

BEFORE THE DAWN – EARLY ORIGINS

C286 **The Romans**

It was the secure location of the harbour that no doubt encouraged the Romans to build their fortress at the top end of harbour some time around 275 A.D and known as **Portus Adurni**. But in all probability the harbour was already well used for trade with the continent well before the erection of the fortresses, for why else would it have been built if not to protect trade and community. Only when the Saxon pirates became more adventurous and coastal settlements at risk did the walls begin to rise, to take its place in a line of Roman coastal forts that was to become known as “**The Forts of the Saxon Shore**” It would be prudent not to be content with this image of history, for one can hardly believe that the Roman Army who had a vast experience of warfare would be satisfied with this, for surely at the harbour entrance they would build a watch tower with a beacon close by to raise alarm of intruders entering Spithead or the harbour Channel, for only at the Point (old Portsmouth) can the harbour and the approaches to Spithead can be clearly seen. It may well be that this was the origins of that early settlement at old Portsmouth, it is most certain the Romans would have seen its strategic value. With the demise of Roman Britain around 410 A.D. the fort fell into disrepair.

Construction of **Portchester Castle** by Carausius, Emperor of Britain, as one of the “Forts of the Saxon Shore” which stretched from Norfolk to Portchester.

Carausius was Emperor of Britain from 287 to 293 when he was assassinated.

Portchester was the fleet based for the Roman galleys of the “**Classis Britannica**” ... the fleet that guarded Britain.

C892 King Alfred strengthened the defences of Portchester.

897 King Alfred stationing some of his fleet in Portsmouth Harbour and it is said that some of the vessels were built here to his own design; they were not shaped after the Danish or Friesian mode; but were longer with 60 oars or more, swifter and steadier. Clearly these ships were larger than those of the northern countries who in the main only had 20 rowing benches. It was with this fleet that King Alfred won a complete victory over the Danes in the Solent and for a time ended the menace of the Dane.

904 Portchester Castle acquired by the Crown. (See 1632)

979 Portsea Island devastated by the Danes. Southampton sacked in 980.

998 The Danes had returned and settled in the Isle of Wight.

1066 **King Harold (Godwineson)** having seized the throne after the death of Edward the Confessor, mustered the fleet (we are told of 700 vessels.) at Portchester to cruise the Channel and ward off any planned invasion threatened by Duke William of Normandy. But after nearly four months and acting on force intelligence he dispersed the fleet and hurried north to deal with the over ambitious “Tosig” and King Harold of Norway (Duke William’s brother-in-law) and crushed the invasion of the Norsemen at Stansted Bridgeon 25th September. On 28th September William of Normandy lands at Pevensey, Sussex. Harold with

his army then made that magnificent forced march south where he fell, we are told to a Norman arrow at the Battle of Hastings 14th October.

1086 **William, “The Conqueror”**, sailed for Normandy from Portsmouth harbour, never to return to England.

1101 **Robert, Duke of Normandy**, William “**The Conquerors**” eldest son, and claimant to the English throne, landed at Portsmouth. After the death of William Rufus, killed by an arrow in the New Forest Henry I was enthroned. Roberts Invasion army marched to Winchester and turned towards London. Henry I met him at Alton and settled an annuity of 3,000 marks which was paid until 1103.

WARS WITH FRANCE

- 1133 Henry I embarked from Portsmouth on his last expedition to Normandy.
- In the same year **Empress Matilda** landed at Portsmouth to assert her claim to the throne. 1148 Matilda fled back to France. England remained in a state of anarchy until 1153 when the opposing parties signed the Treaty of Wallingford.
- 1174 Henry II embarked for Normandy in August.
- 1175 Henry II returned victorious from Normandy in May.
- 1177 Huge invasion fleet assembled by Henry II at Portsmouth but later disbanded.
- C1180 **Foundation of town of Portsmouth by Jean de Gisors** (See 1194)
- 1182 Henry II made his will “**by the seaside at Portsmouth**” before embarking for France.
- 1189 13th August. Richard, on the death of his father Henry II, hastened from France to claim the throne and landed at Portsmouth.
- 1194 3rd. September 1189. Richard was crowned at Westminster and after but a few months he left England to pursue his crusade to Palestine and the re-capture of Jerusalem. This Holy Crusade was beset with problems and bickering between the allied armies in particular with the French King Phillippe Auguste. Richard proved to be a fine soldier and a good military leader and came within sight of the walls of Jerusalem but with the disintegration of the allied armies was forced to turn back. By this time Phillippe Auguste the French King had returned home and was creating trouble on the borders of Richard’s French possession and at home his brother Prince John was planning insurrection hoping to supplant his brother. Richard and a small band of companions returned home but were apprehended near Vienna by Duke Leopold of Austria in the last month of 1192. Richard was handed over in the New Year to the Emperor Henry VI who demanded 150,000 marks ransom. On Richard’s return to England on 13th March 1194 the witch hunt began for John’s supporters and French sympathisers, who were quickly rounded up and their land and possession confiscated by the crown. One such sympathiser was Jean de Gisors owner of the town and other parts of Portsea Island. In consequence his possessions in Hampshire fell to the crown including the town of Portsmouth. Richard’s exchequer was much depleted in respect of his ransom. To recoup his losses Richard set about selling all the confiscated land, but not Portsmouth and as is so clearly stated in the charter he granted Portsmouth on 2nd May 1194 in the second paragraph

“Know that we have retained our Borough of Portsmouth

In our hands, with everything pertaining to it”

There is but one possible explanation for retention of Portsmouth, control of his lines of communication between his French possessions and his English

Kingdom, for the free movement of cargos, troops and munitions. Had it been sold these lines could have been interrupted by noblemen or wealthy merchants who may not in some future time see eye-to-eye with the Kings dreams. Legend has it that at this time Richard built a “Doc” at Portsmouth. Generally this is believed to have been a *Wet Doc* or

- 1194 2nd May. King Richard granted Portsmouth its charter: in the second paragraph he states “Know that we have retained our Borough of Portsmouth in our hands, with everything pertaining to it”. Richard left Portsmouth on 12th May, never to return to England.
- 1200 King John, returning from Barfleure in February confirmed the 1194 charter. He sailed back to France in April.
- 1201 King John and Queen Isabella celebrated Whitsuntide in the Kings Hall (which Richard I had ordered build.) John sailed with the Queen as far as the Isle of Wight, returned to Portsmouth and boarded another ship to sail to Normandy.
- 1203 King John landed here having been driven out of Normandy in December.
- 1204 King John landed here in April and again in May.
- 1205 At Whitsuntide King John assembled a large fleet and army here. He sailed in June but because of discontent amongst the nobles the expedition was abandoned.
- 1206 King John visited Portsmouth in May in connection with a projected expedition against la Rochelle
- 1206 29th April 1206 King John orders the Constable of Southampton:

*As you value our honour and the peace of our kingdom, as soon as
You receive these letters you are at once without delay to visit
Southampton, Portsmouth, Keyhaven, Christchurch, Yarmouth
And other places of your district. There you are to arrest all ships
Suitable for our voyage and capable of carrying eight horses or more
Manning them with good seamen at our expense. They are to be sent to
Portsmouth without delay, to arrive by Whitsunday Eve or earlier if
Possible. Every ship is to be equipped with brows (pontes) and hurdles
(Cleie)* A list is to be made up showing the owners' name the number of
Seamen in each ship and how many horses each carry. If any of the ships
be laden with merchandise or anything else, you are to have her discharged
and sent on our service at our expense as aforesaid.....*

* This was for embarking horses, and for making stalls to keep them secure while at sea.

THE ROYAL DOCKYARD IS BORN

1212 Geoffrey de Lucy disposed of 13 ships captured by his galleys between 25 April and 8 September. The ships carried 666 tons of wine, 936 quarters of corn, 2,640 quarters of salt and 860 salted hog carcasses. Most of ships and stores sent to aid King John in his campaign against the Welsh except that 2 old ships and 98 putrescent carcasses were left at Portsmouth.

20th May. **In this year King John founded the Royal Dockyard by order dated 20th May: -**

“The King to the Sheriff of Southampton. We order you, without delay, by the view of lawful men, to cause our Docks at Portsmouth to be enclosed with a Good and Strong Wall in such a manner as our beloved and faithful William, Archdeacon of Taunton will tell you, for the preservation of our Ships and Galleys: and Likewise to cause penthouses to be made to the same walls, as the same Archdeacon will also tell you, in which all our ships tackle may be safely kept, and use as much dispatch as you can in order that the same may be completed this summer, lest in the ensuing winter our ships and Galleys, and their Rigging, should incur any damage by your default; and when we know the cost it shall be accounted to you.”

By implication some sort of facility already existed before William Wrotham, keeper of the Kings ships and Archdeacon of Taunton started to build his walls and the lean-to sheds to store ships tackle and rigging.

1212, part of which is the accounts of William or Wrotham. The same Arch-Deacon that was ordered to put the wall around the “Doc” at Portsmouth:

To the wages of seamen and workmen guarding the ships and galleys and Bringing them from Winchelsea to Portsmouth by the King’s order: £122. 1s. 2d.

To repair and equipment for the King’s ships and galleys at Portsmouth, and the

Wages of seamen in eight ships of the Cinque Ports.....£64. 4s. od.

To guard the wall made at Portsmouth for the protection of the galleys: £55. 9s. 11d.

Clearly by now it was an active establishment in the King’s service.

1213 21st March King John issued an order to assemble a fleet at Portsmouth. The fleet of 500 ships sailed on 28th May with 700 English and Flemish knights under the command of William, Earl of Salisbury. The fleet attacked Damme (now called Bruges) which harboured a French invasion fleet of 1,700 ships, most of which were destroyed.

In July King John assembled another fleet and army to attack France but the barons refused to support him. The King however went to cruise off Jersey and returned to take vengeance on his unruly Barons.

- 1214 King John led an unsuccessful expedition against the French in February. Ten galleys based at Portsmouth.
- 1st February. The King, Queen, son Richard and niece Eleanor embarked but were delayed a week in the Solent by poor weather. They arrived at La Rochelle on 15th February and the King won back land south of the River Loire and moved northwards to Flanders where he was defeated at the Battle of Bouvines.
- 1216 Following Magna Carta and the start of Civil War in 1215 King John spent Whitsuntide at Portsmouth Planning to cross to France. During this year French forces landed and captured Portchester Castle but retired after a short period.
- 1221 Henry III assembled an army here to fight against the French.
- 1224 Portsmouth listed as “one of the principle ports of the Kingdom”. Expedition against Poitou assembled and sailed from here.
- 1225 The Kings “**great ship**”, called the “Queen” based at Portsmouth until at least 1232, together with galleys.
- 1228 **King John’s Dock** damaged by storms and filled with stones. The Yard remained in use for stores and rigging but without a dock. (See 1212)
- 1229 Henry III granted two charters to Portsmouth. Large army assembled here but disbanded, having achieved nothing.
- Order for the repair of the Kings galleys at Portsmouth using 350 oaks from the Forest f Portchester.
- 1230 Henry III sailed with his army for St Malo, returning in 1231. This abortive expedition failed to restore the Duchy of Normandy.
- 1242 Henry III sailed for France and returned here in 1243.
- 1253 Henry III assembled a large army and 1,000 ships to invade France. The Queen sailed to join him from here inn 1254 at Whitsuntide.
- 1256 Charter granted by Henry III.
- 1258 Fourth Charter granted by Henry III.
- 1266 Barons of the Cinque Ports, jealous of the growing trade of Portsmouth and Southampton, starting seizing cargoes bound for those ports, they invaded and burned the town of Portsmouth, murdered those who put up a defence and stole the ships in harbour.
- 1270 Prince Edward sailed from Portsmouth in August on crusade.
- 1290 **Henry Husse** Constable of Portchester Castle became the first military Governor of Portsmouth.
- 1293 English and French fleets met for battle in the Channel. English captured 240 Ships.
- 1294 Edward I sailed from here for France with 7,810 infantry and 895 cavalry.

- 1295 The first Channel squadron was formed at Portsmouth. Sir William Leybourne appointed "Captain of the Kings Sailors and mariners"
- 1298 Edward I's son, in the King's name, issued orders to Gervase Alard of Winchelsea, Admiral of the Cinque Ports from Dover to Cornwall, to build a large galley fleet of over 100 ships. The Cinque Ports, Yarmouth and Portsmouth contributed ships. A galley cost between £200 and £500 to build and took between 18 and 44 weeks to complete. Galley building had been going on steadily since 1294.

THE FRENCH STRIKE BACK

- 1313 Edward II confirmed town charter.
- 1324 Fleet of transports assembled here to take troops to Aquitaine.
- 1326 All ship of 50 tons and over in ports north and west of the Thames ordered to Portsmouth.
- 1327 In March French galleys, commanded by Nicholas Behuchet, burned Portsmouth and killed many of its people.
- 1336 French sacked Portsmouth.
Portsmouth appointed the rendezvous for ships to resist the French.
- 1337 French galleys under command of Nicholas Behuchet land at Portsmouth under the cover of an English flag, landing a body of troops near Portsmouth, they plundered and burn the town except the Hospital of Domus Dei and the church of St. Thomas.
- The fleet assembles at Portsmouth for service in the west against the Scots.
- 1338 French again sacked the town killing many inhabitants.
- 1344 Edward's fleet attack and defeat the Spanish fleet off the Sussex coast. The Battle was known as "Less Espagnols-sur-Mer" (The Spanish at Sea) and is said to be the first time that cannon was used at sea.
- 1346 4th June. King Edward III assembled an army of 3,000 knights, 10,000 archers, 4,000 Welsh light infantry and 3,000 support troops here. Having reviewed his fleet of 700 ships he sailed to France on 11th July, landing near La Hogue to fight the Battle of Crecy on 26 August and capture Calais in September. Portsmouth contributed 5 ships and 96 sailors.
- 1349 The plague seriously depleted the local population.
- 1355 Edward III sailed from Portchester, defeated the French, and was briefly restored to the French throne.
- 1367 Black Prince sailed from Portchester for an expedition into Spain.
- 1369 September. French again burned Portsmouth. English fleet sailed from Portsmouth in retaliation and sacked Limoges.
- 1370 30 French vessels gain passage into Portsmouth harbour and burn Gosport.
- 1372 All merchant vessels in England and Wales ordered to assemble for the Kings service at Portsmouth.
- 1374 English fleet sailed from here to Le Havre and burned 5 ships.
- 1377 Portsmouth was razed to the ground by the invaders again, this time under Jean de Viene Admiral of France. On this occasion the inhabitants rallied and drove the Frenchmen back to their ships with great slaughter to them.

- 1380 Portsmouth again burned by the French
- 1384 Charter granted by Richard II.
- Portsmouth fitted out a squadron to Harry the French, engaging the French of equal force in the Channel they took every vessel and slew all but nine people.
- 1385 Portsmouth squadron enter the Seine where they captured four vessels and four ships. Among the prizes was the barge of Sire de Clisson, which was worth 20,000 florins, and was said to have no equal in French or England for beauty.
- 1386 Duke of Lancaster embarked with an army of 28,000 for France, leading an expedition to recover Castile in Spain.
- Commission appointed to survey the town defences.
- 1396-99 Portchester Castle provided with a new Great Hall, Kitchen and private apartments to serve as a royal residence.
- 1405 Henry IV granted charter.
- 1415 6th July. King Henry V reviewing a fleet of 1500 vessels at Portsmouth. He later sailed for France with 2000 knights and men-at-arms and about 8000 archers to win a close run victory at the Battle of Agincourt on 25th. October. Henry actually left England from the Water Gate of Portchester Castle, although in Shakespeare's *King Henry V*, Act II, Scene 2 it's entitled "Southampton. A Council Chamber" when he exclaimed to his nobles (as Shakespeare relates)
- "Now sits the Wind Fair, and we will aboard"*
- Then it was at Portchester he said it.
This battle ended serious French resistance for many years.
- 1416 English fleet blockaded by French at Portsmouth.
- 1417 **Round Tower** built at harbour entrance to defend the harbour and approaches.
- 1423 Henry V, The Duke of Clarence and Duke of Gloucester sailed to conquer Normandy. The King's triumphant return in 1422 became a royal progress through the Kingdom.
Charter granted by Henry VI.
- 1441 Portchester Castle described as in a ruinous state. By 1500 it was a total ruin. (See 286, 904, 1290, 1396)
- 1445 **Margaret of Anjou** Landed at Portchester to marry Henry VI at Titchfield Abbey.
- 1461 Edward IV granted a new charter
- 1474 Troop review of army of 30,000 men on Southsea Common by Edward IV.
- 1474 Charter granted by Richard III.

INFANT GROWTH

1489 Henry VII granted charter.

1492 Brewery ordered built by the King. Called the 'Greyhound' it cost £145 and was probably situated in High Street.

1495 (English Chronicles 1495)

“and in this year, the Friday the ninth of January, Master Adam Moleyns, Bishop of Chichester and Keeper of the Kings Privy Seal, whom the king sent to Portsmouth to make payment of money to certain soldiers and shipmen for their wages. And it so happened that with boisterous language, and also for the abridging of their wages, he fell in variance with them and they fell on him and they cruelly killed him. They did indeed. They took him out of the Domus Die, (Garrison Chapel) on to what is now the Parade Ground, and there they stoned him to death. For this terrible crime the citizens of Portsmouth with the guilty soldiers and sailors, fell under the ban of Excommunication that was to lie upon the town for nearly half a century. The implications of excommunication were disastrous for the town and would have consequences for its growth. However it did not deter Henry VII from developing the Dockyard or the town defences.

1495/6 14th July. Henry VII bought 8 acres of land to build the **first dry dock** in the world.

The designer of the Dock was Sir Reginald Bray who was described as a sage and grave person but a lover of justice. He was one of the trusted councillors of King Henry VII, being made Treasurer and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He was also an architect and credited with St. Georges chapel at Windsor and Henry's chapel at Westminster. At first glance there seems to be no evidence to suppose Bray had any maritime experience. However in 1488 he was requested by Henry VII to dismantle the ship *Henry Grace a Dieu* and from the pieces construct a new ship to be called the *Sovereign*, having a displacement of 600 tons and carried 141 serpentine cannon. It was this ship that was the first to use the *Great Dock*. The practice of dismantling wooden ships and building a new one from the pieces was a very common practice and continued well in to the 19th century. It was to Robert Brygandine who, as *Clerk of the Ships* and officer in charge of construction that the task of overseeing the new “Doc” fell.

The “Doc” was begun on 14th July 1495 and continued until 29th November when work stopped for the winter. Work started again on 2nd February when the great gates were built and hung. These great gates were staggered in their position at the entrance to the “Doc” and reached across the width of the “Doc”. The intervening space was filled with clay and shingle to form a watertight middle dam. All work was completed by 17th April 1496, the cost of construction was said to be a princely £193. 0s .6pence and 3 farthings. Then came the great day when on 25th May 1496 the *Sovereign* entered the Dry Dock. It took between 120-140 men who were employed for a day and a night before the ship was dry docked. The majority of the men were employed on infilling with the clay and shingle. The water was removed from the “Doc” by an “Ingyn” this was probably a bucket and chain pump worked by a horse-gin. Getting the ship out of the “Doc” was a more lengthy procedure as all the impacted clay and shingle had to be removed

from between the great gates before they could be opened and we are told it took 20 men 24 days to open the “Doc”.

Although the precise site of the dock is not known it is generally thought to have been about 50 ft. astern of where HMS Victory lies today in No. 2 Dry Dock. During the enlargement of the Great Ship Basin in late 1790's the remains of an ancient dry dock were discovered in that position. However it is possible that these remains may be from one of the old 17th century dry docks although its construction would suggest otherwise. It is described in *“The Illustrated History of Portsmouth”* by William G. Gate as being *formed of timber and trunnelled together, the sides being composed of whole trees. On the removal of this, many large stone cannon-balls were found. It was called Cromwell's Dock, but it seems these remains were those of the dock of 1496. It was thus described at the time of discovery: Old dock of wood, length from head of pier to head of dock, measured along the side, 330 feet on each side; the bottom of the dock 395 feet long; depth 22 feet; the wharf on the outside of the piers 40 feet on each side and depth of 22 feet.*

Presumably the piers were standing out from the dock sides and are where the gates were hinged from. No width of the dock is mentioned in the description but it may be possible to make a reasonable assumption. The difference in the lengths quoted is 65 feet and we are told that there were *two Great Gates*, one on each side of the dock entrance hinging in opposite directions. The inner most gate hinging outwards and the outer gate hinging inwards. When open the gates laid flat along the dock entrance wall. To achieve this the distance between to two gate hinges (in the dock length) would have to be at least the width of one of the gates, so we can assume the width of the dock to be in the region of 65 feet. The length of 330 feet would not have been the docks original length as we are told it was enlarged later in its life.

What ever the faults of the Great “Doc” it was a vast improvement on anything that went before and can be seen as a turning point in the style and methods of ship construction and the way future dockyards would be laid-out and used. The Dockyard had come-of-age and for the foreseeable future only the materials of which the ships were built would have any serious impact on the way a dockyard was laid out and used. The dock was filled in 1623(See 1523)

In the harbour approaches the Square Tower and adjoining Saluting Platform to the south were built.

Earliest map showing town, harbour and dockyard.

1496

1497 **First known ships launched from Portsmouth dockyard**, The “**Sweepstake**”, costing £120 and “Mary Fortune”, costs £110. “**Sweepstake**” survived until 1511 when she was rebuilt as “**Katherine Pomegranate**”. The second ship in the dry dock was the “**Regent**”.

1509

Saw the building of the **Mary Rose** and **Peter Pomegranate** at Portsmouth. The **Mary Rose** became flagship of the King's Fleet She was later rebuilt in the Dockyard and along with the **Sovereign** were for many years the most powerful

vessels in the navy, possibly the world. In 1522 Sir William Fitz-william related in a letter to the king that the ship **Henry** sailed as well or better than any ship in the fleet, that she could weather them all except the **Mary Rose**.

This year there are payments for the breaking up on the dockhead where the **Regent** lay – having out the said ship afloat out of the same dock into the haven of Portsmouth – making a scaffold with mast for the sure setting on end of her main mast?

Portsmouth is the only Dockyard in the King’s service at this time.

- 1510 29th January. Receipts show that £1175, 14 s and 2 pence were spent on the kings ship **Sovereigne**.
- 1511 Charter granted by Henry VIII and Portsmouth became a building centre for the Kings ships. He was the first king to build warships design to repel and invasion fleet at sea. He inherited 5 ships, captured 13, bought 26 and built 46 ships to create the first Navy Royal of any size equipped with heavy cannons.
- 1512 Henry VIII reviewed ships before Lord Howard of Effingham sailed with 25 ships to fight the French at Brest on 10th August where “**Regent**” (See 1497) was lost by fire.
- 1513 Saw facilities for victualling the fleet, built at the town in the form of five brewhouses, “to supply the army and navy with “a good beverage” (a gallon per head per day). It was said that it was the building of these brewhouses that first gained Wolsey the favour of the king. Four of the brewhouses were built around a pond with a spring that supplied fresh water and close to the South Eastern wall of the town fortification and named *Lion, Rose, Dragon* and the *White Hart*. Although we are told that the pond was frequently defiled by buck washing. The other brewhouse was known, as the *Anchor* complementing these was also a bake house for the baking of bread known as the “*Swanne, a King’s bakehouse*” that was situated at the Point.
- 1517 King Henry VIII’s navy, in the ninth year of his reign, was 21 ships.
- 1521 Henry VIII paid £400 for a great naval storehouse at Portchester Castle. Completed in 1527. The navy, at this date, consisted of 16 ships totalling 7,260 tons (See 1517).
- 1522 ***Ye Mightie Chaine of Yron***. Heavy iron chain to draw across the harbour entrance ordered by the King. (Some links of a later chain are on show in Southsea Castle Museum and in the Dockyard Trust Collection.) The first mention of this chain is found in a Navy account presented in February 1522:

For the making of chains to be drawn over the Portsmouth Haven.....£40. 0. 0.

*Hiring of boats bearing the chains from 12th June until 31st January.,
At 8pence the ton month.....£21.
9s. 0.*

It is generally believed that there were three chains laid across the harbour mouth at times of an invasion scare. 1522, 1664 and 1801. At various times booms have been stretched across the harbour to prevent entry.....

1523 *For the making a Doc at Portsmouth for the King's ship Royal "Henry Grace à Dieu"* It is generally thought this refers to the enlarging of the dock.

1526 Thomas Jermyn appointed Keeper of the Dock at Portsmouth at a salary of one shilling a day with sixpence a day for a clerk.

1527 Nine acres of land bought for the dockyard at 20 shillings an acre.

1536 French cut out a Flemish ship in Portsmouth harbour.

"**Mary Rose**" remodelled to 700 tons, she became the first ship with broadside firing heavy guns. This was the prototype of ship design for the next 350 years (See 1509 and 1545)

C1538 **Southsea Castle** commenced building to protect the approach channel to the harbour where it turns at right angles and follows the shoreline. Completed in 1544. (See 1628, 1759, 1975)

C1539 Early map of Portsmouth town, showing houses, 4 great brewing houses for naval beer, and the names of property owners. In 1540 John Leland, antiquary and spy for the King described Portsmouth's fortifications as having earth walls and ditches. He described the 'great dock for ships' as ¼ mile above Round Tower & in the dock were the ribs of "**Henry Grace à Dieu**" (1,000 tons) built 1514 rebuilt 1536-39. She was destroyed by fire in 1553; she was the greatest ship of her period.

1540 Expenses of the Kings ships were £1,425 a month with 1613 seamen serving in the Navy.

About this date **John Leland** traveller, and spy for King Henry VIII visited Portsmouth and left a description of Portsmouth – "There is at the [east] point of the haven Portsmouth town, and a great round toure almost double in quantite and strenkith to that is on the west side of the haven right again it: and here is a might [y] chaine of yren to draw from toure to towre.

About a quarter of a mile above this tower is a great dok for shippes, and yn this dok lyith yet art of rybbes of the *Henry Grace of Dieu* one of the biggest shippes that hath beene made.

There be above this dok 2 crekes in this part of the haven."

1542 Appointment of Clerk of the Stores at Portsmouth.

1544 Henry VIII, sailing from Portsmouth, landed at Calais and laid siege to Boulogne which he captured.

1545 French invasion fleet of 235 ships attempted to establish a foothold on the Isle of Wight and threatened Portsmouth. The King assembled a large army on Southsea Common. Fleet action off Southsea Castle on 19th July. "**Mary Rose**",

vice flagship, **Capsized** in full view of the King with the loss of nearly 700 soldiers and sailors. (“**Mary Rose**” rediscovered in 1967. Raised on 11th October 1982 and subsequently docked in No.3 dock where her conservation continues).
Appointment of a Surveyor of Ships and rigging.

- 1546 24th April. **The Navy Board** was established by Royal Patent, appointing civil officers as Commissioners to serve under the Lord High Admiral as lieutenants of Admiralty, Treasure of Marine Causes, Comptroller, Surveyor, Master of the Ordnance and Clerk of the Ships. Some of these post were already in place but were individually responsible to the King and Lord High Admiral but had no committee structure. (The Navy Board was abolished in 1832.)

Appointment of a Master of Ordnance.

- 1548 List of Navy ships made in January describes 20 ships, 15 galleys, 10 pinnaces and 13 row barges...the greatest part of the fleet then in Portsmouth harbour. (i.e. 12 ships, 13 galleys, 6 pinnaces & 10 row barges.)

- 1550 The whole fleet except “**Henry Grace à Dieu**” assembled in Portsmouth. 53 ships manned by 5,136 seamen, 1,885 soldiers and 759 gunners.

Charter granted to town by Edward VI.

- 1552 Edward VI reviewed his fleet and criticised the fortifications of Portsmouth. An inventory of the fleet lists 24 ships and pinnaces in good repair; 7 ships to be docked and 4 in dry dock (1 not to be repaired); 3 to be sold; 7 not worth keeping and 1 in Ireland.

- 1557 A “great and terrible ffyer” destroyed the **Naval Storehouse in King Street** destroying 26,000 cask hoops, coopers tools and 100 tons of empty casks. (See 1576) The **King Street Bakery** ceased operation and sold in 1829 when Royal Clarence Yard was completed. (See 1828).

Navy described as having 21 ships. (See 1558).

- 1558 Plague killed more than half of the population of Portsmouth and the surrounding area. (See 1349, 1625 and 1665/6) Navy list of 27 ships and pinnaces with 3,565 crew costing £1,436 per month in wages and £1,782 in victuals.

17th November. On Queen Elizabeth accession to the throne she inherited a fleet of 35 vessels and the dockyards were working with vigour on repairing and rebuilding. At Deptford 228 men were working on 5 ships: at Woolwich 175 men were working on 8 ships while at Portsmouth 154 men were working on 9 ships.

- 1560 In August of 1560 Richard Popynjay was appointed Surveyor of Portsmouth and started to re-plan many parts of its fortification. There is no doubt that this was much delayed by plague that visited Portsmouth killing off 250 people between March and October. It had already been decided that the great need of the country were:

1.....The fortifieing of Portesmouth.

2.....The fortifieing of Berwike to be accomplished.

3.....The repairing of Beaucastle in Tyndal.

4.....The Fortifieing at the Blakbanke.

5.....Amending the peir at Dover.

To pay for these works of national importance, Queen Elizabeth inaugurated the first state lottery. The tickets were on sale from 1566, but the draw did not take place until January 1569. The number of tickets sold was 400,000, at ten shillings each. The first prize was £5000 made up of £3000 in cash with £700 worth of plate and the rest in tapestries and linens. 25 prizes were of the value of £100 or more and every subscriber got back half a crown.

STAGNATION

- 1561 Charter granted by **Elizabeth I** who visited Portsmouth, reviewed the fleet and ordered the fortifications re-built. The cost was defrayed by the first national lottery in 1569 which raised £200,000. Work on the defences continued throughout Elizabeth's reign with ramparts and moat encircling the town being completely reformed.
- 1563 Plague kills 300 inhabitants (See 1349, 1558, 1625, 1665/6 and 1663).
- 1565 Royal Commission ordered the high handed Military Governor Sir Adrian Poynings to respect the authority of the Mayor and Corporation. Navy consisted of 29 ships and others vessels.
- 1570 Dockyard virtually destroyed by fire.

Between 1559 and 1570 over £6,600 was spent on Portsmouth dockyard (£73,300 spent on Deptford).
- 1576 4th August. Navy Storehouse in King Street again destroyed by fire (See 1557 and 1784)
- 1582 Queen Elizabeth I reviewed the fleet at Spithead.
- 1584 **Square Tower** used as a magazine until 1779 (See 1773). Twenty-one warships in harbour manned by 3,559 marines and 1,646 soldiers. A new wharf built in the Dockyard.
- 1585 7th July. Roanoak colony establish in Virginia. This was the first English colony to be established in the new world and was commanded by Ralph Lane. After setting up the Colony he returned to Portsmouth for further supplies. The following year the supply ship found the settlement deserted and to this day no trace of the colonist have been found, it is known as the lost colony of Roanoak. When Lang returned to Portsmouth his sailors brought back Tobacco and potatoes. They are said to have astonished the inhabitants by smoking pipes as they walked streets of Portsmouth. (A pipe from this period can be seen in the City Museum.) In 1588 Lane was knighted and appointed Captain of Southsea Castle.
- 1588 Spanish Armada passed Isle of Wight on 24th July. Portsmouth supplied and re-victualled the shadowing English fleet. Navy had 34 ships totalling 12,590 tons with 6,279 crew.
- 1591 Queen Elizabeth I visited Portsmouth and the Dockyard. She inherited a permanent fleet of 35 ships of all classes which increased to 42 ships in 1603.
- 1600 Queen Elizabeth granted 2nd charter.
- 1603 24th March. Queen Elizabeth dies and is succeeded by James I (or James VI of Scotland) He had a nick name of the British Solomon, '*the wisest fool in Christendom*'.

- 1604 Navy consisted of 41 ships which reduced to 36 by 1607, and 39 by 1618 when 13 of these were decayed or unserviceable.
- 1618 Reform of the Navy Board.
- 1620 A commission of Master Shipwrights and Brethren of Trinity House came to evaluate Portsmouth as a naval Harbour. The party caught ship fever and one Master shipwright died. Their views were coloured by jealousy and illness and they dispersed in some confusion.
Contract for beer for the Navy awarded to Henry Holt operating the 4 brewhouses at St Nicholas Street (See 1512)
- 1623 Dry dock filled with rubble (See 1495 and 1523)
- King James I visited Portsmouth and reviewed the fleet. The Prince of Wales (later Charles I) landed here on his return from France & Spain. The gilded bust on the north side of the Square tower commemorates the event.
- 1625 Portsmouth again badly affected by plague (See 1349, 1558, 1563 and 1665/6)
- 1626 4,000 soldiers quartered at Portsmouth. Seamen on naval ships were 3,935 with 594 in other ships.
- 1627 Charles I visited the town and reviewed the fleet and saw off the ill fated expedition to La Rochelle.
- 1627 the Duke of Buckingham caused estimates to be prepared for the construction of a double dock to be built in the dockyard. Unfortunately for Portsmouth the Duke of Buckingham was murdered on 23rd. August 1628 by one John Felton a disgruntled soldier who laid in wait and stabbed the Duke to death at what is now 11 High St. Old Portsmouth. Felton was later executed at Tyburn Tree and gibbeted on the beach at Portsmouth near where the present day Clarence Pier stands, but with the loss of the Duke's support so the great plans for the dockyard withered along with Felton's body.
- 1628 **Southsea Castle** badly damaged by fire (See 1538, 1544, 1759)
- Duke of Buckingham**, Lord High Admiral, murdered by John Felton, a disgruntled soldier, at what is now 11, High Street. Seamen of the fleet in a state of mutiny for lack of clothing, food and pay.
- 1630 Phineas Pett, Master Shipbuilder and William Burrell, Master Shipwright surveyed the ships at Portsmouth in May.
- 1631 2nd. August. King Charles I visited Portsmouth and reviewed the fleet.
- 1632 Sale of Portchester Castle to a private owner (See 904).
- 1633 Navy consisted of 50 ships totalling 23,595 tons with 9,470 mariners.
- 1635 Order issued that no buildings be built within 40ft of the Dockyard wall and that

no thatched roofs be used in the Dockyard (See 1703)

1638 **Master Shipwright Edward Boate** was ordered to reside at Portsmouth permanently. (Previous to this Master Shipwright only visited) One of the reasons for the reluctance to re-adopt Portsmouth as permanent naval station was thought to be the existence of a marine pest known as *Teredo Navalis* in the harbour waters, but worm or no worm the dockyard star was rising.

RENEWED ACTIVITY

- 1642 2nd August. Colonel Goring (Governor of Portsmouth) declares for the King. Lord Clarendon in speaking in Parliament Declared: *“From the Governor of a place that had the reputation of being the only place of strength in England - and situated by the sea, put them into many apprehensions”*

Civil War. C in C the Earl of Warwick suborned his Channel Fleet from the service of Charles I and captured Portsmouth Dockyard. Prince Rupert, for the King, managed to take away 30 royal ships. Parliament set the Dockyard to work to build new ships. Parliamentary forces captured Southsea Castle, bombarded Portsmouth from Gosport and forced the town to surrender. Governor Goring sailed for Holland with his supporters and threw the key of the Square Tower magazine into the harbour. The key was recovered and preserved in Portsmouth Museum until it was bombed in 1941.

Fort Charles built on Gosport shore and Fort James on Rat Island.

- 1645 Goring with three Royalist ships bombarded Gosport but was driven off.
- 1649 29th May 1649. England was proclaimed a Commonwealth or a “Free state”. It was during this time that the size of the navy almost doubled. In 1649 Colonel William Willoughby of the Parliamentary Army was appointed to the Dockyard as its first Admiralty Commissioner with the respectable salary of £500 per annum; he died in 1651 it was said from over work. The Commissioners were responsible for the organisation of the dockyard and initially chosen from the ranks of the Parliamentary Army from where they had proved themselves on committees or in battle and not, as so often in past, because of court favours. They were men of high quality who proved to be prompt, honest, and energetic, sparing not themselves or their purse, supported and strengthened by a Puritan spiritual vigour that had won a war.

Royal Navy consisted of 39 ships and smaller vessels.

- 1650 46 gun ship “Portsmouth” (600 tons) launched here. Between 1649 and 1659 the Commonwealth built 207 new warships.

Shipwrights ordered not to remove oddments of timber from the Dockyard and were paid one penny a day extra for loss of this perquisite known as “chips”.

Dockyard employed 100 shipwrights but there was no Dry Dock or Mast Houses and only one team of horses.

WARS AGAINST THE DUTCH

- 1652 Navy had 98 ships of all classes. Prince Rupert left England with 25 ships which never returned.
- 1653 Admiral Blake won a sea battle against the Dutch off the Isle of Wight. 11 warships, 30 merchant ships and 1,000 Dutch prisoners were captured. "Hampshire" (640 tons) launched from Dockyard. Naval expenditure at Portsmouth increased from £6,860 in 1625 to £13,700 in 1653.
- New Dry dock** under construction in the dockyard. The corporation of Portsmouth contributed £500. Two new Rope **Walks**, 1,095 ft long built in the Dockyard.
- "Sussex", a new 46 gun ship, blew up in Portsmouth harbour.
- 1654 Mutiny in fleet because of bad food and conditions. (See 1783 and 1797)
- On Christmas Day Admiral Penn sailed with a 38 ship squadron and 3,000 soldiers on expedition to the West Indies.
- 1655 **Graving Dock**, built on site of Great Basin (See 1698).
- 1656 **Double Dock** built north of the Graving Dock completed in 1658 (lost when Basin No.1 extended in 1800)
- "Pelican" (38 guns) accidentally burned.
- 1658 Navy consisted of 157 ships and vessels manned by 21,910 men.
- Double Dry Dock** completed.
- New **Single Dock** ordered to be built and 2 acres added to the Dockyard
- 1659 "Portsmouth" (468 tons, 2nd ship of that name built here) launched (See 1650).
- 5,000 strong garrisons marched to London to aid Parliament and support the return of Charles II.
- 1660 Restoration of Charles II who visited Portsmouth with his mother Henrietta Maria.
- Navy had 154 ships and lesser craft totalling 57,463 tons. All were in a shocking state of disrepair.
- August. A Dockyard apprentice who had unwisely taken a wife was carried out of the Yard by the other apprentices as incapable of working with them. Whereupon the Deputy Mayor arrested some of the apprentices and clapped them in the White House (town Jail). Representations was made to the Admiralty by Dockyard officials , who pointed out "*that if apprentices be tolerated in breach of the indentures they will be as free as their masters.*" They also stated "*that if Dockyard workers could be arrested in this way it would leave the dockyard*

open to violence.” The Admiralty’s reply has not been preserved but there was no further interference by the Civil authorities in Dockyard affairs and it is generally believed they were made to eat humble pie.

1661 HRH James, Duke of York made Governor of Portsmouth until 1673. In May **Samuel Pepys** visited Dockyard accompanied by his wife Elizabeth and clerk John Creed.

Queen and Princess embarked for France in January.

1st May. Samuel Pepys. *“and so to Portsmouth, seeming to me to be a very pleasant and strong place”*

14th August. The Navy Commissioners did not always pay their bills as this letter from a contractor states. John Timbrell to the Navy Commissioners. Has neither stock nor credit, and the workmen forsake him to keep their poor families from perishing: must relinquish the service unless supplied with money.

1662 **23rd April.** Samuel Pepys visits Portsmouth and stayed with an old friend. *“The Doctor (Dr. Clerke) and I lay together at Wiard’s the chyrurgeon’s (surgeons) in Portsmouth; his wife is a very pretty woman. We lay very well and merrily: In the Morning concluding him to be of the eldest blood and house of the Clerke’s, because that all the fleas come to him and not me.*

24th May. Estimate by John Tippetts of the charge of building a storehouse in Portsmouth Dockyard: total £672. With approval of Sir Geo Carteret and Sir John Mennes. (see 4th December)

30th April. **Samuel Pepys** (Clerk of the Acts or Secretary to the navy Board since 1660), on a visit to Portsmouth dockyard, was made a Town Burgess. *“Pepys’s diary and with much civility give me my oath, and after the oath, did by custom shake my hand; so I took them to the tavern, and made them drink, and paying the reckoning went away. It cost me a piece in gold to the Town Clerke, and 10s. to the Bayliffes, and spent 5shillings.”*

21st May. 1662 saw great rejoicing in Portsmouth when King Charles married the Infanta, Catherine of Braganza in the old Domus Dei. A glimpse of this love-match can be gained in their writings of August 1661, when he asks Catherine *“to give entire faith and credit to what Sir Richard Fanshawe, his Ambassador, tells her, “especially as touching the assurance of my devoted love, which goes on increasing as the joy of seeing you and the right to call you mine draws nearer, and will do so more and more when you are my own”*. In reply to this tender emission Catherine writes *“As I cannot have the happiness of myself assuring you of my affection He (Sir Richard) may testify to you my solicitude, and be the means of alleviating it by begging you to let me hear from you as continually as I pray to God to bring the fleet to quickly to carry me to your presence, when, seeing you my longing will be at an end. Meanwhile I beg God to give prosperity to your life upon which all my happiness depends”*. It was in April when Catherine started for England under the escort of the Earl of Sandwich and the English Fleet, but storms delayed the passage and she did not reach Portsmouth until May 14th.

“At night all the bells of the town rung and bonfires were made for the joy of the Queen’s arrival who landed at Portsmouth last night”

Samuel Pepys.15th May 1662.

On her landing she had her first taste of English beer, which, was not to her liking. Orders were sent to her ship for tea; it is said it was the first occasion on which tea was drunk in England.

The King arrived in the afternoon of the 20th May and went straight to the Domus Dei where Catherine was lodged. He tried to persuade her to be content with a Protestant form of marriage, but she would not give up a Catholic ceremony and so on the 22nd May Catherine was first of all married privately in the presence of half a dozen people in her private bedroom, according to the Catholic rites. The formal ceremony took place a little later in the day and not in the chapel of the Domus Dei but in the Chamber of Government House and so unlike most couples they were married twice. The reason they were not married in the parish church of St Thomas’s is because the tower had still not been repaired from the damage inflicted by the Parliamentary batteries at Gosport during the Civil War.

4th December. John Tippetts to James Newman. The wet weather delays the storehouse; the oar maker will make the rafters into oars at 5s the 100 feet, if paid ready money.

1663 A further **8 acres added to the Dockyard** on the south side to provide the site for a wooden **Great Ropehouse** see (1704 etc) of 1,000 ft length running parallel with an existing ropehouse (destroyed by fire 1760). Portsmouth had two dry docks at this date.

1664 Charles II and the Duke of York visited Portsmouth. Twenty captured Dutch merchantmen brought into Portsmouth as prizes.

Royal Marines established.

17th May. Warrant to pay to Col: Wm. Legg, Lieutenant of Ordnance £3822, for the purchase of ground, building storehouses, and making a wharf at Portsmouth for the use of the Navy.

27th August. John Tippetts to the Navy Commissioners. *Thinks that the earth for the **Ordnance Wharf** may be digged, carried, and spread, for 8d a load. Progress of the **New Mast Dock**, (The Mast Pond) 40 soldiers are working at 8d a day; 20 other men at 13d. Propose an allowance of two pence a day more to the able soldiers which will quicken them, and add nothing to the charge in the end.*

Samuel Pepys, Secretary for the Admiralty sent £20 for the provision of a fire

engine.

7th December. **Ye Mighty Chanie of Yron.** From John Tippetts, Master Shipwright at Portsmouth.

These are to certifie that Edward Silvester of Gosport, Smyth, hath given Securitie for the makinging and laying of one Substantial Chaine for his Mat'ies Servis at Portsmouth according to a contract made with the Principall Officers and Commrs. Of his Mat'ies. Navy, dated 20th Oct 64. whereby his Second payment of one hundred pounds is due, witnessed my hand the daty and year abovementioned. It is said Silverstone received two payments of £100 for his work.

1665 1665 the Great Plague of London had not yet reached Portsmouth when Commissioner Middleton, writes to Pepys

“Where I am now, wee are forced to packe nyne people in a roome to slpeepe in, not above 16 foote one way and 12 foote the other. We are 26 in family in Mr.Mayour’s house,9 of which are small children. What comfourt can a man have in such conditions soe being together?But that I have a boddy that can endue any things I had been dead.

It had been the custom for the Admiralty Commissioner to lodge with the Mayor in the town of Portsmouth and from the letter one can feel for poor Middleton; certainly Pepys did, for he agreed a fine new residency to be built in the Dockyard.

25th February. **Dockyard Commissioners House.** Thomas Middleton to Samuel Pepys: Details of a new house to be built for myself, with accommodation for any of the Commissioners when they come down. (It was built just north of Stony Lane in the Dutch style and had formal gardens).

Plague in Gosport & Portsmouth killed more than 250 people. (See 1349, 1558,1563 & 1625) 1st victualling Surveyor appointed at a salary of £150 a year.

1st July. *Pepys to the Duke of Albe-marle’s by appointment to give him an account of some disorder at the Yard at Portsmouth, by workmen’s going away of their own accord for lack of money to get work of haymaking or anything else to earn them bread.*

1665 9th August. A Royal Commission was granted to the Portsmouth Governor and other Principle Officers to purchase land around Portsmouth and the Dockyard to build fortification, these were set out to the plans of Sir Bernard de Gomme.

15th August. 500 Dutchmen are received at Portchester Castle, many of them very sick.

30th August. **Dockyard Commissioners House.** Middleton to Pepys. Cannot imagine that his

present house was built only for himself: is content with a good bed to lie on, a hammock to sleep in, two or three stools and chairs, and a few platters of meat. Suppose accommodation will be expected for any of the Commissioners when they come down; if not, begs that no further expence may be incurred.

15th September. **Dockyard Commissioners House.** Middleton to Pepys. Requires 350 for furnishing his new house: promises to send an inventory of things purchased. If more than the sum be laid out, will pay it himself.

1666 29th March. Middleton to Pepys. No part of England is better suited for docks than Portsmouth.

8th April. From Commissioner Middleton to Pepys. The sawyers who had been on strike and in consequence discharged, had petitioned to be employed as labourers, and the Commissioners comment: "*Sweet is any employment in the King's Dockyard at Portsmouth*".

1667 Parliament voted £600,000 to build 30 new ships some of which were built at Portsmouth.

31st March. Hugh Salesbury to Willamson. Three vessels have come to refit. The Garrison fortifications will be concluded in a few weeks. The Dock is to be Fortified.

1668 New defences designed by Bernard de Gomme (See 1662) commenced. Dutch prisoners of war provided much of the labour. (Map showing de Gommess design in British Museum)

Colonel Thomas Middleton appointed Surveyor to the Navy Board in London.

1669 **Mast House** built behind Main Gate. Part remained until destroyed by bombing in World War II.

1670 **Charles II created the Royal Navy.**

Anthony Deane, the best ship designer of the period, appointed **Master Shipwright** here.

1671 **Samuel Pepys** visited Portsmouth Dockyard in July with Lord Brouncker and Commissioner Tippetts of the Navy Board to meet King Charles II. With Anthony Deane they set out to survey the Royal Forests for timber for the Navy.

1672 Charles II visited Portsmouth to inspect progress on new defence and to review an allied fleet of nearly 100 ships with 6,000 guns and 34,000 men. The English and French fleet, as allies, sailed to fight an inconclusive battle against the Dutch off Harwich.

1673 **Antohony Deane** promoted to Commissioner of the Dockyard. In January "Resolution", a 3rd rate, was about to set sail, when the Yeoman of the Powder Room decided to inspect the powder chest, which he erroneously believed empty. The ships cat, in pursuit of a rat, knocked the candle from his hand into the chest which was far from empty. Amid a series of explosions the crew took to the water whilst the Commander heroically staved beer barrels and flooded the powder

room in time to save the ship.

1674 Navy Board ordered the Master Shipwright and the Clerk of the Cheque to cut dockyard staff to: -

Shipwrights	120	Joiners	12	Clerk of the Survey
1				
Caulkers	20	Bricklayers	5	Pitch Heaters
1				
Oakum boys	8	Labourers	10	Ropemakers
18				
Sailmakers	3	Sawyer	2	
Blockmakers	7	Clerk to the Master		Total 218 dismissed.
House Carpenters	10	Shipwright	1	

1675 The King was very pleased with two yachts designed and built by Anthony Deane for use by Louis XIV on his lake at Versailles. These were delivered to France by Deane and Will Hewer, Samuel Pepys clerk, at the beginning of August.

The New Royal Navy consisted of 151 ships and lesser craft totalling 70,587 tons.

Charles II nearly drowned aboard "Greyhound" coming to launch "Royal James" (Deane) on 2nd July. Anthony Deane knighted at the launch.

1677 **Nine more acres** added to the dockyard on the east side.

Samuel Pepys totally reformed victualling of the Navy and established new victualling standards. Payment for victuals was at the rate of 6d a day per man in harbour and 7³/₄d at sea. Every seaman to have a daily allowance of 1 gallon of beer, 1lb of biscuit with 2lbs salt beef or bacon or pork on 4 days and cod or dried fish, 2oz butter, 4oz Suffolk cheese on the other 3 days.

1678 30 ships being built for the Navy, some at Portsmouth.

1682 Charles II charter united Portsmouth and Gosport.

1683 **Samuel Pepys** with Lord Dartmouth sailed from Portsmouth in August aboard "Grafton". Their mission was to evacuate and destroy Tangier. After a holiday in Spain Pepys and Dartmouth sailed for Portsmouth on 21st February arriving at Spithead on 2nd April after delay by adverse winds.

1684 Total Navy in decay and sinking at moorings unmanned. Dockyards at a standstill for want of money.

1685 Early in November **Samuel Pepys** requested **Sir Anthony Deane** to propose a plan to save the Navy. His report was that out of a total of 179 ships of all sizes 142 were unfit for service. He proposed that for regular quarterly payments amounting to £400,000 (less than was currently being wasted by the Navy Board) he would repair all ships, equip a peacetime guard of 4,000 men in winter and 6,000 in summer. Financing was to be spread over 3 years during which time he would build two ships a year and complete three new 4th rates on the stocks. Deane, with a family of 15 children asked for a salary of £1,000 a year with was eventually approved after the Lord Treasurer tried to get him to accept

£500 a year. A Royal Warrant was issued and the Dockyards were galvanised into activity completing the whole programme months ahead of schedule.

£12,185 voted by Parliament to be spent on a **new dock, wharves and storehouses** in the Dockyard. One **dry dock repaired** and **a further dry dock added** together with 20 new storehouses and additional wharves. (See 1689) King James I inspected the Dockyard accompanied by Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn.

It was reported that 32 Men of War in harbour but unfit to sail. 18 Frigates hastily made ready for sea to trap the Duke of Monmouth in Lyme Bay.

Navy consisted of 179 ships and lesser craft of 103,558 tons in total. Only 37 ships were fit for service.

Camber Bastion and magazine built at about this date. (Site of new housing development in Oyster Street).

WARS WITH THE FRENCH

1687 Navy Board grant £40,000 for new storehouses and dry docks at Chatham and Portsmouth.

1688 Navy had 173 ships (including 8 hulks) of 101,892 tons with 42,000 mariners .

Surgeon appointed to the Dockyard. Workmen contributed 2d a month to his ay. (See 1854,1875,1918)

1689 29th May. The Commissioner wrote to the Porter, Mr C. Breckwith (He lived in the Porters Lodge just inside the Dockyard Gate):-

“ whereas I find inconvenience ariseth to ye great prejudice of His Majesty’s service by selling of strong beer at your house, in debauching workmen and others to ye ruin of their families and other material disservices.....These are to direct and require you that after ye 10th day of June ensuing you do not presume to sell any sort of strong liquor whatsoever or to harbour any workmen in your house as ye will answer the contrary at your peril.

Survey of the Royal Dockyard. **New Dry Dock** (250 ft long 68ft wide had a depth of 24ft 3 inches) and **two Wet Docks** ordered to be built. The Dry Dock, big enough to hold the longest vessels was known as **The Great Stone Dock** (Now known as No. 5 dock). Cost £8,116. The first ship to enter this dock was the Royal William on 22nd June 1698.

Samuel Pepys resigned as Secretary of the Admiralty and retired. He died on 26 May 1703 at Clapham.

Great mortality in fleet in harbour due to unwholesome food. List of Royal Navy ships at Portsmouth names 15 rated ships and 6 lesser craft.

1691 Admiral Sir John Berry poisoned aboard ship in Portsmouth harbour. **Work begun on a new Wet Dock** (now the reservoir), **the Great Stone Dock** (No. 5), **The Great Basin** (2/3rd of No. 1 Basin) and a **building slip** on the site of the present No. 3 Dock. All completed by 1698.

Plymouth Dockyard started at about this date.

1692 The deposed ex-King James II. Aided by Louis XIV of France assembled a large army at La Hogue with a French fleet in the Channel but on 19th May 1692 the Anglo-Dutch fleet under the command of Admiral Edward Russell defeated the French at the Battle of Barfleur. Some of the French fleet escaped and were driven into La Hogue and Cherbourg. On the night of 23rd.May over 200 boats from the fleet attacked the French ships in La Hogue, that were at anchor under the protection of the fort, St Vast, leaving the town and fort burning after capturing and carrying away the French ships. It was to Portsmouth the victorious fleet returned; it was occasions like this with their jubilation that helped cement the position of Portsmouth as “First Among Dockyards”

1695 **Chips.** The Admiralty tries to restrict the abuse of the perquisite of chips that

“lawfully to such as falls from the axe”. Chips are not to be gathered and laid aside excepting at noon during the Winter months or at evening bellringing in the Summer months. Anyone found laying them apart at any other time was to be mulcted in one week’s pay. No more was to be carried out than ‘as could be taken handsomely under the arm according to the custom in other Yards.

1697 Royal Navy consisted of 323 ships and lesser craft.

1698 **March. Peter the Great** Csar of Russia, inspected the Dockyard and watched a sham battle at Spithead.

The First Dry Docking Complex.

In the late 1690’s work started at Portsmouth on a new dry dock that had been drawn up by Edmund Dummer, Surveyor to the Navy Board. Dummer’s background started as a shipwright apprentice at Portsmouth under Sir John Tippetts, the Master Shipwright. Later the Navy Board finally appointed him Surveyor to the Navy Board on 9th August 1692.

His New plan called for the construction of a non-tidal basin with a dry dock leading off from it. Adjoining this was a wet dock; this is really another name for an enclosed basin. All would be constructed in stone and not timber as on previous occasions. The construction of the enclosed basin overcame many of the problems, which arose as the tide went out. The effect was almost like enclosing part of the deep-water channel and moving it into the dockyard. In the basin, the ship could be moored along side the jetty where the water would remain at the same level and not going up and down with the tide. To achieve this he hung a double set of doors at the basin entrance so that no matter what state the tide was at, water pressure would act on either the out or inner set of gates keeping them shut at all times. The dry dock (Now known as No. 5 dry dock) for its time was revolutionary in that it had steps rising from the dock floor at an angle of approx 45 degrees to the broad alter, (a much broader step than the others)

Smaller steps formed the dock walls from the broad alter to the copping or dock edge.

The wet dock had a lock connecting it to the harbour. The drainage of the dry dock was unusual and had it been in another part of the world may have worked well. On dry-docking the ship the gates to the basin and dry dock would be opened at high water; the ship would be brought into the dock through the basin. All the gates would then be closed trapping the high water in the basin. Penstocks would be opened to let the water trapped in the dry dock to escape into the wet dock. When the water had drained to the lowest level of the tide, another set of penstocks were opened to allow the trapped water in the basin to escape but in going through a culvert the water ran over a water wheel that turned chain pumps that should have removed the last of the water from the dry dock. Unfortunately the tide doesn’t always rise to the same height, so only too frequently there was insufficient water to work the chain pumps. However for its day it’s thinking was inspired. The tidal wheel within a few years made way for a hose gin. To-day the “*Great Ship Basin*” is known as No.1 Basin, although much enlarged from those days and with the “*Great Stone Dock*” No. 1 dock must be

held as starting points in the maritime industrial revolution of the World.

Dummer had his career abruptly brought to an end when he was accused of accepting bribes by a contractor called John Finch. Finch had been working on building Dummer's dock and basins when he was himself dismissed for poor workmanship when part of the wet dock wall collapsed. Dummer was determined to prove his innocents and started a civil law suit against Finch, but the Admiralty Board's decision to dismiss him was irreversible and in September Dummer was duly discharged from office.

However the court upheld Dummer's plea and he was awarded £500 damages against Finch; Dummer died in 1713 no doubt a bitter and resentful man against the Admiralty Board. Despite the unrest this may have caused in the Navy Office, Dummer's daughter Jane was awarded a pension of £150 in 1714. In its time this was a considerable sum; is it an indication that some in the Navy Office acknowledge Dummer's genius and his unfair treatment he was sent abroad by the Navy Board to study shipbuilding. On his return he applied for the position of Master Shipwright at Woolwich that he failed to attain. He was made First Assistant Master Shipwright at Chatham, became Assistant Surveyor of?

The first ship to use the Great Stone Dock was the Royal William on 22nd June.

1699 Gates provided at west end of approach channel to Upper Wet dock creating a **second dry dock** (NO 6).

1700 **Victualling** also greatly added to the wealth of the town for much of the produce came from local industry and the table below gives some idea as to its importance:

Quantities of various good purchased by the Victualling Board at Portsmouth.

	1700	1720	1740	1760	1780	1800
Beef oxen (cwts) 26400	1900	6700	7900	28900	35500	
Pork Hogs	?	1000	1700	1200	?	?
White Salt 56lbs. bushel 3000	1500	1500	12500	1900	?	
Malt (cwts.)	?	?	?	16400	13800	14300

But by this time the town was chocking within its fortifications and Portsea was rivalling the old town in population. Relieve came in the use of Gosport where land was more available and close to the Dockyard. In the early part of the 18th century the Victualling Board established a brewery at Weelvil Creek that by 1716 included a brew-house and cooperage. The good supply of fresh pure water was soon to earn a fine reputation in English Ales. The Board of Admiralty approved the construction of a windmill on 9th January 1760 to lift the fresh water into a cistern at the brew house.

On the 19th May 1765 the victualling yard at Gosport was established. It would not be until 1st July 1831 that the Weevil yard at Gosport would become the **Royal Clarence Victualling Yard**. Gosport.

In 1766 the Board centralised all barrel making at Gosport and built a fine new Cooperage that was to last in a limited form until the abolition of the navy rum issue on 30th July 1970.

1700 **No. 6 (North Dock)** opened. This was originally a lock into the **Wet Dock**. The Dockyard had only one building slip at this date. (See 1730)

WARS WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN

1703 Royal Navy consisted of 272 ships and other craft totalling 159,00 tons.

1703 Queen Anne visited the Dockyard and at the intercession of the Prince Consort allowed shipwrights and dockyard workers to build on Portsmouth Common (Portsea). Street names in the area commemorate Queen Anne and her contemporaries. (See 1792).

Later in the year a violent storm wrecked 6 naval vessels locally including the "Newcastle" which sank at Spithead with the loss of 193 lives.

1704 During the visit of Queen Anne the dockyard men were granted permission to build a chapel in the dockyard; they complained it was too far for them to go to St. Mary's at Fratton during the day. The chapel was built on the Sail-Field an area set aside for mending, washing and drying of sails. The chapel was voluntarily endowed by Dockyard men with a subscription of two pence per month to be deducted from the pay of every one working in the Dockyard, forever more. This was to be used to provide a stipend for the officiating Chaplain, an office held by the Chaplain in Ordinary. The first service was held 21st August 1704. Many gifts were presented to the Chapel; among the oldest are two small silver candlesticks, hallmark 1698, which was presented by Dr. William Smith M.D. a well known local medical-practitioner who, by his will, founded the Portsmouth Grammar school.

1708 **Porters Lodge** built beside Main Gate built. **This is the Dockyard's oldest building.**

1710 Brick built **Paint Shop** 36ft x 26ft constructed at cost of £170.

1711 Thomas Ridge and James Dixon forced to admit fraud over the supply of beer to the Navy to a Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry. Ridge claimed to have delivered 124,400 barrels of beer at a price of £66,300 between January 1707 & October 1710. He was forced to admit that in the two latter years he only brewed 19,278 out of 33,078 barrels, and paid Pursers @ 30 shillings a ton as compensation, whilst the Queen paid him 56 shillings. Ridge was expelled from Parliament and was bankrupted.

Royal Navy had 313 ships and smaller vessels.

Dockyard employed 21 officers and 2000 men at this date.

Dockyard Wall from Main Gate to Bonfire Corner completed at a cost of £1062. (See 1939-45)

HMS "Edgar" (70 guns) blew up at Spithead in October with the loss of 400 lives.

1711 13th December The Dockyard Wall and Main Gate (now Victory Gate) was declared complete by a visit of Queen Anne. It was begun on 4th June.

1712 **Kings Mill** (SW end of Mill Pond) purchased by the Crown to supply flour to

Naval bakeries. (See 1868).

- 1713 Royal Navy (at peace with France and Spain), consisted of 131 ships of the line and 116 other vessels (total 247) with a tonnage of just over 67,000 tons.
- 1715 **Long Storehouse** had to be shortened for lack of repairs. New **Rigging House** built with additional storey for cordage room. It incorporated a clock cupola. Demolished after 1746.
- 1716 Map of Portsmouth town and Dockyard by Edwards (PRO M PHH 67 (2)).
- 1717 **The Parade (Long Row) built.** It was said to have been the design of the Master Shipwright at the time, which was John Naish. To the rear of these buildings were long vegetable gardens with an even older fish pond. Originally the front of the Terrace showed the deep red brick of which they were built. In 1833 they were rendered in stucco. **Spithead House**, The residence of the Admiral Superintendents of the Dockyard is an 1832 enlargement of No.9. Long Row. It was renamed **Mountbatten House** 1993 when the Commandant General of Royal Marines moved to Portsmouth and needed a secure residence. The Admiral Superintendent re-located into the Commodore of the HMS Nelson residence which was in the grounds of the old Trinity Church in the Dockyard and was re-named **Spithead House**.
- 1718 **Gilded statue of King William III.** Richard Norton who was the grandson and heir of Colonel Richard Norton (he was a supporter and friend of Oliver Cromwell) presented the Commissioner of the Dockyard (Sir William Townsend) with this fine statue of King William III (William of Orange) sculptured in a classical style. It was cast in lead to the design of John Van Nost the Elder of London and finished with a covering of double gold leaf; mounted on a polished white marble plinth The Commissioner set up the statue in front of the new terrace (**Long Row**) in the middle of the Offal Ground now the site of **Victory Building** and surrounded it with an ornamental wrought-iron railing with Royal Crowns on the corners. R.S.Horne's L.R.I.B.A. History of the statue, relates that the Terrace that the Terrace became **Long Row** after **Short Row** was built in 1786. The statue has the inscription of:

GUGLIELMO III

Optime Reg

Which roughly translated from Latin means: To William III To the most Excellent King. On the base can be seen "Riccardo Norton humillime DD" or "Richard Norton most humbly makes this Gift". The Roman numerical date often causes some confusion as it is written in the old way of: CIODCCXVIII. To-day we would translate this as MDCCXVIII or 1718.

First volunteer Dockyard Regiment raised (See 1848).

- 1722 Portsmouth Dockyard the largest in the kingdom with 1099 workers. (See 1711,1730, 1759, 1790 & 1822)
- 1723 A 100ft x 19ft shed for shipwrights built for £20. (See 1737).

- 1724 **Daniel Defoe** visited the town and described the Dockyard – “The strength of the town is also considerably augmented on the land-side by fortifications raised in King Williams time about the docks and yards” and “These docks and yards are now like a town by themselves, and are a kind of marine corporation, or a government of their own kind within themselves; there being particular large rows of dwellings, built at the publick charge, within the new works, for all the principal officers of the place: especially the commissioner, the agent of victualling... the tradesmen likewise have houses here and many of the labourers are allowed to live in the bounds as they can get lodging.”
- 1727 **A further 22 acres added to the Dockyard** with new brick built offices, houses, ropewalks and workshops to replace wooden buildings. This area was reclaimed from mudland.
- 1729 In January **Stephen Martin-Leake**, Clerk to the Navy Pay Office visited Portsmouth and wrote “the dockyard is a fine place...more compact than any other (Dockyard) and the docks are of stone, which in other [yards] are wood. The officer’s houses, I think are better than any other, though not so pleasantly situated as those at Chatham, this being all flat; but the officers are greater men here than anywhere, for they are all commissioners. The yard is walled with a high wall (See 1711). They have a chapel for the use of the yards, (See 1704) and I do assure you a good dock regiment.”
- 1729-1732 **Royal Naval Academy founded by George II.** Built at a cost of £5,772. The Central cupola was added in 1808. (Transferred to Dartmouth in 1838 and Greenwich in 1872.) (See 1939-45)
- Captain Richard Hughes was appointed as the Resident Admiralty Commissioner at Portsmouth; he was succeeded by his son Captain Richard Hughes (Junior). They held the office collectively for 44 years.
- 1730 8th May. The foundation stone to the Royal Naval Academy was laid on the north side under the dinning-room.
- Royal Navy had 124 ships of the line and 114 other craft (total 238).
- Dockyard employed 119 officers and 2318 men.
- Additional **building slip** created south east of the Great Basin. (See 1700)
- 1734 Quay Gate (King Georges Gate) built at east side of the Camber. In c1860 most of this gate was destroyed but parts of it are supposed to have been incorporated in the entrance to HMS “Nelson”.
- 1737 **Larger shed for shipwrights** built at a cost of £210 (See 1723 & 1782).
- 1739/40 Between August 1739 and September 1740 over 15,800 sick and wounded seamen were put ashore at Gosport and Plymouth. (See 1746)
- 19th September 1740 **Admiral Anson sailed from Portsmouth to circumnavigate the world**, he returned 15th June 1744 with £1,250,000 of gold which was taken to circumnavigate with world, returning in 1744 with £1,250,000 of gold which was taken to London in 32 waggons.

1740 **Henry Cort** was born in Lancaster in 1740. Cort moved into Surrey Street in the strand at London and found employment as an agent for the Royal Navy. It was while employed for the navy he became aware of the poor quality of British iron compared to that of imported iron. During this period he began experimenting on ways to improve the quality of manufacturing British iron. He set up a small forge in Gosport during 1775 but was frustrated by the lack of motive power. He needed a water mill and this he found at Funtley near Fareham. Ironstone the bed rock of the iron industry Cort shipped in from Hengistbury Head near Christchurch. Between 1783-4 he took out patents for the process of improving iron bar by hammering at a welding temperature and rolling out all the impurities. The iron produced by this method proved to be both tough and fibrous. His second patent is generally known as the “paddling process”, ore or cast iron was smelted in a reverberating or air furnace with out a blast during the process liquid iron was constantly stirred with iron bars (paddling) which burnt off the carbon from the cast iron and the iron was separated from the slag. The iron was then hammered and rolled to produce black iron bars. Henry Cort’s advancement in the manufacturing process of iron paved the way for a new iron age in Great Britain.

By the end of the 19th century Britain was producing over 4 million tons of pig iron a year which was more than the entire production of all the other European countries. It was said that in 1820 there was at least 8,200 of Henry Cort’s furnaces operating in Great Britain. Many in the iron industry have said it was his rolling process that was his greatest achievement; some have suggested that Cort’s inventions added 600 million pounds to the country’s wealth as well as providing employment for countless thousands of person. In the House of Commons Lord Sheffield said of Cort in 1786

“If Mr. Cort’s very ingenious improvements in the making and working of iron, and the art of making coke at half its original price, together with the Steam engines made by Boulton and Watt, should succeed, it is not asserting to much to say the result will be more advantages to Great Britain than the possession of the thirteen states of America”

Sadly, Cort never found financial benefited from his inventions and after twenty-three years at Funtley he left a ruined man in 1789. He was granted a government pension to support wife and family of twelve children in 1794. He died in 1800 and is buried in Hampstead Heath Parish Church where a bronze tablet placed there by Lancashire to honour this remarkable man to which shipbuilding and in particular the Royal Dockyards owe so much.

1741 **Smithery** enlarge Note the word Smithery is only used in Royal Dockyards. See Oxford Dictionary (See 1779)

1742 First “**Dreadnought**” (64 guns) launched at Portsmouth (See 1801, 1905).

1744 **HMS “Victory”**, Sir John Balchens flagship, wrecked off Alderney with the loss of the whole crew, many of whom came from Portsmouth. This 100 gun ship, originally called “**Royal James**” (See 1675) was re-built at Portsmouth in 1731 and renamed **HMS “Victory”**.

1744 Determined attempt to revise and re-build the defences of Portsmouth (Map of Portsmouth Town and Dockyard, showing interesting detail, by John Peter

Desmaretz – British Library Maps K. Top. XIV.28).

- 1745 Master Shipwrights in Dockyards ordered to consult and determine the dimensions for ships of each class (1st to 6th rates). Anthony Deane (See 1670) originally determined the size of the various rates of ship.
- 1746 Construction of **Haslar Hospital** was commenced (See 1739/40) & 1755). Completed in 1761 it was the first purpose built Naval Hospital.
- 1747 First Battle of Finisterre in May with Admiral Anson bringing in 6 captured French warships and 6 merchantmen. Treasure was sent to London in 20 wagons.

31st October. 2nd Battle of Finisterre Admiral Hawke defeated 8 French ships of the line, 6 of which were brought into Portsmouth. Admiral Hawk was created Knight of the Bath, Freeman of Portsmouth and represented the Borough in Parliament.

Tarring House built to tar ropes. This building survived 1760 & 1770 fires. (See 1789).

First Hilsea Lines (including Portsbridge Redoubt) and fort Cumberland (See 1794) commenced building.

2nd June. The first newspaper to be circulated in Portsmouth was the *Portsmouth and Gosport Gazette*. It was however a localized edition of the Salisbury Journal.

PEACE WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN

- 1750 1750-55. Lord Hawk was the Port Admiral at Portsmouth.
- Royal Navy had 126 ships of the line and 156 other craft (total 282).
- 1753 Dockyard shipwrights built **St Georges Church**, Portsea. (Damaged by bombs in 1941 it has been restored)
- 1754 Dr Richard Pococke mentions “a large brewhouse, bakehouse and cooperage for the Dock(yard) “in the town, he also mention “a well in the Dock(yard) at which ships water”. He describes the Gunwharf “in which are two Chinese Pagods (?Pagodas) seven feet high, with the heads of lyons, as on a sort of pillar, all of one piece of grey granite, brought by Commodore Anson (see 1739/40) and placed here”. He describes the docks – “Most of the Docks are lined with Portland stone and are staunched with clay brought from Estamsay (Stamshaw) near by. They have from 1,000 to 1,500 men employed in the yard; it is curious to see them go out at the toll of a bell at noon and night, when every one may take out useless pieces of wood and chips, (see 1638) as much as they can carry under the arm, and small chips in bags, which are examined with a wooden crow, and all of them observed to see they do not take out iron, or anything valuable. It is curious also to see the forges where they make the anchors the largest weigh about 80 hundred weight that is four tonnes, which are worked with machines to move them. The ropeyard is 102 fathoms in length (612 ft; 186.5m) they join three lengths to make the longest cable, which is 306 fathoms (1,836ft) and 23 inches (584mm) round, consequently about 8 inches in diameter, consists of 3,000 threads (yarns) and weights five tons. The main yard of a first rate man-of-war is 23 ³/₄ inches (603mm) and 33 (ft) long and the bowsprit is 36 inches in diameter (914mm) and the main mast 38” (965mm). The Academy (see 1729-32) is a handsome building for 50 youths to be instructed in the theory and practice of Navigation”...Pococke refers to a “very noble hospital for the sick” at Gosport (Haslar Hospital see 1746) “one (wing) of which is almost complete”.

THE SEVEN YEARS WAR

1755 **Royal Marines** first came to Portsmouth and billeted in Hilsea Barracks. They moved to Barracks in what is now Peacock Lane (originally Barrack Street) in 1783.

From 1755-1763, "The Seven Years War", 133,708 sailors lost due to disease whilst 1,512 were killed in action. (See 1739/40)

3rd. November. A great earthquake struck Lisbon, Spain. Strangely this was felt in the Dockyard but not in the town. At about half past ten in the morning, the vessel **Gosport** was being taken into dock to be cleaned when she pitched forward, recovering the stern then dipped into the water as deeply as the stem and she was greatly agitated, the dock gates were forced open about six inches. In the basin which had not the least communication with the dry dock lay the **Berwick, Dover** and another ship along side the jetty. These felt the shock at the same instant and rolled violently, but no one on land was affected or could perceive that the land under or about them moved.

1756 Royal Navy had 142 ships of the line and 162 other craft (total 296).

1757 4th March. **Execution of Admiral Byng** on board **HMS Monarque** by firing squad at Spithead for failing to press home an attack on the French at Minorca in 1756. On the day fixed for the execution a gale was blowing at Portsmouth, and the **Ramillies**, the vessel which Byng had commanded in the Mediterranean, broke from her mooring chains about half an hour before the execution. The incident was viewed by superstitious sailors as a evil omen.

1757 we find an Admiral writing from his ship in Torbay declaring that the Plymouth beer was so bad that it employs the whole time of the seamen throwing it overboard. He praises the Portsmouth beer and begs to be supplied from that port.

1758 Admiral Saunders arrived at Spithead with captured French ships "**Foudroyant**" (84 guns) and "Orpheus" (64 guns). 1,000 French prisoners of war were lodged in Portchester Castle. (Note: the above "**Foudroyant**" was wrecked on Blackpool Beach in 1897. the **present "Foudroyant"** was originally named "**Trincomalee**" and only renamed after the loss of the first "**Foudroyant**". The latter ship was loaded onto a barge with "**Minerva**" and towed to Hartlepool in July 1987 for restoration.)

The Navy Victualling Office was purchasing 800 hongs and 200 oxen a week which were processed into salted meat at the **Victualling Yard**. Hooves and offal were turned into portable soup for sick and wounded seamen. The "Universal Magazine" for this year also records that beef, port, butter and linen were landed at the Victualling Yard. Some 31,200 pigs and 7,800 oxen were slaughtered yearly to feed the Royal Navy.

1759 Large part of Southsea Castle destroyed by an explosion in the magazine (see c1538-1544, 1628)

2,099 men employed in Dockyard and another 689 employed for ships in reserve.

- 1759/6
0 Royal Navy had 127 ships of the line and 285 other craft (total 412).
Admiral Hawke returned to Portsmouth after victory against the French at Quiberon Bay. (1759 is known as the “Year of Victories” – capture of Guadaloupe, Battle of Lagos and Quiberon Bay. The Latter action ended serious naval effort by the French. **General Wolfe** took Quebec and his body was returned to England at Portsmouth in February 1759).
- 1760 3rd. July 1760 a fire broke out just after midnight in one of the major storehouses of the yard that contained large quantities of pitch, tar, turpentine and other combustible materials that soon got out of control and spread to surrounding buildings. It was generally thought that lightning caused the fire as a great thunderstorm was ragging at the time. The rain increased in intensity and for some hours, which was eventually to be the saving of the Dockyard. However great damage was done to the Dockyard.
- 1761 Commodore Keppel sailed from Portsmouth to capture Belle Isle.
Weevil Brewery at Gosport, producing sufficient beer to supply the Navy.
- 1762 Admiral Pocock sailed from here to capture Havana. Spanish Treasure ship “**Hermione**” brought as prize to Spithead. Treasure taken to London in 20 wagons. The Spanish ships yielded £3 million of stores and treasure. Each seaman received £485 prize money.

PEACE

1763 **No. 11 store built** (cost £7,598) and completed in 1766.

1764 **Boathouse** built on the site of the present No 4 Boathouse.

12th October. By Order of Council Pensions were paid to old and disabled shipwrights (see 1771).

In 1764, the Earl of Egmont who was head of the Admiralty proposed a plan of improvements for Portsmouth Dockyard, which was laid before the King and approved. In the plan No 5 Dry Dock was to be lengthened and a site provided for the building of No 4 Dry Dock that was to be identical in size to No 5. Dock, although work on the new dock did not start until 1772. The delay may have been due to a contract awarded to a Mr. Templar in 1765 for the rebuilding of the Basin entrance with the cill lowered by 2 ft. and also for lowering the bed of the Basin. It may well have been deemed necessary to complete this work before starting on the new dock. It would seem that work to No's 4 & 5 Dry Docks along with the Basin was already planned before the 1764 plan was accepted.

There is a drawing in the PRO. Piece Number 560 dated 1766, entitled Contract drawing from Mr. Templar indicating a rebuild of No.5 Dock and new build of No.4. It would appear that he was responsible for all the work in the basin and of the dry docks at this time. The original estimates for the first part of the new Dockyard plan was £352,240 of which by the end of 1773 £299,912 had been laid out. The plan that was adopted continued for just on 40 years and apart from one or two deviation is what we now know as the Historic Georgian Dockyard of Portsmouth. These storehouses and even some of the workshops continued in service for the remainder of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, some are still in service with the fleet to-day, in the twenty-first century and substantiality of their structure stand as a testament to the far sightedness of the Navy Board of the 1770's

Contract awarded to Messrs. Templar and Collard for the building of new slips, The slipways were covered by roofs and formed, together with the adjacent storage space for timber, on 14 acres of land reclaimed from mud lands during 1765.

1765 7th May. **HMS "Victory" launched** at Chatham after 6 years on the stocks. She is the 5th ship of that name (2,162 tons 104 guns) The keel was laid on 23rd July 1759 in the old single dock at Chatham. On 30th October 1760 she was registered in the list of the Royal Navy as Victory. At the time of her launch her construction cost was £63,176. & 3 shillings.

19th May. The victualling yard at Gosport was established. It would not be until 1st July 1831 that the Weevil yard at Gosport would become the Royal Clarence Victualling Yard. Gosport.

WARS WITH AMERICA, FRANCE AND SPAIN

1766 In 1766 the Board of Admiralty centralised all barrel making at Gosport and built a fine new Cooperage that was to last until the abolition of the navy rum issue on 30th July 1970.
(see 1828).

John Pounds born in St Mary's Street (now Highbury Street). He worked in the Dockyard until he was crippled in an accident. He then set up as a cobbler. In about 1818 he established a school to educate poor children in his shop thereby starting the Ragged Schools movement which gained impetus elsewhere after 1844. John Pounds died in 1839. (John Pounds memorial in the garden behind John Pounds Chapel, High Street).

1769 Nine Dockyard men drowned in November crossing the harbour to Gosport in a hurricane.

Stone Dock (see 1689) rebuilt and renamed **North Basin Dock** (now No 5 Dock).

Work started on new **munitions depot at Priddys Hard**, Gosport. Buildings were completed by 1773. (Magazine and Hard exist. See 1777)

1770 Ramparts and moats encircling Portsea commenced building (see 1860).

Great mortality amongst sailors of Russian fleet at Spithead. Crews landed in batches at Hilsea Barracks and Haslar Hospital.

27th July. **A Great Dockyard Fire** destroys most of the Yard. Had the wind not abated and changed direction the Town as well would have been lost. The material lost was said to be equivalent to equipping 30 men-of-war. John Wesley who visited Portsmouth soon after recorded his impressions:

*I walk around the Dock, much larger than any in England. The late fire began in a place where no one comes, just at low water, at a time when all were fast asleep, so that none could doubt of it being , done by design. It spread with amazing violence among tow and cordage and dry wood, that none could come near without the utmost danger, nor was anything expected but that the whole dock would be consumed if not the town, **But God would not permit this.***

1771 Royal Navy had 134 ships of the line and 226 other craft (total 360).

Nos. 15, 16 and 19 Stores built (see 1939-45) **Hemp & Hatchelling Homer** built, **Boiler Shop West** built.

25th September. Dockyard Pension scheme extended to all crafts (see 1764).

1772 **No. 4 Dock opened.** Dockyard area at this date was 66 acres.

1773 **Priddys Hard Ordnance Depot** largely completed at Gosport (see 1769). At about this date Square Tower ceased use as a magazine and became adapted to use as a meat store in 1779.

22nd June. King George III reviewed fleet at Spithead and inspected the Dockyard; he was saluted by 232 guns. He was welcomed by the Dockyard men, who wore green boughs in their hats and the scene was described as a walking forest.. The King left £1,500 for the Dockyard artificers, £350 for the seamen of the Barfleur's yachts, £250 for the poor and a week's pay to each man in the Dockyard.

August 27th. James Templar & Thomas Parlby were contracted to carry out and complete all wharfs to the Camber, Mast Pond piers and to deepen it, setting stone in terras with gates at the extremities to be lined with Portland stone. 600 ft. per year to be completed signed Sept. 1773.

1774 Royal Navy employed 17,731 men. By 1783 this had risen to 107,446

The value of work performed at the Camber between 16th May 1774 & 27th September 1776 was £14493. 11s. 10d.

14th January. census of the yard showed that on the 14th January 1774 there were employed in the yard:

Officer.....22.	Bricklayers.....22	Masons.....4
Clerks.....26	Pitch Heaters.....3	Smith's.....85
Shipwrights.....861	Riggers.....67	Foremen.....2
Quarter Boys.....33	Rigger's labourers....20	Spinners.....115
Caulkers.....82	Yard Labourers.....293	Winder-uppers ....9
Oakum Boys.....33	. Braziers.....1	Labours.....14
Joiners 64	Locksmiths.....2	Hatchellers.....18
House Carpenters..82	Sawyers.....134	Boys.....8
Wheelwrights.....3	Sail makers.....51	Block makers.....4
Plumbers.....2	Scavemen.....75	(Teams) I man, 2 horses....75

In all there were 2.198 men employed within the Dockyard and another 685 on ships in ordinary (reserve) as watchmen and maintenance.

1775 2,500 workers employed in the dockyard (see 1759). Two strikes by Dockyard shipwrights.

New **Double Ropehouse** of 1030 ft x 58 ft completed (see 1770)

In July Captain Cook in "*Endeavour*" returned to Portsmouth after circumnavigating the world.

1776 7th. December. Incendiary "**Jack the Painter**" (alias James Hill, or John

Aitken) a sympathiser with the American rebellion, set fire to the Ropehouse which was gutted. He was hanged 64ft high from the mast of the "Arethusa", erected inside the Dockyard Gate, on 10th. March 1777.

Explosion about **HMS "Marlborough"** in harbour killed 18 men, women and children.

1777 Royal Navy had 121 ships of the line and 271 other vessels (total 396). By the following year there were 131 ships of the line and 319 other craft (total 450)

Storekeepers House built at Priddys Hard, Gosport (see 1769).

18th February. Messrs. Templar, Parlby & Templar contracted for erecting the Middle store **No. 10 Storehouse** fronting the Camber together with the Clock cupola and to take in hand the foundations of the intended **Rigging House and Stores** on the west side of the Camber. Materials mentioned in 9th March 1764. The Store to be 210ft. x 51ft. broad. The old building on the site to be removed and the rubbish used in raising the new ground; the building to be of the Tuscan order 1782-83-84. Works excavated for the Storehouses for Fitting rigging, Rigging Houses and Rigging Stores, and the new South storehouse £9000.

The bottom and sides to the old North Dock was renewed at a cost onearly £14,000.

1778 George II and Queen came to Portsmouth on a five day visit during which they inspected the Dockyard and reviewed the fleet.

4th June. To celebrate the King birthday men of the Dockyard together with the foremen, quartermen, converters, measurers etc. walked in procession, with blue ribbons and laurel branches in their hats and with white wands in their hands; they went to the Commissioners House and then round the Yard from the officers houses and into the town ending up at the Hard where they gave three Cheers before going home.

No. 17 Store built.

Admiral Keppel sailed to engage the French off Ushant.

Captured French East Indiamen brought into Portsmouth by two Liverpool privateers. Their cargo valued at £500,000.

Semaphore Tower built (see 1913 & 1930). **No. 17 Store built**. New **Rigging House** on west side of Camber parallel to 9, 10 & 11 Stores. This building complete in 1783. Destroyed by fire in 1913. (See 1715).

1779 Prince William Henry (later William IV) joined the Navy at Portsmouth as a midshipman. (See 1801).

Smithery considerably altered at a cost of £2,219 (see 1741).

Admiral Sire George Rodney sailed from here and won a decisive victory over the

Spanish fleet off Cape St Vincent in 1780.

31st December. Tower of London. Cost of carving the Lion for **Lion Gate** and Unicorn for **Unicorn Gate**.

	£	s	d
Portland Stone	31	15	0
Carving the Lion	78	0	0
Carving the Unicorn	83	0	0
Packing cases for do	1	14	8
Packing, Carrying, Loading, &c.	2	12	0

	£204	1	8.

1780 24th April. Began driving piles for **Enlargement of Dockyard** by 15 acres .

The value of work performed at the Camber between 1780 1784; digging foundations and pumping etc. was £20807. 19s. 3d. In 1785 works at the Camber cost £480.

1782 **No. 9 Store built. No. 24 Store started.** Additional storey added in 1939. **No. 25 Store** commenced building. **No. 33 Store built.** It includes the remains of the two storey north west building of this date; this store is now 3 stores.

Shipwrights shed built for £300 (see 1723 & 1737)

Royal Navy had 161 ships of the line and 439 other vessels (total 600)

29th August. "**Royal George**" (100 guns) being on the heel overset and sank at Spithead with the loss of Admiral Kempenfelt, most of the crew, families and traders who were onboard at the time were lost, numbering just over 900 souls were drowned (see 1785).

Admiral Lord Howe sailed with fleet of 183 ships to relieve Gibraltar.

Compte de Grasse, French C in C landed here as a prisoner of war.

Serious fire at the Hard destroyed several houses.

1782-83-84. Works to the Boat Channel, Slipway etc. £2146. 9s. 2d.

1783 & 1784 works to the Wharfs to the Watering Island £8131. 5s. 10d. Wharfs at the Landing Hulk King's Stairs £4230. 14s.

14th August. In 1782 A David Tyrie, who being a Civil Servant in the Portsmouth Navy Office was observed by a woman's curiosity (Ha Ha!) in transacting the sale of vital information to the French. The said Mr. Tyrie was apprehended, tried and convicted of High Treason. The punishment was DEATH... To be hung by the neck until nearly dead and then cut down and while still conscious his bowels taken out and burnt on pan before his eyes; and that head should then be taken

off, and his body cut into four quarters and placed at the King's disposal. The sentence was carried out on Southsea Common where a mob later tore the body to pieces. Ladies were said to be like wild cats trying to dip their handkerchiefs in his blood. The Town Jailer ran off carrying the bleeding head under his arm, which he later exhibited in the town for profit.

1783 First **Sail Loft** built west of the camber (demolished C 19). **Kings Stairs** built about this date.

Mutiny at Spithead. (See 1654 and 1797). Royal Navy had 107,446 men.

Royal Marines came from Hilsa to do duty in the Dockyard.

Captain Nelson paid off his ship *HMS "Albermarle"* at Spithead following peace with France, Holland, Spain and the United States of America. (See 1797)

1784 **Long Storehouse** in King Street (see 1557) reconstructed and enlarged. (See 1557, 1576, 1828)

1785 May. The 50 gun ship *Leopard* that had been laid down in January 1776 was taken to pieces and transported to Sheerness and reassembled, she was launched there on 24th April 1790.

To stop pilfering the Admiralty issued the following order:

No persons is to pass out of the Dock Gate with great coats, large trousers

or any other dress that may conceal stores of any kind. No trousers are to be

Used by the labourers employed in the Storehouses and if anyone persists

In such a custom he is to be discharged from the Yard.

1784-86 Work started on **Admiralty House**. Designed by Samuel Wyatt. The Admiralty Clerk of Works was **Thomas Telford**. The house was used by Emperor Alexander of Russia in 1814 and Grand Duke Nicholas, who became Emperor of Russia in 1838. Original cost £8,661 (including water closets). Bombing c1940/41 destroyed the main staircase and Victorian ballroom. C in C transferred to HMS "Victory" for the rest of World War II. (Original drawings exist).

One of the early interesting stories concerning the house concerns the Commissioner's Daughter. Commissioner Martin was a close friend of the Royal Family and at the time of the building the Commissioner's House the frigate **Hebe** was in Portsmouth Dockyard. Aboard that frigate was a Lieutenant RN with the title of Prince William Henry, the third son of the King who had embarked on a naval career in 1779 and was later to become King William IV, no doubt through his visits to the Commissioner a fondness developed for his lovely daughter Sarah, which was equally returned. Such passion matured into a proposal of marriage from the young Prince. The Commissioner on hearing of the news acted swiftly and decisively in packing the lovely Sarah off to relations in London and writing to his friend the King, who lost no time in instructing the Admiralty to post the ardent lieutenant off to the North American Station. The date of this liaison is still uncertain. The **Hebe** was originally the French frigate

L'H'ebe and was captured by the British frigate Rainbow on the 4th. September 1782 and brought to Portsmouth to be coppered and fitted for British service. She remained in the Channel squadrons for a number of years and having successive refits in the Dockyard. Prince William became a firm friend of Nelson, in fact it was the Prince who acted as Nelson's best man at his wedding and gave away his future wife Fanny Nesbit on 11th. March 1787. (A year and a day after the opening of the new Commissioners House.) Prince William Henry would not succeed to the throne until 26th. June 1830 by which time he was nearly 65 He would be known as The Sailor King or the Royal Tar and sometimes as *Silly Billy*. As the Duke of Clarence (from 1789) he won a reputation as a womaniser. He later married Princess Adalaide of Saxe-Meiningen in 1818 and had two daughters who both died in infancy. He's better remembered are his ten illegitimate children by the actress Mrs Dorothea Jordan (1762-1816). He married Princess Adalaide to gain a government settlement to pay off his debts and hopefully to give England an heir. Poor Adalaide spent her honeymoon at St. James's nursing William's oldest son George who had broken his leg. The couple lived quietly at Bushey near Hampton Court, she allowed William to keep part of the Victory's foremast in the dinning-room. It was Adalaide who gathered the younger members of the Fitzclarences around her, one of whom is well remembered in Portsmouth as the Lieutenant Governor of Portsmouth, Lord Frederick Fitzclarence GCB. The man who made Clarence Esplanade possible. One can only wonder, did William, in his old age still think of the lovely Sarah?

As for poor Sarah, who was dispatched with haste to London settled down with her relatives and a broken heart, for she never married. But history would not forget her; she was destined to achieve a modest fame in literary history as an author and illustrator of a book of Nursery Rhymes, the best known of which is "Old Mother Hubbard" based say some on the housekeeper of her future brother-in-law others say it was based on the housekeeper of the **Commissioner's House**. If it is indeed the **Commissioner's House**, then the mystery is, which house, the old one built at the time of Pepys or Martin's new residence? We will only know when we know the date Prince William Henry was posted to the North American Station.

1785 **St Ann's Church** built in 8 months. (see 1704) to the design of John Marquand, The Admiralty Surveyor. Thomas Telford was appointed Clerk of Works for the job and the builders were Thomas Parlby & Son. The east end of the church suffered bomb damage in 1941 and rebuilding shortened the church by two bays. The ships bell of the "Royal George" (see 1782), hung in the cupola of the church. (See 1939-45)

Wharfs in front of the Boathouse £960. Wharfs at the South end if the **Boat Pond** £480.

1786 8th January. The last service in **St. Ann's church** conducted by the Rev. Mr. Bayley By the 10th March the old church was pulled down.

4th February. The New Chapel of **St Ann's** opened its doors and the inaugural sermon was given by the Rev. Brown. We are told the text came from the Book of Job, chapter III, verse 10. For the opening sermon of a new church it seems a strange text to pick, for the chapter starts with:

After this Job opened his mouth cursed the day of his birth.

Verse 10 reads:

Because it did not shut the doors of my mother's womb,

And hide trouble from my eyes.

Western half of **South Office Block** built as offices (see 1788).

Royal Navy now 149 ships of the line and 322 other craft (total 471).

Revolt amongst convicts on hulks in Portsmouth Harbour was not subdued until 8 had been shot dead and 36 wounded.

Stone piers for new **Mast Pond**. £4320.

Stone Wharfs at the East end of the **Boat Pond**: Exclusive of discount £2886.

Works to Offices, Joiners and shop and Saw pits £960.

1787 13th May "**First Fleet**" of 13 ships including flagship **HMS "Sirius"** (see 1939-45) sailed for Australia. They arrived at Botany Bay and then moved to Sydney Cove where the first European settlement was founded at the flag raising on 26 January 1788 (now Australia Day).

The Dockyard employed 752 shipwrights and 134 sawyers.

Short Row, houses for Dockyard officers, designed and supervised by **Thomas Telford** as his first architectural design.

Captain Bligh in command of **HMS "Bounty"** sailed from Portsmouth. The crew mutinied in the South Seas and Bligh sailed an open boat with 18 loyal crew to Timor (3,618 miles). Three "Bounty" mutineers executed in Portsmouth 1792.

Wharf North side of the new Mast Pond (South wall) £4483. For works continuing £3496. 4s. 6d.

1788 Eastern half of **South Office Block** built as stores (now offices). The designer was George White, Master Shipwright. (See 1786)

1789 **No. 1 Boathouse** built. **Tarring House** enlarged.

1790 11th. August. **New Dock** proposed. The South pier and dam of new Dock (**No. 1 Dry Dock**) £3330. 2s. 2d.

Works to stone wharf adjacent to new dock commenced.

Dockyard employees numbered 130 officers and 2,033 men (see 1722, 1775).

- 1791 Store £252. 15s. 8d.
- Boat House Channel wharfs etc. £2832. 16s. 4d.
- Works to the North side of the **Reservoir** £7639. 14s. 4d.
- Works continued £315. 14s. 8d.
- Expense of the stone wharf and the South pier of the new dock (**No. 1 Dry Dock**) £11400. 6s. 8d.
- December 31st. Began driving foundation piles for the South side of the new dock (**No. 1 Dry Dock**).
- 1792 **Portsmouth Common renamed Portsea** (see 1703).
- Wharfs continued with the formation of a dam £1683. 8s. 9d. To New Dock.
- Mast house slip £265. 19s. 4d.
- 3rd. March. Began setting Portland stone for the south side of the new dock (**No. 1 Dry Dock**). Contract for its formation being dated Jan. 2nd. 1792.
- Works to the South dock (**No. 1 Dock**) £11072. 12s. (average price £22. 10s. per rod). Work continues 1793 £18328. 5s. 1d. 1794 £13952. 2s. 1795 £1400. 8s. 3d.
- 1793 Royal Navy had 113 ships of the line and 191 other vessels (total 304).
- Wharfs of the new pond £2085. 16s. 8d. Wharfs of the inner **Mast Pond** £3561. 16s.
- 1794 Admiral Lord Howe fought the Battle called the “**Glorious 1st of June**” off Brittany capturing 6 French ships and sinking one. He returned to Portsmouth with 6 prizes.
- George II & Queen Charlotte visited Portsmouth to launch **HMS “Prince of Wales”** and review the fleet.
- Single storey brick Block-makers Shop built (see 1802).
- Wharfs of the inner **Mast Pond** £4390. 11s. 8d. North wall of the new Mast Pond £1689. 7s. 2d.
- Boat House Channel £82. 9s. 6d.
- 1795 **Dr. George Pinckard’s description of Portsmouth.**
But here hordes of pollinating females are seen reeling in drunkenness or plying upon the streets with a broad modesty which puts the great orb of noon to the blush. These daughters of Cypria are not only of manner peculiar, but likewise of such peculiar figure and apparel that it were, perhaps, difficult in any other part of England to find a correct resemblance to the “Sweet Poll of

Portsmouth”.

Sir Samuel Bentham appointed Inspector General of Navy Works and started to modernise and mechanise the Dockyards.

29th May. Brigade General Sir Samuel Bentham proposes his plans to enlarge the **Great Ship Basin**.

8th October. The Admiralty orders works to be carried to General Bentham’s plan.

Semaphore using revolving shutters built on Southsea Common. Communication with the Admiralty in London was via 12 other semaphores, with the next being on Portsdown (see 1822).

1st May“. The **Boyne**” (98 guns) blew up and sank at Spithead. Towards noon it was learnt in Portsmouth that the Boyne commanded by the Hon. George Grey was on fire at Spithead. The fire was supposed to have started by some burning cartridge paper being blown into the captain’s cabin that spread with alarming rapidity. And within half an hour the rigging was ablaze. It was apparent that nothing could be done to save the ship from destruction and other vessels in the vicinity made haste to give her a wide berth. Crowds gathered on Southsea sea front, her guns being loaded started to go off as the fire reached them and for over two hours the cannonade continued. At about two o’clock her cables burnt through and she began to drift with the tide grounding on the Spit, immediately facing Southsea Castle. At five o’clock her after magazine blew up with tremendous violence showering the Castle and surrounding district with cannon and pieces of the ship and all that remained was a mushroom of smoke shaped like a palm tree. 13 people died in the blaze and the ships final resting place was marked by a bell and to-day is still known as the Boyne bell.

Admiral Lord Bridport sailed from here and engaged the French fleet off L’Orient capturing 3 ships.

Channel Fleet based at Portsmouth from this date (see 286)

Boat House Channel continued £274. 15s.

Works to the inner **Mast Pond** £467. 11s. 6d. Dwarf wall and slips to the outer mast pond £1400. 16s. 9d. North Wall to the same £1272. 6s. 5d.

1796

20th March. Work started on the **Elevated Water Tank** for securing the yard from fire, the apparatus was designed and erected Sir Samuel Bentham and consisted of an elevated water reservoir holding some 900 tons of water, into which water is raised by steam engine, and distributed around the jetties and building of the dockyard by a pipe line. Work stopped on 17th April and commenced again on 21st December 1797 until 29th October 1799. The whole project was finally completed on 8th April 1808.

Works continued £1417. 16s. 9d. To the **new Mast Ponds**. This plan for new Mast Pond was later abandoned.

Wharfs and slips on the South side of the **Boat House Channel** £904. 11s. 3d. This was sited on the north side of here No.6 Dry Dock is to-day.

Works to **Wharfs, docks and basin**, agreeable to General Benthams plan. £14973. 9s. 5d.

- 1797 15th April. **Naval Mutiny at Spithead**. The mutiny broke out onboard Lord Bridport's flagship **Queen Charlotte** at Spithead, lasting until the 15th May. It spread to the Nore on the 12th May and lasted there until the 13 June. The country had never been in greater peril in its long wars with France for without its navy it was virtually defenceless. (See 1654 and 1783).

The **Armoury** built at Gunwharf.

Rear Admiral Nelson hoisted his flag in **HMS "Vanguard"** here. (See 1783, 1801 & 1805)

Work continues to the above. £19839. 18s. 2d. To **Docks and Basin**.

Wharfs and slips on the South side of the **Boat house channel** £1349. 10s.

North side of the new **Mast Pond** £657. 1s. 2d.

North side of the new **Mast Pond** £657. 1s. 2d. For the new Mast house and proceedings with locks in the **Mast Pond** £20,000. North and South jetties £16,000. Mast Pond Mast houses, locks, dams etc. £20,000.

21st December. Sir Samuel Bentham completes and signs a drawing of a 12 horse-power Sadler engine which was said to have been invented by James Sadler, the chemist of Bentham's staff. This was the first steam engine to be put to work in any of the Royal Dockyards.

- 1798 **Pay Office** with fire roof brick vaults built (See 1809)

Work continues to the above. £742. 15s. 5d. To new **Mast Ponds**.

Work continues to General Benthams plan. The dam opposite the entrance to the basin, in order of formation from 24th Sept. to 25th Oct. 1798. £22149. 14s. 2d. Bentham planned to extend the Great Ship Basin southwards and add two extra Dry Docks within the basin. This necessitated moving the entrance to the basin to the south to ease entry into the proposed new dry docks. The old entrance was sealed up and became known as **Sheer Jetty** due to the sheer legs that were mounted there in the 1835.

- 1799 **No. 2 Boathouse built**.

Earl St Vincent, with his fleet arrived at Portsmouth after his brilliant victory over the French.

Two merchant ships in harbour and **HMS "Prince Frederick"** (64 guns) at Spithead caught fire.

Large Russian Fleet anchored at Spithead.

Work continues to the South dock (No. 1 Dry Dock) (£25,000 being voted by Parliament). £3548. 0s. 4d.

March 11th. The firststone was laid to the invert arch for the entrance to the **Great Ship Basin**. (£47,680 voted by Parliament to carry on the great national works).

The new entrance to the Basin would be 64 ft. 9 inches wide at the top and 33 ft deep and was of a new and novel design, for Bentham proposed doing away with the traditional method of closing a dock or basin by using lock gates and substituting it with, what at the time was called the **Green Land Boat**. It was shaped similar to that named vessel in that it was pointed at both ends. It had a large protruding keel on the outside that ran through its centre and up to the top deck at each end. This keel was designed to sit in a groove in the masonry on the newly constructed basin entrance. The vessel would be towed into position and then seacocks would be opened to flood and sink the vessel into the grooves of the basin entrance. The pressure exerted by the falling water level on one side or the other, due to the tide, kept keel in the groove watertight. The main advantage of this new system was in the roadway top deck that when sunk in position became part of the road, allowing horse and wagon traffic carrying considerable loads to cross it. Where-as the old system of lock gates only allowed foot traffic. In terms of traffic movement around the yard this was a vast improvement. To remove the caisson, the seacocks were closed and men worked a crankshaft that operated chain pumps, all within the caisson that cleared the water from the ballast tanks and allowed the caisson to float. It is said that this operation took less than an half an hour. To day we know this invention as the Caisson. New visitors to the Dockyard also call it the Caisson but they soon pick up the old Dockyard word for it, which is pronounced **Cassoon** and that is exactly how Bentham spelt it when it was built in the dockyard. Since that time the world has copied the caisson and it can be seen in operation around the world.

21st December. **12 hp Steam Engine** proposed and installed to drive dock pumps. It was an engine called "Sadler" after the man who invented it and who was said to have been on Bentham's staff. It was first set to work at Redbridge and was the first steam engine erected and used in Hampshire (1795).

Works on the walls for the enlargement of the Basin with the new entrance from the harbour, together with entrances to the two new docks (No's 2 & 3 Dry Docks) according to General Bentham's plans £19039. 11s. 4d.

1800 **North Office Block** originally built at **The Old Smithery**. (See 1741 &1779)

Strong north westerly storm drove 8 vessels ashore and damaged 41 others locally.

Basin removing earth, cleaning masonry and constructing a dam to complete the granite walls £1185. 5s. 10d.

Works to the new South Dock in the Basin (No. 2 Dry Dock) (No. 3 Dry Dock),

this year £211981. 14s. 10d. Works to the South East Dock consisting of excavations and masonry £221. 17s. 5d.

New parallel Dock formed at £22. 10s. per rod.

Works to the long Dock in the Boat House channel agreeable to General Bentham's plan £1297. 10s. 11d.

1801 Royal Navy with 180 ships of line and 684 other vessels (Total 864).

Prince William Henry (later William IV) made Freeman of Portsmouth (see 1779 and 1834).

Marc Brunel patented block making machinery (see 1802).

11th April. The new **Bolton and Watt engines** for pumping docks set to work. It could pump 20 tons of water a minute.

13th June. "**Dreadnought**" 98 guns (see 1742 and 1906) launched after 13 years on the stocks in the Dockyard. She was designed by Sir John Henslow. She took part in the battle of Trafalgar capturing the Spanish San Juan. She was hulked in 1825 and became a Lazaretto. The name lazaretto comes from Italy and was used to describe a ship where the practice of ridged quarantine was enforced to limit the spread of infectious disease. In 1831 she went to Greenwich as a seaman's hospital.

170 artificers discharged for involvement in riots.

12th June. **Great Ship Basin** (see 1698) enlarged by **Sir Samuel Bentham** and opened with the first practicable caisson at entrance. **HMS Britannia** was said to be the first ship to pass through the caisson entrance.

Rear Admiral Nelson aboard "St George" sailed for the Battle of Copenhagen. (See 1783, 1797 & 1803)

1st July. "**Chips**" (removal of scraps of wood) forbidden and sixpence paid in lieu to Shipwrights, their apprentices 4 pence a day during the first four years of their apprenticeship and 6 pence a day in the last three years of their apprenticeship. Caulkers, Joiners, Carpenters were allowed 4 pence a day, with 2 and 4 pence to their apprentices. Scavengers and labourers were allowed 3 pence a day. (see 1650, 1754 & 1830).

The original reason for this perquisite lay in three main reasons:

1. The scarcity and dearness of coal in southern England.
2. The low rate of pay in Royal Dockyards.
3. Wages would often be months and sometimes as much as a year in arrears.

The original meaning of chips was adze and axe chipping which could be used for fire kindling and could be carried under one arm and only gathered at leaving work. Abuse of the perquisite eventually led to the rule that chipping had to be less than 3 feet in length. This ruling had a knock-on effect in the artisan

dwelling houses of Portsmouth regarding the size of cupboards, stairways, windows, shutters and doors etc. Often if waste chipping were not available good timber would be cut to size, and it is recorded that a visit paid to the home of the Master Rope Maker not only showed fine furniture to that size but also two fine coffins for the day when he and his wife would have need of them. The abuse often leads to other items being concealed in the chips.

26th October. Naval Lieutenants take over the duties of the Porter and are styled **Wardens**.

27th October. Bentham proposes the **New Water Supply** for the Dockyard. The old system could not cope with the new demand of a growing fleet and the thirsty steam engines. The new boring was 18 inches in diameter and descended to a depth of over 300 ft. The water in the bore rose to within 25 feet of the surface. A steam engine pumped it through a ring main to the major buildings and wharfs in the yard.

Works to the South Dock (No. 2 Dry Dock) in the Great Basin and drains £9663. 1s. 4d. Works to the new South East Dock (No. 3 Dock) in the Great Basin and drains are £10,099. 12s. 6d.

Taking out earth to the depth proposed, clearing away dam, and completing granite walls of the Great Basin £2540. 5s. 8d.

Ye Mighty Chain of Yron. Mottley's guide of 1801 says: "*the enemy can be stopped by a chain that always lies at the bottom ready to be immediately raised and fastened to both side.*"

Writing in the Portsmouth Standard in 1842, Dr. Quarrier says: "I recollect the time when a chain was tied from Capstan Square to Blockhouse Point."

It is believed that Dr. Quarrier served on the **Royal William** (at Portsmouth) from autumn 1799 until the early part of 1801. It is thought probably that this is the last chain to have been stretched across the mouth of the harbour and was laid down in 1801 during the French invasion scare. (See 1522 and 1664)

1802 **No. 2 Dock completed** (berth of HMS "Victory" since 1922)

In the recent was 6 ships of the line and 53 smaller vessels were lost. The Royal Navy took 89 ships of the line 481 other naval vessels and 903 privateers from the enemy. 60 ships, including 26 ships of the line were laid up in the harbour and 18 sold to ship breakers.

Thirteen "Temeraire" mutineers hanged from ships in harbour in January. A principal ringleader was hanged in April. Altogether 60 mutineers were caught and most were hanged.

20th March. The 50 gun ship **Grampus** was launched from the Dockyard. Originally she was going to be named **Tiger**; she was hulked in 1820 to become a hospital ship on the Thames for the Committee of Distressed Seamen, being finally sold in 1832.

26th March East Side of the South East Dock in the Basin, the length of 60ft.

Now in progress. Works to the new South East Dock £16,564. 2s. 4d. (No. 3 Dry Dock).

1st April. The World's first **Steam dredger** designed and built in Portsmouth by Sir Samuel Bentham. (Generally it is thought that Simon Goodrich, the machinist of Bentham's staff was responsible for much of the machinery design.) Bentham proposed to the Admiralty the building of a steam dredger on the 18th April 1800. Only the dredging machinery was worked by the 12hp steam engine which was built by John Lloyd of Westminster, London.

14th April. Admiralty ordered the Navy Board to proceed with the construction of the **Wood Mill** to Benthams design at an estimated cost of £8,827. This was the first steam Powered Wood Mill in the World. This building eventually became the **Block Mills** the first steam powered factory in the World and the first to use all metal machinery for mass production of ships blocks. The machinery was designed by **Marc Brunel** (father of Isambard Kingdom Brunel) and **Sir Samuel Bentham** (see 1801 & 1806). Some of this machinery still exists in working order. The architect of the building was Samuel Bunce.

15th April. Sir Samuel Bentham officially recommends the adoption of the Marc Brunel's shaping machine as part of the system of machinery already provided or which it may be advisable to erect in the Dockyard, for the manufacture of ship's blocks.

Works of Docks continuing £193. 5s. 10d. The docks being in the year widened. These docks are intended for the reception of Frigates and smaller ships of war. (possibly No's 4 & 5 Docks)

27th December. No.1 Basin was opened.

1803 Hot Press collected 500 able seamen. Dockyard men ordered to work extra time and all volunteered for service in the militia.

Nos. 3 and 4 Docks opened (see 1825 and 1772)

16 French prizes brought into Portsmouth including an East Indiaman valued at £80,000.

"Keppels Head" Hotel (known to the Royal Navy as "The Nut") on the Hard destroyed on 25 April by fire (rebuilt by 1805. Burnt out in air raid on night of 10 March 1941 and restored after the war).

1st Feb. The Basin still in progress of deepening to the amount of 2577¹/₄ yards, and alters, ships, drains, and invert archways forming.

1803-1806 The tunnel and drain from the South East Dock the Mast Pond now in progress.

1805 14th September. **Admiral Lord Nelson** embarked from the beach near Spur Redoubt and sailed to battle off Cape Trafalgar aboard HMS "Victory", where he

was mortally wounded by a sharpshooters musket ball on 21st October. This battle ended any serious threat from the French Navy for the rest of the war. Battle scarred "Victory", with Admiral Nelsons body preserved in a cask filled with spirits of wine arrived back at Spithead 4th December. One of HMS "Victory's" anchors was placed on a memorial at Clarence Pier.

Royal Navy had 175 ships of the line and 774 other vessels (total 949).

Between 1805 and 1905 the Dockyard built 163 ships.

1806 **Isambard Kingdom Brunel**, son of Marc Isambard Brunel, born on 9th April in Britain Street, Portsea. (See 1802).

18th February. The 32 gun frigate *Alexandria* was launched from the Yard. She was the last of her class, that were known as the Thames class to be built. These ships were built of fir and did not have a long life; She was hulked in 1817 and broken up in 1819.

1807 23rd April. The 76 gun ship *Bulwark, (ex Scipio)* designed by Sir W. Rule was launched from the Dockyard. She was broken up at Portsmouth in 1826.

Convoy of 700 ships assembled at Spithead.

Russian frigate and store ship detained at Spithead and sold as prizes as diplomatic relations with Russia failed in June.

3rd September. Marc Brunel reports to Simon Goodrich that by the 10th October 1807 the Wood-Mill (Block Mills) would be able to supply all the blocks required by the navy.

John Dickens started work as a pay clerk in the **Pay Office** in the Dockyard (see 1812)

1808 26th May. The 26 gun sloop *Brazen* was launched from the Yard. She became a floating Church ship on the Thames during 1828 and was broken up 1849.

26th May. The brig *Podargus* of 16 guns was launched from the Dockyard; she was designed by the Surveyor of the Navy and built by Dockyard shipwright apprentices. She became a receiving hulk at Portsmouth in 1822 and was broken up at Rotherhithe in 1833. *Podargus* won fame in 1812 when in company with the 3rd rate ship *Dictator*, sloop *Calypso* and the gunbrig *Flamer*, sighted four Danish warships including the brand new 40 gun frigate *Nayaden* off Mardoe, Norway. It was decided to engage the enemy ships but the Danes ran for shore and proceeded up a narrow inlet. *Podargus* following ran aground, *Flamer* stood by her. Both ships were heavily engaged by shore batteries and suffered many casualties. She later succeeded in re-floating herself and again engaged the Danes. *Nayaden* was sunk and the other ships struck their colours

1809 Royal Navy had 722 ships of all classes.

28th April. Saw the launch of the 16 gun brig Zephyr launched; she was similar to the *Podargus* and was also built by Dockyard shipwright apprentices. She was sold in 1818 and broken up.

The 74 gun 3rd. Rate Ship **Augusta** that had been laid down in 1806 was cancelled and broken up on the slipway.

1810 20th. January. The launch of the 42 gun frigate **Pyramus** from the Yard. She was originally to be built by Greenwood & Kidwell of Itchenor but the frames were transferred to Portsmouth who completed the building of her. She was hulked in 1832 and became a receiving and convict ship at Halifax Nova Scotia: she was sold and broken up there in 1879.

20th January. The **Primrose** an 18 gun brig that had been built Dockyard shipwright apprentices was launched from the Yard. She was broken up in 1832.

3rd July. The 98 gun ship **Boyne** was launched from the Dockyard. She had been built to the lines of **Victory**. Boyne became a gunnery training ship at Portsmouth in 1834; in 1859 she was re-named **Queen Charlotte**, being broken up in 1861.

1811 **First School of Naval Architecture** founded in the dockyard. It was short lived.

Grand Storehouse, Ordnance Wharf (within HMS "Vernon") started. Completed 1814.

One wing destroyed by bombing in 1940.

8th July. The 20 gun sloop **Hermes** that had been built by apprentices was launched. After completing she took part in the naval war with America 1812-14. On 15th September 1814 in an attack on shore batteries at Mobile, USA. Her rigging was damaged and she grounded, after further damage she caught fire and became a total loss, 19 of her crew perished.

Launchings. The custom of breaking a bottle of wine over the stem of a ship when being launched originates from custom of toasting good fortune to the ship from a goblet of wine, which was then cast into the sea so that a toast of ill intent could not be drunk from the same goblet. This practice continued for many years until, in 1690 the practice of breaking a bottle of wine across the stem of the ship was introduced. Ships belonging to the crown were normally launched by a royal personage or Royal Dockyard Commissioners. However in 1811 the Prince Regent introduced the custom of ladies launching Royal ships. On occasions when launching large vessels it was found more practicable to throw the bottle of wine at the stem of the ship. On one such occasion a certain lady missed her aim and the bottle hit a spectator who sued the Admiralty for damages. As a result of this the Admiralty ordered that on future launchings the bottle of wine should be securely tied to the ship with a stout lanyard. Another old custom that accompanied the launch and is still observed to-day is to pray for divine blessing on the ship and her crew throughout her life. Royal Navy ships are never launched with champagne only Empire Wine.

1812 **Charles Dickens** born 7th February at 387 Mile End Terrace (now a museum at 393 Old Commercial Road). John and Elizabeth Dickens had settled here in 1809 but soon had to move to cheaper accommodation in Portsea at 16 Hawke

Street and then 39 Wish Street (now Kings Road). John Dickens worked in the Dockyard as a pay clerk until January 1815. (see 1805)

8th July. **Childers** an 18 gun brig was launched she also had been built by dockyard apprentices. She was broken up in 1822.

21st December. The 46 gun frigate **Lacedemonian** was launched from the Dockyard. She was broken up at Portsmouth in 1822 and was one of the **Leda** class frigates which was one of the largest classes of frigate built; two of which are still in existence to-day, the **Unicorn** at Dundee and the **Tricomalee (Foudroyant)** at west Hartlepool.

1813 17th May. The 18 gun brig **Grasshopper** built by Dockyard apprentices was launched from the Yard. She was sold to a private buyer and broken up in 1832.

23rd November. The launching of the 72 gun ship **Vindictive** from Portsmouth. She was cut down to a 50 gun ship in 1833 and hulked in 1862, becoming a stores ship at Fernando PO Island of the Cameroons, West Africa. Foundering there in 1871 where her wreck was sold for £20 to a private buyer in 1872. She was one of the Armada class ships-of-the-line. They were numerically the largest class of battleships to be built, and known with little affection as the “forty thieves”.

Improvement of Hilsea Lines at cost of £90,000 commenced (see 1747).

In September there were 3,582 dockyard men of which 1,330 were shipwrights.

By this date 18,000 French Prisoners of War were confined on hulks in the harbour, or at Portchester Castle. (see 1816)

1814 **School for Superior Class of Shipwright Apprentices** began the new building was designed by Edward Holl.

18th August. Another product from the Dockyard apprentices was launched in the shape of an 18 gun brig **Icarus**. She was one of the **Cherokee** class brigs and between 1807 and 1830 115 of these vessels were built. In 1838 **Icarus** became a Coast Guard vessel at Beaulieu, where she was broken up in 1863.

Prince Regent, the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia inspected the Dockyard and reviewed a squadron of 15 ships of the line at Spithead. This was the last purely sailing ship review. The Prince Regent left £3,000 to be distributed to the sailors and dockyard men.

1815 9th June. The first visit of a steamship to Portsmouth. She was a vessel of 75 tons with a 14 horse power engine that enabled her to reach a speed of 8 knots.

18th June. The Battle of Waterloo ended war with France.

Dockyard employed 217 officers and 3,916 men.

Press gangs used for the last time although the law still remained in force (see 1830).

Dockyard Pension society for widows and orphans founded by dockyard men.

PEACE AT LAST

1816 Three hundred artificers were discharge from the Dockyard in March, and 30 ships were ordered to be broken up. In August the distress in the Town was so great that it was said 4,500 persons was in receipt of relief. Soup kitchens made their first appearance in Portsmouth.

13th April. The 74 gun ship **Pitt** was launched from the Yard. Being one of the “Forty Thieves” (**Armada** class). She never went to sea; in 1853 she was converted to a coal hulk and served in Portsmouth harbour until being broken there in 1877.

13th April. On the same day as the **Pitt** was launched so was the 42 gun frigate **Pallas**. She was originally laid down as the **Guillaum** at Northam, but her frames were transferred to Portsmouth in 1811 that completed her building. In 1836 she became a coaling ship at Plymouth from where she was sold to a private buyer in 1862.

Last batch of French prisoners of war sent home (see 1813).

402 Dockyard workers were laid off. (see 1821, 1822)

School of Naval Architecture for the Superior Class of Shipwright Apprentices, was opened it was designed by Edmund Hall. Professor Inman was the President from 1816 to 1832 when the school closed. At various times the building has served as a residence, Port Admirals Office, Tactical School, War College, NATO and Naval HQ and C in C Western Fleet Offices.

HMS “Victory” moored in Portsmouth Harbour. (See 1765, 1903 & 1922).

1817 Dockyard men’s wages reduced to peacetime standards. Shipwrights pay reduced by 6d a day. 52 rope makers offered work as labourers but later restored. Reductions in rope makers due to the increased use of iron chain for shrouds and stays. Dockyard men formed a co-operative to supply families with meat. (see 1847).

1818 16th. October. The launch of the 84 gun ship **Waterloo** from Portsmouth Dockyard. A contemporary writer records: *Dear to the patriotic feelings of every Englishman-it must have been on the launching of the **Waterloo**. This assertion is bourn out by the vast crowds of attendance on the present occasion, greater, by far, than on any former launch within the recollection of the oldest; the noble crowd cannot be estimated at less than 20,000 persons. The harbour was covered with noblemen’s and gentlemen’s yachts, and pleasure boats of all descriptions. A great number of ladies and gentlemen were launched in her. Lord Howard of Effingham, having christened the ship, She moved into her proper element with that admirable stupendous magnificence and majestic ease, which render the completion of this highest achievement of human skill and science, at once the untmost gratification and pleasure of the spectator.* She was originally laid down as the **Talavera** but the name was changed to **Waterloo** before launching. In 1824 she was renamed **Bellerophon** and became a harbour training ship at Portsmouth in 1848, and then a receiving ship

in 1859. She was sold to a Mr. J. Read a private buyer for breaking up in 1892

1819 4th January. The Grand Duke Maximilian of Austria, and his suite, visited the Rope-house when one of the suite a Count Hardigg placed his hand on the fibres being twisted while looking in another direction. His hand was drawn in. An instant shout to stop the machine was promptly obeyed. His fingers were crushed, the back of his hand was torn up and his shoulder was strained. The Duke gave £60 to be distributed to the workmen of the Dockyard, and put £17 into the charity boxes, for the widows of men who had lost their lives by accident while employed in the dockyard.

11th May. The Cherokee class brig **Cygnnet** was launched from the Yard; she became a packet in 1824 and later sold out of service in 1835.

10th June. Saw the launching of the 10 gun brig **Delight** launched. She was another of the numerous Cherokee brigs. Sadly she was caught in a storm off the Isle de France on 23rd April 1824 and was lost. All the crew save two were lost including 123 slaves who had been saved from another wreck.

1820 At about this date the lighthouse was built at Southsea Castle.

30th May. The **Prince Regent** a 3 gun yacht designed by the School of Naval Architecture at Portsmouth was launched; she was presented to the Imaun of Muscat in 1836.

13th June. Launching of the 46 gun frigate **Minerva** from the Yard. She was said to have been the first rounded stern frigate built in England. She was never completed for sea, becoming a sheer hulk in 1861 and finally broken up in 1895. (Sheer hulks were hulks with sheer legs fitted to lift the masts into other ships.)

26th July. The 10 gun brig **Jasper** was launched. She was wrecked on 13th October 1828, on the Isle of Santa Maura in the Mediterranean, her crew were saved.

24th August. Another 10 gun brig of the Cherokee class named **Britomart** was launched; she was broken up in 1842.

7th December. The 6th Rate 28 gun Sloop **Ranger** was launched from the Dockyard: she had been designed by the Surveyors of the Navy. She was sold at Plymouth in 1832.

1821 550 Dockyard men laid off (see 1816 and 1822). Employees remaining were 3,500.

18th May. The 20 gun sloop **Martin** was launched, she foundered off the Cape of Good Hope in 1827 with the loss of all hands.

1st June. The 16 gun brig **Rose** was launched from the Yard; she was designed by the School of Naval Architecture at Portsmouth. She was broken up at Chatham in 1851.

30th June. The 10 gun brig **Plover** was launched. She became a Falmouth packet, converted to a lazaaretto in 1836 and sold in 1854.

12th October. The Cherokee class 10 gun brig **Ferret** was launched, she was sold in 1837.

1822 Dockyard re-organised and labour force reduced to 2,200 (see 1722, 1775, 1790 and 1837) 900 Dockyard men laid off.

The ancient offices of the clerk of the Survey, Clerk of the Ropeyard (see 1545) Master Mast Maker, Master Boatbuilder, Master Carpenter Master Caulker and Master Joiner abolished. The works force was reduced to less than 2,200. Most of the Foremen of trades disappeared at this time also, leaving just the Master Shipwright, his assist's and a limited number of shipwright foremen who then took the title of Foremen Of the Yard which they jealously guarded until 1993 when they came in line with other civil service ranks.

22nd June. The Chief Clerk was given the title of Secretary to the Commission and from June 1832 the title changed to Secretary to the Admiral Superintendent.

Semaphore Tower erected on Square Tower to communicate with the Admiralty in London via a series of stations. The Semaphore was dismantled in 1848 and moved to Southsea Common. (see 1778 – 1795).

First steam vessels for use in Portsmouth Harbour, “Cornet” which was used as a tug and survey vessel and “Mercury” tug.

1823 This was a good year for the Dockyard and saw 5 ships launched, the first being: 20th March. The 10 gun cutter **Arrow**. She was broken up at Portsmouth in 1852.

14th April. The 26 gun ship **Tweed**. She was razeed at Portsmouth into a 20 gun corvette 1831 and later broken up at Devonport in 1852.
Razeed: is the term used when upperworks or a complete deck is removed from a ship. It origin if French.

23rd April. The Cherokee class, 10 gun brig **Philomel** was launched; she was designed by Sir H. Peake. She was sold in December 1833.

13th May. The Cherokee class 10 gun brig **Royalist** was launched she was also designed by Peake. She was broken up in 1838.

21st October. The 74 gun ship **Carnatic** was launched from the Dockyard. Her frames were of teak and came from Bombay. She was never completed for sea, being laid up and used as a stores ship and later a coal hulk. Loaned to the army 1866 and used as a powder store. The navy used her for the same purpose on her return in 1891. She was sold and broken up in Germany in 1914.

1824 Royal Marine Artillery comes to Portsmouth from Chatham.

21st May. The 18 gun sloop **Orestes** was launched from the Dockyard. She was

designed by the School of Architecture at Portsmouth and was said to be one of the best sailer of her day. Became a coal hulk at Portsmouth in 1852 where she was later given the number of C28. Being scraped in 1905 after nearly 71 years service. The other 18 gun sloop launched on this day was the **Champion** designed by Admiral Hayes. After service in the east and in particular Burma she returned to Portsmouth and became a water police boat in 1860; she was later moored on the East mud in the Solent and used as a target; being later scrapped at Portsmouth in 1867.

1825 5th April. The first steam packet ran between Portsmouth and Ryde. At the time she was said to be an object of beauty, but she heralded a era of great prosperity for the Isle of Wight.

19th February. Two Cherokee brig/sloops were launched from the Yard, the first was **Leveret**, and she was sold out of service in 1843. The other was **Mosquito**; she was also sold out of service in 1843. Also on this day the 5th rate, 28 gun ship **Volage** was launched from the dockyard; she saw much service in the eastern wars before becoming a survey ship in 1847; she was converted to a powder hulk for the army in 1864 and was finally broken up at Chatham in 1877.

14th September. The launch of “**Princess Charlotte**” **110 guns**. 10 minutes before the launch an accident occurred that claimed 16 lives when a spring tide burst open the gates to Dock No. 3. The bridge of which was crowded with people attending the launch (see 1803). She became an accommodation ship at Hong Kong in 1858; she was sold there to a private buyer in 1875.

14th September. The Cherokee class brig/sloop **Myrtle** was launched. She was wrecked on the coast of Nova Scotia on 3rd April 1829 fortunately all the crew were saved.

The Admiralty lay down the functions of the C-in-C in regard to the Dockyard:

*No C-in-C. or other Naval Officer is to assume authority or control
Over a Resident Commissioner at a Yard nor interfere in
management,*

*The Commissioner's functions being distinct from those of the
Military*

Branch of the Service.

1826 14th November. The 28 gun ship **Challenger** was launched from the Dockyard; she was wrecked of the coast of Chile on 19th May 1835 with the loss of two of her crew.

1st December. Two 18 gun sloops were launched from the Yard, the **Wolf** became a store hulk in 1848 and in 1859 as a coal hulk at Plymouth where she was broken un in 1878. The other being the **Columbine**; she was reduced to a coal hulk in 1854 and finally sold to a private buyer in 1878.

Rank of stoker introduced in Royal Navy.

1827 31st January. The 26gun ship **Sapphire** was launched from the Dockyard. She was designed by the School of Naval Architecture in the Dockyard. She was

converted to a troopship in 1839, and finished her career as a hulk at Trincomalee, from where she was sold in 1865.

13 February. The frigate ***Diamond*** having returned from South America under the command of Lord Napier, had been placed in ordinary (reserve) as fit for immediate service. Shortly before daylight a fire was discovered to have broken out in the ship. ***Victory*** the guard ship fired several guns in quick succession to summons assistance. The guard ship's boats under the command of Captain Inglis were very active in trying to remove other vessels in harms way. The Dockyard assisted by manning some powerful floats and several hundred men were soon at work pouring water onto the blazing ship. The strong winds baffled any attempt to save the ship and it burnt to the waterline and sank. Fortunately no lives were lost. It was thought that a hot ash from the galley fire was the cause of the blaze.

24th March. Saw the launch of the 6 gun ***Sylvia*** from the Dockyard. She was fitted out as a survey ship and eventually sold to a private buyer in 1859.

Steam vessels in Royal Navy allowed to use the pre-fix HMS.
Duke of Clarence (later William IV) reviewed the British and Russian fleets at Spithead.

The 5th Rate 46 gun ship ***Penelope*** that had been laid down in the Dockyard was taken to pieces and re-laid at Chatham Dockyard in November. She was completed as a paddle frigate in 1843.

1828 Victualling facilities from both sides of the harbour brought onto one site in Gosport. **Weevil Yard** (renamed in 1831 to the **Royal Clarence Victualling Yard**) extensively rebuilt from this date to 1832. The name Clarence commemorated the Duke of Clarence, Lord High Admiral. A new granary, flour mill and bakery was added to the existing cooperage (see 1766) and brewery (see 1761).

Climbing boys employed to clean chimneys in the dockyard prohibited.

1829 20th April. The launch of the ***President*** of 50 guns. She was based on the successful design of the American frigate ***USS President***. She became a RNR drill ship on the Thames in 1862; she was sold to a private in July 1903.

21April. The 18 gun sloop ***Favourite*** was launched from the Yard. She became a coal hulk at Devonport in 1860 and given the number C.3. later C.77. she was sold out of service in 1905.

17th August. **The first steam Warship to be Built at Portsmouth.** The 46 gun ship ***Fox*** was said to have been based on the French ***Leda*** class frigate. She was completed with machinery built by Ravenhill & Salkeed as a screw frigate but was disarmed before commissioning. She served as a stores ship from 1862 until being broken up in 1882 at Devonport. Also launched on this day was the 10 gun brig ***Rapid***. She was wrecked on 12th April 1838, near Cap Bon; the crew were saved but it was said the captain was drowned. Another ship launched on this date was the 10 gun brig ***Recruit***. Both she and the ***Rapid*** were designed by Sir. H. Peake. She became a steam packet and foundered with all hands in

1832 while on passage from Halifax to England. There were a number of variations to this class brig or brig/sloops which were sometimes referred to as “Coffin Brigs” and represent one of the largest classes of sailing warships ever built with over a hundred vessels.

1830 30th March. The ancient title of **Clerk of the Cheque** was abolished and its duties taken over by Store Keeper. However it was restored as a separate department on 1st April 1865 under the title of **Casher’s Department** it later became the **Finance Department**.

18th May. The *Seaflower* a cutter of 4 guns was launched from the Dockyard. She was broken up in 1866.

HMS “Excellent” Gunnery School established on ships harbour. (The establishment did not move to the shore base at Whale Island until 1891 (see 1891). Reductions in all dockyards to 7,000 total. “Chips” money stopped saving £8,000 a year (see 1638 & 1803).

Impressments ceased (see 1815). Pay and conditions improved in Royal Navy.

1831 12th January. The Leda class frigate *Thalia* was launched from the Dockyard. She was hulked in 1855 and became a Roman Catholic church ship at Portsmouth; she was broken up in 1867.

31st January. The 26 gun ship *Acteon* that was designed by the School of Naval Architecture at Portsmouth was launched. She was completed as an 18gun survey ship. She was hulked in 1866 to become a hospital ship and in 1874 was used for torpedo experiments being attached to HMS Vernon.

26th February. The Admiralty Yacht *Fanny* was launched from the Dockyard. She was used as the C-in-C’s yacht. She was transferred to the Coast Guard in May 1862.

28rd February. The 10 gun brig *Charybdis* was launched from the Yard; she was designed by Sir H. Peake. She was sold to a private buyer in Rotherhithe 1843.

March. The 18 gun Sloop *Argus* that was being built at Portsmouth was dismantled on the slipway and broken up as was the 46 gun frigate *Euphrates* that had been laid down in 1831.

1832 Victualling Board and Navy Board abolished as separate departments of the Admiralty.

Post of **Commissioner of the Dockyard** abolished and replaced by a Rear Admiral known as **Admiral Superintendent**.

Admiralty House. It is about this time that the Port Admiral moved into the Dockyard and displaces the Admiral Superintendent (the old Dockyard Commissioner) He take over the Commissioners Residence and renames it **Admiralty House**. Admiralty House was formally situated in the centre of the High Street, opposite the George Hotel. It was originally the residence of one, Philip Varlo for whom it was built; he was the Mayor of Portsmouth 1764, 1768,

1770, 1774 and 1776. Some time between 1793-99 it was purchased by the Admiralty for £2000. as a residence for the Port Admiral. The War Office purchased the house from the Admiralty in 1833 for the use of Lieut-Governor. The last Lieut-Governor to use it was Prince Edward of Saxe Wiemar, from 1878 - 1884. It was later used as the Headquarters of the Southern Defences. During the late 1920's it was used by the Portsmouth Electricity Company. Sadly this building was demolished in the 1970's.

27th September. The 120 gun ship **Neptune**. At that time she was one of the largest sailing warships in the World and the largest built at Portsmouth to date. She was converted into a screw battleship of 72 guns and broken up in 1875.

No 6 dock provided with a temporary cover. 3 docks (No 3 to No 6) had permanent roofs.

1833 218 dockyard men discharged. (See 1822).

18th July. The 16 gun sloop **Racer** was launched from the Yard. She was sold to a private buyer in 1852.

18th July. The three gun brigantine, **Lynx** was launched; she was broken up at Devonport in 1845.

New Dockyard Police established. The **Warden** becomes **Director of Police** with a Staff of 3 Inspectors, 3 Sergeants and 36 constables. Inspectors paid £100 a year, sergeants 22s-6d a week and constables 19s-2d a week

1834 William IV (see 1779, 1801) visited Portsmouth.

27th February. A new form of civil guard was introduced into the Dockyard as a **Police Force** under the control of a lieutenant of the navy and was styled **Director of Police** with an establishment of 91 officers. The Military Guard Remained and consisted of 1 Captain, 2 Subalterns, 3 Sergeants, 5 Corporals, 2 Drummers and 63 Privates 21 sentinels was constantly on duty.

24th March. The brigantine **Buzzard** of 3 guns was launched from the Yard. She was broken up at Plymouth 1843. On the same day two lighter named **Duck** and **Drake** were launched from the Yard.

The Dock-Yard

Persons visiting this place should be at the entrance gate by 10 o'clock in the morning. At the Office there, the Warden's consent to see the Yard must be requested; which is never refused, unless the visitor be a foreigner. This consent obtained, a guide will be sent with the party, who will point out, nearly in the order here noticed, the several objects of curiosity in this truly wonderful place. Instruction for the visitor wishing to visit the Dockyard from, A Portsmouth Guide Book. 1834.

1835 26th June. **Launch of first steam paddle ship** to be built at Portsmouth. **HMS "Hermes"** (712 tons) of 6 guns. Her 220 horse-power engines were by Mauldsley and Field. She was employed in the Packet Service. She was sold in 1866.

At this date only 58 ships of the line fit for service.

1835 22nd September. The 36 gun Frigate **HMS Pique** commanded by Captain the Hon. HJ Rous struck on rocks off the coast of Labrador. She beat heavily until the morning of 23rd when she was hove off. The ship, leaking badly, proceeded to England through strong westerly gales. She reached St Helens Roads on the 13th October. When dry docked large rocks were found to be lodged in her bottom, if they had fallen out the ship would have foundered and her crew of 350 and passengers would have perished. One of the Rocks is now on display in the Heritage area of the Dockyard. Years later Rous campaigned for Parliament and during an open meeting a heckler shouted "Who are you?" Rous replied "The man who brought the Pique home". It was enough to secure his seat.

Mast Sheer Legs were erected on the west inside wall of the Great ship Basin these were followed in 1837 by a similar set being erected on the out side wall of the Basin.

1836 14th January. Smuggling is still a lucrative business; the Customs Officers seized 71 tubs of spirits at the Sally Port and dredged up 35 tubs of spirits from the Horse Sands.

16th June – The 36 gun Frigate **HMS Iconstant** launched in the Dockyard. She became a hospital ship at Queenstown in 1853 and was sold out of service there in 1862.

21st April. The 18 gun wooden sloop **Hazard** was launched from the Dockyard. She saw service around the World and was eventually broken up by Whites of Cowes in 1866.

1836 29th June – The Paddle Steamer **Volcano** intended for the Packet Service was launched in the Dockyard. Became a floating factory at Portsmouth in 1854 and sold out of service in 1894.

1837 Over 6,000 men employed in the dockyard (see 1822 and 1865).

17th February. The 18 gun wooden sloop **Electra** was launched from the Dockyard.

1837 30th June. By Act of Parliament the punishment of the **Pillory** was abolished. In the early years of the century it was frequently inflicted by Portsmouth Magistrates, chiefly for thefts from the Dockyard and assaults on women.

1837 27th October – the Merchant Ship **Colonist** was a Spithead on the Motherbank when she caught fire. The passengers and crew were rescued but the ship made a fierce bonfire for 72 hours.

1838 26th March. **HMS Termagant** a 10 gun Brigantine was launched in the Dockyard. Her career in the Royal Navy was very short as she was sold to a private buyer in 1845.

The 110 gun First Rate Ship **Royal Sovereign** that had been laid down in 1833

was cancelled and taken to pieces on the slipway before the launch.

1839 Contest between “**Archimedes**” screw driven ship and “**Vulcan**” paddle steamer at Portsmouth, “Archimedes” won convincingly (see 1845).

Royal Engineer Lieutenant appointed Civil Architect to Navy Works in the Royal Dockyards. (See 1843).

1839 1st January – **John Pounds** a Dockyard Shipwright who fell into a dry dock (thought to be No. 2 Dry Dock) and was crippled, became a cobbler in Old Portsmouth and while earning his livelihood by mending shoes, he gratuitously educated and in part clothed and fed some hundreds of poor children of the town. Died on the first day of January at the age of 72.

1839 16th March. The **Indus** was launched from the Dockyard. This 78 gun ship-of-the-line had been 16 years on the stocks. Her frames were cut from teak and brought in from Bombay, India. She was hulked in 1860 and became harbour flagship at Plymouth until she was sold for breaking up in 1898

1839 15th May – amidst an enormous crowd **HMS Royal Frederick**, 110 gun ship of the line, was launched. She was later re-named **The Queen**.

1839 20th June – the foundation stone of the Holy Trinity Church, Portsea was laid by the Warden of Winchester College. It was taken into the Dockyard in 1906 and became a naval church. It was destroyed during the early German bombing but the ruins are still visible today in the grounds of t..... The ceremony of consecration was performed on 30th September by the Bishop of Winchester.

June. The Admiralty tried to force the Calling of the Muster Rolls in the Dockyardmens own time and the reduction by fifteen minutes the time allowed the blacksmiths to extinguish fires and wash, the men struck work and management withdrew the obnoxious order.

1839 27th August – the wooden steam paddle sloop **HMS Stromboli** was launched. She served in the Crimean War and off the Syrian coast; she was sold to a private buyer in 1866.

1839 In September, Colonel Pasley began the operation of blowing the wreck of the **Royal George**. (See 1782)

1840 4th May. **The Floating Bridge**. The horse ferry boat began running between Portsmouth and Gosport. Previous to this time horse and carriages had to go around through Fareham to reach Gosport.

11th May. People gathered on the beach to watch the effects the explosion power of 2.400 lbs of gunpowder in the attempt to remove part of the wreck of the **Royal George** that had so tragically sank at Spithead 29th August 1782.

18th April. The 12 gun brig **Bittern** was launched from the Dockyard. She had an exciting career and saw active service in the Burmese and Chinese wars. She was sold to a private buyer in Honk Kong 1860.

3rd. June. The 10 gun brig **Rapid** was launched from the Yard. She was sold at Singapore in 1856.

24th December. The wooden steam sloop **Driver** was launched from the Dockyard. She saw service in many of the colonial wars including the Crimea War. Sadly she was wrecked on Mariguana Island, Bahamas in August 1861 while under the command of Cdr. Horatio Nelson (no relation to Lord Nelson) thankfully all the crew survived.

1841 13th February. Rain, sleet and snow followed by severe frost enabled many people to skate in large areas of the Town even in front of the Admiral's House in the Dockyard.

30th September. **Holy Trinity church**, Portsea, was consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester.(See 1906)

1842 Naval Review by Queen Victoria at Portsmouth. Prince Albert visited the Dockyard inspecting the Block Mills, Copper Foundry and Blacksmiths Shop.

This year saw considerable shipbuilding in the Dockyard with four ships being launched:

13th January. The steamer **Thunderbolt**.

28th March. The 16 gun sloop **Albatross**

23rd August. The 16 gun sloop **Frolic**.

5th September. The steamer **Firebrand**, she was laid down as the **Beelzebub**.

1843 16th May. **HMS Eurydice** was launched from the Dockyard by Miss Elliot. Eurydice was an experimental ship built by Rear-Admiral Elliot with the view of trying how far all the Weatherly and other sailing qualities of Sir. W. Symond's ships could be attained under a reduction of at least one-tenth of her draught. 35 years later it was to she was to end in disaster. (See 1878)

27th July. The 8 gun Brig **Skylark** was launched from the Dockyard; she later became a training ship and was sold to a private buyer in 1875.

Railway system to serve the dockyard started construction. Prior to this a horse tramway system had existed since the late 18th century for moving masts from the Mast Pond to near No. 7 dock. (see 1846).

Royal Engineer officer Civil Architect's title changed to Officer of the Royal Engineers in Charge of Works (see 1839).

No 6 Boathouse built as a Mast House with elegant cast iron beams and columns. Bombed in 1941 (see 1939-1945).

Seventeen acres added to the Dockyard to provide facilities for the new steam Navy.

29th May the first stone was laid to the new **No. 2 Basin** (the Steam Basin) New construction work involved four new docks (including 7 & 8 Docks) and several large buildings (see 1848). No. 9 Dock was sited at the north western corner of the yard. It was later filled in as it proved to be shallow for the tides.

Royal Dockyard School founded north of Marlborough Gate (see 1814 &

1970).

1844 **The Salt Water Tank (Fire Station)** completed. It was first propose in April 1842 by Lt Beatson RE and the Master Shipwright Blake. It replaced Bentham's wooden water tank. Permission to erect the water tank was given in May 1842 and the contract for the iron work was awarded to Bramah & Fox of the London Iron Works. The ground work was awarded to Mr Bramble of Portsmouth; a local contractor who did a lot of work at this time in the steam extension of the Dockyard.

Admiralty annexed the area known as "the New Buildings", Portsea and demolished 230 houses. The area was brought into the dockyard as part of the area of the new Steam Basin. This area was thought by the historian Alexander Howell to be the birth place of Portsea, where the first dwellings were erected. The Historian Slight differs some what in that he says it was St Georges Square. However in a Portsea Improvement Act of 1792 the area in question is referred to as the "Old Buildings" which would seem to confirm Howell's opinion.

Queen Victoria inspected British & French ships at Spithead.

30th May. The King of Saxony visited the town and toured the Dockyard as well as inspecting some of the ships. When he came to HMS Victory the crew manned the yards and a Royal Salute was fired.

1844 18th September. 2½ ton Nasmyth hammer and boiler to be delivered to the Smithery.

1844 6th October – saw the arrival of Louis Philippe, King of the French.

1844 2nd April. Saw the double launching of *Osprey* and *Daring* two experimental 12 gun brigs from the Dockyard.

8th October. The French King, Louis Phillipe, who was escorted by a French squadron, visited the Dockyard and Town. The Royal Yacht *Gomer* brought the French King into the harbour. After visiting the Queen at Windsor the King accompanied by her Majesty and Prince Albert, returned by rail to Gosport. It was intended that they should dine aboard the *Gome*. Bu before embarking a violent gale of wind and rain forced them to seek shelter in the offices of the Superintendent and Storekeeper. After remaining here for some time the French King being subjected to bouts of sea sickness, determined that he should cross the Channel from Dover and shortly after left by train for that purpose. The Royal Party in the mean time had become very hungry. There upon Mr. Grant the Storekeeper, who had made provision for some friends to dine with him, offered the hospitality of his house, which was gratefully accepted, the distinguished guests sitting down in three relays and eating with the keenest relish the good food provided for others.

21st October – the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, the Queen made a complete inspection of HMS *Victory*. On descending the orlope deck she was nearly knocked down by a powder-monkey who was running with a fresh supply of cartridges for the Royal Salute.

8th November the *Scourge* a 6 gun wooden paddle steamer was launched

19th December. Lt. R.S. Beatson RE. Prepares drawing for cast iron circular window for the Chain Cable Store. By the 27th December Beatson had prepared details for the doors to the **Chain Cable Store** which “their lordships approve of and also the wrought iron ties which are being procured from W .Smith of Portsea at 23/- per cwt.

This year Cook and Wheatstone under took a contract for 21 years at £1.500 a year to provide an electric telegraph between the Admiralty in London and Portsmouth Dockyard. The South-Western took half the shares in the scheme, which was completed in 1845 and at that time formed the longest and most important line in England.

1845 29th September. Messrs. Grissall’s tender for the roof of the **Chain Cable Store** is accepted.

This year the Admiralty decided to prove the respective merits between the paddle wheel and the screw propeller. The two ships selected for the contest were the paddle wheel vessel *Alecto* and the propeller driven *Rattler*, both vessels being almost exactly equal in power and tonnage. The contest was stage at Spithead where the two vessels were secured stern to stern and at the given signal applied their full power. After a small pause the paddle wheel *Alecto* was towed stern first backwards by the screw driven *Rattler* at a speed of two and a half knots. (The screw of “*Rattler*” is displayed in the arcade of Storehouse No. 11).

. 21st. June. Queen Victoria reviewed the Experimental Squadron at Spithead. At this period there were 113 steam vessels in the Royal Navy.

19th May. **Sir John Franklin** sailed to find the North West Passage in the “*Erebus*” and “*Terror*”. They were last sighted on the 26 July at the head of Baffin Bay after which the two ships were never seen again. 39 expeditions were dispatched in search of the missing ships but to no avail. It was not until 1859 that a cairn was discovered by Captain McClintock in the steam yacht *Fox* containing the log of the expedition up to 25th April 1848. It showed that the two ships became stuck fast in the ice near King Williams Island and after eighteen months they were abandoned and the crews tried to march to safety and disappeared into the whiteness wilderness. At the very end of Point, Old Portsmouth stood a hotel called the Star and Garter that saw in its day the likes of Howe, St. Vincent and Nelson lodging there. It is said the Sir John Franklin lodged there with his wife prior to his departure on the ill fated voyage and that on the anniversary of his sailing his wife would visit the Star and Garter and stay in the same room. Tragedy the Hotel fell victim to the German bombing in the Second World War.

100 Shipwrights and 426 artisans & labourers taken for 6 months.

Contract entered into between the Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty and Messer’s. Baker and Son, of Lambeth for the erection of two cast-iron roofs over the two first class ship-building slips of Portsmouth Dockyard. This became known as **No.3 Ship Building Shop**.

1846 May Andrew Murray was appointed the first Chief Engineer and Inspector of

Machinery.

First electric telegraph cable laid between Portsmouth and Gosport. Mr. Hay, a chemist in the High Street, of Old Portsmouth, devoted much attention to electricity and lectured on the subject in and around Portsmouth; he was appointed Electrical Referee and lecturer in the Dockyard it was while holding this office he took part in the laying of the cable..

10th August. The **Rifleman. The first screw driven vessel** to be built in the dockyard was launched. She was a wooden steam gunboat of 483 tons.

Physical link of Dockyard railway to town Stations (see 1843, 1876).

1847 5th January. The *Dauntless* a wooden steam frigate of 26 guns was launched from the Dockyard.

Working Men's Co-operative Society founded by dockyard men's, this was the start of the Portsea Island Co-operative Society. (see 1817).

1st June. Opening of "Royal Albert Pier" at the Hard. It was 1249 in length; the Harbour station now occupies the site.

1st April. Commencement of the financial year, the men employed in the Factory to be transferred from the books of the Storekeeper & that the Pay Clerk & Bookkeeper of the Factory should enter upon the full discharge of his duties..... you will inform Mr. Murray that they will expect the Accounts of the Portsmouth Factory to be kept in such a manner, as to enable him, at any hour, to furnish an account, both of the amount of work done, and of the names of the Vessels, over which is has been distributed.

1847 22nd April. "With reference to a letter from Captain James RE. Relative to the floor of the **Chain Cable Store**; I am (to ask) if the iron ballast, recommended by Capt. James for laying the centre part of the floor, be likely to be wanted for any other purpose, if not it may be used as proposed. Mr Rolt to perform the work.

12th July Captain James RE. Has forwarded "a general plan of the new grounds at the north end of the Dockyard, representing the Docks, slips, and Factory now building... enclosed also a detached plan of the Smithery,," Their Lordships approve of the plan & ask for detailed plan and estimates. "Steps are immediately to be taken... for the foundation of the Chimney for the new Smithery – the sum required to carry out these works during the currant year will probably not exceed £3000-£4000.

11th. September. A plan to enclose the space under the **Salt Water Tank** in Portsmouth Yard has been accepted, Messrs. Baker & Son Who tender to perform the work for the sum of £697. This enclosure was of corrugated iron plate, some of this is still visible on the eastern side of the building.

6th October. The new iron caissons made by Fairbairs are ready Capt. James RE was to report when he would be ready to receive them. The entrance to the Steam

Basin was sealed off in 1874 and a new entrance created 500 feet to the east. Road repairs in January 1984 to the old entrance revealed the original iron caisson still in place. A wall had been built on each side of the caisson and the space filled with shingle. After the road repair the caisson was again covered and is still in place to-day (2007).

April – the artisans and other workmen of the Dockyard were formed into 12 companies of infantry and 10 companies of artillery, each company consisting of 85 men, making a total of 1870 men. The Infantry Corps was under the command of the Master Shipwright and the Artillery Corps under the command of the Master Attendant.

During this year the area known as the New Buildings was acquired by the Admiralty for the extension of the new Steam Basin.

1847 31st December – the last message by **semaphore** was sent from Portsmouth to London. The semaphore system was established in 1795.

EXPANSION

1848 25th May. HM Queen Victoria accompanied by Prince Albert and the Duke of Wellington opened the **New Steam basin** (No. 2 Basin) 15,000 people witnessed the event (see 1843).

8th March. *Leander* was the last sailing ship to be built in the Dockyard was launched; she was said to have been designed by Richard Blake who was at that time the Master Shipwright at the Dockyard.

5th April. Saw a double launching at the Dockyard when the screw steam frigate *Arrogant* and the screw steam sloop *Plumper* were launched in the presence of a great concourse of people.

Central School of Mathematics and Naval Construction founded in the dockyard. Semaphore on Square Tower dismantled (see 1822).

Royal Dockyard Corps volunteer militia formed. Operated until 1857. (see 1718).

1st October. The railway from London to Portsmouth was opened.

1849 **Ship Shop No.2** built for the construction of steam engines. **No. 7 Dock** opened. Dockyard railway consisted of 1¾ miles of track (see 1952).

Cholera strikes the town during the summer months. The town records state that there were 800 internments at Kingston Churchyard and St. Thomas's Churchyard; they were buried in batches usually before eight o'clock in the morning. 26th September was set aside as a day of humiliation and prayer. The Dockyard and other Government establishments in the area were closed. By 15th November the plague had disappeared and general thanksgiving services were held throughout the towns of Portsmouth and Portsea. The crisis in over filled burial ground forced the town council to appoint a special Committee to consider the provision of another burying ground.

Shipwright staff reduced to 3,500 with reductions in other categories of worker.

Royal Sailors Home opened in Queen Street.

15th December. The wooden steam paddle sloop **Argos** was launched from the Dockyard.

The wooden steam gunboat **Cossack** that was laid down in 1846 was cancelled and taken to pieces on the slipway.

The steam sloop **Resolution** that was laid down in 1846 was taken to pieces and transferred to sheerness Dockyard but she was cancelled the following year and scrapped..

1850 5th April. A serious riot on board the **convict-ships Sterling Castle and York**, moored alongside in the dockyard. It was not suppressed until two days latter when the ringleaders were severely flogged.

25th April. It was reported that **Frederick's Battery** was completed. This was later dismantled in the late 1860's and rebuilt with the Round Tower on the north eastern corner of the Dockyard.

18th June. Lieut. Governor, Lord Frederick Fitzclarence before giving up command of the Garrison he would like to presented two statues as a token of regard and good feeling to the town and its inhabitants; the statues were of the England's national heroes, one of Lord Nelson and the other of the Duke of Wellington and to be mounted on Southsea Common near where Lord Nelson embarked to win and die at Battle of Trafalgar and the other of the Duke of Wellington who sailed from Portsmouth to conduct the War in the Spanish Peninsula. The statues were unveiled on the 18th June amidst a concourse of 50.000 spectators; other events on the Common at that time were the presentation of colours to the 28th Regiment and the passage of the Queen along the sea front in the Royal Yacht *Fairy*. The fate of the statues is a mystery; they were carved of soft limestone and soon showed signs of decay. We are told the finishing touches were applied by some mischievous person who painted the faces with tar. One morning the inhabitants of the town awoke to find that the statues had disappeared. It was said, that by order of a well known naval officer a party of bluejackets landed from a ship under the cover of darkness and dragged the statues from their pedestals and dropped them in the sea.

23rd August. No. 9 Dry Dock was opened at the North corner of the Dockyard for the purpose of dry docking the Neptune of 120 guns. But the tide did not rise enough and many of the spectators disappointingly departed, however she was docked the following day. This dry dock was a disappointment as it was found to be too shallow. It was eventually filled in and on occasions of trench work in this area to-day the top stones of the dock are often discovered to the amazement of the diggers. It is also the reason that the numbering of dry docks appears confusing as another dry dock built in the 1970's was numbered 9 Dock.

26th August. The launching of the wooden steam paddle frigate *Furious* from the Dockyard.

1852 **Great Steam Smithery** opened in the Dockyard. On the 17 April the Hampshire Telegraph reported that Mr. Nasmyth the inventor of the steam Hammer installed two in the Steam Smithery and gave a demonstration.(see 1741 & 1779).

2nd January. The Troopship Birkenhead sailed from Portsmouth. She was wrecked off Danger Point, South Africa on 26th February with the lost of 436 lives. The behaviour of the crew and Troops who formed up on the deck of the sinking ship so that the women and children could escape in the life boats has gone down in history as one of the noblest pictures in British history. Many of the crew came from Portsmouth where the tragedy was deeply felt and over £3000 was raised in Portsmouth and a father £3500 in London for the bereaved.

1853 11th August. **Grand Naval Review** at Spithead. It was the first Royal inspection of a fleet of Steam Warships. After the Review there was a mimic battle between

the new steam fleet and older sailing vessels, which of course the Steam Fleet easily won. The review attracted vast crowds from all over the country and it was said many wandered the streets looking for a bed for the night.

- 1854 10th March. (**The Crimean War.**) **21 Sail of the Line were review by HM Queen Victoria.** At one o'clock the Queen was observed coming from Osborne House in the "Fairy" and the whole fleet fired a Royal Salute. The Queen meet the Captains on board the Royal Yacht. Later the signal was given and the whole fleet weighed anchor for the Baltic, The Queen in the "Fairy" accompanied the fleet to the Nab Light from where she bid them God-speed.

Staff Surgeon appointed to the Dockyard (see 1688, 1875, 1918).

Iron Foundry and Pattern Shop opened.

- 1855 12th June. The **South Inlet Dock**, (No 8 Dry Dock) opening into the Steam Basin was completed in early February. The first ship to use it was Queen Victoria's new Yacht, Victoria and Albert. On the 12th June.

31st July. HM. Queen Victoria accompanied by the Prince Consort and the eldest of her children Launch of **HMS "Marlborough"** a wooden steam screw of 1st rate (121 guns). She stuck 25 feet from the end of the slipway and could not be moved until the following day. She was the largest wooden ship in the world at that time and it was said that 76 acres of oak forest was needed to build her. She became Vernon II in 1904. She capsized and sank off Brighton on tow to the breaker's yard in 1924.

Board of Ordnance, established in the Tudor period, was merged with the War Office.

- 1856 1st April. The ancient position of **Clerk of the Cheque** was abolished from 30th March 1830 and its responsibilities merged with that of the Storekeeper. However it re-emerged as a separate department in this year with the title of **The Accountant** and continued until 2nd August 1887 when the title change to **Officer in charge of Expense Accounts.**

23rd April. **Grand Peace Review of the Fleet** by Queen Victoria at Spithead, after its return from the Baltic. There totalled 254 ships of all classes manned by over 50,000 men and carrying 1,132 guns. It composed of 22 line-of-battle ships, 16 screw frigates and sloops, 26 paddle frigates and sloops, 8 Royal Yachts and tenders, 7 screw mortar vessels and floating batteries, 6 troopships, 7 sailing vessels and 188 gunboats. The whole fleet was extended in two squadrons forming two parallel lines. The Queen steamed through the two lines, anchoring at the far end of the review lines. On a given signal the two squadrons steamed past the Queen and as each ship turned past the Royal Yacht, their sides were manned and the crews gave three cheers. It was said at the time "the town, which was thronged with visitors, gave its self up to the patriotic enjoyment of the occasion.

3rd. May. The Proclamation of Peace was read by the Town Clerk, first at the Platform Battery, next from the steps of Market House and finally from the Dockyard Gate.

12th. May. The Queen was at Portsmouth when a troopship arrived from the

Crimea with a large number of wound men and invalids on board. The Queen expressed a wish to see them. The men were drawn up in two lines stretching from the Dockyard Gate to and beyond the Admiral Superintendents office.(at the head of where HMS Victory is to-day) After passing through the two lines , stopping to express her sympathy here and there, the Queen took her place on an improvised grand stand and the troops marched past in review. First came the Hussars in threes, then those invalids that could walk marched past the Queen in their motley uniforms. Following these came several omnibuses with invalids who could not walk. Bringing up the rear came a number of poor fellows in cots, whose feel attempts to acknowledge the graciousness of their Queen was full of Pathos.

29th May. Peace with Russia was celebrated in Portsmouth by a General Holiday. A Review of the Garrison on Southsea Common and a grand firing of a *Feu-de-joie* followed by a Royal Salute was the highlight of the event. Over 50,000 spectators attended the spectacle.

1857 220 artificers discharged from the Steam Factory and all labourers employed in the late war dismissed. Rates of pay for painters and carpenters 23 shillings a week, shipwrights 27 shillings; rope and sail makers 21 shillings and labourers 13 shillings a week.

25th April. Launch of "**Royal Sovereign**" the first turret ironclad in the Royal Navy. She was laid down as 121 gun ship of the line but while completing the decision was made to rebuild her as a Turret ship which completely altered her appearance. The conversion took two years and was the first of much large conversion carried out in the Dockyard. The **Royal Sovereign** was the only wooden Turret ship to be built for the Royal Navy.

4th August. (**Troopers Jetty**.) Queen Victoria inspected in the Dockyard a large number of troops about to embark for India. At this time the jetty now known as South Railway Jetty was where the Indian Troopships berthed to take on troops bound for India and the jetty was known as Troopers Jetty.

Dock No. 10 opened.

1858. 2nd. August. Queen Victoria visits Portsmouth and presented twelve officers and men with the Victoria Cross on Southsea Common. The Parade consisted of 4.000 troops with over 20.000 spectators.

1858 - Hilsea Lines reconstructed from this date to the present form (see 1747).
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1859 30th July. The 51 gun wooden steam frigate **Bacchante** was launched from the Dockyard. She did not have a very long life as she was broken up in 1869 at Portsmouth.

17th November. The 121 Gun 1st Rate ship **Victoria** was launched by Princess Frederick William of Prussia, HM the Queen and other members of her family were also present. It was said to have been a day of great pomp and splendour.

On the same day as the launch of the **Victoria** a mutiny broke out on the **Princess Royal** lying at the jetty, and just about to pay off. Leave was granted

to one watch, but the others demanded leave also. All hands were at once piped on deck, but 140 remained below in a very disorderly and defiant mood. The hatches were battened down, the marines from other ships in the harbour were summoned, and after a period of great disorder the mutineers surrendered. They were afterwards court-martialled, and 109 of them were sentenced to three months hard labour in Winchester Goal.

13th December. The 101 gun ship of the line **Duncan** was launched from the Dockyard. She was sold and broken up in London 1910.

Royal Navy Reserve created.

1860 25th January. After nearly twelve years on the stocks the 131 gun ship of the line was launched and named **Prince of Wales**. She was laid down as a sailing ship but converted while building to a steam screw-ship. The figure-head of the Prince of Wales was carved by Messrs. Hellyer of Cosham. In 1869 she was renamed Britannia and used as the Royal Naval Training ship at Dartmouth, From where the Royal Naval College got its name. She was hulked in 1909 and later broken up at Blyth in 1916.

24th March. The Dockyard saw the 17 gun wooden steam sloop **Rinaldo** that had been built in a Dry Dock, floated up.

25th March. The **Frederick William** was launched from the Dockyard. She was originally to be named **Royal Frederick** but the name was changed just before the launching on the occasion of the Princess Royal's marriage to Prince Frederick William who later became the German Emperor.

Hired staff in Dockyard 1265:-

Shipwrights	550	Caulkers	60
Joiners	90	Smiths	128
Sawyers	56	Painters	27
Mill Wrights	35	Labourers	305
Oakum boys	14		

1st October. **Metropolitan Police** take over policing duties in the dockyard. Their position was clarified by a special Act of Parliament 1860 for their employment in Her Majesty's Yards, Victualling Yards and steam Factory Yards. This act gave them power in the Yards and within 15 miles of such Yards. Outside the Yards they exercised power in respect of Crown property or persons subject to Naval, Marine or Military discipline. (See 1833).

29th December. Launch of "**HMS Warrior**" at Blackwall on Laid down 1859. (See 1987).

Commencement of demolition of the fortifications of Portsmouth and Portsea (See 1770, 1864). Future defence would be from the Hill Forts, sea forts and harbour entrance defences.

4th February. The title of **Surveyor of the Navy** abolished and was restyled **Controller of the Navy**.

1861 Whale Island that had been used as a dumping ground from spoil excavated from the Steam Basin was purchased from the Corporation for £1,000 by the Admiralty. Both Winchester College and Portsmouth Corporation both claimed the mud flat and it went to court for settlement in the end both parties agreed to share the purchase price.

(9th February. The **Chanticleer** was launched from the Yard, she was a wooden steam sloop.

28th March. The wooden steam-screw frigate **Glasgow** was launched. She was sold in 1884.

Trouble with convicts. Several murderous attacks by convicts on their warders are reported this year. The worst being an attack by 26 convicts on two warders in the Cable Store of the Dockyard.

This year great concern was felt in the town and Dockyard over the Admiralty decision to remove the Cadet Training Ship **Britannia** from Portsmouth Harbour to another port. Sir James Elphinstone, one of the Borough's Members was blamed for having suggested to the Admiralty that the establishment should bein a permanent college either at Portland or Hayling Island. The Town Council sent a reasonable protest to the Admiralty but to no avail. The loss to Portsmouth was a serious blow for establishing a continuing link with the old Academy in the Dockyard.

1862 Royal Marine Barracks, Eastney, commenced building.

1863 Four out of five Portsdown Forts well advanced in construction.

12th December. The Wooden steam gunboats **Bramble** and **Crown** both had been laid down in 1861 were cancelled and taken to pieces on the slipway.

Portsmouth own Dry Dock. This Dry Dock was built at a cost of £30,000 and was sited at the Camber, Old Portsmouth. It was first used in May of this year. It was later filled in and no lies under the Isle of Wight car ferry port.

The 92 gun 2nd Rate Ship of the Line **Kent** that was laid down in 1860 was cancelled and taken to pieces on the slipway.

The steam gunboat **Protector** that was laid down in 1861 was taken to pieces before launching and cancelled.

MAJOR EXPANSION – THE STEAM REVOLUTION

1864 It was this year the Lords of Admiralty were granted the necessary Parliamentary powers for the enclosing of **180 acres addition to Dockyard** (93 reclaimed mudflats) and the construction of 15,000 ft of wharfing, of 3 basins, one tidal basin, 3 dry docks and 2 locks, with the provision for a further two dry docks to be added later. The estimated cost was £1,500,000. Whale Island was enlarged from 11½ to 74 acres from the spoil that were excavated, which was carried over the water by a railway viaduct from the Dockyard: it was constructed with a swing bridge in its centre so that merchant ships could use Flathouse Wharf; it was still in existence in 1892. Flathouse Wharf was given to the Portsmouth Corporation in exchange for the Anchor Gate Wharf, which had been included in the Dockyard Extension.

A large portion of Portsea known as the Pest Field was taken into the Dockyard Extension. This land was well populated by **Rabbits**. In the early days of the extension dockyard men were allowed to set traps to catch rabbits; if questioned by the police on leaving the dockyard with a parcel the answer would be “its only a rabbit”. The expression grew into any job that was performed in dockyard time and with government materials for private use i.e. **A rabbit job**.

29th March. The gunboat ***Cherub*** was launched from Haslar Gunboat Yard.

9th July. By Her Majesty’s order of Council, it was directed that the classification of ships under the denomination of Red, White and Blue Squadrons, should be discontinued, and that in future the White Ensign should be used by all HM ships of war in commission; the Blue Ensign by British merchant ships commanded by officers of the Royal Naval Reserve, after obtaining permission from the Admiralty; the Red Ensign by all other ships belonging to Her Majesty’s subjects.

15th October. The ***Royal Alfred*** was floated out of dry dock from the Dockyard. She was laid down as a 91 gun ship of the line and converted to an ironclad while on the slipway. She was to be the last wooden battleship to be built at Portsmouth.

12th December. The steam sloop ***Harlequin*** that was laid down in February 1861 was cancelled and taken to pieces on the slipway.

16th December. The wooden steam frigate ***Dryad*** that was laid down 2nd January 1860 was cancelled and taken to pieces on the slipway.

1865 31st January. The paddle yacht, dispatch vessel ***Helcion*** was launched from the Dockyard. She was later renamed the ***Enchantress*** in 1888.

16th February. The wooden steam gunboat ***Ministrel*** was launched.

1st. July. The first ship dry docked in the newly opened **North inlet Dock** in the Steam Basin (No. 11 Dock) was **HMS *Minotaur***. At that time the Dock was one of the best executed works in masonry ever seen in the Royal Dockyard.

Dockyard employees, exclusive of officers 4905. Wages £284,754 a year (see 1837).

3rd. August. The tender submitted by G. Smith & Co. For taking down and re-erecting the **Unicorn Gate** was accepted.

31st January. The paddle yacht, dispatch vessel **Helcion** was launched from the Dockyard. She was later renamed the **Enchantress** in 1888.

1866 22nd July. The wooden steam gunboat **Netley** was launched.

27th December. The wooden steam gunboat **Orwell** was launched. These vessels had three mast and were square rigged, they played a major part in policing the Victorian Empire.

Spoil from Dockyard basin used to form Southsea Esplanade carried by a temporary tramway from the Dockyard to Southsea Common (see 1864).

Labourers pay – 150 ‘established’ men @ 14 shillings a week, 220 1st class labourers @ 13s-6d and 800-900 2nd class labourers @ 13 shillings a week. 220 of these men worked for the timber inspector and 30 for the Master Attendant. About 60 worked all year round from 6am to 6pm at the rate of 3 shillings a day and about 150 assisted skilled mechanics @ 2s-6d a day. It was common for labourers to have a second job as night watchmen or waiters in Music Halls.

1867 24th August. **Young Fanny** Adams from Alton was cruelly murdered and partly dismembered. At that time the process of tinning meat for the Navy was still in its infancy and the rumour spread that parts of young Fanny was tinned for consumption by the navy in the Victualling factory at Gosport. Tins of meat quickly became known as a tins of **Sweet Fanny Adams**. The empty tins, often called “fannies” found a use in the Dockyard as containers for liquids such as tea. Later when training centres for apprentices were established in the Dockyard, Coppersmith and Plumber apprentices would earn a few extra shilling by making copper **tea fannies** for dockyard men that could be filled with water and boiled on rivet fires. These came in various sizes from a one man to 10 man fanny.

17th July. The Sultan of Turkey visits the Town and Dockyard. A Naval Review in his honour was staged; it consisted of eight wooden frigates, two wooden sloops, fifteen iron and iron clad frigates and sloops, sixteen gunboats, five royal yachts, and eighteen troopships and other vessels.

The Dockyard had been busy this year with building Steam Gunboats.

Danae launched 21st May.

Ringdove Launched 4th September.

Avon launched 2nd October

Cracker Launched 27th November.

Bruizer Launched at Haslar Gunboat Yard 23rd April.

Cromer Launched at Haslar Gunboat Yard 20th August.

Anchor Gate closed. (see 1864).

Torpedo and Gunnery electric school started on HMS "**Vernon**" in Fountain Lake. Her first commander was 'Jackie' Fisher. Commissioned as an independent establishment in 1876.

1868 **Kings Mill** (see 1712) destroyed by fire. 600 Dockyard men enrolled as special constables due to fear of Fenian attacks.

May The **Dockyard Ropery** was closed. With the revolution in ships steam propulsion the need for rope gradually diminished and ropemaking was concentrated in Devonport and Chatham Dockyard. Senior officers of the Ropery and selected men were transferred to other yards but many others were discharged from the Dockyard causing much hardship in the town.

This year saw four vessels launched from the Dockyard.

10th January..... The composite steam gunboat **Elk**.

12th February..... The wooden steam gunboat **Magpie**.

24th April..... The Wooden steam corvette **Sirius**.

16th November.... The wooden steam gunboat **Swallow**.

1869 20th April. Great gloom hung over the town as discharged Dockyard men and their families emigrated to Canada. 391 men, women and children of whom 175 belonged to Portsmouth sailed in the Troopship **Crocodile** that the Admiralty allowed for the passage. On 1st May another 776 left in the Troopship **Serapis**. It was said that most did well and prospered in the new world.

23rd October. The wooden steam corvette **Dido** was launched from Portsmouth Dockyard. On return from the Zulu Wars she was hulked and in 1906 was re-named **Actaeon**.

1870 **Royal Marine Barracks at Eastney** largely completed (see 1862).

Admiralty Chemical Laboratory established in the Dockyard.

June another large party of Dockyard shipwrights and their families embark in the troopship **Crocodile** for passage to Canada.

700 taken on in the Dockyard because of worries about the Franco-Prussian War. (see 1869-70).

13th July. The gunboat **Plucky** was launched, she was one of the two prototypes for 20 Ant class gunboats built at about this time. She was a renamed **Banterer** in 1916 and finally broken up in 1969.

7th December. The gunboat **Blazer** was launched.

8th December. The Gunboat **Comet** was launched.

The Dockyard Complement 1870.

Workmen.

Established.

Hired.

Shipwrights & Apprentices.	1,086	609
Caulkers & Apprentices.	110	—
Joiners.	159	—
Sawyers.	61	—
Smiths & Apprentices.	213	—
Workmen in Blocks and other Mills.	71	—
Coppersmiths	—	45
Riggers.	159	—
Sailmakers & Apprentices.	33	—
Other Trades.	148	—
Labourers.	220	—
Colour Women.	—	9
—		
	Total.....2,260.....	663

1871 The **Lion Gate** was removed this year when the fortification was demolished at the end of Queen Street. It was later re-erected as the gate way to Anglesey Barracks in Queen Street that later became the Naval Barracks. It proved too small and in consequence was replaced by the present gateway. The old Lion Gate was re-erected as *Gate Way to the Empire* under the Semaphore Tower in 1930. (See 1930)

Flogging in Royal Navy suspended in peacetime. (See 1879).

12th July. **HMS “Devastation”** (4,406 tons) the first ironclad built at Portsmouth in a dry dock was floated up. Generally thought to have been built in No. 9 Dry Dock. Construction had employed 500-600 men since the keel was laid 12 November 1869. She was the first mastless ocean going Turret ship.

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Staff in Dockyard reduced from 3,781 to 3,045 in 1871 (see 1865).

1872 **HMS “Vernon”** moored in Portchester Creek for use as the Royal Navy’s first torpedo school. (Moved to Gunwharf mooring in 1876 and to shore there in 1923).

21st December. **HMS *Challenger*** A steam screw corvette converted to a survey ship under the command of, Captain George S. Nares, left Portsmouth on her 4 year oceanographic survey on behalf of the Royal Society. She returned to Portsmouth on 24th May 1876.

1873 **The Unicorn Gate**, which pierced the Portsea fortifications at the end North Street, Portsea, was taken down this year and re-erected as an entrance to the Dockyard Extension. (it was first erected in 1778-9)

23rd. June. **Spithead Review** in honour of the Shah of Persia. It was the first time that a ruler of Persia had visited this country and he astonished all beholders by the brilliance of his entourage and the magnificence of his jewels. He was greatly interested in **HMS *Devastation*** the latest product of the

Dockyard.

10th. September .The 26 gun. Iron Steam frigate, **Blonde** that had been built in the dockyard was re-named at her launching in honour of the Royal Visitor as **HMS Shah**.

Staff in Dockyard 3,900 (see 1870). Smiths wages – 1st class 45 shillings a week to 4th class @ 29 shillings.

1874 **Disastrous Fire.** No.11 Store House (Now the Naval Museum) was completely gutted by fire down to the ground floor. However massive walls remained in tacked and in 1879 the building was restored to its original state. In the apex of the front of the building can be seen a fine old clock. It was brought from the Royal Naval Armaments Depot at Lodge Hill near Rochester in 1963.

In the previous 12 months 4,000 dockyard men were treated at the dockyard surgery for minor injuries. 1,000 men and boys incapacitated. Compared to the previous 10 years the number had trebled.

23rd.April. Troops and sailors returning from the **Ashanti War** are reviewed at Gosport by the Queen and on the 30th April they are entertained by Portsmouth.

1875

29th May. The **Deep Dry Dock (No. 9 Dock), North Lock (B. Lock). South Lock (A. Lock) Tidal Basin** and the **Repairing Basins** +was opened (see 1864).

Departure of the Arctic Expedition in “**Alert**” and “**Discovery**”. The expedition returned in 1876 after **HMS “Alert**” had reached within 400 miles of the North Pole. They returned on the 20th November 1876.

Fleet Surgeon appointed.

1st April. Mr. W. B. Robinson was the **last Master Shipwright** at Portsmouth for on the 1st April the title changed to that of Chief Constructor. Interestingly on his appointment to the yard on 19th January 1869 he was styled Master Shipwright and Engineer. The chief Constructors post was upgraded on 1st January to that of Manager, Constructive Department, he became known in the dockyard as MCD.

1875

18th August – a terrible disaster occurred in the Solent which thrilled the entire country and for many weeks formed the basis for many a heated controversy. The Royal Yacht “**Alberta**” with the Queen onboard was crossing the Solent, when in collision with the privately owned yacht “**Mistletoe**”. The yacht sank and three on board were drowned, one being a young girl. The jury at the subsequent inquest were unable to agree upon a verdict.

16th October. Saw the launching from the Dockyard of the iron screw corvette **Boadicea** of 3913 tons burden.

No 7 Boathouse rebuilt over the Mast Pond.

1876

27th April Princess Louise Launches **HMS “Inflexible”** (12,000 tons) with the

thickest armour used on a warship (24 inches) she was the first major warship to use electricity and be launched by electricity. The Princess then steam into the new **Dockyard extension works** to declare it open (see 1864)

During the extension works there was as much as 9 miles of railway viaducts in use either going up or down as the excavation proceeded and the building work commenced, there were 13 steam locomotives employed and over 90 various types of steam engines employed. The following table gives some idea as to the scale of this vast construction.

Material	Amount
Excavated material.....	19.600.000 cubic yards.
Dredged material.....	240.000 tons.
Concrete.....	650.000 tons.
Timber.....	281.000 loads.
Bricks.....	155.000.000.
Portland stone.....	3.984.000 cubic yards
Granite.....	5.329.000 cubic yards.
Iron.....	5.000 tons.
Work force.....	1500-1600 men.
Convict labour.....	800 men.
Yearly brick production.....	20.000.000
Cost voted by Parliament.....	£2.350.000
Dredging work not completed until 1878....	800.000 cubic yards.

In 1801 the Navy Board estimated that its annual consumption of timber was over 36.000 loads, in comparison the dockyard extension used 281.000 loads during its 5 years construction.

19th October. The iron screw corvette **Bacchante** was launched from the Dockyard. She was a sister ship to the **Boadicea** that had been launched the previous year.

July. Boiler explosion on **HMS "Thunderer"** while she was at Spithead kills 30 men. A local relief fund amounting to £5.000 was raised for the sufferers.

Railway viaduct from harbour Station into Dockyard via swing bridge completed.

Following the Dockyard Extension many new trades were entered into the Dockyard as the list below shows.

Compliment of the Dockyard 1876-77

Trades.	Established.	Hired.
Apprentices.	0	131
Blockmakers.	3	-
Block Mills.	16	-
Braziers and Tinmen.	5	3
Bricklayers.	1	1
Boilermakers.	-	125
Boys.	-	296
Caulkers.	80	6
Colour Women.	-	20
Coopers.	1	-

Coppersmiths.	20	40
Draughtsmen.	-	13
Engineer Students.	-	59
Fitters.	-	310
Founders.	-	35
Hosemakers.	1	-
Joiners.	124	164
Labourers.	168	700
Leading Men of Stores.	1	-
Locksmiths.	2	-
Masons.	1	-
Messengers.	8	1
Painters.	30	38
Pattern Makers.	-	24
Plumbers.	10	2
Recorders of Works.	-	6
Riggers.	124	114
Sailmakers.	30	13
Saw Mill Men.	15	-
Sawyers.	20	4
Shipwrights.	809	350
Skilled Labourers.	-	614
Smiths.	192	141
Storehouse men and Store Porters.	21	2
Surgery Attendant.	1	-
Tailors.	1	-
Timekeepers.	-	4
Wheelwrights.	6	4

2nd October The Portsea Railway was opened.

1877 **The Great Foreshore Case.** Since the days of the Plantagenet's the Corporation had exercised rights of Admiralty over the foreshore – that is, the land between the high and low water marks. This right was disputed by the Admiralty, and the case went to court which pronounced in favour of the Corporation. However the case was taken by the Admiralty to the House of Lords who reversed the courts findings. Afterwards a legal document was found in private ownership that proved that the Corporation had given the rights to the Admiralty one hundred and fifty years before. The whole episode proved embarrassing and expensive for the Corporation. The financial settlement was not concluded until 1880.

1878 Queen Victoria Reviewed Reserve Squadron of 26 ships.

Discharge of 1,400 dockyard men but 700 re-engaged.

24th March. On Sunday afternoon the training ship **HMS Eurydice**, when off Dunnose Point, a headland between Ventnor and Sandown and almost within sight of home was struck by a terrific squall and blinding snow, with such force that it beat her down, heeling her till her open gun ports slide beneath the water and within minutes she sank with the loss of all her crew of 328 save for two. A relieve fund totalling £23,040 was raised for the dependence of the men who

were lost. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who was at the time a resident of Southsea wrote:

*A grey swirl of snow with the squall at the back of it,
Heeling her, reeling her, beating her down;
A gleam of her bends in the thick of the wrack of it,
A flutter of white in the eddies of brown.*

*It broke in a moment of blizzard and blindness;
The next, like a foul bat, it flapped on its way,
But our ship and our boys! Gracious Lord, in your kindness,
Give help to the mothers who need it to-day.*

*Give help to the women who wail by the water,
Who stand on the Hard with their eyes past the Wight.
Ah! Whisper it gently, you sisters or daughter,
Our boys are all gathered at home for the tonight.*

The wreck was raised the following September and brought into Portsmouth Harbour, many of the bodies recovered were buried at Haslar Cemetery where a great memorial was erected. The wreck was later broken up in the Dockyard. (See 1843)

13th August. The Queen reviewed the Reserve squadrons at Spithead. It consisted of 26 vessels such as the **Lord Warden**, **Valiant**, **Warrior** and **Hercules**.

1879 Flogging in the Royal Navy was abolished (see 1871).

“Sailors Welcome” opened in Queen Street by **Sarah Robinson** who had already established the “Sailors Institute” in ex-“Fountain Hotel” High Street in 1874(present site of “Fountain Court”).

1880 In consequence of the troubles in Afghanistan Indian troopships left Portsmouth with the 1st battalion of the Rifle Brigade, The Queen accompanied by the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Duke of Connaught came over from Osborne to bid them good-bye.

1881 22nd July. The Crown Prince (William II) came to Portsmouth to inspect HMS Inflexible. Then the last word in naval construction and commanded by Captain (Jacky) Fisher. A week later Prince Henry of Prussia came to Portsmouth with the same objective.

26th August. The Crown Princess of Germany launches the corvette **Canada** from the Dockyard, she was the first all steel ship to be built in the yard.

25th October. The **Cordelia** a sister ship to the Canada was launched from the Yard.

The annual **Dockyard Regatta** was a great success this year and was attended by the Prince and Princess of Wales. 150 boats, manned by over a 1.000 men took part in the spectacle.

“Royal Sailors Rest” opened by **Agnes Weston** in Queen Street.

1882 21st March. The launching of the turret ship **Colossus** by Lady Emma Baring, daughter of Lord Northbrook, First Lord of the Admiralty. **Colossus** was the first all steel battleship and the first battleship to have breech loading guns.

No. 5 Boathouse built over part of Mast Pond (see 1665 & 1875).

14th June. “Royal Sailors Rest Home” opened by **Agnes Weston** in Commercial Road.

3rd November. Marines, sailors and troops arrive back at Portsmouth from the Egyptian Wars and were entertained at public expense.

1883 January. First plans and sections of the new **Police cells** at Portsmouth. These are just inside the Victory Gate.

18th December. The armoured cruiser **Imperieues** was launched from the Dockyard.

1884 24th June. The cruiser **Calliope** was launched from the Dockyard. In March 1889 she was in Apia harbour, Samoa with six foreign warships and several merchant ships, when a hurricane broke over them. Great waves carried first one and then another on to the reefs, the American flagship **Trenton** was in a sinking condition. Captain Kane of the **Calliope** headed her out of the harbour of doom and by the heroic exertions of the crew and in particular the engine room staff proceeded at one knot an hour. In the teeth of horrendous winds and sea they past the American flagship a great cheer went up, raised by the American Admiral and his men, who were watching the **Calliope** struggle. Only she of all the boats in the harbour on that terrible day survived. After the storm Captain Kane wrote to the American Admiral thanking him for the cheer of encouragement. On receiving a characteristic letter of congratulations he ended with the remark “**Blood is thicker than water**”. The **Calliope** was broken up in 1951 at Blyth.

1885 The Troops returned to from the Sudan Campaign were enthusiastically received at Portsmouth.

24th November. The first class battleship Camperdown was launched from the Dockyard.

1886 7th August. The **King of Portugal** visited Portsmouth and toured the Dockyard.

1887 21st June. A Review of all the troops in the Garrison on Southsea Common in the morning followed by festivities in the afternoon by 23,000 children. A whole bullock was roasted at Landport for the poor.

23th July. HM. Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee and Naval Review of 136 major warships. At Spithead. At night the fleet was illuminated by coloured electrical lighting.

1,000 men discharged from the Dockyard. They were the heaviest discharges

since 1869, so great was the distress in the town that the Admiralty agreed to give assisted passage to Canada in troopships to any of the discharged men and their families. (see 1869-70).

Admiralty Experimental Works established at Haslar under the superintendence of R.E. Froude.

20th September. Amidst a great concourse of spectators Lady Hood launched the new battleship Trafalgar from No. 5 slipway in the Dockyard.

1888 1st. May. The Composite sloop **HMS *Nymph*** was christened by Miss Platt who was the daughter of the Reverend T. D. Platt, Vicar of Holy Trinity church at Portsea.

20th September. The launch and christening of the cruiser **HMS *Melpomene*** was said to have been the shabbiest ever witnessed, for the Admiralty had forbidden any ceremony that was not absolutely necessary. The ceremony was performed by Miss Carpenter-Garnier.

1889 Naval Review in honour of the Kaiser who was accompanied by a German Squadron. 81 ships including 33 ironclads. After reviewing the fleet the Kaiser said that "*he had seen the finest navy in the World.*" It was generally believed that this display of naval power fired the Kaiser's ambition to become a maritime power. The future king of England was then a naval lieutenant RN commanding Torpedo Boat No.79 which the Royal party visited.

March saw 850 emigrant leave Portsmouth for South America but the bright new life offered did not mature and many return home disillusioned.

The dockyard had great activity this year.

31st March. The **Naval Defence Act** is passed: it established the principle of the two-power standard; the Royal Navy to be at least equal to the naval strength of any two other countries; it was to shape naval policy until 1921.

28th February. The Sloop **HMS *Beagle*** was christened by Mrs, Deadman, and wife of the Chief Constructor of the yard.

16th April. **HMS *Barrosa*** a cruiser was christened by Miss Gorst, daughter of Sir John Gorst MP

13th June. **HMS *Vulcan*** was christened by Mrs. Gordon, wife of Rear-Admiral Gordon Admiral Superintendent of the Dockyard. This vessel was of a special nature as she was designed to carry eight Torpedo boats and was fitted with powerful hydraulic cranes capable of lifting boats of 20 tons.

11th September. The cruiser **HMS *Barham*** was christened by Miss Hamilton, Daughter of Sir Vesey Hamilton.

2nd December. Telephonic communications was established between Portsmouth and Southampton.

1890 30th June. The cruiser **HMS *Pallas*** was launched from the Dockyard by Miss Gorst, The daughter of Sir John Gorst. MP.

6th and 7th August. **The Kaiser** tours the Dockyard and Eastney Barracks.

9th August. **The New Town Hall** was opened by the Prince and Princess of Wales. In his opening address he said “you are every right to feel proud of this fine building, worthy of the Largest Naval Port in the United Kingdom. The first stone to the new building was laid by the Mayor Mr. Alfred S. Blake on 14th August 1886

1891 20th August. HM. Queen Victoria inspected French and English Squadron at Spithead.

HMS “Excellent” moved to shore base at Whale Island (see 1830, 1864). A railway system existed on the Island after demolition of the viaduct in 1892 and was in use until c1929. (see 1864).

1891 26th February – the Dockyard had special reason for rejoicing from the circumstances that two of the most powerful vessels yet constructed had been built in an incredibly short span of time. They were the **Royal Sovereign** and the **Royal Arthur**. The christening ceremony was performed by HM the Queen in the most happiest of occasions and in the presence of thousands of people who had travelled to Portsmouth for the occasion.

Rear Admiral J. A. Fisher CB. Appointed Admiral Superintendent of the Dockyard.

20th August. Queen Victoria reviews ships of the British and French fleets at Spithead.

1892 30th March. The First Class cruiser **HMS Crescent** that had been built in dry dock was floated up after the christening that was performed by Lady Elizabeth Mead. **Crescent** was a sister ship to the **Royal Arthur**.

3rd. August. The new battleship **HMS Centurion** that had been built in No. 13 Dry Dock was floated up after the christening ceremony that was performed by Mrs. Fisher, the wife of Admiral J. A. Fisher. Fisher was that to transform the navy and was the principle voice of the Dreadnought battleship.

1893 **Royal Railway Shelter** built on South Railway Jetty it was designed by Mr. T. C. Agutter. (see 1939).

15th. June. Saw the launch of the cruiser **HMS Fox**, the christening ceremony was performed by the Countess of Clanwilliam.

22nd June. The battleship **HMS Victoria** was sunk in collision with the battleship **HMS Camperdown**. The Admiral and 360 officers and men were lost in the Victoria. The majority of the crew came from Portsmouth. The disaster Brought great sadness to the town and Dockyard

1894 19th July. The launch of the cruiser **HMS Eclipse**, the christening ceremony was performed by Mrs. Kane, wife of the Admiral Superintendent.

1895 **First Electrical Repair shop built.**

31st January. Princess Louise christened the new battleship ***Majestic*** and she was floated up from the dry dock in which she had been built. Her building time set a record for its day of just two years.

22nd. August. HRH. The Duchess of York accompanied by her husband the Duke of York (future King George V) came to Portsmouth to launch the new battleship **HMS. *Prince George***.

1896 29th April. The Indian Troopship ***Malabar*** arrived in Portsmouth after her last voyage. It had been decided to replace the Indian Troopship Service with liners. For many years Portsmouth had been the home of these graceful ships painted in their white tropical coatings and their passing was much regretted in the town and Dockyard.

1st July. **HMS *Terrible*** was the first ship to use **No. 14 Dry Dock. No. 15 Dry Dock** was opened a few months later. **Ship Shop built** and the **Gun Shop built**.

2nd September. The battleship **HMS *Ceasar*** that had been built in 13 Dry Dock was christened by Lady Salmon, the wife of the Commander-in-Chief and floated up.

8th December. The second class cruiser **HMS *Gladiator*** was launched in the presence of Mr. Goschen the First Lord of the Admiralty, and a distinguished company. The First Lord's daughter Miss Goschen launched the vessel.

1897 Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Fleet Review of 173 major warships in 5 lines of ships 7 miles long. **HMS *Active*** became the last full rigged ship to sail out of Portsmouth Harbour.

Charles Parsons steamed his revolutionary vessel "***Turbinia***" through the fleet at an unprecedented 34 knots. The first major ship to use the steam turbine was HMS "***Dreadnought***" (see 1905).

Anchor Gate demolished having previously been taken into the Dockyard in 1864.

3rd. October Mrs. Rice, wife of the Admiral Superintendent of the Dockyard launches the new battleship **HMS *Canopus*** from No 5 Slipway.

1898 28th February. Saw the last departure of the Indian Troopships from Portsmouth with the sailing of "***Jumma***". These troopships berthed at South Railway Jetty which at this time was known as Troopers Jetty.

17th November. **HMS "*Formidable*"**, the largest warship at that time, launched by Lady Hicks-Beach, the wife of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. On the 1st January 1915 while on exercises in the Channel she was struck by a torpedo from U24. three quarters of an hour later at 0315 she was again torpedoed by the U24. The seas were rough and very cold, at 0445 she capsized and sank with the loss of 547 of her crew.

- 1899 21st September. Launching of the Battleship **HMS *London*** by Lady George Hamilton.
- 1900 27th January. The small cruiser **HMS *Pandora*** was launched by Mrs. Napier the daughter of Admiral Sir M Culme-Seymour.
- 1st November. Mr L. T. Steel was appointed head of an embryo electrical department with the title of **The Electrician**. The title change soon after to Electrical Engineer (Higher Grade).
- 1901 22nd January. Death of Queen Victoria at “Osborne House”, Isle of Wight. Her body was carried by sea on 1st February to Portsmouth on board the ***Alberta***. She steamed through lines of warships that fired minute guns that were also taken up by shore batteries. Landing at Clarence Yard, Gosport and thence to London. The Funeral of the great Queen was on the 2nd February.
- 6th March the Armoured cruiser **HMS *Kent*** was launched from the Dockyard the ceremony had to be postponed a day due to bad weather.
- 1st. November. The Duke and Duchess of York arrived at Portsmouth at the conclusion of their Colonial tour aboard “***Ophir***” temporarily serving as a Royal Yacht. (“***Ophir***” was an Orient liner). The tour had taken 8 months and the Duke and Duchess were met by the King and Queen on their return. The Channel Squadron was anchored at Sptihead and with the ships in the dockyard it was said to have been an imposing naval pageant.
- 1902 18th August. Saw the final dispersal ceremony of King Edward VII Coronation Fleet Review.
- 20th August. The return of HMS ***Terrible*** from the South African War.
- The first two submarines, “***Holland I***” & “***Holland II***” arrived from Vickers at Barrow in Furness and were berthed alongside HMS “***Hazard***” (see 1904 & 1985).
- 1903 15th January. The First Class Cruiser **HMS *Suffolk*** was launched from the Dockyard by Lady Stradbroke.
- 30th September. The Naval Barracks was completed and opened it had originally been an army establishment known as Anglesea Barracks. The old Lion Gate was first used as its entrance but this later gave way to the present gateway.
- 23rd October. **HMS “*Victory*”** rammed and nearly sunk at her mooring by battleship “***Neptune***” that was under tow to the breakers yard. (see 1765, 1816, & 1922).
- 1904 4th February. The Countess of Onslow performed the christening ceremony of the new battleship **HMS *New Zealand***. She was later renamed ***Zealandia*** and her original name given to a new Battlecruise.
- Captain Scott** sailed on ill fated expedition to the South Pole. (Statue sited north west of the Ropehouse).

Title of Chief Constructor changed to Construction Manager. (see 1875).

Submarines "*Holland I*", "*Holland II*" and *A1* berthed at fort Blockhouse which became the submarine base. *Holland I*, recovered from a watery grave is on show at the Submarine Museum in Gosport.

18th March. While taking part in submarine experiments off the Nab the submarine *A1* was struck by the liner *Berwick Castle* and sank with the loss of her crew of 2 officers and nine men. The wreck was raised and brought into the dockyard where the bodies were recovered and later buried at Haslar in the presence of an enormous concourse of sympathetic spectators.

10th September. The Antarctic exploration ship *Discovery* arrived at Portsmouth after her memorable three year voyage.

10th December. Saw the launching of another battleship *HMS Britannia* by Lady Londonderry. She had the distinction of being the last British warship to be lost during World War I, when on the 9th November 1918 just west of Gibraltar she was torpedoed by the Germany submarine *UB 50* and sank 3½ hours later. The war ended on the 11th November 1918.

ARMS RACE WITH GERMANY

1905 27th March. It was announced that the Admiralty planned to discharge a large number of men from the Dockyard. As a result of agitation, the concession was obtained that the men should be discharged in small weekly batches.

June 5th. **The King of Spain** arrived at Portsmouth and had a most imposing naval reception.

7th August. “**Entente Cordiale**”. The French Northern Squadrons anchor at Spithead and were reviewed by King Edward VII on 9th August. The French were lavishly entertained by the town.

21st October. The centenary of Nelson’s great battle was observed by many naval displays. At night the **HMS Victory** was illuminated by electric lighting the current being supplied by a torpedo boat moored alongside.

“**St Vincent**”, Boys Training ship, towed away and trainees move to shore establishment in Gosport.

Great Factory completed.

1906 10th. February. Launch of the epoch making battleship **HMS “Dreadnought”** by King Edward VII. This ship made all other battleships obsolete and gave her name to a new breed of warship. The first keel plates were laid on No. 5 Slipway on the 2nd October 1905; she was launched four months later and commenced her sea trials on 3rd. October 1906. It was a speed of building that astonished the world. Between 1905 & 1915 Portsmouth dockyard built the lead ship in all classes of battleship. As for the **Dreadnought** she had the distinction of being the only battleship to ram and sink a submarine, when on 18th March 1915 while steaming in formation with other battleships she sighted a periscope, she increased speed and leaving the formation rammed and sank the German U-boat U29. She was sold and broken up at Inverkeithing in 1923.

Transfer of the **Holy Trinity Church** to the Naval authorities at Portsmouth. The church was built in 1839 and consecrated on 30th September 1841 by the Bishop of Winchester. It had a devoted congregation that in 1877 freely renovated and improved the church; much of the wood work was performed by Dockyard Shipwrights. The last service was held on 23rd February 1906. The admiralty paid £5000 for the land and the building which was distributed among other churches of the town. Sadly the church was lost during the German bombing campaign but the ruins can still be seen in the dockyard to-day.

Riots in Naval Barracks on 4th and 5th November.

Anchor Gate was built this year.

1907 27th July. Another great day for the dockyard as thousands of people flowed into the yard to witness the launching of the improved Dreadnought **HMS Bellerophon**. The christening was performed by Princess Henry of Battenberg.

3rd. August. A review of the re-constituted Home Fleet by King Edward VII. The fleet consisted of 188 major warships.

11th. November. The German Emperor arrived at Portsmouth in his Royal Yacht "**Hohenzollern**" escorted by a squadron of German warships. There was much profession of friendship and concord by the Kaiser who in return for the town's hospitality conferred upon Councillor Foster the Order of the Red Eagle. Councillor Ferdinand G. Foster had a unique experience in the following year when he became Mayor of Portsmouth. Being a widower: and with the approval of his colleagues his 5½ year old daughter **Doris** became Mayoress and we are told that little **Doris** performed her duties with a charming success. It is unlikely that any other town could boast such a young Mayoress.

Three top floors of 33 Store converted to an **Electrical Drawing Office**.

1908 25th. April. The Portsmouth built cruiser **HMS *Gladiator*** is rammed and sunk by the liner ***St. Paul***, near Yarmouth, Isle of Wight during a snow storm. 30 men lost their lives with many injured.

4th. October. ***Gladiator*** is raised and starts her journey to the Dockyard.

7th October. ***Gladiator*** is dry docked in the Deep Dock (Known today as No 9 Dry Dock)

13th October the Admiralty decide to sell the ***Gladiator*** for scrap,

10th September. "A Grand Launch". That was the general verdict of the great concourse of people who attended the launching of the Dreadnought ***HMS St. Vincent*** in the Dockyard. The ceremony was performed by the Countess of Beauchamp.

1909 24th March. Never before in the history of the Royal Navy had such a scene been witnessed at the Hard and Dockyard Gate when over 12,000 people assembled for the purpose of giving a send-off to Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, the most popular Admiral in the British Navy since the days of Lord Nelson.

31st. July King Edward VII reviewed Fleet at Spithead. This was the first review where battle cruisers were shown.

1909 30th September. The improved Dreadnought ***HMS Neptune*** was launched from No 5 Slipway by the Duchess of Albany.

1910 6th May. King Edward VII nick named the Peace-maker died at Buckingham Palace. At his funeral on the 20th May his cortege is followed by the Kaiser, 8 Kings, 5 heirs, and over 50 Royal Princes or Dukes.

24th May. At a meeting of the Town Council it was resolved to allow mixed bathing at Southsea Beach

21st July The new King of England, King George V and his Queen visit Portsmouth to tour the Dockyard and other Naval establishment.

20th August. The Marchioness of Winchester launched the heaviest battleship yet built at Portsmouth dockyard ***HMS Orion***. She was the first British battleship to mount all her main armament on the centre-line in superimposed turrets and the first to mount the new 13.5 inch guns.

1911 24th. June. **Coronation Review** at Spithead by King George V. Altogether there were 165 vessels including 32 battleships, 25 armoured cruisers, 8 protected cruiser, 4 light cruisers, 67 destroyers, 12 torpedo boats and 8 submarines. These vessels constituted the “Home Guard” and not one had been specifically commissioned for the occasion. On arrival at the Harbour Station the King and Queen were greeted by over 50.000 people as the made their way to South Railway Jetty. At night the whole fleet was illuminated by Electric lighting.

28th June. The **Dockyard Museum was officially opened** by His Majesty King George V, accompanied by Queen Mary. It had long been a dream of Mark Edwin Prescott-Frost who was Secretary to the Admiral Superintendent of the Dockyard to create a museum of the Dockyard, for scattered around the Dockyard were many items of historical interest relating to the Dockyard and Royal Navy. He persuaded the Admiral Superintendent to allocate a space in the Great Rope-House where all the artefacts could be housed under on roof. He became the Honorary Curator and spent ever minute of his spare time cataloguing every item. Sadly it closed and many of its artefacts were absorbed into the new Victory Museum in 1938, others were given to the National Maritime Museum in London and many more were simply lost.

9th October. Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein launched the battleship **HMS King George V** from No 5 Slipway in the Dockyard. She was laid down as the **Royal George** but the name was change prior to launching. Launchings from the Dockyard had always attracted large crowds and as each successive battleship was larger than the one before so the clamour to see the largest battleship in the world launched became greater and often in the town launched days became a holiday.

1912 5th February. The King and Queen return to Portsmouth aboard P&O Liner “**Medina**” (that had acted as a temporary Royal Yacht) from their Indian Tour from where his coronation of Emperor of India was celebrated.

2nd February. The **Submarine A.3**. Was sunk in collision with Torpedo Gunboat **HMS Hazard** with the loss of her crew of 14 officers and men while exercising off Bembridge, the Isle of Wight. One month later the wreck was raised and brought into Portsmouth Dockyard where she was dry docked for the recovery of her crew; they were buried at Haslar Cemetery. The wreck was later towed away and sunk in deep water.

27th February. **Portsmouth Dockyard General Order**. As from this date and in accordance with Admiralty Local Order 3275:

South Lock	to be known as	A. Lock
North Lock	to be known as	B. Lock
New Lock	to be known as	C. Lock
New Lock	to be known as	D. Lock
Deep Dock	to be known as	No. 9 Dock.

9th July. An assembly of the fleet took place for the benefit of both Houses of Parliament. There assembled 233 ships of all classes, including 44 battleships, 5 battlecruisers, 25 armoured cruisers and 106 destroyers. At a given signal they

weighed anchor and steamed silently past the awed legislator on board a great liner until only she and the Admiralty Yacht *Enchantress* were left in the roadstead.

No.9 Dock was often referred to as Suicide Dock for on occasions suicides occurred in it.

No. 3, 4 and 5 Basins combined to create No. 3 Basin. A 250 ton Hammerhead crane was constructed on the promontory.

2nd August. Worlds largest **Floating Dock** arrived at Portsmouth. Area 2 ¼ acres with lifting capacity of 40,000 tons. Moored in Fountain Lake. (see 1939)

12th October. The cradle of the Dreadnoughts added yet one more leviathan to the Royal Navy when the Duchess of Wellington launched the battleship *Iron Duke* from No 5 slipway watched and cheered by a crowd of over 60.000 people. She was to become flagship of the Grand Fleet under command of Admiral Sir John Jellicoe.

2nd November. The admiralty ordered an immediate mobilization of all torpedo and submarine flotillas.

1913 8th April **C. Lock** first used for the Dry Docking of the Battle-cruiser **HMS Princess Royal**. It had taken four years to build and cost £1.000.000.

16th. October. The launching of super Dreadnought **HMS Queen Elizabeth** by Lady Meux, wife of the Commander-in-Chief, she later treated the men who built the ship to a night out at the Music Hall. She the first oil fired battleship, the first to mount the new 15 inch guns and the largest in the world at that time. She was the first of a class of five vessels that has been described as the finest battleships of their time.

20th December. **Semaphore Tower** destroyed by fire. The fire started in the Sail loft spreading quickly to the upper floor and roof of the three men on duty in the Tower at the time two perished in the flames. It was rebuilt as the present structure in 1929/30 incorporating re-sited Lion Gate on the west side (see 1778 & 1930). In consequence of this fire a wireless telegraph station was established on Horse Island, which had been purchased by the Admiralty from a Mr. C. B. Smith of Fareham some years before. It was the largest and most powerful in the World and was said to boast it could communicate with ships in anyone of the seven seas.

THE WAR TO END ALL WARS

1914 16th. July. To test the efficiency of the Royal Naval Reserve system a mobilization of the reserve fleet took place at Spithead and was combined with a Fleet Review. There assembled 24 Dreadnoughts, 35 pre-Dreadnoughts, 18 armoured cruisers, 31 light cruisers, 78 destroyers and hundreds of smaller craft, in total there were 640 vessels drawn up in twelve long line totalling 40 miles. On the 20th the assembly weighed anchor and in single file steamed past the King aboard the Royal Yacht anchored at the Nab Light dipping their ensigns in salute as they passed It was an unprecedented sceptical.

4th August. Following the German invasion of Belgium Great Britain declared war on Germany.

The garrison and coastal defences are put on a high state of alert. In the beginning of the war the garrison numbered over 50.000 troops and never at any time during the war did it fall below 25.000 troops.

D Lock completed.

1915 31st January. Just after 2200hrs a fire broke out in the Building Shed covering the slipways engulfing the Mould Loft Floor, Erection Shed, and the roof of the building slip. Large quantities of stores and valuable machinery were lost and two jetties facing the harbour were destroyed. Saboteurs were suspected and the Admiralty offered a reward to no avail.

29th April. The last battleship to be built at Portsmouth **HMS *Royal Sovereign*** was launched with out ceremony.

16th November. Submarines **J.1** and **J.2.** were floated up from where they were built in No.13 Dry Dock. The naming ceremony was performed by the Honourable Cynthia Cadgow, stepdaughter to the C-in-C.

1916 23rd January. A fire started in the Electrical Shop in the Dockyard. By the combined efforts of the Dockyard and Corporation Fire Brigades it was got under control but not before considerable damage was done.

31st May. Portsmouth and the Dockyard were shocked at the list of ships sunk during the battle and details of the crews as “all Lost” saw many distressing sight at the Dockyard Gate and Naval Barracks. The badly worded signal gave the impression that the Royal Navy had suffered an overwhelming defeat. Over 6.000 men were lost in the battle many of them from the Portsmouth area. The outcome still causes controversy over who actually won and can be best summed up in a poem that appeared in a national newspaper at the time:

*The Germanys cry, "We've won!
But surely 'tis a curious view
That those are the conquerors who run
And those the vanquished who pursue.*

28th. May King George V inspected the Royal Naval Barracks

16th. September a Zeppelin flying over the Dockyard dropped four bombs. One narrowly missed **HMS “Victory”** and another fell near **HMS Renown**” in dry dock. No damage occurred.

14th November. Submarines **K.1** and **K.2** floated up from the No. 13 Dry Dock in which they were built and followed later by **K.5**. Surgeon Commander appointed (see 1688, 1854, 1875).

1917. Food supplies were greatly reduced in consequence of the activities of German submarines. The government insisted that bread should be sold by the pound and not until twelve hours after it had been baked. To help stave off the food shortages allotments were created in private gardens, Parks, building plots, recreation grounds, land at Great Sultans, parts of Southsea Common, Governor Green even spare ground in the Dockyard.

1918 22nd January. The first WRNS volunteers came from women working in the Dockyard and the Division was formed. Later Dame Katherine Furse came to Whale Island to establish a depot for the newly formed Women’s Royal Naval Service. The WRNS were demobilised on 1st October 1919.

23rd October. Dame Agnes Weston died. She is often described as “Mother of the Navy” All who heard the news was greatly saddened by it, and the Admiralty accorded her the unprecedented honour of a Naval Funeral.

1914-18 The war record of the Dockyard was revealed for the first time by the Dockyard’s General Manage Mr. John Apsey (Later Sir John). From the commencement of hostilities to the armistice there were 1,200 vessels refitted in the Dockyard, including 40 battleships and battle cruisers, 25 cruisers, over 400 destroyers, 150 torpedo boats, 140 trawlers and drifters, 20 submarines and other vessels. During this period this period 1,658 vessels were dry docked or hauled up slipways for repair; these do not include munitions produced in its factories for the War Department. Ships built in the Dockyard during this period include the battleships “**Iron Duke**”, “**Queen Elizabeth** “ “**Royal Sovereign**” together with **submarines J1, J2, K1, K2, and K5**.

Dockyard Work Force.								July 1914.
December 1918.								
Women	...	....	....	....	50	....	....	1,786
Men	...	....	....	....	15,646	....	....	22,509
Officers and Clerks	...	....	....	....	591	....	....	1,103
Total.....								25,398

PEACE AND DECLINE

1919 15th August. The Government approved the “**Ten-year Rule**”. A policy not abandoned until 1933 which instructed the services to cast their future estimates on the assumption that there would not be a major war for ten years. It was to have dire consequences on the services when war eventually came.

The Price of Peace. The Admiralty announced that there were to be large discharges from Portsmouth Dockyard, these were inevitable but hard to live with. The Admiralty agreed to spread the discharges over as long a period as possible.

1920 The total number of the Hampshire Regiment to have fell in the Great War was 7,176. Of these 1,375 belonged to the Portsmouth Battalions, the majority of which came from the Dockyard.

September. **The Nab Tower** was sunk in Position and replaced the Nab Light ship. During 1918 the Admiralty planned to close the Striates of Dover to all but friendly shipping and prevent German U-boats using it as a passage to the English Channel. The plan entailed six gigantic towers linked by steel boom netting. Each tower costing £1 million. The war ended within a few months and only one tower was completed and so the Admiralty came up with an alternative plan to use it as a navigation beacon in place of the Nab lightship.

1921 Crown Prince of Japan sailed for home from South Railway jetty.

8th June. The cruiser ***Effingham*** was launched from the Dockyard by the Marchioness of Salisbury. She was laid down on 6th April 1917 but with the coming of peace all work on her was stopped. After four years on the slipway she was sarcastically referred in Parliament as HMS Methuselah.

29th January. Submarine **K5**, sank off Lands End with loss of crew. 33 of her crew of 57 were from Portsmouth. The submarine was participating in the Atlantic Fleet exercises. She was last seen at 1144 hrs when she dived. When she failed to surface in the afternoon a search was mounted, a large oil slick was found with wooden wreckage later the following morning the lid of a ditty box was found belonging to one of the crew. It was presumed she dived below her safe diving depth of 187 ft.

Society for Nautical Research began a crusade to save **HMS “Victory”** for the nation.

1922 Arctic liners refitted in the Dockyard.

The Dockyard Bell that was cast in 1791 and did ring the in and out musters of the Dockyard rang for the last time this year when sirens were introduced. The bell was re-introduced for the war years as the sirens were often confused with air raid sirens.

12th January. **HMS “Victory”** towed from her berth in Portsmouth Harbour to permanent berth in No. 2 Dry Dock where restoration was commenced (see 1765, 1805 and 1928). Local artist **W. L. Wyllie** (see 1938) was an active proponent

of restoration of the ship to its Trafalgar condition as a national monument.

22nd October. At the end of the war the pressing need was to rebuild the country's merchant fleet in consequence many ships building for the Royal Navy were cancelled, those to far advanced in their build were sent to Royal Dockyards to be finished of, the cruiser **HMS Diomede** that had been built at Vickers came to Portsmouth and was completed on this date. The new aircraft carrier **HMS Eagle** was another such vessel which came to Portsmouth on 24th April 1920 and was completed for sea trials in September 1923.

The **Royal Marine Police** formed. They replaced the Metropolitan Police Force at Chatham in 1932, Portsmouth in 1933 and Devonport in 1934.

1923 **HMS "Vernon"** moved to shore base at Gunwharf (see 1867, 1872 and 1876).

1st June. The restoration work on **HMS Victory** was appropriately commenced on the anniversary of the "Glorious First of June", Earl Howe, and a direct descendent of the victor, taking an interesting part in the ceremony.

1st August. Royal Marine Artillery amalgamated with Royal Marine Light Infantry and moved from Gosport to Eastney Barracks (see 1755, 1862, 1870, 1991).

1924 Fleet Review by King George V. It was a sadly depleted fleet that assembled for this review when compared to that of 16th July 1914. Of the 59 battleships there were but 10.

15th October. The Naval War Memorial built on Clarence Esplanade was unveiled by the Duke of York it showed the names of 9,279 men & women who died in World War I.

28th November. The old wooden wall **Marlborough** that had done good service in the harbour for many years as part of the **Vernon** establishment, was being towed away to be broken up when she encountered a gale and sank off the Owers in the tragedy four men lost their lives.

1925 September. The Admiralty announced the closure of Pembroke Dockyard and a reduction to care and maintenance at Rosyth. The effect on Portsmouth was cause for concern as employment in the Dockyard had to be found for established men from these two Dockyards and the town had to find additional housing.

12th November – while engaged in manoeuvres off Start Point the Portsmouth based submarine **M1** dived and was not seen again. The crew of 68 officers and men all perished.

The All-in Scheme. A movement which began in the Dockyard, and has spread through the town has ensured a great increase in revenue to the Royal Hospital, and Ear and Eye Hospital and other local charities. It was known as the **All-in Scheme**, the contributors to which make a weekly payment of two-pence, and in return for this they have the right to hospital treatment for themselves and their families. As a striking instance of its effects, the direct contribution from the Dockyard has increased from £200 to £5,000 a year.

1926 16th February. The cruiser **HMS Suffolk** was launched from the Dockyard by Marchioness of Bristol. She was the first of the post-war cruisers to be laid down and was a result of the 1922 Washington Treaty which specified that cruisers should not exceed 10,000 tons displacement.

21st April. Portsmouth becomes a City with a Lord Mayor.

Portsmouth created a City. Prince of Wales, on visit to Portsmouth, created the first City Freeman.

30th January. Numbers of Men and Women employed in the Dockyard.

1926

Dept.	Estbd.	Hired Men.	Hired Women.
Total			
Captain of the Dockyard	209	389	36
634 Manager Constructive Dept. (MCD)	2146	3066	43
5235			
Manager Engineering Dept. (MED)	1054	2610	27
3691			
Senior Electrical Engineer. (SEE)	453	1278	9
1740			
Senior Naval Stores Officer (SNSO)	92	534	1
627			
Others	12	55	-
67			
Totals.....	3966.....	7932.....	116.....12014
Senior Civil Engineer (SCE)	244	1400	-
1644			
		Grand	
Total.....	13658		

15th. March. Sir Phillip Watts KCB., died. He was one of three talented sons of a Dockyard Shipwright holding the post of Timber Inspector of the Yard. Phillip entered the Dockyard as a shipwright apprentice in 1861, gained a scholarship to south Kensington, and was appointed Assistant Constructor at the Admiralty. In 1901 on the retirement of Sir William White (who was also a Dockyard shipwright apprentice) he was appointed to the Admiralty as Chief Constructor and many of the ships that took part in the Great War were chiefly from his own designs

1926 22nd October – The foundering of the Destroyer **HMS Valerian** in a hurricane off Bermuda brought sad news to many homes in Portsmouth. The crew were mostly from this port. Of 104 only 19 were saved.

New **Coppersmith Shop** built just north of the MED Factory.

New Steel Foundry that was started on 31st March 1925 was opened. This building is situated on the south side of No. 2 Basin. The site had previously been occupied by the old Coppersmith shop.

1927 820 men discharged from the Dockyard as redundant.

6th January. Duke and Duchess of York embarked in **HMS “Renown”** for a grand tour of Australia. Traditional naval ceremonies were observed and the departure was witnessed by thousand of people along the sea front. After a voyage of 35.000 miles they returned to Portsmouth on 27th June.

27th January. Portsmouth gave a splendid send off to a 1.000 Royal Marines who had been selected for service in China. They embarked on the Transport **Minnesota** which left the next day. A contingent of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from Hulsea Barracks also left for the same destination.

14th September. The Lady Mayoress of London performed the christening ceremony at the launching from No. 5 slipway in the Dockyard of the new cruiser **HMS London**. Within six days the first keel plate of a new cruiser to be named **Dorsetshire** was laid on the same slipway by Mrs. L. A. B. Donaldson, wife of the Admiral Superintendent of the dockyard.

1928 17th July. **HMS “Victory”** restoration to Trafalgar condition completed and opened to the public by King George V.

1929 29th January. With the cheers of thousands of spectators the new cruiser **Dorsetshire** took to the water from No. 5 Slipway from where she had been launched by the Countess of Shaftesbury. She was to be the last of the County class cruisers to be built at Portsmouth A fourth ship; to be named **Surrey** was cancelled before being laid down.

22nd March. The famous marine artist Mr. W. L. Wyllie, RA. laid the foundation stone to the new naval museum that was situated at the harbour end of an old rigging shed and was to hold a panorama of the battle as seen from the stern windows of the 80 gun French ship **Neptune**. The panorama at the time was being painted by Wyllie with help from his daughter.

Scheme introduced to give Dockyard men six days leave with pay. From 1930 this leave was taken during the first week in August. Whilst the Dockyard was closed Navy Weeks were held.

1930 4th July. **New Semaphore Tower, Rangefinder Test House and Rigging House** was opened. It was rebuilt on the foundation of the 1778 Rigging House and Sail loft destroyed by fire in 1913. Under the Semaphore Tower the old Lion Gate (1778) was recreated to form “The Gateway to the Empire” leading on to South Railway Jetty. The mast to the Tower came from the German cruiser Nurnberg which had surrendered to the Grand fleet off May Island on 21st May 1918.

26th May. A un-precedented event occurred in the Dockyard. The flags of one Admiral of the Fleet, three Admirals, three Vice-Admirals and two Commodores all flew their flags. The occasion was the return of Admiral Sir Frederick Field from the Mediterranean to become First Sea Lord.

The Admiralty granted to all Dockyard employees a week’s holiday with full pay, the holiday to coincide with Navy Week which was the first week in August. Navy Week itself created another record attendance for no fewer than 137.000 people visited the Dockyard to see the ships and Dockyard side shows.

1st October. Due to over crowding at the Royal Marine Barracks at Eastney, the Royal Marine School of Music was transferred to Deal in Kent.

1931 **East Gate** opened in October.

30th September. The destroyers **Crusader** and **Comet** were christened and floated up from No. 13 Dry Dock where they had been built with the Mining School Tender **Nightingale**. They were the first destroyer to be built in a Royal Dockyard and proved to be lighter than the rest of the class due to welding the superstructure; they were also the cheapest of the class to be built. They were transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy in 1938 and became Ottawa and Restigouche.

1932 **HMS “Implacable”** (see 1949) and **“Foudroyant”** (see 1758) towed to Portsmouth and moored in Portsmouth Harbour.

6th July. The destroyer leader **Duncan** was christened and floated up from No. 8. Dry Dock where she was built. The naming ceremony was performed by Mrs L. G. Preston, wife of the Fourth Sea Lord. **Duncan** saw much hard service during the Second World War, sinking three German U-boats. But by the end of the war she was worn out and scraped in 1946 at Barrow.

1933 31st January. Saw the launching of the light cruiser **Neptune** from No.5 Slipway in the Dockyard. She commissioned for the Home Fleet 12th February 1934. The sinking of Neptune is one of the most tragect stories of the war. She was the senior ship of Force K, consisting of the cruisers **Neptune**, **Aurora**, and **Penelope** accompanied by the destroyers **Kandahar**, **Lance**, **Lively** and **Havock** operating from Malta. Just after midnight of the 19th December 1941 Neptune exploded a mine in her streamed paravanes. While manouvering a second mine blew her propeller and rudders away leaving her stopped. **Penelope** and **Aurora** coming up astern both exploded mines while trying to avoid **Neptune**, but were able to reach Malta. **Neptune** then drifted onto a third mine. **Kandahar** closed the stricken cruiser and in turn had her stern blown off by a mine. About two hours later another mine exploded under **Neptune’s** bridge and with in a few minutes she rolled over and sank. The senior ship was now **Penelope** and her captain and unable to reach **Neptune’s** survivors, who were still in the minefield and so had to leave them to their fate and return with the force to Malta. Over the next four days the survivors slowly slipped away until on the 23rd an Italian torpedo boat rescued Leading Seaman J. Walters, the sole survivor of **Neptune** crew of 764 Officers and men. **Kandahar** was sunk by the British destroyer **Jaguar** the following day after picking up her survivors.

1934 12th. January. Battleship **HMS Nelson** ran aground on Hamilton Bank just outside the harbour entrance; she was got off on the next tide. At one point the whole crew, assembled on the quarterdeck, were ordered to jump up and down in unison whilst the engines were astern in an attempt to get her off.

30th January. The destroyer leader **Exmouth** was christened. She was the last of the destroyers to be built in Portsmouth Dockyard. On 21st January 1940, she was torpedoed and sunk by the Germany U-boat U-22 at 4-45 in the morning while off Tarbet Ness, Moray Firth. When she slipped beneath those cold waters she took all her crew of 190 souls with her. Tragically her resting place was only

discovered in 2003.

1935 16th July. **King George V's Silver Jubilee Fleet Review.** There assembled 157 major warships over 60 merchant ships and hundreds of smaller craft it was an impressive show of strength.

1936 20th January. Death of King George V. at Sandringham Palace.

August. **Navy Week.** 206,752 people attended Navy Week at Portsmouth Dockyard visiting ships dockside shows and other attraction demonstrating the navy's power.

20th August. Lady Fisher, wife of the Commander-in-Chief launched the new light cruiser **Aurora** from No.5 slipway. The C-in-C said at the launch **Aurora** had been built with all the perfection of workmanship that Portsmouth Dockyard is renowned. She had a most active war career serving much of it in the Mediterranean, where she received damaged on a number of occasions, operating with the famous Force K. She was also at Salerno, in the Aegean, the landing in Southern France and the liberation of Athens. On the 19th May 1948 she was sold to Nationalist China and renamed **Chung King**, defecting to the communist and was renamed **Tchoung King**, but was sunk by Nationalist aircraft in Taku harbour in March 1949. She was later salvaged and re-named **Hsuang Ho, Pei Ching** and finally in 1951 **Kuang Chou.**

10th December. **The new King Edward VIII abdicated.** He spoke to the nation of his "final and irrevocable decision to give up his great heritage". In the darkness of the night this ex-king and freeman of the City of Portsmouth travelled by road to Portsmouth, entering the Dockyard by the Unicorn Gate and on down to the jetty where he embarked with out ceremony in the destroyer **Fury** and escorted by the destroyer **Wolfhound** sailed at 2 am. on 11th December.

Central Metallurgical Laboratory established in Dockyard.

1937 Dockyard Employees:-

Captain of the Port	644
Construction Dept	6,190
Engineering Dept	3,911
Electrical Dept	2,113
Naval Stores Dept	803
Civil Engineering Dept	1,241
Others	___59
Total	<u>14,961</u>

22th. May. **Coronation Review of the fleet** at Spithead by HM King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. 160 major warships assembled at Spithead including 17 foreign vessels for the Review by the new King in the Royal Yacht **Victoria and Albert.**

16th July. Portsmouth and Southampton civic authorities organise an exercise in which the dockyard and city was bombed with many casualties. Government ministers and many other cities and town throughout the country sent observers. It was the first of such exercises in the country.

August. The First Lord, Mr Duff Cooper DSO. M.P. opened Portsmouth's Navy Week and visited other naval establishments. He visited the site of the proposed new Naval Signal School off Northern Parade, The school had been in the naval barracks, but during the Second World War it moved out to Leydean House to become **HMS Mercury** and the Northern Parade site became the **HMS Phoenix** the navy fire fighting school. **HMS Phoenix** closed in 1997.

1938 **Victory Museum** (now Royal Naval Museum) opened including the Trafalgar panorama painted by W L Wylie assisted by his daughter. (see 1922).

28th May. The City Council adopted the recommendation of the Finance and General Purpose Committee to sell to the Admiralty 40.56 acres of land on the Western side of Northern Parade at the district values price of £72,000 for the purpose of erecting a Naval Signal School. This sum was subsequently reduced to £27,161.(See 1937)

23rd November. **Queen Maud of Norway** had died in a nursing home in London on 20th November. Her body lay in state at the Chapel at Marlborough House, St James' Palace until the afternoon of the 23rd when it was place on a special train to Portsmouth. Prior to departure from London, King Haakon, Crown Prince Olaf, and the King and Queen Mary and many other members of the Royal Family, went to the private Chapel to attend the last service in England for this Princess of Great Britain and Ireland. The special train that brought the coffin from London was met with full ceremony when it drew onto South Railway Jetty. The coffin was raised from the coach on which it rested by 6 Chief Petty Officers of the Royal Navy and two Sergeants of the Royal Marines and taken on board the battleship **Royal Oak**, going past a Guard of Honour from **HMS Excellent** who stood with arms reversed and the King's colours draped in black. The following day at one o'clock Dockyard tugs slowly pulled the battleship from the jetty an into mid-stream. From her stern flew the white ensign and the Norwegian flag flew from the Peak and from the main mast flew the Cross of St George, King Haakon's flag as an horary Admiral in the Royal Navy; All were at half mast as were all flags in the area. The battleships escort was the destroyers **Fame, Brilliant, Bulldog** and **Keith**. It was said to have been a most moving spectacle.

November. Brigadier W. Robb, M.C., succeeded Major-General B. L. Montgomery, DSO as Garrison Commander who had been very popular figure in the City.

MAJOR WAR AGAIN – THE STRUGGLE FOR EUROPE	
1939	<p>30th April. At the invitation of the C-in-C The City Council and their principle officer paid an official visit to the Dockyard Church. After robbing at Admiralty House, the Civic representatives walked in procession to the church and were received by the Admiral Superintendent (Rear-Admiral R. Ross Turner) and the Dockyard Chaplin (The Revd. E. S. Ulyet). After the service the City representatives were received at Admiralty House by the C-in-C and Lady Cork and Orrery.</p> <p>6th May. Last Royal Train to use South Railway Jetty when King George VI & Queen Elizabeth departed on an official visit to Canada and the United States of America on board the <i>Empress of Australia</i>. They returned to England on 22nd. June and were met at Spithead by Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret onboard the destroyer <i>Kempenfelt</i>.</p> <p>24th. June. Floating Dock was towed out of harbour by five dockyard tugs and two Dutch tugs followed astern to render assistance if necessary tug. For the journey the crew comprised of 70 men mainly from the Dockyard; she was towed to Malta.(See 1912)</p> <p>3rd. September at 11am. Great Britain declared war on Germany.</p> <p>4th September The City Chimes of the Guildhall clock were stopped in consequence of the introduction of war-time precaution.</p> <p>19th December King George VI made the first of his wartime visits to Portsmouth.</p> <p>The Pocket on the east side of No. 3 basin built.</p> <p>Additional storey added to No. 24 Store (see 1782).</p>
1939	21 September? – Duke and Duchess of Windsor arrived in Portsmouth at 9pm on board the Destroyer HMS <i>Kelly</i> (Mountbatten's ship) from France and stayed overnight at Admiralty House. They left for London the next morning.
1939	29 th September – The Duke and Duchess of Windsor arrive at Admiralty House from London. They left later on board the Destroyer <i>HMS Express</i> for Cherbourg. He had been given a war appointment in Bermuda.
1939	19 th December – the King came to Portsmouth and visited establishments in the area and had tea at Admiralty House before departing for London.
1939	20 th December – Admiral Darlan, the French First Sea Lord, and his staff came to Portsmouth and stayed the night at Admiralty House. They left for London the following day.
1939-45	<p>In 1940 the first diesel locomotive started work.</p> <p>The Dockyard suffered bomb damage and changes:-</p> <p>10th March. A very heavy raid by over 300 aircraft that lasted 7 hours, with very heavy damage done to the yard and a number of ships were also damaged. Trinity church is completely destroyed and the detention quarters were partially demolished and many of the factories put out of use.</p> <p>No. 10 Storehouse & Clock Tower destroyed by incendiaries in 1941</p>

	<p>(restored 1991/2).</p> <p>No. 6 Boathouse (1843) – bomb damage to east end (currently awaiting restoration).</p> <p>St. Ann’s Church – north west end destroyed by bombing on 3rd May 1941. Church later restored 16ft shorter in 1955. The bell cupola and bells were destroyed. (see 1785).</p> <p>Statue of Capt Scott suffered from bomb splinter damage (cleaned and repaired in situ in January 1968).</p> <p>HMS “Victory” in No. 2 Dock was bomb damaged.</p> <p>15 and 16 Store, in Anchor Lane both damaged by bombs in 1940/41. No. 14 Storehouse destroyed.</p> <p>Royal Academy bombed in 1940. Serious damage to the South wing that caused the western wall to lean forward by over twelve and allowing the cupola to sag. It was shore up for the duration of the war. The School of Navigation moved out to Southwich House. In 1950 Mr Hodgeman offered to re-plumb the wall and pick up the sagging dome. This remarkable engineering feat was successful. (see 1729-32).</p> <p>Admiralty House (see 1784-86) bombed in 1940/41 destroying the main staircase and the Victorian ballroom. The C-in-C moved to HMS “Victory” for the rest of the war to direct Portsmouth Command.</p>	
1940	Full scale ARP (Air Raid Preclusion) exercise held in Portsmouth attended by the Home Secretary, Mr Anderson, who the corrugated air raid shelters were named after.	
1940	19 th May – the Queen of Holland came to Portsmouth to visit Dutch ships that had come to Portsmouth to avoid capture by the Germans i.e. 1 cruiser, 1 half completed cruiser, 3 submarines and many smaller craft. She had tea in Admiralty House.	
1940	21 st May – the Commander-in-Chief Portsmouth receives the signal to prepare for withdrawing the Army from France. Rapid survey of all small craft in home waters followed. “Dynamo” the evacuation code word was received on the 26 th and on the 29 th the strange armada of assorted craft left Portsmouth for Dover.	
1940	25 th May – Parachute mines laid by the German aircraft in both the Western and Eastern channels. On the 30 th they were also laid off the Nab Tower.	
1940	29 th May. Armada of small ships set off for Dunkirk. The ships included destroyers, motor torpedo boats, minesweepers, IOW ferry “ Whippingham ”, Hayling Island Ferries, Pickfords coasters, yachts and fishing vessels. An estimated 340,000 soldiers were brought off the beaches but many ships were lost including IOW Ferry “ Gracie Fields ”.	
1940	6 th June – HMS Nelson that had been in Portsmouth having repairs to mine damage left the Dockyard at slow speed while minesweepers swept the channel. As she passed through the boom and turned south they exploded two mines but Nelson passed through the shallow waters safely.	
1940	8 th June – Portsmouth prepared a small armada of 200 boats from south coast ports to evacuate the 51 st Highland division from St Valery. They had been attached to the French army who would not give permission for the withdraw.	

	<p>By 11th June 51st Division situation was critical. In the end it was left too late and only 1,500 British and French soldiers were rescued.</p>	
1940	<p>3rd. July. There were many French warships in the harbour including one battleship which had come to Portsmouth to escape the Germans. With the fall of France it was feared that these ships would return to France and be of use to the enemy. Using two battalions of infantry from the garrison, 1000 armed sailors and 500 Royal Marines all the French vessels were boarded simultaneously in the early hours of the morning and their crews removed. Using the Isle of Wight steamers, 6000 French sailors were taken to Southampton for passage back to France.</p> <p>Interestingly we find that Admiralty Fleet Order. 2307. Dated 27/11/1941 All ratings of French nationality serving in the Royal Navy are to be transferred to the Portsmouth Port Division as from 1st December 1941.</p>	
	<p>Round Tower (eastern end of Fountain Lake Jetty) was used as an air raid observation post where a painted representation of Portsmouth was created inside the perimeter of the parapet. This was painted out during the 1964 restoration.</p> <p>Main Gate (“Victory Gate” built in 1711) widened in 1942. Wrought iron arch and lantern removed.</p> <p>Royal Clarence Yard - many buildings damaged by bombing in 1940.</p> <p>Frederick Street, Gloucester Street and Marlborough Row, Portsea taken into the Dockyard between 1938 and 1944 (5 acres). Marlborough Gate, originally built in 1711 moved to the apex at Bonfire Corner.</p> <p>Air attacks – 11th July 1940 – 1 bomb in the Pocket north of D Lock and a stick in Fountain Lake with ex French vessel “Savorgnan de Brazza” damaged by near miss.</p> <p>12 August 1940 – major attack. Near miss damaged floating crane in No. 3 Basin; damage to road at the south east corner of the Basin destroyed services and railway track and cut telephone lines; extensive damage around C Lock and between Pitch House and South Railway jetties with 3 Dockyard workers killed and 17 injured. Bomb in No. 1 Basin.</p> <p>24 August 1940 – HMS “Acheron” lying off the North West Wall disabled in stern; 3 bombs at west end of D Lock; in the Block Mills a bomb penetrated underground reservoir and killed 65 Dockyard workers using it as a shelter; HMS “Vernon” 3 HE bombs hit trench shelters and wounded 6 ratings.</p> <p>10 September 1940 – Small raid on HMS “Dolphin”.</p> <p>20th September. The Southern Railway Steamer s.s Portsdown blew up and sank off Southsea Beach. Eight of the crew and an unknown number of passengers were missing. It was believed she hit a mine.</p> <p>5 December 1940 – 2 major fires in Dockyard, one at South Railway Jetty and the other in No. 8 Dock which badly damaged ex US destroyer HMS</p>	

1941	<p>“Cameron”, which was declared a loss; fires at HMS “Vernon” and at Royal Clarence Yard.</p> <p>6 December 1940 – Chain Cable Test House badly damaged by a direct hit.</p> <p>17th December. The destroyer HMS Acheron That had had her stern blown off in the bombing of the 24th August was repaired and running trials just south of the Isle of Wight when she hit a mine and sank with heavy loss of life.</p> <p>23rd. December. Tremendous explosion near the Unicorn gate that left a hugh crafter and did much damage to the surrounding area. I was believed to have been a German aircraft load with bombs that had been hit and cashed.</p> <p>10th January. Air raid lasted from 7-30 until 2 in the morning. The City and Dockyard very badly hit with much damage, numerous fires and large numbers of casualties.</p> <p>11 March 1941 – “Admiralty House” twice hit by bombs. Admiral James moved HQ to HMS “Victory” when a bomb exploded on 17th April.</p> <p>10th March 1941 – Floating Dock sunk in a direct hit from a bomb. In January 200 incendiary bombs had fallen on fort Blockhouse.</p> <p>Over 200,000 sq ft of storage space containing food were destroyed by Royal Clarence Yard and the remaining stores were then dispersed to Guildford, Godalming and Swindon.</p> <p>18th April. 1941 – Northwest corner of St. Ann’s Church wrecked by a bomb. Also bombed a fortnight later.</p> <p>3rd April. The Admiralty announced the spirited defence by the Naval Paddle Sweeper Lorna Doone that before the war was well known as a pleasure steamer in the Solent. She was attacked by three German aircraft and shot one down, damaging another and driving off the thirds.</p> <p>Between 11 May and 23rd October 1940 Portsmouth suffered 30 attacks by enemy aircraft. The worst air raid on the City was on the night of 10 & 11th January 1941 when 300 raiders dropped 25,000 incendiary bombs leaving 28 major and 2,314 other fires. The last air raid was in May 1944.</p>	
1942	<p>1st July. Admiralty Floating Dock No.18 was launched from No. 5 Slipway.</p> <p>August 1942 – Dieppe Raid mounted from here proved a disaster with large casualties. But many valuable lesson were learnt which was to bear fruit on the 6th June D-Day.</p> <p>12th October. King George makes his fourth visit to the Dockyard and town since the beginning of the war. In the Naval Barracks he takes the salute as 6,000 men</p>	

	<p>of the Royal Navy who march passed 12 deep. Queen Street saw the massing of sailors and civilian to cheer the King; while at the Main Gate (Victory Gate) Dockyard men gave the King a tremendous reception. He stops to inspect the new midget submarine being built in No. 4 Boathouse. The high spot was a review of 25 coastal craft from HMS Hornet in the harbour.</p> <p>In 1942 the citizens of Portsmouth collected £1,200,000 in Warship Week which helped pay for the cruiser HMS “Sirius” that was built at Portsmouth Dockyard. She was launched on 18th September 1940. Her construction was delayed by damage caused by German Bombing and was not completed until 6th. May 1942. HMS “Sirius” has been the adopted ship of the City.</p>	
1943	<p>9th March. The Lady Lord Mayoress of Portsmouth Lady Margaret Daley launches Admiralty Floating Dock No. 21 from No. 5 slipway in the Dockyard.</p> <p>19th March. The submarines Tireless and Token built in No. 13 Dry Dock were floated up and completed in 1944.</p> <p>1st July. Miss Clark the sister of Vice Admiral Sir Michael Llewelly Clark KB.DSO. Admiral Superintendent of the Dockyard laid the keel plate on No. 5 Slipway to the new cruiser Hawk. This ship was cancelled in March 1946 and broken up on the slipway.</p>	
	OPERATION OVERLORD AND NEPTUNE.	
1944	<p>6th. June. D-day As “Overlord” gained momentum so the work of the dockyard became more involved and this affected not only those who were employed directly on ships but also those who serviced the dockyard and the many establishments of the Portsmouth Command that now extended from Cumberland in the North to parts of the Midlands, to Portland in the West and Newhaven in the East. The role of the Dockyard in Overlord was so crucial and diverse that some of the activities are worth relating.</p> <p>The Weather. The Mulberry harbours were designed to withstand winds corresponding to a force 6. This was arrived at through two elements. The Meteorologist reported that winds stronger than force 6 rarely occurred in the Channel during the month of June. Secondly although a wind state of force 8 was the desired target this would have complicated the construction and many units would not have been ready in time. When the great storm arrived it was the worst storm to strike the Channel in forty years. There were two Mulbury Harbours A, and B. Harbour “A” was for the Americans and “B” was for the British and they consisted of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There were 60 blockships. 2. Nearly 150 concrete Phoenix caissons. 3. Just over 100 floating breakwaters. 4. 7 Miles of pier roadways. <p>To keep them safe, Phoenix had to be sunk on a flat sea bed or they would break (an example of this can be seen today in Langstone Harbour.) Dungeness and Selsey were chosen as the reception areas..... Addition parking areas were found at Peel Bank, Marchwood and in the Solent /Spithead anchorages for</p>	

nearly five miles of floating roadway.....The metal roadway ran over succession of concrete barges called “ **Beetles**” every sixth span was telescoped to allow for the twisting and sagging in bad weather.....the seaward end of the floating roadway was secured to “**Spuds**” These were square floating platforms with a steel leg in each corner, which when in position the legs were lower to the sea bed and the platform allowed to float up and down with the tide. This system was designed by Major-General D.J.McMullen and his deputy Brigadier Bruce White.

“**Grasshopper**” This was the name given to the **Landing Craft Rocket. LCT(R)** when it was in its embryo stage. The plan was to fire between 800-1000 rockets. The problem was how many rockets could be discharged at one time. The first test was carried out at Spithead in bad weather on 11th. April 1943. 198 rockets were fired in groups of 33 at half second intervals. The build up of heat set fire to paint work, melted electrical cables and was in danger of cooking the crew. The blast was so great that the landing craft was being driven backward through the sea. The following day 759 rockets were fired in batches of 33. Temperature in the well of the boat rose to 800 degrees. A fault in the electrical circuit fired two batches simultaneously and the temperature rose to just over a 1000 degrees. Trials were again conducted on the 28th April with similar results. Finally the solution was partly found in flooding the well deck during firing. The rocket craft became a powerful weapon in the D-day arsenal and one craft could discharge 1080 rocket in to an area 750 yards long by 240 yards wide. 18 of these vessels were converted in the Dockyard.

Large numbers of **LCT (III)** were fitted with ramp extensions for launching DD tanks (swimming tanks) after many experiments had been carried out in the Dockyard.

Conversion of **LCT (V)** to **LCT (A)** after the prototype of this vessel had been developed and produced in the Dockyard. (*V = Vehicle, A = Assault*)

P.L.U.T.O. (Pipe line under the Ocean)

Hamel pipe line. 3.5 Out side diameter used by Conuns and **Persephone**.

Hais pipe line 4.5 inch out side diameter used by cable laying ships.

Persephone first trial April 1943 laying 2-inch wire.

June 4th. First laying of 2-inch pipe in Solent. **Phersephone** laid 16 in no. 3-inch pipes across the Solent.

CONUN Drums were 60 ft. long by 50 ft. in diameter. First trial lay in August 1943. After which a further 5 drums were ordered from weight of drums 300 tons. Construction was given to Messre. Orthostyle Ltd. Who constructed all the **CONUM** drums in a prefabricated form at their works in Scunthorpe and erected at the Hamel factory at Tilbury docks.

Tugs **Bustler** and **Marauder** were used for towing CONUM.

.....

Hais Cable Ships.

First ship was **SS.London**, later renamed **HMS. Holdfast** and was completed October 1942. first laid cable from Swansea to Ilfracombe in December 1942. Other vessels taken over for the task were **S.S. Empire Baffin, Empire Ridley** and **Algerian**. The first two of these vessels were renamed **HMS. Sancroft** and **Latimer** and could carry 100 miles of 3-inch Hais pipeline. At that time they were the largest cable ships in the world.

Five Thames motor barges were converted being named **Britannic, Oceanic, Runic, Golden Bell**, and **Gold Drift**. Also dumb barges and other auxiliary craft were used for inshore work.

Two Hamel pipe lines were laid from Cherbougne to Sandown and eleven Hais pipe lines were laid from Dungeness to Boulogne.

Total delivery was just over 600.000 tons or 3.500 tons per day of petrol and aviation spirit.

20 Phoenix Caissons were built in **C** and **D locks** and the floating dock. These were mainly built by contractors with dockyard assistance.

Swiss Roll. The designs for the floating mat roadways were developed by the dockyard and trials carried out in the locks and tidal basin. The original idea was developed by Ronald Marsden Hamilton in a bombed out wing of the Grosvenor Hotel, London.

Considerable work performed on the development of **Bombardon** both rigid and flexible type which was known as lylo. These were to form break-waters for the Mulbury Harbours.

Hedgerows. 18 LCA's were converted with hedgerows (Forward throwing mortars.) Equipment and an additional 10 were converted from short range to long range equipment.

Inflatable Balloons for lifting damaged landing craft was developed in No. 4 boathouse.

HMS. Persephone and **PLUTO** (Pipe line under the ocean). Considerable experimental work on continuous welding was undertaken by the Dockyard for this task and also the conversion of **HBW 24**. (Named **Persephone**) to carry and lay out the submarine pipe line to convey petrol across the Channel. The first experiment was carried out across the Solent.

In addition the dockyard was responsible for providing an extra 3000 berths in the area and 2300 extra moorings all for shipping.

To cope with the additional work load of "Overlord" and "Neptune" and extra 29.000 billets had to be found in the Command.

Note: **Overlord** was the code name for the Invasion of Europe. **Neptune** was the code name for the naval part of Overlord.

The Armaments Department at Gosport set aside 20.000 tons of ammunition for the bombarding forces of "Neptune". (More than was used in the first Gulf War).

The Victualing Department at Priddy's Hard, in the run-up to D-Day supplied to the waiting forces:-

20.000 tons of water per day.
23.000 pounds of bread per day.

400 tons of potatoes per week.
100 tons of meat per week.
50 tons of fresh vegetables per week.

In consequence of this the lightering services of the Port was greatly increased in numbers. The movement of these craft in and out of the harbour became so congested that on the 5th June a traffic light system by night and flags by day was introduced, confining the flow of traffic either into harbour or out of the harbour.

The dockyard was heavily involved in setting up 13 additional maintenance bases many with slipways within the Portsmouth Command.

Storage became a major problem. Additional 1.172.000 square feet of storage had to be found as well as an additional 1.100 separate holding sites within Southern England.

The number of ships dealt with by the Dockyard for refits, boiler cleaning, and armament changes etc. during this period:-

Battleships, Cruisers, Monitors, Destroyers and Fleet minesweepers.....	88
Landing Ship Tank (LST).....	16
Landing Craft Tank (LST).....	186
Trawler, Drifters and Boom Defences vessels.....	30
Miscellaneous craft. Oil tankers, Dredgers Survey and Yard craft.....	53
Coastal Forces.....	54

In the months between June and July 1944, 418 various landing craft received assistance from the Dockyard.

HMS Centurion, Durban, and HMNS Sumatra were prepared as blockships in the Dockyard.

HMS Dispatch, Largs, Hilary and Bulolo were converted as Headquarter ships for Force Commanders while in the Dockyard.

Post D-Day. There was a period of calm and operations such as supply, casualty reception and marshalling prisoners of war were dealt with. By the 10th of June numbers of damaged ships returning to Portsmouth steadily increased. During the weeks after D-day work on the following was undertaken:-

	<u>Under Repair</u>	<u>Dry Docked</u>
Cruisers, Destroyers and Fleet Minesweepers	76	15
LST.	44	22
LCT.	247	203
Trawlers, Drifters etc.	65	16
Miscellaneous craft.	25	13
Coastal forces.	56	33

Large scale repairs were carried out to the following vessels, which were patched up for completion elsewhere:-

Rattlesnake, Wrestler, La Surprise, Halstead, Pink, Persian, Kellet, Trollope, USS Nelson, LST 359, Fury, Goatland, Apollo and Scylla.

The Admiralty Testing Tank Department at Haslar was almost continually at work on testing models and other experiments for PLUTO, Phoenix Caissons and many other aspects of the Mulberry Harbours and invasion craft involved.

18th April. The submarines **Thor and Tiara** that had been built in No. 13 Dry Dock were floated up. Their fitting out was stopped in 1945 and they were discarded in 1946 and 1947 respectively.

King George VI reviewed ships taking part in "Operation Overload" in late May.

5th June. General Eisenhower visited troops embarking from South Parade Pier.

6th June D-DAY

.16 June 1944 – King George VI sailed aboard **HMS "Arethusa"** to visit the Normandy beaches.

15th July. The last serious raid on Portsmouth when a V.1. (Doogolebug) crashes in Necomen Rd. Stamshaw. Sadly the author was a small boy attending Stamshaw school at this time and one of his friends was killed in this air raid. All the school pupils collected their half-pennies and farthings and bought a framed picture of Christ knocking at the door. It was mounted in the main hall of the school with a candle that was always alight, for all the children that had died in the town. Sadly a visit to the school many years later to see the work of my grand-children; nobody in the school knew anything about it or the barrage balloon manned by WAC's that was in the play ground. The WAC girls, who gave us boys bits of the barrage balloon all seemed to have long blond hair and big thick red lipstick.....(At the tender age of 8 I fell in love for the first time in my life.)

It is worth now to reflect on the implications of the German bombing campaign on the Dockyard which involved the City.

Air Raids.

There were 1581 Air raid alerts which caused disruption of work and loss of sleep. 67 major air raids in which most of the damage to the City and Dockyard occurred.

Bombs recorded to have fallen on to the City. Many hundreds more fell into the harbour and surrounding sea and are not recorded.

1320 heavy High explosive bombs.

38.000 incendiaries.

38 parachute land mines.

Since the end of the war many bombs have been discovered during building work in the City or have been dredged up in the harbour or basins of the Dockyard.

Casualties not counting service personnel.

930 killed.

2837 injured.

Many with minor injuries were treated by local G.P.'s and were not recorded.

Damage in flocks not counting buildings within government establishments

	<p>such as the Dockyard.</p> <p>6625 properties totally destroyed. 6549 properties seriously damaged. 68,886 properties slightly damaged.</p> <p>Civilian protection. 24,000 Anderson Shelters were built in Portsmouth mainly in dwelling house gardens. 3,200 brick shelters were built in gardens where the water table was too high to permit Anderson shelters to be built. 800 basements to buildings were strengthened to form air raid shelters. Community shelter was built for 5,000 people.</p> <p>Civilian population. At the height of the bombing campaign over 8000 civilians were employed in Air Raid Precaution (ARP) work such as civil defence, fire watch, look-outs, air raid wardens, first aid or red cross, ambulance service, rescue parties, welfare services and WVS, Headquarter and messenger service, Auxiliary fire service etc. This does not include the Home Guard which in Portsmouth by 1944 had strength of 5,400 officers and men. All the above duties were over and above the individual's normal work.</p>
<p>1945</p>	<p>1st October. The Boom Defence Vessel <i>Rogate</i>, began to remove the Sea Gates that had kept the harbour safe from surface attacks during the war. There were three Sea Booms one stretched from Lumps Fort to Nettlestone Point, Isle of Wight. The second Boom stretched across the Needles Passage from Durns Point to Hamstead Ledge, with <i>Cherwell</i> as the gate vessel later replaced by <i>Silva</i>. The third and inner Boom was held in readiness at the Round Tower Old Portsmouth, to be hauled across to Fort Blockhouse in an emergency. The <i>Rogate</i> had been on duty for eight years.</p> <p>From 3rd September 1939 until the end of the second World War the Dockyard had Dry Docked 2,548 vessels of all classes.</p>

**PEAC
E**

- 1946 7th August. **The 'D' Day map** in what was the Naval war room at *HMS Dryad*, Southwick Park, was preserved as a permanent memorial, and the ceremony of its unveiling as a memorial was performed by Admiral of the Fleet Sir George Creasy, CB, CBE, DSO, MVO. The map measures 20ft x 14ft. and is encased behind glass it was made in the dockyard.
- 1946 29th November. Two men were killed and 13 injured in a violent petrol fume explosion in the War Department ship *Maxwell Brander*. The vessel was a tank landing craft taken over by the War Department as a Royal Army Service Corps vessel and was under going a refit in the dockyard.
- 1946 13th August. The last of the *Fisgard* hulk in service was sold for scrape. She was formerly *HMS Sultan* (1870) and was hulked and converted into a "Boy Artificer" training school. During the Second World War she became headquarter ship to the minesweeping squadrons operating from Portsmouth.
- 19th December. The swing bridge connecting the Railway Viaduct at Portsmouth Harbour Station to South Railway Jetty in the dockyard was lifted out of position and subsequently reduced to scrape. The bridge had been damaged during the war.
- 1946 15th May. At 7 pm. All the ships in the harbour dipped their ensign in a farewell salute as the colours were hauled down for the last time on board the battleship *HMS Queen Elizabeth* after 34 years service through two world wars. The Royal Marine band beat retreat prior to the ceremony and finished with 'Auld Lang Syne'. She was moored at North Slip Jetty almost across the old slipway from where she first entered the harbour waters on 16th October 1913. The following month she was towed away for scrapping
- 1946 The bombed out buildings that once formed **Clarence Barrack**, Southsea was transformed into the first permanent home for members of the W.R.N.S. at Portsmouth. By permission of the King the portion of the barracks occupied by the Wrens was re-named '**Duchess of Kent Barracks**
- 1947 27th March. **Reserve Fleet**. The Evening News, Portsmouth reports that there 70 warships lying in the creeks of Portsmouth Harbour as part of the Royal Navy's reserve fleet in other bases there:- Harwich 99, Plymouth 80, Forth approx 60, the Clyde 15, Sheerness 23, Chatham 20 and Pembroke 50.
- On 1st February the King, Queen, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret sailed aboard HMS "Vanguard" for a Royal tour of South Africa.
- 1949 1st. December. *HMS "Implacable"* (see 1932), towed out of Portsmouth on and was scuttled off the Owers lightship. Bombing broke up main deck which continued to float. The ship had fought at Trafalgar and was the last two decker in the world.
- 1949 *HMS Implacable* formerly the French ship DuguayTronin She was laid down at Rochefort in 1797. Launch 1801, and captured by the British in 1805 after

escaping from Trafalgar.

1st October. At the end of the War the Chief Constable at the Admiralty had three police forces under his control: **Royal Marine Police**, **Royal Marine Police Special Reserve** and the **Admiralty Civil Police** in hospitals. On the 1st October these three separate forces , acting under different codes of discipline were merged into one Police Force under the Chief Constable as the **Admiralty Constabulary** .

1950 14th July. Enormous explosion in Ammunition barges at Beddenham. An estimated 5,000 tons of explosives exploded but no one was killed although there was damage to property.

1950 11th December **Winston Churchill** receives the Freedom of the City. In his reply to the Freedom address he said “Portsmouth is the main cradle of the Royal Navy. Portsmouth has always been the centre of the Naval power of Britain.

1951 17th April. **HMS Affray** fails to respond to signals as time drifted on she was given up for lost along with her crew. She was found on 14th June in 200ft of water on the edge of the Hurd Deep in the English Channel. Most of her crew had come from the Portsmouth area and there was great sadness that a modern submarine could be lost without explanation.

11th July. **The statue of Lord Nelson** presented to the City by Dr. H. J. Aldous was erected in Pembroke Gardens and unveiled by the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Arthur Power.

1952 Dockyard railway comprised 27 miles of track (see 1849).

1953 25th March. Keel laying Ceremony of the new Anti Aircraft Frigate **Leopard** by Mrs. A. G. V. Hubback, wife of the Admiral Superintendent, when she switched on an automatic welding set that join two weldments together and thus performed the then modern equivalent of the traditional keel laying ceremony to the great joy of the spectators. After the ceremony the guest were accommodated for lunch in a screened off area of No. 3 Shipbuilding Shop.

15th. June. Coronation Review at Spithead by HM. Queen Elizabeth II. There was 14 miles of ships moored for the Review and over 300 aircraft from the Fleet Air Arm flew in formation past their Queen.

1955 23rd May. The launching of **HMS Leopard**. She was the first warship to be built in Portsmouth after the war and the first all welded to be built in the yard. The launch was performed by Princess Marie Louise, in perfect weather and with an audience of over 10.000 people. The Princess borrowed a coin in order to pay for the scissors which she used to perform the naming ceremony. She was broken up in 1978.

1956 Lt Cdr L P K Crabb RNVR disappeared on 19th April, believed drowned in Portsmouth harbour, whilst trying to obtain information about the Russian cruiser “**Ordzhonikidze**”, berthed at South Railway Jetty during a visit with Marshal Bulganin and Nikita Krushev.

1958 14th January. **HMS “Victorious”** re-commissioned after a £20 million refit.

She came in hand in the Dockyard on 10th October 1950 and was dry docked in D. Lock on 12th December 1950. It was not until 12th December 1955 that she took to the water again.

13th. October. **HMS Hornet** the Coastal Force Base at Haslar is closed. It started life during the First World War and at different period in its early life came under the command of both **Dolphin** and **Vernon** until established as an independent command. During the Second World war it was used by hundreds of Motor Torpedo Boats, Motor Gunboats and Motor Launches patrolling or raiding the French coast.

1959 23rd. March. **HMS Rhyl** launched from the Dockyard.

Royal Marines given Freedom on the City (RM left Portsmouth in 1991).

1960 **Great Ropehouse**, until this date the longest building in Europe (1095 ft 8 ½ ins), was divided into two, gutted, restored and the roof replaced. (Now No. 18 Store).

4th August. **HMS "Vanguard"** last modern British battleship grounded in harbour entrance alongside the Still & West public house. Whilst being towed to the breakers at Faslane. She was re-floated on the same tide. She arrived at Faslane on the 9th.

13th. March **Admiralty Floating Dock 59** launched. The 400ft long Dock was built in dry dock to suit destroyers, frigates and nuclear submarines.

6th September. **HMS Nubian** launched from No 5 Slipway.

1962 Last steam locomotive in dockyard retired from service. From this date diesel engines took over (see 1940). Three steam locomotives were retained for use as mobile dockside boilers and were finally sold in 1972.

1963 Ice formed in shallow waters of Portsmouth Harbour during 2 month freeze.

1st April. After 168 years of service with the Admiralty the **Navy Works Department** was transferred to the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works.

1964 15th January. Saw the departure of C.1. (Coal Lighter No.1.) from Portsmouth harbour. C.1. was the World's largest coal lighter. Built under an Admiralty contract by Swan, Hunter & Wigham 1901 and launched on 27th February 1902; coming to Portsmouth on 23rd June 1904. She had the capacity to handle 12,000 tons of coal to hungry warships and for many years was a familiar sight in the harbour. She was towed to Hendik Ido, Ambacht, in the Netherlands and broken up.

1,300 Shipwrights employed in the Dockyard at this date.

22nd September. Launch of **HMS Sirius** by Lady Woods from No. 5 slipway in the Dockyard (see 1939-45, 1990).

- 1966 Search for “**Mary Rose**” commenced. (See 1509, 1536, 1545, 1967, and 1982).
Floating Dock for ‘Polaris’ submarines completed after 2 years work.
Central Office Block 1 opened.
- 1967 “**Mary Rose**” wreck re-discovered (see 1509, 1536, 1545, 1966 and 1982).
24th May. Launch of **HMS “Andromeda”**, Leander Class frigate, the last RN Warship to be built in the Dockyard. Since 1547 at least 343 named ships were built in Portsmouth Dockyard. From 1900 to 1965 the Dockyard had built 12 battleships, 10 cruisers, 4 destroyers, 7 submarines, 5 frigates, and 21 other craft.
Statue of William III restored and re-gilded, (see 1718).
- 1969 8th February. The Block Mills finally closes. Block making continued in the dockyard but on a smaller scale and was transferred to the first floor of No. 6 Boathouse.
Queen Elizabeth II reviewed NATO Fleet of 63 ships at Spithead.
9th September. The first females were indentured as Electrical Apprentices.
- 1970 **Dockyard Technical College** closed after 127 years.
31st July. Naval Rum issue abolished.
- 1971 15th September. Flag Officers of the Royal Navy holding positions of Admiral Superintendents at Royal Dockyards were restyled as Port Admirals.
HRH Prince Charles joined Royal Navy as 2nd Officer of the Watch aboard HMS “**Norfolk**” (see 1977).
- 1972 Last Dockyard steam locomotive scrapped. (See 1977).
Collection of Nelsonian memorabilia donated to the Royal Naval Museum by Mrs John McCarthy CBE.
Nautical paraphernalia comprising of mooring anchors, ground chain, and propellers etc. were sited in Queen St. which at on time was known as Admiralty Road.
- 1973 **Central Office Block II** opened in March. The building is 200ft. x 42.6” and has seven floors which provide accommodation for the Design Division Staff, records, and printing section. Also included are facilities for training, conferences and staff amenities. Construction was commenced in September 1970 and completed in March 1973 at a cost of £650,000.
3rd. March. The **Boiler Shop** closed its doors for the last time. The increasing use of gas turbine engines in naval propulsion had meant less work for the Boilermakers who move to smaller premises.
April. The old **Timber Saw Mills** closed along with the old **Saw Sharpening Sheds**.

- 1974 **Amalgamated Pipe Shop** opened.
- 1975 Civic Trust award for the City Architects restoration of Southsea Castle (see 1538-44, 1628, 1759 and 1978).
- 1976 11th February. The **New Combined Workshop** was opened by Chief of Fleet Support, Vice Admiral Sir Peter White. This building became known as the **Heavy Plate Shop**.

Royal Marines Museum, Eastney Barracks won commendation.
- 1977 28th June. Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee and Fleet Review of 180 ships of 18 nations in 10 lines seven miles long.

HRH Prince Charles took command of Coastal Minesweeper HMS **Bronington** (see 1971).
- 1977 30th. November. **Last British Rail train left Dockyard**. Track from Unicorn Gate to town Station removed 12 April 1978. Last diesel engine ceased working in the yard in 1979. (See 1843, 1846, 1876, 1972).

Cranes dismantled in preparation for filling in No 1, 2 & 5 slipways.
- 1978 26th May. **Haslar Gunboat Yard closes**. It was sited in Haslar Creek at Gosport and came under Ship Group 1 of the Dockyard. It was originally built 1856-58. The last vessel un-slipped was **MFV 119**.

Dockyard workforce 8,325.

“Europa Nostra” Award for conservation work in Southsea Castle won by City Architect/Director of Museums.

1980 Demolition of the oldest surviving iron arched building, **Ship Shop No.3** in the Dockyard. It was built in 1844 as a cover to the shipbuilding slipways.

Part of the Dockyard (including the present Naval Base Heritage Area) and the Hard Declared an Outstanding Conservation Area. (The only Outstanding Conservation Area which includes a working MOD establishment).

FALKLANDS WAR

1981 25th June Mr Nott, Defence Minister announced severe contraction if Portsmouth Dockyard and closure of Chatham Dockyard by 1984. Proposed reduction of Dockyard labour force from 7,200 to 1,200 (see 1984)

7th July. Men and women from Portsmouth Dockyard travel to London to join in with men from other defence establishment to lobby Parliament over the proposed defence cuts.

9th September. The Secretary of State for Defence, Mr. John Nott made a visit to the Dockyard and tried to address a crowd of up to 2,000 employees outside of Central Office Block 1. As he emerged from the entrance he was booed, jeered and met with a barrage of missiles. After a period of time and waiting for the crowd to disperse (which it didn't) he was smuggled out of the rear of the building. It came in the same week that 178 apprentices who had just finished their time were discharged from the Yard.

1982 2nd April. At 2-45am while the people of Portsmouth slept the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher received a message informing her of the Argentina's impending invasion. "Operation Corporate" (Falklands War 1st April to 14th June) Started with the sailing of HMS "**Invincible**" & HMS "**Hermes**" on 5th April. One third of the ships involved were prepared at Portsmouth. Dockyard labour force, already under threat of redundancies worked long hours. Portsmouth ship HMS "**Sheffield**" was hit by Exocet missiles on 4th May with the loss on 20 of her crew. She sank under tow on 11th May.

21st July. Ecstatic scenes in Portsmouth Harbour as Flagship of the Falklands Islands War, Task Force, HMS "**Hermes**" returns to her home port. Since leaving Portsmouth on 5th April she had spent 108 days continually at sea steaming over 35,000 miles.

17th September the Queen welcomed home Prince Andrew, serving as a helicopter pilot aboard HMS "**Invincible**".

Government announced plans to close HMS "**Phoenix**" in 1984, HMS "**Excellent**", HMS "**Vernon**" with **Fraser Gunnery Range** to close in 1986.

11th October. "**Mary Rose**" which sank off Southsea Castle in July 1545 successfully raised and installed in No. 3 Dock. Prince Charles witnessed the raising on 11th as the culmination of sixteen years of underwater archaeology. Over 10,000 Tudor artefacts were recovered from the wreck on display in Boathouse No. 5 in the "**Mary Rose**" temporary cover erected in 1982. Both attraction open to the public.

1983 26th July. The new Fleet Maintenance Facility at North Corner was opened by Admiral Sir William Staveley, Commander-in-Chief Fleet. This new facility was staffed mainly by RN personnel.

August. The **Hose Makers Shop** closes and the last hose-maker, Mr. Walter Foster retires. During the war the Hose Maker's Shop produced over 10,000

hoses a year.

31st October. The last Foreman of the Foundry, Mr Ken Snook turned the key for the last time on the closure of the **Iron Foundry and Pattern-Makers shop**.

1984 11th March. All the Dry Docks linked to No.1 Basin were declared surplus the future requirements of the fleet.

1st October. **Portsmouth Royal Dockyard became Fleet Maintenance and Repair Base**. Staff reduced to 2,800 (see 1981).

Prince Charles opened "**Mary Rose**" **Museum** in No. 5 Boathouse (see 1882).

1985 In December "**Holland I**" salvaged of Eddystone Lighthouse and brought to the Submarine Museum Gosport (see 1902).

The 250 ton hammer head crane that had dominated the Portsmouth sky line since 1912 was demolished

1986 **The Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust** was set up to take on the lease of the Heritage Area (in the Naval Base) that was to become known as **Portsmouth Historic Dockyard** and find new uses for the historic buildings that would safeguard their future and attract more visitors to the area.

1987 16th. June. Arrival of **HMS "Warrior"**, (1860) ironclad, and the only surviving British battleship. She had suffered years of neglect since being laid up in 1883 for use as part of HMS "*Vernon*". The ship was superbly restored at Hartlepool from 1979 to 1987. Mr John Smith MP largely paid for the restoration which cost £7 million.

19th October. **HMS Swiftsure** became the First Nuclear Submarine to be dry docked at Portsmouth in C Lock. The Lock and dock side was specially adapted to cater for the needs of Nuclear submarines.

1988 26th May. **Round the Basin Race**. 157 runners took part in a race around No.3 Basin (a distance of 1½miles) to raise money for Queen Alexandra Hospital Body Scanner Appeal. The race grew out of a race by two engine fitters two months earlier, Terry Gray and Bob Day who met over the distance and raised £205.

1989 **No. 7 Dock** filled in.

21st January. The last underwater dive by a dockyard diver using the standard diving dress was made by Mr. Eric Walker in the waters of **No.10 Dry Dock** at the undocking of the submarine HMS **Onyx**.

1990 May saw the closure of the **Royal Naval Armaments Depot** at Priddy's ending 250 years of service. The 25 acre site was offered to the Gosport Bough Council.

1990 Unveiling of "**Sirius**" **sculpture** in Cascades Shopping Centre. This sculpture was given by Ku-ring-gai Council, Australia and commemorates both the ship

(see 1939-45, &1963) and the sailing of the First Fleet (see 1787, 1980).

2nd August Iraq invades Kuwait.

6-7th September. Parliament is recalled from the Summer recess; MPs back government's anti-Iraq stand in the Gulf.

1991 Ships made ready for the Gulf War by Dockyard.

1991 Royal Marines leave Portsmouth after 236 years. (See 1755).

19th May. FMRO hold their families day.

1992 Replacement of **clock tower in No. 10 store** (destroyed by bombing in 1941) completed in May.

1993 In November **The Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust** announce Plans to spend over £2.000.000 on The **Porters Lodge, a new Visitors Centre and No 7 Boathouse.**

12th October. Rear-Admiral Neil Rankin succeeded Rear-Admiral David Bawtree as Flag Officer Portsmouth and Naval Base Commander. He was destined to be the last Rear-Admiral to hold this Office; its lineage stretched back to the first Rear-Admiral in 1827, who was Rear-Admiral Maitland the man who received the surrender of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1815, and back further to Colonel William Willoughby, of the Parliamentary Army who was the first Commissioner of the Dockyard in 1649.

1994 25th March. The new **Victory building** was opened. This was the Headquarters of the Second Sea Lord and his Staff who had been moved from London and integrated with CINCPACFLT.

1996 April. **HMS Vernon** the navy's mine and diving school closed. It had been transferred to the Royal Navy from the War Department in 1923 Although the Royal Navy had made use of part of the establishment during the First World War for mine work.

31st July. **HMS Daedalus** the Royal Naval Air Station at Lee-on-the-Solent closes. It started life in 1917 during the First World War when the Royal Naval Air Service was in its infancy, only to be transferred to the newly formed RAF in 1919 and returned to the Royal Navy in 1939. Sadly like **HMS Vernon** it fell victim to the defence cuts.

1998 28th February. The **Fleet Maintenance and Repair Organisation (FMRO)** was taken over by **Fleet Support Limited (FSL)**. The company formed by BAE Systems and Vosper Thornycroft to manage the FMRO.

1998 Portsmouth Naval Base hosted IFOS (International Festival of the Sea).

23rd.February. Vosper Thornycroft signed an agreement to begin a 125 year lease

2002 of part of the Naval Base.

2006 7th September. The Offshore Patrol Vessel (Helicopter) **HMS Clyde** was named ceremony was performed by Mrs Lesley Hunt. Clyde was built in the Vosper Thorneycroft shipbuilding complex on the site of No.13 Dry Dock. She is the first warship to be built at Portsmouth since HMS Andromeda was launched on 24th May 1967.

2007 2nd May. Bow section of the new type 45 destroyer **Diamond** leaves Portsmouth for BAE System Surface Fleet Solutions Govan, Scotland. The 50 metre section left VT Shipbuilding Complex, Portsmouth on the 2nd May and arrived on the 6th May. The ship is scheduled to be launched on the 27th November.

14th June **Old Naval Academy** closes as a **Staff Officers Mess**.

25th July. Ministry of Defence confirmed the building of the two proposed super aircraft carriers to be named **Queen Elizabeth** and **Prince of Wales** at a cost of £3.8 billion, parts of which will be built in the Vosper Thorneycroft shipbuilding complex at Portsmouth. It was also announced that the two ship will be based at Portsmouth and so securing the Naval Base as **Home of the Fleet**.

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