

## Visitor Information

### Facilities and access for visitors with disabilities

#### Introduction

Every effort has been made to ensure maximum accessibility for all visitors to The Historic Dockyard Chatham – the world’s most complete dockyard of the age of sail.

The Historic Dockyard is, however, an 80 acre (32 hectare) site with over 100 historic buildings and structures and 3 historic warships, and this alone provides some limitations and challenges to access.

#### On Arrival

##### *Disabled Parking*

Disabled parking is located in the main undercover car park within easy reach of the admission point.

##### *Visitor Entrance & Shop*

Ramp access

##### *Admission*

Helpers/Carers receive free admission to the Dockyard.

Free pre-visit for organisers of groups or educational visits.

##### *Wheelchairs*

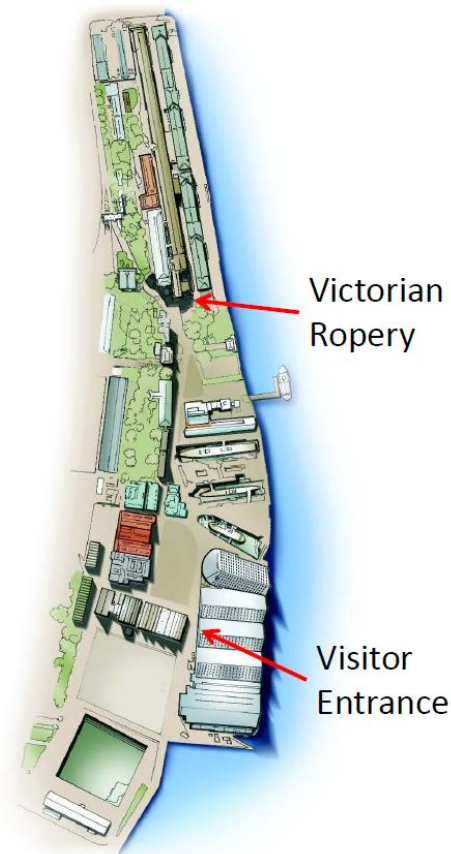
A limited number of manual wheelchairs are available for loan at the admissions point; please book in advance to avoid disappointment.

##### *Hearing Impaired*

Guidebooks are available for loan on request.

##### *Getting around the site*

The distance between the main entrance and the furthest gallery is approximately 800 metres. The route between the galleries and ships has a fairly even surface with the ground sloping down from east to west. There are however some steep slopes to the landward side of the site, particularly between the Ropery, The Royal Dockyard Church and Main Gate.



In addition to the gradients mentioned above, there are several changes of surface on site. These include gravelled pathways, tarmac, concrete and in some areas around Hearts of Oak and the Victorian Ropery Galleries there are cobblestones. A railway line runs through the site from the Main Visitor Entrance to Commissioner's House parallel with the roadway which can trap wheelchair tires if you don't notice them.

There is, subject to availability, a 6 seater electric buggy to assist visitors around the site which can be requested via duty staff (availability of this vehicle can be checked at Visitor Reception on arrival and is subject to on the day cover).

## Visitor Facilities

### *Toilets*

There are disabled toilets located throughout the site at the following locations:

- Museum Square
- Thunderbolt Pier
- Outdoor Play Area
- No.1 Smithery

All disabled toilet facilities are equipped with folding handrails and emergency alarms.

## **Food & Drink**

### *Commissioner's House*

Ground floor level access to some areas with a wheelchair lift to gain entry to the building

### *Railway workshop, Refuel and Play*

Ground floor level access. Indoor picnic and play area (At busy times and school holidays there is a mobile canteen located outside the Railway workshop. Please check on arrival for opening times). Due to the construction of the server, there is unfortunately no low level counter.

## **Access to Galleries and Historic Ships**

Details are given below for the galleries, ships and other buildings that are normally open to visitors.

### **Core Galleries**

#### **Hearts of Oak**

Ground floor and first floor gallery with level access (some slight inclines). Lifts are available to and from the upper gallery. Lift size is 3'7"x4'9" (110x147cm).

Interpretation within the gallery is largely through an audio visual presentation. Subtitles can be requested for the hard of hearing from the gallery staff prior to the start of the tour.

#### **Steam, Steel & Submarines: The Royal Dockyard Story 1832 – 1984**

Ground floor level access through double width doors is via a second entrance located to the right of the main entrance. A lift is available to enable visitors to view the Dockyard Library by appointment only.

#### **The Victorian Ropery**

Ground floor level access. A lift is available to the upper gallery and there is a ramped exit from the ropewalk. Lift size is 3'7" by 4'9" (110cm by 147cm). Please note that there is a small area of cobblestones immediately outside the ramped exit from the building that could be more difficult to negotiate.



Descriptive tours are available if pre-booked.

### **The BIG Space (No 3 Covered Slip)**

Ground floor level access. A lift is available to the upper floor. Lift size is 3'6" by 4'5" (109cm by 135cm).

### **The RNLI Historic Lifeboat Collection (No 4 Covered Slip)**

The self guided visitor route around the gallery is via a gently inclined walkway. Handrails are available on either side of the walkways.

### **No.1 Smithery**

Self Guided visitor route with ground floor ramped access. A disabled toilet is located in the building.

### **Three Historic Warships (\*)**

#### **HMS Gannet (1878)**

Access to Main Deck and Commander's Cabin is via a ramped gangway with access for visitors in wheelchairs. Lower deck, poop and forecastle decks are accessed via steep ladders.

Interpretation is by hand held audio tour, induction loops and text versions are available upon request at the ship.

## **HMS Cavalier (1944)**

Access to the ship is via a steep gangway (with steps leading up to it). The visitor route onboard involves a number of steep ladders and small compartments with narrow passageways.

Interpretation is by hand held audio tour, induction loops and text versions are available upon request at the ship.

A separate gangway is located to the port side of the ship to enable wheelchair access to the main deck (and aft education spaces). Access can be arranged by speaking to a member of staff.

## **HM Submarine Ocelot (1962)**

Access to the submarine is via a gangway (with steps leading up to it) followed by a steep ladder. Due to the nature of the vessel it features confined areas and small hatchways to climb through between compartments.

Interpretation is by guided tour.

Descriptive tours are available if pre-booked.

## **(\*) Historic Warships Virtual Tours**

Virtual Tours of both HMS Ocelot and HMS Cavalier can be found on The Historic Dockyard Chatham website. As well as showing publically accessible areas there is also the ability to look at parts of the vessels not normally open to the public.

## **Other Galleries and Attractions**

### **Keeping Britain Afloat**

Level access to gallery through double width doorways.

### **Commissioner's Garden**

Level access to shingle pathways with slight gradients.

**CHDT reserve the right to make changes to the above information. If you would like any further information please telephone us on 01634 823800 or e-mail us at [info@chdt.org.uk](mailto:info@chdt.org.uk)**