

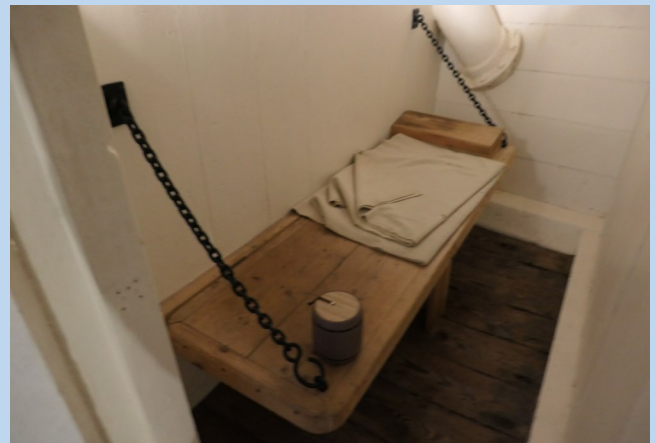
Portsmouth - 21st July 2022

Thirty-eight of us met early on Thursday 21st July for our visit to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. Luckily for us the weather had cooled a little from the very high temperatures of the previous days. We had booked a 40-seater bus but when it materialised it had magically transformed itself into an 80 seater double decker so there was plenty of room for us all.

We arrived at the dockyard just after 12 and collected our Three Attraction Tickets. This enabled us to choose any three of the available attractions, excluding the Harbour tour. Faced with such a choice some of us opted to check out a drink and lunch first to prepare ourselves for the arduous afternoon ahead.

So, suitably refreshed, Dave and I decided to have a look at The Warrior first. I'm not sure what I was expecting but I was very surprised by this ship. It was built in the 1860s and its purpose was to show the world how great our defensive power was. It was never involved in active warfare although it carried a tremendous armament. It was huge, with a length of 418 feet and beam of 58 feet. Apart from the occasional trip down the west coast of the Iberian Peninsula, it spent most of its time sailing round the British Isles.





Then came the main attraction, the new **Mary Rose Museum** which was opened in 2016. This ship was the flagship of Henry VIII and served in his fleet for 34 years before sinking during the Battle of the Solent in 1545. Her remains were raised in 1982. The visit began with some interesting presentations about the ship then we entered the galleries where we could see the remains of the ship. This was amazing, just walking past the part of the ship which had been recovered and restored gave me goose bumps. To think that it was over 500 years old and had been buried for so many years! The displays in the galleries tell the stories of the 500 men who lived, worked and died on-board. There are around 19,000 artefacts on display recovered from the seabed. We could have spent the whole day just looking at this exhibition.



With very little time left we took a quick walk round the **Victory**, although we certainly did not do it justice and will need to go back some time in the future. There was some restoration work being carried out on this ship so it was not possible to see it all anyway.



The good weather tempted some members of the group to join a harbour tour.

Audrey reports

'We had a great view of the Warrior as we pulled away from the quayside and there were various craft in the harbour, including ferries to the Isle of Wight. The highlight was the superb sight of H.M.S. Prince of Wales and H.M.S. Queen Elizabeth. These enormous aircraft carriers have 16 decks each and flight decks that are 70metres wide and 280metres long. They are each capable of carrying up to 48 Lightning Aircraft and 4 Merlin Helicopters. With a minimum 700 crew on board, increasing when there are aircraft on board, they are awesome!!



The tour took about 45minutes, calling in at Gunwharf Quays to take more passengers on board. This popular shopping centre is dominated by the Spinnaker Tower. The area is known as "The Hard" and is home to the Tall Ships Youth Trust. Several of their training boats were moored close to our landing point, which is also the boarding point for the regular ferry across to Gosport.'

Dave and I had just time for a much-needed quick cup of tea on the terrace of the Mary Rose Café overlooking the Victory and the latest aircraft carriers docked in the Harbour before returning to our coach for the trip home. Denise Thornton