



Press Release
5 August 2020

Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust Appoints New Chief Executive

Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust is pleased to announce the appointment of Richard Morsley as its new Chief Executive.

Richard succeeds Bill Ferris OBE DL, who has held the position since 2000.

The result of a comprehensive interview process, Richard has worked for the Trust since September 2019 most recently holding the position of Special Projects Manager and Assistant Chief Executive. Prior to this he was Director at Betteshanger Parks. He also held the positions of Deputy Director at Turner Contemporary and is a Trustee of Open School East, Margate.

Richard said: "I am delighted and feel incredibly privileged to have been selected to take forward the ambitions of the Trust. Navigating the last four months of the unplanned COVID-19 crisis has been difficult and managing the long-term future of the Trust and The Historic Dockyard into a somewhat uncharted future will certainly be demanding. I look forward to working with the Board of Trustees, our highly committed, professional team and our dedicated volunteers as we approach the future with confidence."

"The Historic Dockyard is a unique place; a world-class heritage environment and Museum, a thriving business community, place of learning and residential community. The strong business model developed over many years provides a great foundation to rebuild our ambitions. I am thrilled to be taking on the role of Chief Executive at such an important moment in this organisation's development."

Admiral Sir Trevor Soar, Chairman, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, said: "The appointment process for our new Chief Executive commenced earlier this year but, due to the current C-19 crisis, the Trustees and I felt it appropriate to suspend this until the situation

became clearer. Although the pandemic impacts are ongoing, the immediate crisis has been negotiated and we believe that we understand the risks, uncertainties and potential longer term opportunities better now. Although we continue to find ourselves in exceptional circumstances, we have a number of medium to long term plans in place to make this an appropriate time to enable new leadership to take these forward.”

“We very much look forward to working with Richard. We believe that he has exactly the right set of skills to see the Trust and The Historic Dockyard through the next stage of its journey as an exemplar of well managed heritage which lies at the heart of the place and the community as well as a significant economic powerhouse for the recovery phase ahead. Richard will bring energy, new thinking and experience to lead the team through the challenges and potential opportunities ahead.”

Sir Trevor continued: *“I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Bill for his long service to the Trust. Bill has achieved much during his career and helped build the multi-award winning Trust we are so proud of today. Through spearheading his “preservation through re-use” strategy, Bill has taken the Trust from a charity facing significant financial challenges to one in a more resilient position despite the impacts of C-19. We are grateful to Bill for staying longer than anticipated to lead the team through the crisis period. We wish him well in his retirement.”*

After nineteen years at the helm, Bill Ferris will retire on 31 August and Richard Morsley will take up the position on 1 September.

MORE PRESS INFORMATION

Please contact Lynnette Crisp on 01634 823800 or email lcrisp@chdt.org.uk for further information.

Notes to Editors

About 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).