

Getting in to or out of the Dockyard / Naval establishment or indeed almost any official site has always been a problem. During WWII it was normal at In Muster, for entry to the Dockyard to be by personal recognition only. Duty men, usually Recorders, would be at designated turnstiles that had to be used when picking up your tally. Special holes were cut through the Dockyard wall, now bricked up although they can still be seen near the Unicorn and Marlborough Gates. Unless you were known by sight you were not allowed in, which was awkward for apprentices, always moving around between gangs / shops. If you forgot your Instructors name you had to wait till he arrived - although mostly you were let in being youngsters.

At one time during my apprenticeship I worked in Admiralty House, the residence of the Commander in Chief, Portsmouth. One morning the Admiral sent his steward round to the workshop for an electrician. I was the only one about so I went right away. The Admiral had to go to see the Surgeon Captain in the Naval Barracks and wanted to take his infra-red heater with him which he was using for a stiff knee. The heater was connected to a large round pin plug and in those days there were a variety of plug and sockets in use, two pin, three pin, 15 amp, 10 amp, and 5 amp, and even some ship types different from the rest. So I had to bring a selection of plugs, some tools, and go with him so as to effect any changes needed on the spot. Ten minutes later I was sitting in the front of his official Rolls Royce alongside the driver, the Admiral in the back and we whirred out of the Dockyard, down Queen Street into the Barracks saluted by everyone in sight. In the surgery one quick look established that no plug change was necessary. So with my tool bag I sauntered back up Queen Street feeling free and happy outside the Dockyard. Coming into the Dockyard the policeman stopped me: *"Where do you think you're going matey?"*, *"Back to work, Sir."* *"What are you doing out of the 'Yard?"* *"I went out just now Sir."* *"Where's your D4?"* (That was a special form to allow you to go out through the gate.) *"Haven't got one Sir, 'cos I went out with the Admiral."* *"Don't be bl--dy saucy or I'll have you arrested!"* *"I'm not, Sir!"* I went out with him in his Rolls Royce.

*"That's it, inside matey, I'll get the Sergeant."* The Sergeant appeared annoyed to be disturbed and I was berated as a liar. Some phone calls later I was released and then admonished by my Inspector for going without authority. Thus I learnt early in life that truth is not always the way to salvation. I should have skived off for the rest of the morning, come back in again after the dinner break as normal and I would not have been missed or caused any trouble!

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