



Winter 2025 • Issue 71

Maritime Messenger

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Dear Reader

The summer has been a rollercoaster for the Trust with a lot of milestones achieved!

I am pleased to welcome **Jessica Pay** to the team in the role of estates surveyor. Jessica joined the team in July and is already proving a very worthwhile addition. I would also like to welcome **Bernard Atkinson** to the watersports team. Bernard brings a wealth of experience in watersports and outdoor pursuits and is a very welcome addition to our expanding team at the watersports centre.

I am delighted to say that, after an extended period of negotiation, the Trust has taken control of the remaining land and assets on St. Mary's Island and the wider estate, from Homes England. This marks a step change in the development of the Trust, allowing better decision making and control over estate activity. I would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work in what has been a long and complicated project. Over time, this will deliver the next phase of growth for the location.

In the summer, we celebrated the **20th Anniversary of the Community Centre**. The centre is a focal point for the island community; it was great to meet so many clubs and organisations that use the facility and to hear their experiences. It was an excellent evening and one to remember.

At Chatham Maritime Trust we pride ourselves in:

- Acting with integrity
- Always providing a high standard of service
- Treating others with respect
- Behaving ethically

IN BRIEF

As always, the **Food & Drink Festival** was a tremendous success and with 36 teams entering the **Dragonboat Racing**, it was quite a weekend! The event is only made possible with the support of local businesses and adjoining occupiers and we are always grateful for the help we receive.

This summer saw the introduction of the new **AquaPark** at the **Watersports Centre**. This has been a great success and a popular addition to our growing list of activities at the centre. With over 50 swimmers the **open water swimming** is getting busier with both weekday and weekend slots available. The centre is focused on supporting community activity and supports schools, cadet groups, charities and families alike. There are numerous opportunities to learn new skills, gain water-based qualifications or just have fun! Please take a look at the website www.chathammaritimewatersportscentre.co.uk or visit the centre and speak to Matt and his team. **Don't forget, SMI residents get a discount!**

We continue to look for opportunities to invest in the estate. The operations team will be updating signage in the coming months and we have also installed four new CCTV cameras to add to the existing portfolio. ANPR cameras have been installed overlooking the lock bridge and we are replacing damaged

lighting as part of a multi-year programme of maintenance. We have installed solar panels at the watersports centre, reducing further our utility costs in line with our overall ESG strategy.

I am constantly surprised by the diversity and abundance of wildlife around the estate so it was exciting to see two seals in the marina basin earlier in the summer, no doubt enjoying the all you can eat fish buffet on offer! Although not unusual for the location it was fun to see them popping up in the water from time to time and entertaining passers-by. I am sure our resident cormorant was not impressed with the unwanted competition for food!

In mid-May I attended the **'meet the CEO' SMIRA** meeting at the community centre. It was a lively discussion covering a good many topics and the next meeting will require a larger room, due to the number of attendees! The format is a good one and I enjoyed being able to listen to and answer residents' questions and their suggestions for improvement. I will work with SMIRA and agree another similar event for the new year. The Trust is always open for residents to call in and learn about what we do. If you would like to visit the office and meet the team please contact us. Alternatively, we are happy to visit you if appropriate. The first thing that new staff members often say when they join the Trust is "I didn't realise just how much goes on here!"

Thank you for your continued support.

Richard Farrer, CEO

TRANSFER OF HOMES ENGLAND ASSETS

Chatham Maritime Trust are delighted to announce that, following lengthy negotiations with **Homes England (HE)**, the majority of the remaining assets owned by HE on the estate have been transferred to the Trust.

This allows the Trust easier access and greater control for the purposes of administering the estate and the day-to-day operations that take place. It also ensures that the long-term management and development of the estate remains the responsibility of the Trust rather than with third party developers.

One example is the heritage pontoon adjacent to the Trust office in basin 1 where the Trust will continue to offer moorings to heritage craft and historical vessels for the benefit of preservation and for wider public interest.

The transfer provides a number of opportunities to enhance the estate and build future prosperity for the location through long term stewardship and proactive estate management.

WHO'S WHO AT THE TRUST

CHATHAM MARITIME TRUST



RICHARD FARRER

Richard Farrer is the CEO; he is a chartered surveyor with 35+ years' global real estate experience and a board member of 'We are Medway' and a 'Medway Champion' networking figure.

01634 793942 | ceo@cmtrust.co.uk



ELONA WALKER

Elona is the Trust Administrator/PA to the CEO, supporting the CEO and Trustees, managing the Community Fund, and producing the Trust's newsletters.

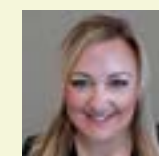
01634 793945 | elonawalker@cmtrust.co.uk



GRANT LEATHWHITE

Grant is Operations Manager; he manages the day-to-day operations on site and is the main point of contact for the residents & stakeholders on the Chatham Maritime Estate.

01634 793943/07867 507187
grantleathwhite@cmtrust.co.uk



JOANNE TERRY

Joanne is the Finance Manager and Company Secretary responsible for managing the Trust's finance function and related professional services such as banking and audit.

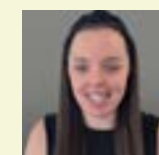
01634 793944 | joanneterry@cmtrust.co.uk



LYNSEY KEMBER

Lynsey, a qualified FMAAT, is the Finance Assistant overseeing daily finances for the Estate office, Community Centre, and Watersports Centre.

01634 793946 | lynseykember@cmtrust.co.uk



JESSICA PAY

Jessica is the Estate Surveyor, she supports the Operations Manager and estate team. Jessica is the primary contact for St. Mary's residents on covenants, consents, and re-mortgages.

01634 793941/07900 334060
jessicapay@cmtrust.co.uk



KAROLINA SZYMANCZUK

Karolina is the Estates & Facilities Assistant and provides a visual presence across the estate. Karolina heads up the Trust's sustainability project (ESG).

01634 793948/07787 292088.
karolinaszymanczuk@cmtrust.co.uk

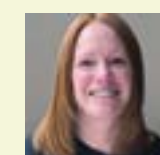
COMMUNITY CENTRE



VANESSA JARMAK

Is the Community Centre Manager. Vanessa oversees hiring of the facility along with day-to-day operations with Emma.

01634 890072 | vanessajarmak@cmtrust.co.uk



EMMA BROOKS

Is a Community Centre Administrator. Emma works closely with Vanessa assisting in all aspects of hiring the facility.

01634 890072 | emmabrooks@cmtrust.co.uk

WATERSPORTS CENTRE



MATT SMALL

Matt is Chief of Watersports for the Watersports Centre at Basin 2.

07538 964335 | wac@cmtrust.co.uk



BERNARD ATKINSON

Bernard Atkinson is the Snr. Watersports Instructor working with Matt Small to deliver fantastic watersports experiences.

wac@cmtrust.co.uk

Introducing new team members

Bernard joined the watersports team at the start of the 2025 summer season. Bernard has c. 40 years' experience delivering watersports sessions and courses.

When he is not at the watersports centre he can be found in the hills delivering Duke of Edinburgh expeditions or in the woods delivering forest school sessions.

Jess joined the team at the end of July as Estate Surveyor supporting the Operations Manager and estate team. Her background is in procurement and supplier management in the fast-moving consumer goods industry.

Jess loves to travel and recently took a career break spending 5 months solo backpacking across Asia, Australia and New Zealand. She also enjoys walking her dog Willow and spending time with family and friends.

As a resident of St. Mary's Island Jess is already familiar with the estate.

Work



LARGE
CHARITY OF
THE YEAR
WINNER!

Chatham Maritime Trust's CEO, Richard Farrer, and Operations Manager, Grant Leathwhite, recently attended the RBLI roll of honour ceremony which recognised the sponsors who have contributed to their growth and development.

Chatham Maritime Trust featured on that roll of honour and is a customer of their social enterprise facility delivering high quality estate signage and social value through the employment of veterans and people with disabilities.

The charity was recently named Large Charity of the Year at the Kent Charity Awards. It is proving that social enterprise can deliver real change, supporting veterans and people with disabilities into meaningful work. Their programmes turn people's lives around giving them self-respect, motivation and the confidence to contribute to society again. Congratulations to all at the Aylesford site.

Work



WAYFINDING PROJECT

BY TILLY BUCKNALL



This image stands out from my research. Taken circa 1860s, it shows the marshy terrain of St. Mary's Island during the development of the Victorian extension of the dockyard. Planks were laid across the land to allow workers to navigate the site.

It was provided by the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust and can be viewed via their online collection.

Over the past three months, I had the opportunity to work as a research assistant for Chatham Maritime Trust (CMT), conducting historical and ecological research on St. Mary's Island and the surrounding area as part of their Wayfinding Project.

This experience deepened my understanding of local history and gave me valuable insight into the collaborative and investigative nature of historical research.

The project involved gathering information from a wide range of sources, including books, journal articles, historic plans, and interviews with individuals with a personal or professional connection to the area. I made several trips to Medway Archives and the Reading Room at Chatham Historic Dockyard, where I accessed fascinating materials such as 17th-century maps and development plans. These visits were vital for building a detailed picture of the island's transformation over time.

One of the most intriguing discoveries was the plan to construct a fourth basin in the middle of St. Mary's Island. The earliest reference I found was in a newspaper from 1894, but by 1903, the idea was shelved in favour of developing a naval base at Rosyth. It's fascinating to imagine how different the island might be today had those plans come to fruition.

Over the course of the research I spoke with trustees who had particular interests in aspects of the island's history, and were able to provide guidance to steer the direction of the research. I also had the pleasure of interviewing a former member of the St. Mary's Island History Group and several knowledgeable volunteers at the Reading Room — some of whom were former dockyard employees. Their insights added depth and personal context to the archival material, reminding me that history is not just about documents, but lived experiences.

Being part of the CMT team was a rewarding experience. From the outset, I felt welcomed and supported. My colleagues were always

happy to share their expertise and provide context for areas of the research. Through this collaborative environment, I gained valuable insight into professional working practices. The role also helped me develop key skills such as managing large volumes of information, synthesizing complex data, and presenting findings in accessible formats.

This experience has given me a new appreciation for the layers of history beneath our feet and the importance of preserving and sharing local heritage. I'm proud to have contributed to a project that will in due course help residents and visitors alike connect with the stories that shaped St. Mary's Island into the community which now exists.

Work

COMMUNITY UPDATE

We're delighted to share the latest news from SMIRA

Our recent 'Question Time with the CEO' session with Richard Farrer proved to be a real success, drawing many residents and sparking valuable discussion. We're encouraged to see such steady participation at our regular meetings and look forward to continuing this momentum.



Siobhan Draper



Mona Koshkouei

We are also pleased to announce that Siobhan Draper and Mona Koshkouei will jointly serve as Co-Chairs of SMIRA, bringing shared leadership and experience to the role. Alongside this, we're fortunate to have both Co-Chairs who also serve as Directors of CMT, strengthening collaboration within our community.

Meetings and Events

Residents' Meetings will now be held quarterly, alternating between Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings. In addition, we will be introducing shorter 'Pop-in' sessions, lasting around an hour, where residents can drop by briefly to raise issues and leave when convenient.

Following the popularity of Richard's talk, we plan to organise more topic-focused events in the future, with details to be advertised in advance. A meeting with Grant to discuss covenants has already taken place.

Check out our noticeboards, located at the Community Centre and the path between the Central Bund West and the Central Bund East for information or follow us at (SMIRA (St. Mary's Island Residents' Association) Official Group | Facebook)

Live

Organisational Updates

We have started updating our members' list, so please keep an eye out for emails relating to this. Work is also underway to review our Articles of Association, as some updates may be needed to ensure they continue to reflect the needs of our community.

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce the upcoming rebuild of our website, which will make it easier for residents to access information and stay connected with SMIRA.

Get Involved

SMIRA is always looking for more residents to get involved. If you are interested in joining the Board of Directors or simply want to play a more active role in your community, we'd love to hear from you.

If you're not yet a member of SMIRA, now is the perfect time to sign up. To get in touch, you can email us at: Chair-SMIRA@outlook.com for general enquiries, or Secretary-SMIRA@outlook.com for membership and director queries.

Together, we can continue to make our community stronger.

Upcoming date

Sunday, 11 January
2026, 10:30am,
Community
Centre



Kent
Police

POLICE SURGERY

PCSO Angela Saunders will be holding a Police Surgery at CMT Office, Maritime Wharf, Chatham Maritime, ME4 3ES.

From 11am to midday:

- Saturday 15th November 2025
- Saturday 13th December 2025
- Saturday 10th January 2026

This is an opportunity for residents to speak to the PCSO on a one-to-one basis with any issues or concerns that they may have.

BATON OF HOPE

Chatham Maritime welcomed the Baton of Hope on Monday 22nd September on its tour around the UK to raise awareness of the effects of suicide and how it can be prevented.

Over 6,000 suicides occur in the UK every year and those affected by suicide in some way were encouraged to apply — 130 were selected to be **Baton Bearers** along the Kent and Medway route.

The Medway leg started at Mid Kent College passing through the University grounds and the Historic Dockyard, on to Rochester Cathedral and the Castle Gardens before leaving for Maidstone, Canterbury and concluding at Margate.

Bill Parkinson, one of our **Medway Sunlight Rotarians** who meet at the Community Centre, was one of those chosen and met with 8 other Baton Bearers at the Bell Mast in the Dockyard to receive the Baton after its journey through the university estate.

Bill recounts his experience — "The nine of us were all nervous as we waited for the baton to arrive passing the time swapping life stories and then the baton party and flag carriers were upon us and circulating the Bell Mast.

Then it was our turn and Alison set off as our first carrier with a big crowd of supporters around us.

I was second up and after the first 100 metres I made my way to the front of the group and embraced Alison before taking the baton. I had time to look at the beautiful craftwork to the baton which I had read up about — "a fluted handle symbolising strength and determination that is not easily crushed, decorative lattice work representing a community working as a team, spirals of silver and gilt spelling supported climb out of despair and a top of silver spirals depicting a pause and a decision to continue living."

But it was the emotions I felt during my 100 metres that shook me. My father died by suicide when I was 17 and my mother, myself and my two brothers had to cope with the grief and with the practical measures needed to continue without the breadwinner. Apart from other family members we had no help or guidance in how to survive — there was little support from elsewhere. On top of that it was not long after suicide had been decriminalized but there was still a stigma and an impact on financial support.

At the end of my section I passed the baton on to a couple who had lost their son to suicide and I wished them well before dropping back in the group. I felt exhausted but respectful of all my fellow baton carriers on this emotional day.

After more baton phases we reached the wonderfully named Thunderbolt Pier where the baton was handed over to the Fire and Rescue team and then by boat to the Esplanade, the Cathedral and the Castle Gardens.

The Baton of Hope is all about **raising awareness that suicide is preventable** and that there is now a lot of help available — it may be just checking to see if someone is OK. I felt proud to be part of spreading that message."

www.batonofhopeuk.org



Live

"... I carried the Baton of Hope in Medway on Monday 22nd September as it tours Britain to highlight the impact of suicide and the need to do more to prevent it.



A WELCOME RETURN TO Wetwheels South East

Wetwheels South East returned to Chatham Maritime in September for a second visit this year offering unique powerboating experiences for people of all ages with profound and complex disabilities. Excursions along the River Medway and to the Maunsell Forts were on offer; in some cases these experiences can be life changing for the people involved.

Wetwheels is an inspiring organisation where perceived barriers are reassessed, new skills are learned and new-found independence is discovered.

Central to the experience is active participation – helping to broaden aspirations, increase confidence and directly impact on health and wellbeing.

All are active participants, rather than simply passengers, with the opportunity to steer the vessel and learn seamanship alongside peers, friends and families.

A little bit about Wetwheels' journey...

Wetwheels was conceived and founded by disabled yachtsman, Geoff Holt MBE. Their first boat, Wetwheels Solent, based in Portsmouth, made her debut in 2011. This was followed by Wetwheels Jersey in 2013, with Wetwheels Hamble launched in May 2016.

In 2018 **Wetwheels Yorkshire**, based in Whitby and **Wetwheels South East**, located in Dover opened. **Wetwheels South West** launched in September 2020 based in Falmouth. The boat was supported by Sport England and they are now one of their strategic delivery partners for disability and inclusion. Edinburgh arrived in March 2023 and Torbay is their latest vessel having been delivered for 2024.

Each of their local **Wetwheels Operators** is a social enterprise, registered as a community interest company (CIC), or the local equivalent (as in Jersey). Their Operators gain the advantage of the support of the **Wetwheels Foundation**, a registered charity, and a proven, successful, sustainable operating model.

Their skippers are fully trained and commercially endorsed, and their volunteer crew receive their bespoke disability awareness in a maritime context training. All their boats are certified according to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's (MCA) Cat. 3 standards. Their commitment to safety and quality of service delivery has led the MCA (their regulator as the government agency responsible for safety at sea) to declare them as the 'subject matter experts on taking disabled people to sea in small boats'.

Chatham Maritime is proud to work in partnership with **Wetwheels South East** supporting their visits to Chatham Maritime that are so valued by the community.



Play

WATERSPORTS

BY MATT SMALL

It's been exciting times for the **Watersports Centre** this year with the introduction of our new **AquaPark**, we have recruited new staff and have achieved the **RLSS 'Industry Approved Aqua Park'** Status, with **Gold Accreditation**, demonstrating that we have met the strict operational and equipment standards set out by the **Royal Life Saving Society UK**.

Open water swimming has continued to grow, with regular swim sessions being held on Friday evenings and Sunday Mornings. Swimmers take the plunge in to our 'Excellent' bathing quality water whilst under the watchful eye of our safety team. Being a salt water body we provide a unique non tidal location for individuals training for cross channel swims to practice in more buoyant water and alongside our non-stinging moon jellyfish.

Our traditional watersports sessions have been popular with members of the public, schools and groups such as cadets, scouts and other youth organisations. This year we have been privileged to work with some great organisations including **We are Beams**, **Carers First**, **Medway Plus** and **Arches Local**, to provide young people with diverse and complex challenges and needs with watersports experiences that they would not otherwise have the opportunity to access. We have also this year delivered Kayaking sessions to pupils studying for their OCR Sport qualification.



“Great morning, fantastic staff.
Totally relaxing and will go again.”

10



“My daughter who is Special Educational Needs (SEN) has had a fantastic time learning water sports this summer with you guys. All a lovely group of people and made her feel at ease. Thank you.”



Our Saturday morning **'Grassroots'** OnBoard sailing club has seen a growing number of regular sailors working their way through the RYA national youth sailing scheme and we have provided numerous individuals with their very first experience of dinghy sailing.

This year we have also seen the introduction of paddleboard taster sessions for the **'deaf community'** which has led to several participants going on to become regular independent paddlers.

The **'Crewroom'** our training and meeting room has seen increased use from groups and individuals with a focus on health and wellbeing,

with regular **Yoga Classes** on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, the Delivery of **Pre-Diabetes and Healthy Way** courses, **First Aid** courses, **'Toolbox'** talks, resident association meetings and Monthly ladies' crafts classes.

Despite Autumn now being well and truly here and the main watersports season drawing to a close... it's not quite time to hang up your wetsuit just yet! We will over the course of the winter still be offering our **Pay&Play** and **Self-launch** sessions as well as continuing with **Open water swimming** for those hard-core swimmers mad enough to plunge into the cold water.

Play

11

MARITIME MARVELS

The Nao Victoria visited Chatham Maritime at the end of July and welcomed visitors on board to explore its decks and learn about the experiences of the young crew who continue to sail across the seas of the world today.

The 27-metre long, three-masted replica is an exact copy of the 16th century original with four decks, 290 square metres of sail, and a main beam measuring 6.7 metres. It is managed by the Fundación Nao Victoria, whose main goal is to educate people about maritime history.

The Nao Victoria is the replica of the ship that, captained by Magellan and Elcano, starred in the greatest maritime adventure of all time: the first circumnavigation of the world, which began and ended five centuries ago in the Spanish port of Seville — Spain (1519-1522). A vessel sailing the world as an ambassador of this great maritime feat and the work of its sailors.

The Chatham Maritime Trust team and guests, including the Mayor of Medway, attended an opening ceremony on board receiving a warm welcome from Captain Juanjo Capo and the crew.



The Kent Tug also welcomed visitors on the Saturday. Most Tuesdays and Saturdays Volunteers are pleased to show interested people around and talk about the boats from 10am to midday so plenty of opportunity to visit. There is no charge to step on board but donations are gratefully received.

The vessel is maintained by a fantastic group of volunteers who are always keen to share their knowledge and experience.

The Kent was built in 1948 by Richards Ironworks of Lowestoft for J. P. Knight, Rochester.

The Kent began her life on the Medway berthing ships in the Port of Rochester and Sheerness. When the BP Refinery opened at the Isle of Grain it was the Kent who assisted the first British Tanker onto the berth. Over the years she was deployed in various locations with spells in Scotland, coastal and near continental towing.

In the middle 1980s the Kent was taken out of service after working almost forty years. The Kent was secured on the moorings off Ship Pier, Rochester where she was illuminated with floodlights and used for advertising the company of J. P. Knight. In 1991 the Kent was towed from the moorings and secured on the buoys off Thunderbolt Pier, Chatham Dockyard where she remained until 1995. In all this time there was no maintenance on board.

In October 1995 the South Eastern Tug Society (SETS) purchased the Kent from J. P. Knight for the sum of £1 on the understanding that she would be restored and preserved. A berth was found for her in No. 1 Basin, Chatham Dockyard (courtesy of Chatham Maritime), where the refurbishment was to take place. For the next 4 years there was a lot of hard work for the volunteers who had 13 years of rust and corrosion to clean and paint, plus inspection, repairs and preparation of the main engine and auxiliary engines.

In January 1999 the fruits of labour paid off with the first run of the Kent's main engine. A few weeks later she was under way in the basin for a trial run and a test for the steering gear. In May 1999 S.E.T.S. sailed the Kent on her first official trip from Strood to Sheerness. Since May 1999 the Kent has attended events at St. Malo, Ostend, Maassluis, Rotterdam, Dover, Great Yarmouth, Whitstable, barge races and regattas on the River Thames.

In 2012 the Kent was part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant on the River Thames, and in 2013 the Kent and the Fearnought were performers in 'The Ships Opera' also on the Thames in the Pool of London. Every Christmas the tugs are decorated for the season and create a bright and welcome show of colours.

Some of the team from Chatham Maritime Trust were fortunate enough to experience a trip on the Kent Tug out on the River Medway in July. The purpose of the visit was to get to know our neighbours, as they are moored on our heritage pontoon, and to promote the historic vessel.

The Kent Tug



Play

ST. MARY'S ISLAND

COMMUNITY CENTRE — SMICC

The Community Centre has been celebrating it's 20th Year anniversary since December'24.

We held a hugely successful photo competition in Spring with winners being selected for canvas display throughout the centre. After some redecoration, they now take pride of place through the corridors of the centre and really do make for a warm welcome to our venue.



Photo Competition

OTHER WINNERS

Other winners are being used to create our very own St. Mary's Island Community Centre 2026 Calendar for sale at our annual Xmas fair or from the centre office. Proceeds for this will go to a chosen charity. Come along and admire the talented photographer's artwork.

FIRST PRIZE WINNER

The first prize winner is shown here... and has prime position. Winners received shopping vouchers.



SMICC

Summer Evening Event



We held a summer evening event for our regular hirers to say thank you for all that they bring to our community and for supporting us throughout the year. This was a lovely opportunity for everyone to catch up with each other. The night consisted of music, food and drink, speeches, games and tombola prizes, along with celebration cakes! It was a fabulous evening enjoyed by the team at the centre and CMT, with so many of our valued groups and colleagues.

This was followed by summer fun for the younger members of the community. Special 20th anniversary decorated pebbles were hidden around the walk-ways and parks across the Island for primary school children to find and re-hide. Craft prizes were claimed for anyone who shared their find or sent a photo in for our socials.

There may well be some still out there! Keep a look out.

Celebrations come to an end at the Xmas fair, with more celebration cakes, treats, free tombola prizes, and the sale of our special charity calendar.

SMICC is now looking forward to the next 20 years ahead.



Live

It was recently announced that the University of Greenwich and the University of Kent are to merge. This new structure will be a single entity with one vice-chancellor, one governing body, and one academic board, but it will allow each university to keep its own name, identity, and campuses.

The aim is to create a stronger financial foundation for both institutions. It is proposed that the new multi university group will be known as **London & South East University Group** but this is subject to consultation. Detailed financial and legal due diligence is underway and all being well the new set-up will be established for the 2025/27 academic year.

UNIVERSITIES MERGER



UNIVERSITY of
GREENWICH



University of
Kent

Study



Play

COMMISSIONER'S HOUSE REVEALS A PIECE OF HISTORY

Commissioner's House was built in 1704 as the official residence of the Dockyard Commissioner and has therefore been significant in British Naval history overseeing the construction of ships like HMS Victory and acting as a strategic hub during the WWI and WWII. The building is a testament to Britain's naval past.

Among its many treasures, the house features an exquisite ceiling painting attributed to Highmore and Thornhill, depicting an assembly of the gods, with Mars crowning Neptune — a piece originally from HMS ROYAL SOVEREIGN.

Grants have been received for the essential restoration and preservation works but additional funding is required to complete this ambitious project. The re-launch of Commissioner's House is scheduled for Summer 2026, promising to add another chapter to its celebrated history.

The project has been split into two phases:

Phase 1: Repair and Protect

The first phase will address structural stability of the building through critical repairs. Conservation efforts will preserve historic interior features, including the remarkable ceiling painting of Mars Crowning Neptune, attributed to Highmore and Thornhill. Additionally, remedial work will be undertaken to protect the exhibits and collections housed within the building. Sustainability improvements will also be implemented to reduce the house's operational carbon footprint.

During the restoration works a piece of history was uncovered. A 300-year old Jack of Spades card was found under the floorboards. Conservator Alexandra Wade said the discovery was a "tangible reminder of the lives that once lived here — a small personal object that has survived nearly three centuries". Chatham Historic Trust approached the Worshipful Company of Playing Card Makers in London to discover more about the card. The company dated the Jack of Spades card to between 1725 and 1750.

Ms Wade commented that the card is unique because it has been altered; three of the corners had been cut off at uneven angles and it is believed that the card had been repurposed. It is suspected that the card fell through the thin gaps in the wooden floor by chance.

This discovery prompted Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust to launch a call out to people to design their own unique set of cards featuring their memories of the Dockyard. The submissions will be sealed in a time capsule and will be placed inside the rooftop of the Commissioner' House. The Jack of Spades card is now on display at the Historic Dockyard.



Phase 2: Access, Interpretation, and Reuse

In the second phase, the Commissioner's House will be opened to the public for the first time. The building will undergo adaptive reuse, serving both as a museum and a hospitality venue. Efforts will also be made to enhance accessibility, ensuring more people can engage with its rich history. A programme of events within the building will enable visitors to connect and appreciate Medway's maritime legacy and the impact of the Dockyard's naval history.

COURT PADEL TENNIS ON UNIVERSITIES AT MEDWAY

MEDWAY CAMPUS

The courts are a recent addition to the Medway Campus, open to the public and students receive discounted rates. Non-student bookings can be made through Playtomic.

Padel is an innovative form of tennis that's fun, easy-to-learn and extremely sociable.

Played as doubles on an enclosed court about a third the size of a tennis court, groups of mixed ages and abilities can play together.

Padel is fast-paced and is often described as a mix between tennis and squash. Scoring is the same as tennis, but is played with different rackets and with lower pressure balls.

Who invented Padel?

Mexican businessman **Enrique Corcuera** set up the first-ever padel court at his holiday home in Acapulco in 1969 — but the roots of the sport go back further than that.

During the 19th century, passengers on British cruise ships played a similar game with tennis rackets and in the 1910s 'platform tennis' became popular in Washington and New York, with paddles replacing traditional tennis rackets.

Over the next decade, changes were made to the courts, adding wooden floors and high surrounding fences to avoid losing the ball in the winter snow.

But it wasn't until the 1960s when Enrique set up the first recognised court on land he owned in Acapulco. The main difference being that he surrounded his court with walls and a metallic fence of up to four metres on all sides, designed to prevent the ball from escaping onto his neighbour's land.

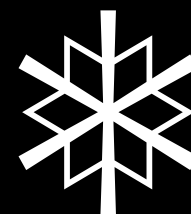
He called the sport **Paddle Corcuera** — and the rest is history.

In 1992 the **British Paddle Association** was formed by a group of passionate British expats seeking to compete in the 1992 **World Paddle Championships**. Since then the sport has steadily grown throughout Britain and continues to gain popularity.

The game can also be played at Platform 26 Padel located in Waterfront Way, Chatham ME4 4JT in the heart of Chatham.

PLATFORM26PADEL.CO.UK

DIARY DATES



St. Mary's Island Community Centre Christmas Fair takes place on Saturday 29th November from 1pm to 4pm. There will be a range of stalls, festive music, carol singing, lots of Christmas gifts and treats and of course a visit from Santa.

Mission Christmas at the **Historic Dockyard** available on selected dates in November and December. Mission Christmas is an immersive festive experience with a difference. At the end of the journey you'll be rewarded with a magical encounter with Father Christmas. This is a separate ticketed event; annual tickets are not valid for this initiative.

For details and to book:
<https://thedockyard.co.uk/events/mission-christmas-2025/>



ROCHESTER CHRISTMAS MARKET

Friday 28th November to Sunday 14th December

This takes place in the grounds of Rochester Castle and is **FREE to enter**. Trading dates and times as follows:

- Friday 28th November 12pm to 9pm
- Saturday 29th November 10am to 9pm
- Sunday 30th November 10am to 6pm
- Friday 5th December 12pm to 9pm
- Dickensian Christmas Festival —
Saturday 6th & Sunday 7th December 10am to 9pm
- Friday 12th December 12pm to 9pm
- Saturday 13th December 10am to 9pm
- Sunday 14th December 10am to 6pm

ROCHESTER DICKENSIAN CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th December

There will be street entertainment, parades, costumed characters, readings, song and dance and Victorian-themed delights. The festival takes place from 10am to 6pm on both days.



USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Chatham Maritime Trust	01634 891888
✉ @CMTrust	
Facebook Chatham-Maritime-Trust-240934882728615	
Security	01634 890292
Community Centre	01634 890072
Watersports Centre	07538 964335
✉ wac@cmtrust.co.uk	
Chatham Maritime Car Park (Dockside Outlet Centre)	
🌐 www.cmcarpark.co.uk ✉ info@cmcarpark.co.uk	
Doctor's Surgery	01634 890712
Pharmacy	01634 891207
St. Mary's Island School:	01634 891050
🌐 www.st-marys-island-cofe-primary-school.co.uk	
Dockside Day Nursery & Pre-School	01634 258235
Fen Pest Control	01580 754839
Odeon Filmline	0871 2244607
St. Mary's Island Church	
🌐 www.stmarysislandchurch.com	
SMI Residents Association (SMIRA)	
✉ admin@smira.info 🌐 www.smira.info	
Facebook St. Mary's Island Residents Association Official Group	
Vistry Customer Services	01474 618222
✉ cs.kent@vistry.co.uk	
Chatham Historic Dockyard	01634 823800
River Ward Councillors	
Cllr Habib Tejan	07985 169598 / 01634 891046
✉ habibtejan@live.co.uk	
✉ @HabibTejan	
Kent Police Emergency	999
Non-emergency	101
Crimestoppers	0800 555111
Anti-Terrorist Number	0800 789321
PCSO 56208 Angela Saunders	
✉ 56208@kent.police.uk	
Medway Council	01634 306000
Medway Council Specialist Teams:	
• Waste & Contract Monitoring (waste@medway.gov.uk)	
• Engagement (eet@medway.gov.uk)	
• Enforcement (environmental.enforcement@medway.gov.uk)	
• Animal Wardens (animal.wardens@medway.gov.uk)	
MC Emergency (out of hours service)	01634 304400
Environment Agency Hotline	0800 807 060

🌐 www.cmtrust.co.uk

Chatham Maritime Trust
Maritime Wharf, St. Mary's Island
Chatham ME4 3ES

Maritime Messenger is published by: **Chatham Maritime Trust**

☎ 01634 891888 | ✉ info@cmtrust.co.uk

Regular news updates are posted on the 'News' section of the Trust's website and the 'What's On' section details events in the area and beyond.

If you wish to be kept informed of what is going on across the estate (maintenance, events, lectures, roadworks etc.) and in the vicinity then sign up to the weekly e-publication the 'Friday Flyer' via the website or send your details to info@cmtrust.co.uk

Artwork by Jane Graham



**Chatham
Maritime
Trust**

Charity No. 1055710