

August has been quite a varied month. I was helping the archaeology team with timber recording again, a project that has been ongoing since June. I also helped Dan Pascoe, the licensee and lead archaeologist on the HMS *Invincible* wreck, look at gun carriages that NMRN have in their collection. We deciphered what type of gun they were and took photos. It was really interesting talking to Dan about archaeology, learn about types of gun carriages and the different parts.



I also helped find objects in the collection for the Victory Gallery which is going to be updated next year. It's exciting seeing this project from the beginning. After being involved with the Historic Ships team I'm keen for the conservation story of HMS *Victory* to be told and on her entire life, not just Trafalgar and Nelson, which I think is the general feeling with everyone. My task was literally searching for objects in different stores. Something I've learnt about museums, any museum, is that the records may not be up to date! This means that the location may have changed, or is on display somewhere with no record of it. It was really good fun trying to find different objects though. You come across all sorts of different things, like the life-mask of Nelson in a silver padded briefcase!

We had to take measurements and photos which were updated onto a joint folder for all the different departments that are involved in the new gallery. It's interesting also reading an object description on the database, only to find out it's very different in reality. For example, the letters of Reverend Scott, chaplain and private secretary to Nelson on HMS *Victory* before and during Trafalgar, could have given an insight into life on board the ship or daily routine. However, in practicality most of them were in French, Spanish and Italian, and the ones that were in English were political or about Nelson and his death. So they weren't useful for our purposes.

I was also fortunate enough to go to meet with the curators of the Fleet Air Arm Museum (FAAM) and get shown around the collection there. Dave Morris, Senior Curator of Naval Aircraft, has been working at FAAM for over 25 years. We talked about how approaches to conservation have changed. Present good practice generally involves conserving the remains of an object, rather than restoring an object to what it 'should' look like. It's a remarkable shift, and especially in the Armed Forces, one that has been a very difficult road. Dave talked about the Corsair project which is a fascinating story, and well worth a read (some good articles online, Dave also does talks about conservation). The Barracuda project also is fantastic. The engineers at FAAM are rebuilding the plane from Barracuda parts found at known crash sites such as a peat bog in Scotland, the Channel sea bed and mountain sides. They're conserving the metal, cleaning and protecting it. This not only includes parts of the frame or fuselage, but also any useable fastenings! It's a huge undertaking especially as the plans they have only relate to separate parts of the plane, with no mention of the order things were put together. The workshop where the Barracuda is being assembled can be viewed by the public which is great too. I hope to visit FAAM again.



Some may remember back in May I was helping pack up the Marine's collection to be moved to a new location. Well I managed to see where some of the objects would go! As FAAM is under the NMRN remit, there is a new purpose built storage hanger there which will house the uniforms of the Marine's collection. It was great to see more of NRMN's vast collection and archives.

On that note, when I was back in Portsmouth, I helped move some of the Marine's collection into large freezers. This is done to kill any pests or mould on the objects. It was quite good, hard work and very satisfying knowing that they will be pest free!



I also had the opportunity to join a team of specialists from the museum who were checking out a potential new acquisition for the museum. The museum already owns a very similar vessel; however it was likely that the vessel we were looking at was a part of the D-Day landings, which adds to its significance. The things I learnt from that day are that photos and test samples should be noted down on a ship plan, so that they can be identified with the location. Also going through the vessel systematically and asking the same questions in each area is important. It was really interesting seeing how people from different areas of expertise will approach conclusions, and it was useful to discuss the why's and how's together.



I also wanted to gain experience in volunteer management. So I shadowed a Curator who is in charge of a volunteer based digitalisation project to understand what is needed when organising tasks. Digitalisation projects are popping up quite a bit, as technology has steamed ahead and the demand

for online museum sources has increased. Volunteers are absolutely crucial to museum work, so understanding what they want to do and what needs to be done is important.