocated to dockyards: *Director* and *Faithful* to Malta, *Forceful* and *Grinder* to Portsmouth, *Dexterous* to Gibraltar, *Favourite* to Devonport and *Griper* to Rosyth. The old steam tugs were scrapped immediately, except at Devonport where *Camel* and *Pert* continued for a few years, until 1961 when *Faithful* was transferred from Malta to join *Favourite* there. In 1966 *Griper* was moved to Portsmouth from Rosyth, leaving the latter yard without a paddle tug until 1970 when *Director* arrived there. They were operated by the Admiralty’s Port Auxiliary Service until this was absorbed into RMAS (Royal Maritime Auxiliary Service) in 1976.

All seven were built on the Clyde, where the construction of paddle-wheeled vessels had long been a specialism: four by Yarrow, of Scotstoun, one by Ferguson, of Port Glasgow, and two by Simons, of Renfrew. They were driven by two 1800 BHP Paxman diesels linked to DC generators which powered for the two British Thompson Houston 1640 BHP electric motors, which were independently connected to each paddle wheel. Bill Hannan, master of *Faithful*, commented, 'The electric drive provided a very quick response to the direct bridge controls and made these tugs a joy to handle.'² Their top speed was 13 knots, and they had a range of 5,900 miles at 13 knots (rather more than they needed for their dockyard work!). They were fitted for firefighting, salvage and oil-pollution spraying, and did not have towing winches, hence all towing was conducted whilst secured abreast of the towed vessel. Their masts could be lowered by hand turning gear to rest between the funnels when working under the overhang of aircraft carriers. Their paddle blades were made of Canadian elm and were feathered so that all the time they were in the water they were in a vertical attitude for maximum efficiency.

The class was withdrawn from service in 1979–81, the last, *Faithful*, being withdrawn at Devonport on 4 September 1981. Her last assignment on that day was to assist the Dutch Navy support ship *Zuiderkruis* into the Tamar and her dockyard berth.³ (See footage of this online as referenced below). Five of the Directors were scrapped in Spain; *Faithful* was sunk off Gibraltar as a target, by the frigates *Alacrity*, *Battleaxe* and *Brazen* on 21 April 1983.

Forceful lingered on as a target at the Aberporth missile range, after which she was laid up at Queenborough before eventually being scrapped at Cairnryan in 1990. On 21 October 1980, as



The previous generation of Admiralty paddle tugs included the Dromedary class: *Volatile* was completed in 1900 by Barclay Curle, Glasgow as *Volcano*. She was renamed in 1914 and is seen here in Portsmouth Dockyard. (Courtesy of Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust)



The Director class paddle tug *Griper* was completed by William Simons, Renfrew, in 1958. She is seen entering Portsmouth Harbour in 1968.

***Griper* seen
in front of the
Steam Factory at
Portsmouth.
(World Ship
Photo Library)**



***Forceful* in 1957,
alongside *Fiona*.
(World Ship
Photo Library)**

the last paddle tug at Portsmouth, she was to go out of service with the press, photographers and television there to capture the moment. In company with the diesel screw tug *Agile* she had been tasked with assisting the departure of the US Navy tanker *Savannah* when *Agile* hit *Forceful* on her port paddle box with such force that the latter had to be withdrawn from the operation.⁴ The Director class tugs were said to be costly to operate and maintain and were replaced by the Adept class tractor tugs.

Dr Paul Brown

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- 4 The Last Paddle-Wheel Tug, Portsmouth Dockyard, Dockyard Timeline, PRDHT, <https://portsmouthdockyard.org.uk/timeline/details/1980-the-last-paddle-wheel-tug>, retrieved 8.3.23.

HMS *Lion* – cruiser – Rosyth

The cruiser HMS *Lion* was one of a class of three and was laid down in 1942 as HMS *Defence*. Her completion was delayed and she spent eight years laid up in an incomplete state in the Gareloch, before finally being entering service in 1961. A very short service career followed; she was placed in reserve in 1965, initially at Devonport and ending up at Rosyth dockyard in May 1973. Stripped for use on conversion of her two sisters *Tiger* and *Blake* to helicopter carriers, she was then put for sale for scrap.

The Marine Technology Special Collection (MTSC) at Newcastle University has extensive records of the major shipbreakers. One of these, TW Ward, reported how dangerous a laid-up ship in a dockyard such as *Lion* could be in an undated memo, probably written in late 1971, when one of their inspectors surveyed her with a view to purchasing her for scrap.

This vessel is in a disgusting state. Greater havoc could not have been caused if a gang of men had been paid to do nothing else . . . There are holes, port and starboard throughout the three decks above where the gearing has been removed – after removal, these holes have been used as dumps – there will probably be 20 to 30 tons of scrap, pipes, non-ferrous rubbish in each hole . . . One very disturbing feature is the amount of asbestos which is lying around. There are large number of bags at various places on the ship – these are special bags which the Admiralty use for asbestos with red warning lettering showing . . . A considerable amount of work would still be required to make the vessel fit for a long tow. No information is available as to whether the propellers were still on. They have not been removed since the vessel arrived at Rosyth, but no one here knows what happened before she arrived from the south.

**Lion by North
Corner Portsmouth,
5 July 1965. (World
Ship Photo Library)**



**Lion at TW Ward
shipbreakers,
Inverkeithing with
oiler Wave Chief
alongside, 25 May
1975 (Ian Buxton)**



**The forward
6 inch turret on
Lion, Inverkeithing,
25 May 1975.
(Ian Buxton)**

TW Ward records at MTSC show they budgeted £20,000 for asbestos removal when making their successful bid of £262,500 for the ship. Possibly the proximity of their Inverkeithing yard helped them get the ship, given her parlous state.

MTSC has outturn cards for all TW Ward ships and that for *Lion* reveals a profit of £316,000 on the break up as scrap prices soared. Non-ferrous metals were as ever the most valuable. For example, 40 tons of copper fetched £25,631 whereas 5,342 tons of steel yielded £246,516, less than a tenth of the price per ton for copper.

Richard Holme

BOOK REVIEW

***Exploring Portsmouth Dockyard* (And how to get the most out of your visit) by A. J. Noon**

Redvark Productions, March 2023 316 pages £12.99

This useful paperback begins with a detailed chronology from 1086 to 2022 about Portsmouth Dockyard, its surrounding fortifications and key events over the centuries in the harbour area. It includes some interesting historical illustrations and many photographs, reflecting the author's deep knowledge and research. A detailed description follows of the buildings in the Heritage Area based on what you can see, including industrial archaeology – the weighbridge and railway wagons – as well as on historical information. He then explores dockyard firsts: dry dock, machine production line, caisson, steam-powered bucket dredger, *Dreadnought*, floating dock . . . followed by a map series. There are details of how to book tickets, discounts, opening times and the heritage pass offering free access to the whole heritage area, to Boathouse 4 and the Dockyard Apprentice Museum in Boathouse 7. Hotels and B & Bs, picnic areas and transport links are listed, with ship histories and more detailed information about historic attractions both in the dockyard and the surrounding area.

Noon pays tribute to the NDS, the Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust and their volunteers, the Friends of the Porter's Garden and the landlord of the Heritage area, the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust. The latter body continues to face hefty challenges, including rising energy costs as well as rising sea levels.

Noon is not a fan of modern architecture, for example the Visitor Centre adjoining the Cell Block at the entrance. It's good to see Kathleen Scott's statue to her husband Captain Scott of the Antarctic mentioned. (There's another memorial to him by his wife overlooking Mount Wise in Plymouth.) The only slight quibbles I have are that the Royal Commission on the Defence of the United Kingdom, prompted by the growing naval and military power of the French which led to the construction of many of the harbour's fortifications, is only mentioned as '1860 – Construction of Palmerston's Follies begins . . .' The Naval Pay Office where John Dickens worked is actually inside the Heritage

Area. It's currently leased to the Sustainable Conservation Trust and Ankle Deep, a university consultancy. Action Stations in Boathouse 6 has been closed for some time. The NMRN's bid to house the Royal Marines Museum in it failed, but the auditorium where the NDS's 2022 conference took place and also used by No. 6 Cinema where we enjoy art house films is still in use. The National Museum of the Royal Navy now has offices in South Office Block – hence the new security gate by the bow of the *Victory*. Noon says that in 2022 'The next phase of the "Big Repair" of HMS *Victory* starts, with plans to replace 806 external planks (all relatively modern), whilst saving as much historic material as possible.'

Celia Clark

Endnote: We will have to rely on books like Noon's or on getting the latest on opening times on-line. The Gosport Tourist Information Centre in the bus station is closing in April 2023. It doubles as a very useful bookshop selling local publications, including interesting titles: *The Life and Legacy of Doctor James Lind* by Professor Ken Shaw 2019 (Studio 6 Design & Print Droxford), many publications by the Gosport Society including its book celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, Palmerston Forts Society publications and Gosport Papers such as Philip Eley's 'Queen Victoria's Gosport', with a photo of the lost royal railway station in Royal Clarence Yard, and 'Lee-on-the-Solent, a Victorian New Town', which includes an account of the Seaplane Training School in 1910. Portsmouth Information Centre in the Hard bus station doesn't stock local books.

OBITUARY

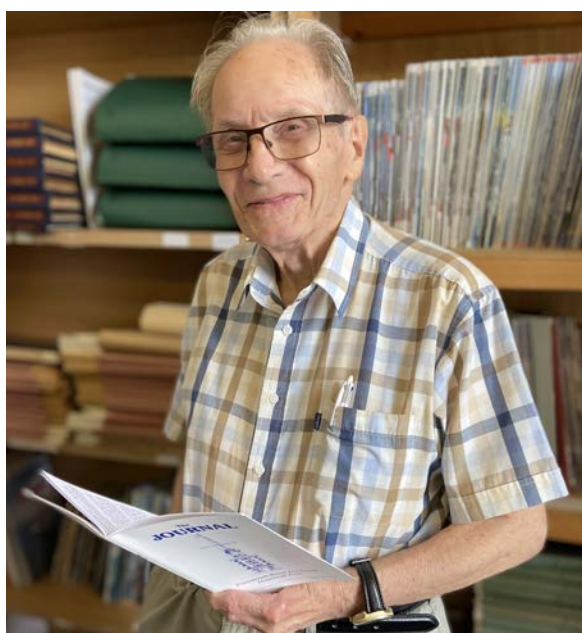
Archibald (Archie) Malley (1934–2022)

Sadly, Archie Malley, who began his dockyard career as a ship-fitter apprentice in 1950, has passed away aged eighty-eight, on 15 December.

Archie served a five-year apprenticeship and upon completion was immediately conscripted into the army for two years' National Service. In 1960 he became a recorder and he retired in 1994.

In 1984 The Historical Society was founded (now known as Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust (PRDHT)) and Archie soon joined. His knowledge of the history of the yard, its buildings and warships was immense and unsurpassed. He has been credited in numerous publications for his expertise and his eye for detail and was still an active Thursday participant until his ill health some weeks ago. Archie will be very sadly missed.

Mick Huitson, PRDHT Director and Vice Chairman, Volunteer Group



I first met Archie at a Nelson Birthday Lecture in the late 1980s which featured Portsmouth Dockyard and speakers Dr Roger Knight and Roger Morriss. I joined the PRDHT in 1992 and from then on saw him regularly at Thursday meetings. He was a founder member of the Naval Dockyards Society.

When I was writing the *Twentieth Century Naval Dockyards: Devonport and Portsmouth Characterisation Report* (2015) Archie spent several days showing me the collection of photographs and documents which were invaluable in pinpointing events and dating changes to buildings. One marvellous series of photographs shows the demolition of

the gargantuan 250-ton electric hammerhead crane by Sir William Arrol, constructed in 1912. Its height made it visible to much of Portsmouth, resulting in it becoming a city icon for many locals. The crane was immobile and with such a secure base its working radius extended to 100 feet, enabling vessels on both sides of the Promontory to be serviced.

Archie said it was actually a 240-ton crane but was always known as the 250-ton crane. The photographs show it being dismantled section by section in 1984. He chose to join the army for his national service and was given significant responsibility in his post in Lancashire. He spoke about his long dockyard career. He used to cycle to work and said that if he was at Fratton Bridge to hear the warning bell, he knew he would be on time.

His job as recorder meant that he visited all the departments in the yard, checking the levels and amount of work done, and recording information. He thus knew about all the jobs and all the buildings in the yard. Sadly, his job also gave him a long-term lung disease. But he never stopped being excited by any new documentary discoveries and was passionate about Portsmouth Dockyard, assembling a huge collection of books.

The image of Archie in 2022 was taken by Mick Huitson.

Ann Coats

Note – another NDS founder member, Ian McKenzie, who was also Ordnance Society Membership Secretary for many decades, died on 25 January 2023. He was a loyal member and attended many of our conferences.

‘The Life of Riley’ – Saturday 9 September 2023

Over the winter of 2019–20 detailed plans were made for a day conference to commemorate the academic life and work of the late Dr Ray Riley, who died in May 2019 and whose career was summarised in Volume 12 of the *Transaction of the Naval Dockyards Society*. Unfortunately that event, scheduled for 28 March 2020, was cancelled due to the lockdown – but it is now the intention to make that tribute to a man of great experience, learning and good humour later this year.

The details remain to be determined – some elements of the programme for the above-mentioned conference ‘Dockyard Maties, Portsmouth Maps and Corsets’ will be retained, while others may be altered – but the lead will be taken by the University of Portsmouth Culture & Heritage Board, and the projected date of the conference is Saturday 9 September 2023. More information will be published in due course, but at this stage persons ‘interested’ are requested to contact Mark Brady (02392 379278 or mrbrady@btinternet.com) as soon as possible.

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