

25 glorious years

chatham historic dockyard trust

VOLUNTEERS play a big part in the life of the dockyard.

The Chatham Historic Dockyard Volunteer Service was formed 15 years ago from members of the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service, Thames and Medway area, which was disbanded by the Ministry of Defence under the Options for Change policy.

Members of the RNXS had many skills and after a meeting between curator Richard Holdsworth, then trust chairman Admiral Sir William Staveley, and Alan Bates, the RNXS staff port naval officer for Thames and Medway, the thriving service was set up.

They've been involved with a broad range of restoration projects including warships HMS Cavalier and HMS Gannet, the submarine HMS Ocelot, one of the first Royal Navy

Dedicated volunteers are putting skills to good use

Dragonfly helicopters and a range of smaller craft and military vehicles and guns. They also help during large events. Mr Bates said they get a lot of support and encouragement from their patron, HRH Prince Michael of Kent, and president, Captain Mike Hare.

There are now five groups of volunteers contributing some 60,000 hours a year. Members are of all ages and give as much time as they can spare. The oldest volunteer group, formed in 1982, is the Chatham Historical Society which supports and maintains the exhibits

within the museum. Others work on ships, the collection of trains and the RNLI's collection of lifeboats, which are on display on Slip 4.

For further details, contact the trust's volunteer and youth coordinator, James Armstrong, on 01634 823800.

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QUIET HAVEN: The Receiving Room houses the World Ship Society's library (inset)

A world of maritime and naval expertise on offer

A SMALL group of dedicated enthusiasts set up the World Ship Society in 1946 and it's now the largest and most prestigious international organisation dedicated to maritime and naval history.

Its library and archives have been located in the Receiving Room at Chatham Historic Dockyard for the last five years.

The society is noted for its extensive list of publications, including the highly-regarded journal Marine News, and it maintains a significant library and collection of photographs

for members and researchers. Branch meetings, held throughout the world, allow members young and old to share their knowledge and experience of the shipping and naval industries.

The Receiving Room is in the heart of the dockyard complex, on the visitor trail between the Ropery and the museum.

Non-members can also use the facilities in return for a donation and members of the public are welcome in the open section, said librarian Alan Watt.



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*Proud to be involved with the
Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust*

