



Royal Borough of Greenwich Greenwich Information Centre



Main attractions



DISCOVER GREENWICH VISITOR CENTRE



The Discover Greenwich Visitor Centre at the ORNC opened to the public on 23rd March 2010. The Grade II listed Pepys building was refurbished at a cost of £6 million with generous support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Clore Duffield Foundation.

The Discover Greenwich Visitor Centre is a free attraction and the starting point for millions of visitors to the Old Royal Naval College (ORNC) and Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site. Here you can:



- explore over 500 years of history through a fascinating permanent exhibition
- see a programme of temporary exhibitions
- browse for unique design led gifts at the Shop at the ORNC
- find out more about what to see in Greenwich at the Tourist Information Centre
- enjoy a refreshing beer or bite to eat at The Old Brewery

all located in one space.

The exhibition

The permanent exhibition, which includes historical artefacts, scale models, film footage and hands-on displays, tells the story of the people who shaped the buildings and landscape of Greenwich through the centuries.

Start at a spectacular central model and then explore the themed exhibition areas:

- **Greenwich Palace** - The remains of one of Henry's VIII favourite palaces lie just a few feet below the ORNC site. More than 30 objects excavated on site allow us to picture the splendour of the Tudor palace.
- **The Royal Hospital for Seamen** - It was a refuge for old and injured sailors. At its peak in 1814, 2,710 Pensioners were cared for here. Find out about life at Greenwich from the highlights, like the beer allowance of four pints a day, to the boredom and punishments for breaking the rules.
- **Royal Naval College** - In 1874 the site became a prestigious naval training establishment for officers. Get an insight into life at the College by listening to reminiscences from inhabitants, and uncover the secret of Greenwich's own nuclear reactor.
- **Architecture** - The list of those who shaped the world-famous buildings and landscape of the ORNC and Greenwich reads like a roll call of the greatest architects of their time, including Inigo Jones, Sir Christopher Wren and Nicholas Hawksmoor. Discover who built what and who influenced who.
- **Craftsmanship** - The ORNC features building and decorative crafts of the highest quality, from stone carving and decorative painting to gilding. Explore the skills required to create these magnificent buildings and how we preserve them for future generations.
- **Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site and Greenwich Views** - In 1997 Maritime Greenwich became a World Heritage Site, a place recognised by UNESCO as being of 'outstanding universal value'. Find out what attracted visitors in the past, and discover what there is to do and see in Greenwich today.

The building

The Pepys building, which today houses the Discover Greenwich Visitor Centre, was originally designed for use as racquet courts for naval officers in 1874. In 1905, it was converted to become the main mechanical engineering laboratory of the Royal Naval College. The industrial feel of the interior has been preserved, with heavy beams and a gantry crane reflecting its former use.

Given its original function, the exterior of the building is surprisingly ornate, featuring classical columns and roundels containing busts of naval heroes such as Drake, Cook and Nelson.