

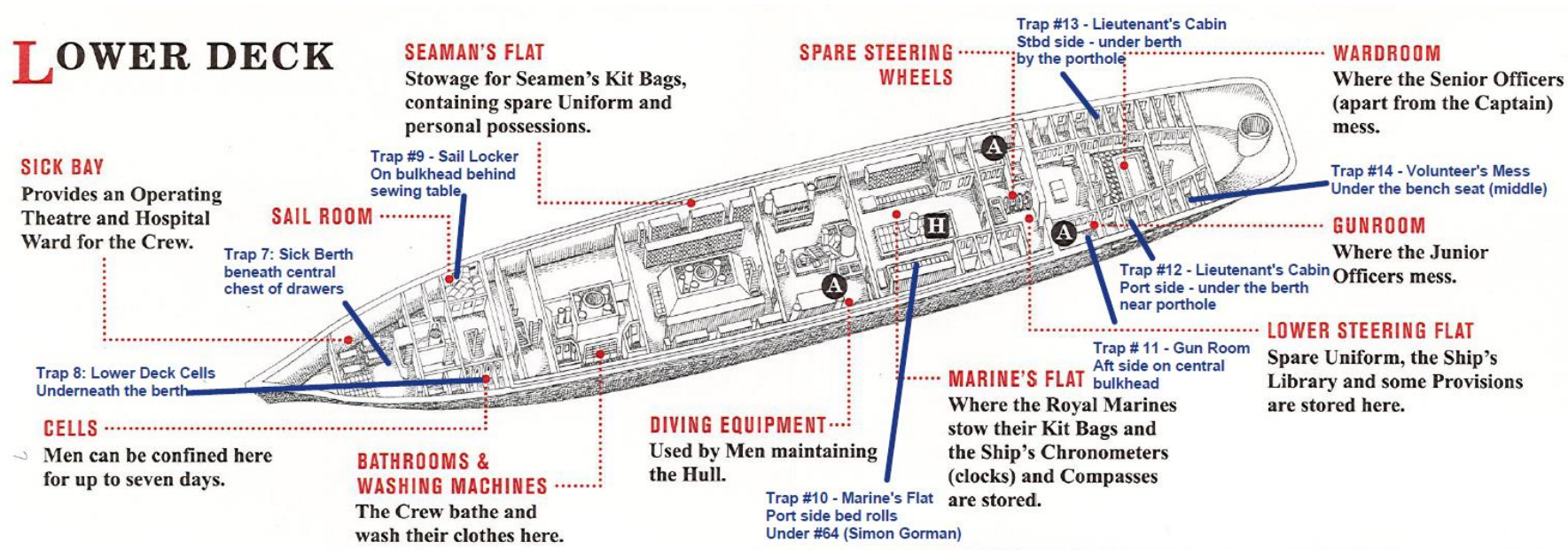
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SHTP2 August Blog

# BACK IN THE SWING OF THINGS



Although the original plan was to move to the Collections team in August, as I am still working on some interesting projects with the Conservation department, I instead split my time between the two. This has meant that this month has been super varied, with me working on a few different projects.

The month began in the same vein as the last, with me working on the Integrated Pest Management plans for the historic ships in Portsmouth. One of the things we noticed when looking for the pest traps that had been placed on the ships previously, was that the description of their location was often too vague or slightly off. In order to make it easier for future searchers to find the traps and maintain the pest management system, I decided to annotate ship guides to show the exact location of all the traps we were setting, whilst also writing up more detailed notes of the traps locations.



Returning to my work on *Victory's* mast, I began researching the best way to remove the iron nails which secured the iron hoops that once held the mast together. The wood of the mast has shrunk so much that these nails are now obsolete, and are aesthetically displeasing. Since these nails were a contemporary addition, we made the decision to remove them. Instead the iron hoops will be secured in place using purposely made wooden wedges. I ended up removing the nails with a claw hammer, by placing a wooden wedge up against the nail, underneath the hammer and then pulling the nail out. This provided leverage and traction for the motion of the hammer, prevented the hammer head from damaging the mast wood, and also prevented the wood from splitting when the nail was removed.



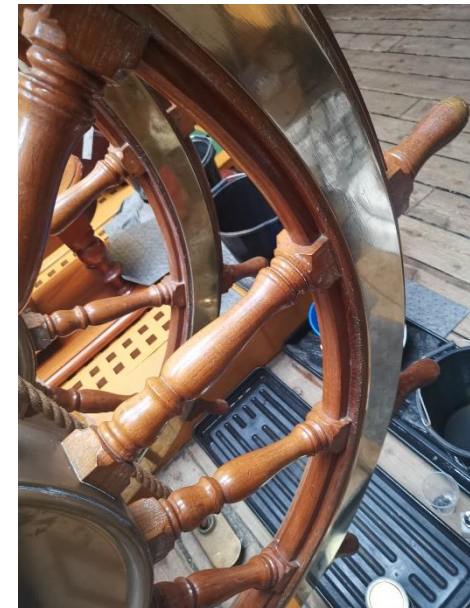
My next task with *Victory's* mast was to begin wet cleaning. After conducting a bit of research into the best methods to wet clean historic wood, I ended up mixing a 1:10 solution of Synperonic A7 (a mild detergent), and water; which I began gently applying to the mast with a cotton swab. I gently rub the solution onto the mast in a circular motion to loosen the dirt, and then use a dry swab to remove the solution and any leftover dirt. Using this method, I moved systematically down the mast in a strip before starting from the top again with another strip right next to the first. Although this method is slow going, it is the best way to ensure that there is no water damage to the mast.



Partway through the first week of August we found out that the museum would be reopening on the 24<sup>th</sup>. This development meant that my



work on *Victory's* mast was placed on the backburner, and instead we focused on projects that were best done without visitors around. The first of these projects was the conservation the brass on *Warrior*. NMRN's conservator, Morgan, wanted to conduct some coating testing on *Warrior's* brass wheels, in order to see what would be the best adhesive to use to prevent the brass from tarnishing. In order to do this, we first had to remove the existing tarnish from the wheels, using wire wool and white spirit, followed by autosol to polish the brass and leave a shiny finish. *Warrior's* wheels are huge, so this was quite an undertaking!



When working with the Collections team, one of the tasks that most urgently needed to be done was the cleaning of the insides of the display



cases for the main exhibits. These hadn't been cleaned in quite a while, as there hadn't been a period when the museum was closed to visitors for years, and in order to properly clean many of the cases the objects inside have to be safely removed. It was really interesting to get to see how some of these cases were designed and the different ways they could be opened. This task also highlighted some of the problems with case design, in terms of being able to easily clean them when they contain huge objects, such as ship models.



This month I was also tasked with conducting a condition survey for HMS *Victory's* keel. *Victory's* keel is the oldest part of the ship, and due to its position on the dry dock it is completely open to the elements. The museum has also opened up a viewing platform on the dock bottom to allow visitors to be able to see *Victory's* hull from below. My condition survey will assess the damage to the keel from its exposure to the elements, as well as investigate if there are any further threats from the public, now that they are allowed to access the dock bottom.

August has been a very busy month and so far, it doesn't seem like September will be any different! It's great that after a long period of laptop-based study I now get to be involved with so many different projects at the museum. The last few months have gone by in a whirlwind, and I'm excited to see what new experiences the rest of my time here at NMRN will bring!

