

Visitor Information

Accessibility at Chatham Historic Dockyard

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. This alone provides some limitations and challenges to access.

On Arrival

Parking

We have disabled parking in our main car park within easy reach of the admission point, please display your Blue Badge clearly if you have one. If you are not a Blue Badge holder but require certain access needs, please contact us prior to your visit.

Visitor Entrance & Shop

Ground floor with ramps at entrance and exit.

Admission

We understand that some people will need an assistant to enjoy their visit. One personal assistant is permitted free entry when accompanying those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment. If multiple personal assistants are required, prior arrangements must be made in advance and written evidence of this may be required.

Wheelchairs

We welcome all types of mobility vehicles. A limited number of manual wheelchairs are available for loan at the admissions point; please book in advance to avoid disappointment

Assistance dogs

Assistance dogs are welcome.

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 Buildings, The Royal Dockyard Church and Main Gate.

There is, subject to availability, a staff operated 6 seater electric buggy to assist visitors around the site which can be requested in advance.

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

Mess Deck

Accessible toilet

The Changing Places accessible toilet is situated near to the Steam, Steel and Submarines gallery and includes a height adjustable changing bench, a hoist system, shower and space for one person with a disability and up to two personal assistants. To access this space please speak to the gallery host.

Food & Drink

Mess deck

Level access from entrance or ramp from museum square

Wagon stop, Picnic and Play

Ground floor level access. Indoor picnic and play area.

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. Please note lift size is 3'7" x 4'9" (110 x 147cm).

Interpretation within the gallery is largely through an audio visual presentation. Subtitles can be requested for people with hearing impairments – please speak to the gallery staff prior to the start of the tour.

Command of the Oceans/Namur: The ship under the floor

Level access to command of the oceans

Namur : The ship beneath the floor ramps to the gallery and lifts are available to the museum courtyard.

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

Ground floor level access.

The Victorian Ropery

Ground floor level access. A lift is available to the upper gallery and there is a ramped exit from the ropewalk. Please note lift size is 3'7" x 4'9" (110cm x 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.

The BIG Space (No. 3 Covered Slip)

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

The RNLI Historic Lifeboat Collection (No. 4 Covered Slip)

The self guided visitor route around the gallery is via a gently inclined walkway

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.

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.

A separate gangway is located to the port side of the ship to enable wheelchair access to the main deck (and aft education spaces). Please speak to staff to arrange access to the ship using this method.

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.

Few modifications have been made to the historic warships to preserve their internal appearance and character.

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

<https://thedockyard.co.uk/plan-your-visit/accessibility/>

Other Galleries and Attractions

Commissioner's Garden

Level access to shingle pathways with slight gradients

Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust reserves the right to make changes to the above information.

If you would like any further information or discuss any requirements for your visit please telephone us on 01634 823800 or e-mail us at info@chdt.org.uk.