

The temporary exhibition will challenge the misconceptions and superstitions of women at sea, explore women's place in war and share inspiring stories of pioneering women who campaigned for change and fought against the odds, including Jane Austen's sister-in-law, Fanny, and Zandra Bradley, the first female apprentice.

Alexandra Curson, Hidden Heroines Curator, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, said: *"We are incredibly excited to be opening a new exhibition dedicated to the Dockyard's female workforce. Chatham has a such a rich history, but it can often be told from a male perspective. Women have played vital roles in all aspects of the Dockyard's history and this exhibition brings together a fascinating collection of stories, objects and photographs for the first time."*

"From the traditional roles of women in the home through to the first women who climbed aboard ships destined for battle and the invaluable female workforce that kept the home fires burning during two World Wars, these stories will be brought to life in our No.1 Smithery gallery and through a supporting digital exhibition."

"As part of a team of women working at the Dockyard today, we have the responsibility to champion the heroines that went before us and tell their tales of triumph to future generations – this exhibition does just that."

Hidden Heroine: Zandra Bradley, the first female apprentice



Zandra Bradley entered Chatham Dockyard in 1971 hoping to join the apprenticeship scheme. Zandra was initially rejected from the scheme and it was recommended she join the clerical department.

She persisted.

Zandra even attended night school to ensure she would pass the entrance exams, which included engineering maths that was not included in female maths syllabus.

Zandra joined as electrical fitter and later transferred to a technician apprenticeship.

She is photographed here in 1973 for an article in the Dockyard's newspaper, Periscope, in an inappropriate dress for her job and a wrench that would rarely have been required for her tasks.

The Historic Dockyard Chatham is currently closed to visitors due to current Government COVID restrictions. Hidden Heroines: the untold story of the women of the Dockyard, along with the wider Historic Dockyard site will open to the public once restrictions allow and it is safe for all users of the estate, this will be no earlier than 17 May 2021. Hidden Heroines will run until October 2021.

Hidden Heroines: the untold stories of the women of the Dockyard has been made possible through generous support from Garfield Weston Foundation.

For more information see thedockyard.co.uk

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MORE PRESS INFORMATION

Please contact Lynnette Crisp on 01634 823800 or email lcrisp@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).

Garfield Weston Foundation

Established over 60 years ago in 1958, the Garfield Weston Foundation is a family-founded, grant-making charity which supports causes across the UK and gave over £88million last year. It has donated well over £1billion to charities since it was established.

One of the most respected charitable institutions in the UK, the Weston Family Trustees are descendants of the founder and they take a highly active and hands-on approach. The Foundation's funding comes from an endowment of shares in the family business which includes Twinings, Primark, Kingsmill (all part of Associated British Foods Plc) and Fortnum & Mason, amongst others – a successful model that still endures today; as the businesses have grown, so too have the charitable donations.

From small community organisations to large national institutions, the Foundation supports a broad range of charities and activities that make a positive impact in the communities in which they work. Around 2,000 charities across the UK benefit each year from the Foundation's grants.