

**Press Release**

**5 February 2021**

**Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust awarded  
Garfield Weston Foundation Culture Fund grant**

Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust is pleased to announce the Garfield Weston Foundation Culture Fund has awarded the charity a grant of £177,500 to support the rebuilding of audiences following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The crucial funding will be used to support the redevelopment of the popular Victorian Ropery gallery at The Historic Dockyard Chatham, telling the 400-year-old story of ropemaking at Chatham – a process that continues to this day.

The project will see improved interpretation within the gallery and the integration of a newly acquired collection of objects from the Museum of Knots and Sailors' Ropeworks. The enhanced experience will also allow an increase in the number of visitors able to access the guided tours of the Ropery complex each day. It is anticipated the project will commence towards the end of 2021 and open to the public in 2022.

Funding from this grant will also support a new temporary exhibition in No.1 Smithery gallery for the 2021 visitor season. The exhibition, entitled "*Hidden Heroines: the untold stories of the women of the dockyard,*" will explore the valuable roles women played throughout the Dockyard's history, right up to present day. Further details of this exhibition will be announced shortly.

Richard Morsley, Chief Executive, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust said: "We are delighted that the Garfield Weston Foundation has chosen to support us during what continues to be a very challenging time for our industry. This support will enable us to enhance our gallery spaces and find new ways to tell the fascinating stories of the Historic Dockyard Chatham, reach wider audiences, and assist our post COVID-19 recovery. The Garfield Weston Foundation has previously funded a number of projects for the Trust, including No.1

Smithery and Command of the Oceans and we are delighted the Foundation has been able to provide support once again.”

For more information: <https://thedockyard.co.uk/>

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## **MORE PRESS INFORMATION**

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

### **Notes to Editors:**

#### **About Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust**

The Historic Dockyard Chatham has over 100 buildings and structures, including 47 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The site is in the stewardship of the independent charity, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust (No. 292101).

The Trust’s dual objectives of education and preservation are achieved by a strategy of preservation through reuse. Some of the buildings are open to visitors; others are occupied by residential tenants, businesses, and faculties of the University of Kent.

As a fully accredited museum, the 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. The Historic Dockyard Chatham presents unrivalled status as the most complete and best-preserved dockyard of the Age of Sail anywhere in the world. It immerses audiences in a mighty feat of preservation, innovation education and heritage. It offers access to the ships that shaped the world, from a Victorian antislavery sailing ship, to a Second World War Destroyer and a Cold War submarine as well as the stories of the people who made them. From historic buildings, including 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.

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 ongoing 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).

#### **Weston Culture Fund**

On 1 February 2021, the Garfield Weston Foundation announced the outcome of the Weston Culture Fund which granted over £30 million to more than 100 cultural organisations across the UK.

The Weston Culture Fund was created in response to Covid-19 which has had a devastating impact on the UK's much-loved museums, galleries, cultural centres and creative arts organisations. The fund aimed to support the sector to restart its work, refresh activities and re-engage audiences following Covid-19 closures. These organisations not only bring joy and wonder into our lives, but also play a vital role in their communities through learning and outreach; not to mention the wider employment and volunteering opportunities they create.

The scale of need was evident with requests totalling over £128 million. While it was never going to be possible to stretch the fund that far, our Trustees were impressed by the ingenuity and solidarity of the sector and were delighted to increase the fund by over 20% from its initial £25 million, granting over £30 million in total.

The Trustees' took many factors into account when reviewing applications and, after multiple meetings, made difficult decisions. Whilst we are delighted to help so many creative partners through this unprecedented period of uncertainty, this is tempered by regret at having to turn away so many great charities, many of which we have long and valued relationships with.

The Weston Culture Fund honours the UK's creative and cultural organisations which, while battling huge challenges of their own, endeavour to make life better for the rest of us.

The list of Weston Culture Fund grants can be accessed [here](#)