



**For immediate release**

**Tuesday 19 May 2020**

**Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust honours  
Mental Health Awareness Week**

Current living and working situations present challenges for everyone. In honour of Mental Health Awareness Week 2020, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust has released a series of initiatives to encourage people to look after their mental health.

The coronavirus outbreak has thrown the world into turmoil but one thing that has been witnessed in countries around the globe is overwhelming gestures of kindness. In response, 'Kindness' is the theme for Mental Health Awareness Week.

During Mental Health Awareness Week Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust aims to shine a light, not only on the ways that kindness is already flowing during this challenging time but also encourage kindness to spread further through its communities.

Some of the ways the Trust will be encouraging people to take action for mental health include:

**Random act of kindness**

Kindness and mental health are deeply connected, it is an antidote to isolation and creates a sense of belonging. With useful suggestions, the Trust is encouraging people to get involved and make someone's day by carrying out a Random Act of Kindness for someone else.

For the Trust, this is starting right at the top with a random act of kindness from its Chief Executive Bill Ferris. 90% of the Trust staff has been placed on furlough leave due to the decline in visitor income caused by lockdown. The mental health of these individuals is a primary concern and various support measures have been in put place. Staff who have continued to work throughout the crisis have been awarded an additional two days annual leave to recognise their commitment, good humour and focus on service. The whole team has then been encouraged to carry out random acts of kindness for three fellow colleagues.

### **Give to others**

Helping others has a dual effect, it is a great way to do good for someone else and make ourselves feel happy. During this time many organisations are taking on new volunteers to help with tasks such as driving elderly people in need or taking a dog out for a walk.

Baking and cooking is a more creative way to 'gift' to people at home and those nearby. Whilst those who served onboard *HMS Cavalier* tucked into delicacies such as 'Spithead Pheasant,' 'Train Smash' and 'Yellow Peril, the Trust has reproduced some slightly sweeter original Royal Navy recipes for 'Bread and Butter Pudding' and 'Patriotic Pudding' for people to try at home.

### **Connect with other people**

Staying connected is a good way to feel happy. Keeping in contact with other people combats boredom and is critical for minimising feelings of isolation or loneliness.

As well as some top tips for staying in touch the Trust has published a step by step guide to make an origami card.

### **Be active**

Regular physical activity is directly associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across people of all ages.

For those wishing to really get the heart rate racing, the Trust has found original material for Royal Navy workouts, including what was involved in the Royal Navy and Royal Marine Commando pre-joining test.

For anyone local to Chatham, keen walkers can enjoy discovering the exceptional story of Chatham's Dockyard and Defences through a downloadable trail leaflet.

### **Take notice, pay attention to the present**

Paying more attention to the present moment helps to improve mental wellbeing. Often known as "mindfulness", this can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

There are a number of ways to practice mindfulness, the Trust has created a number of jigsaw puzzles from its artworks for people to do online. It also has recruited members of staff to 'notice the everyday' and take some time to reflect on a day in isolation. The series of blog posts will be shared on the Trust's website.

### **Learn something new**

Studies show that learning a new skill can help build confidence and a sense of self-efficiency, making people happier.

The Trust, in partnership with the National Museum of the Royal Navy, has announced two new online talks linked to its forthcoming exhibition 'Diving Deep: HMS Invincible 1744'.

Part 1 entitled "*HMS Invincible*" takes place on Thursday 21 May at 2pm and explores the story of *HMS Invincible*, her capture and the contribution she made to the British Royal Navy. Part 2, Marine archaeological techniques and conservation, is on Thursday 28 May at 2pm looks at excavation techniques and the conservation of objects recovered from the *Invincible* wreck site.

For more information about the initiatives developed by Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust see: <https://thedockyard.co.uk/community/>

The Trust would love to hear your Random Act of Kindness story, please share a picture with them via Social Media or email using #KindnessMatters

## **MORE PRESS INFORMATION**

Please contact Lynnette Crisp on 01634 823800 or email [lcrisp@chdt.org.uk](mailto:lcrisp@chdt.org.uk) for further information.

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

### **COVID-19**

As with the rest of the world, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust is closely monitoring the evolving situation around the global pandemic of COVID-19.

Following UK Government guidelines the Historic Dockyard has been closed to the public from Wednesday 18th March 2020 until further notice. The Trust will continue to review the situation in line with Government guidelines and reopen as soon as it is safe to do so.

## **The Historic Dockyard Chatham**

The Historic Dockyard Chatham is the only place in the world that lets you explore a complete dockyard from the age of sail and beyond. It's a unique destination that celebrates Great Britain's magnificent maritime past and unmatched contribution to the Royal Navy's shipbuilding excellence that led to worldwide command of the oceans.

Chatham offers unrivalled access to the ships that shaped the world, from a Victorian anti-slavery sailing ship, to a Second World War Destroyer or a Cold War submarine and the stories of the people who made them. From Chatham's historic buildings, from the Commissioner's House and officers' quarters to the remarkable Victorian ropery, where the rigging for HMS Victory was made, to its collection of maritime archaeology, the Dockyard forms an indispensable part of Britain's naval history and its national heritage.

As a fully accredited museum, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust collects, preserves, researches and exhibits objects and materials connected with the history of the dockyard and its people. It studies the development of Royal Navy warship design, construction and the use of the River Medway by the Royal Navy.

Visitors to and users of The Historic Dockyard Chatham are fundamental to its purpose and the economic reuse of the site and its buildings. Its staff and volunteers play a vital role in providing a high level of service and customer care. The Trust is also involved in the on-going regeneration of Medway and The Thames Gateway, with Culture and Heritage at its heart.

As part of the Trust's strategy of "Preservation through re-use" recent projects have secured the long-term financial sustainability (on a revenue basis) of the wider Historic Dockyard site. The economic outputs from the new uses of the recently opened Fitted Rigging House as

well as other activities across the site will bring the total annual contribution made to Medway's economy to £26.3m in 2019, building on the 2012 estimate of £16m (64% growth).