

Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust (Support Group)

Layout Guide to Apprentice Exhibition

As you enter the exhibition you see:

Outside the brick 'Dockyard Wall entrance'

(RH) Right hand Shipwrights hand drawn carts.

(LH) Left hand 'Honours Boards of 'NAVY WORKS Dept' depicting Senior officers of the Dept between 1839 – 1964

LH side of entrance on front of wall is Board describing 'Benthams Book of Blockbusters'. Many 'World firsts' achieved with introduction of machinery & plant into Dockyard. Numerous facts Power Steam, Worlds Deepest Basin, largest dry dock, Locks, Timber Mill, Caisson, Block Mills, Steam factory, Fire ring main, Water supplies etc.

Moving through 'Dockyard Wall' archway

LH side is 'Portable Clocking -in' clock used by employees

RH side HMS Wildfire Bell (1964) a Chatham underground Shore Establishment involved in Dunkirk 1940 evacuation.

Through access into 1st Aisle

RH side is an employees Box Shed with tool boxes, clothing, tools (note the tea cans for brewing warm drinks). These sheds were open sided built between dry docks in pyramid shapes with large steps for tool box stowage rising to 12 feet high. They were open to weather elements & were cold, wet & very poor but at least they had a little protection overhead for changing into work overalls etc.

Talking '**touch screens**' (**choose language**) in front of the box shed exhibit, describe the work of the Dockyard over the centuries.

LH side is notice of 'Final Cleaning of ship' .(c 1955).

A series of Canvas Scrolls describing Box Shed usage, History of Dockyard AD 286 -1753. Maps of dockyard layout & various changes undertaken between 1212 to 1915.

LH next is a small model of Iron Duke & Large glass case of HMS Actaeon (1749). Dreadnought Class painting (copy) with original Shell underneath + graphics

RH side display of Masts & Spars & tools used. Also a mast with 'platform rising up' at **RH end** of this display all made by **Shipwrights**. Descriptive board & tools for 'Caulking' wooden ships (tar & rope filling for ship & deck seams).

Front (across bottom of Aisle) more displays of **Shipwrights** work as boat builders. Part 'clinker' built boat & various tools & tins of resins, materials etc used

Then turn right, through iron doorway

Into an iron riveted 'ships machinery space' where ship noises are heard. A rivet forge where rivets were made red hot for clenching iron together. Green Hand morticing machine. Compressed air riveting machine. Also more Caulking details with tools used in making ship watertight

Onward into 2nd Aisle

LH side **Blockmaking** Morticing & Scoring machines.

RH side Corner saw, Boring machine, Shaping engine (Brunels)

LH side, Ropemaking machine, Splicing of wire & rope with tools displayed.

RH side various examples of Blocks & tackle used on ships

RH side 'Knots' display used in dockyard & ships

LH side is showcase model of HMS Bristol (1969) & **in front** is a Block & tackle lifting weights display. This illustrates the easy way to lift heavy items by using multiple sheaved blocks & a single rope. (**Have a try yourself !**)

LH side (on past 'Knots' & lifting weights) is a Large Timber 'Boring' machine. Built in 1851 for Great Exhibition & transferred to Dockyard in 1853, used in Blockmills & still working until 1986.

Front along top wall showcases containing models of HMS Hardy, HMS Andromeda, HMY Britannia, HMS Amazon.

Above models are 9 Wall mounted boards of defining Dockyard & Dreadnought history in pictures & text

Turning into 3rd Aisle

RH side is a plasma screen (**activated automatically by movement**) of the launching of Portsmouth 1962 built HMS Nubian. **Overhead** is HMS Nubian 'Launch Board'.

LH side are two special items, a Tide Gauge indicating depth of water & Portsmouth Clock that is still in full working order & correct time is maintained regularly.

RH side is information vessels named 'Sirius' & the Portsmouth 1964 built HMS Sirius with (War Actions) Honours Board also Ships Bell that has numerous names of children baptised on board, engraved on inside of bell.

LH above, on the large **wooden roof pillar** is the 'Solomon Selby' clock designed & built by a Mr Selby. Originally located in Blockmills.

RH side is display of '**Blacksmith**' work including working Forge, tools, etc Large hammers' were used for larger items under red hot conditions.

LH side are iron 'cooking stoves' made by Specialist **Apprentice Blacksmiths**. This group of Specialists included, **Gunsmith, Chainsmith, Anchorsmith, Trawlersmith, Springsmith, Locksmith, Firehearthismith, Horseshoersmith.** (now Farrier)

RH side is '**Patternmakers**' where accurate replicated patterns were made in yellow pine wood of components for castings to be poured in molten iron. This display has actual wood patterns made & used in the Dockyard.

LH side is '**Founders**' Metal castings evolved in 1840s to create accurate 'moulds' in sand from Patternmakers wood patterns with molten metal to create metal components

LH side high up pillar truss (after Selby Clock above Founder display) is a large 'Bell' rung to indicate 'start & finish times' of work in Pattern shop (closed in 1982 after over 500 years of ship castings manufacturing).

At bottom of 3rd Aisle

'Ships Boiler Room' semi enclosed steam engine, fuel oil pumps, boiler feed pumps, Gauges etc display.

Turning into 4th Aisle

Protective Clothing & model boiler displays Area of old smoke helmets, breathing apparatus & stretcher. Vintage machinery, triple expansion engine with propeller shaft, early electrical dynamos & model coal fired boilers.

Steam Power developed in 1790s but not used on ships until nearly 100 years later. Numerous new Trades were involved in the future with Steam, Gas, Diesel & Electrical engines with dockyard adapting to changing requirements to install, maintain, design & modify as years progressed. Trades of **Engine Fitters, Boilermakers, Plumber, Coppersmiths, Ship Fitters, Electrical Fitters & Electrical Station Fitters** (Power Stations) evolved

RH side are showcases of Electrical Power Breaker switch gear from Royal Yacht 'Victoria & Albert'. Followed by displays of variety of Blowlamps & Oil cans/feeders.

RH side (look back onto Oil Can display sidewall) is Wood Lion head carving of Anchor 'catshead' (1840) for fitting over anchor hawse outlet. Hand Carved Craftsman plaque

LH side (projecting end wall) are **Painters** work. 'Nelsons' prayer, 'Sir Francis Drake's prayer & Royal Coat of Arms, all hand painted.

LH side are hand painted 'Ships Crests'. Figurehead HMS Peterel (1860). Restored in 2005. Then more 'Ships Crests'.

RH side is display of **Painters** work. Lifebelts, Ships name board plus different paints used in their work. Their work includes Signwriting, Gold Leaf skills & Marbling, A portrait of General Eisenhower at **LH** end of display painted by Portsmouth Dockyard painter. Intricate Ships painting was done by the Skilled Painters (Indentured Apprentices). Painters were regarded as decorative 'Artists' Brush Hands (not apprentices) painted Ships external Hull & interiors of ships surfaces.

RH side (looking to **RH** end of Painters display sidewall) is a framed 'Apprentice Indentures' document. A legal document signing the apprentice into a term of learning a Trade for up to 7 years.

LH side **Flagmakers** work. Flags from 1600s were most important. Method of communications signalling particularly in Battles at sea to identify 'Friend or Foe' passing orders, symbolic occasions. Communication by flags continues in 21st Century despite all the electronic technology available!

RH side **Sailmakers** & their tools. One of the oldest skills, as sails were an early method of moving ships & boats over water & at sea. In addition to sails, hammocks, awnings, covers, kitbags were also made.

LH side are showcases of Apprentice 'Test Pieces'. Items made by apprentices during their learning years. Items displayed include **Coppersmith, Painters, Engine Fitters, Ship Fitters, Electrical Fitters.**

RH side Displays of Measuring Tools made by 1st year Engine Fitters, Ship Fitters, Electrical Fitters apprentices

Overhead (above showcase) Shipwrights Test Piece

- 'Sheer' drawing (a) showing 'Lines in 3 planes'
- Outline of ship profile, lines & decks.
 - Half breadth plan.
 - Body plan Fwd/Aft section.

LH side is Holy Trinity Church wood carving "REREDOS" 1839 made by Portsmouth Dockyard Shipwrights. The church was destroyed in 1941-45 war (Church ruins are inside Dockyard walls still). More information is described on the graphics, including maps of Church location.

LH side (alongside Reredos)

A 'Memorial Tablet' commemorating Officers & Men of 'Portsmouth Port Division' 1914-18 World War 1. Tablet was stored with "Reredos". Both were re-discovered & then displayed in this exhibition

RH side display of International Code Flags, Union Flag & 'Flag' game boards.

RH side (projecting wall - behind Flag games)

Honours Boards of Portsmouth Dockyard staff who attained high ranks in their career with Dockyard Organisation for period 1845 – 1884. Also an old Civilian Officers desk & chair beneath the 'Boards'

RH side a display of old photographs of Dockyard 'extra' social activities, 1911, 1922, 1931 etc.

LH side Apprentice Indentures, Trade notebooks & Imperial Service Medals (ISM) awarded to 3 direct line members of the 'Tarzey family' is displayed in showcase.

1st was Shipwright Portsmouth Dockyard 7 years apprenticeship from 1884.

2nd was Coppersmith Gibraltar Dockyard 7 years apprenticeship from 1912.

3rd was Shipwright (Vospers) 5 years apprenticeship from 1937.

LH side showcase book of 'handwritten letters'

LH side Silk Chinese Tapestry 1950 (repaired in 2005) Made & presented in gratitude for Portsmouth Dockyard 'Recorders of Work' loaned to Hong Kong Dockyard in 1947-1950 to help restore Hong Kong working conditions following World War 2..

Followed by framed Recorders 'Ties', also Gold wire Blazer badges of Portsmouth Royal Dockyard School apprentices

LH side pendulum Clocking In/Out clock.

LH corner is box of various copper cans & hand trolley

EXIT.

The PRDHT(Support Group) has many 1000s more artefacts/ photographs/workers memorabilia etc of Dockyard History not displayed, but available for research or information. It keeps alive the memory of a once thriving Dockyard Industry that made Portsmouth & this Country 'great'.

We hope this leaflet gives you an insight to the varied work of Royal Dockyard Apprentices and you have enjoyed your visit.

Additions & improvements to the exhibitions continue

Now Visit the 'large machinery' display in 4 Boathouse through blue doors of building opposite

Please enquire how to become a member of PRDHT Support Group and enjoy being involved in display & renovation of our historical collection