



Welcome to  
HMS Unicorn

12 Essential Things  
To See When Visiting

## The Most Original Old Ship In The World

Telephone:  
01382 200 900

Email:  
enquiries@hmsun  
icorn.org.uk

Address:  
South Victoria  
Dock Road  
Dundee  
DD1 3BP

We hope that you enjoy your visit to HMS Unicorn. To help guide you round the ship, we want to tell you about twelve essential things we feel you shouldn't miss.

HMS Unicorn is a truly unique and internationally significant ship. She is a registered historic vessel listed on the National Historic Fleet. The significance of the ship is due to the level of originality, national associations and rarity.

Unicorn retains a unique level of originality due to the fact that she was laid up in reserve and did not see active service. This, along with the roof, which was fitted after launch, has led to the remarkable preservation of the hull. Her long-standing connection with the Royal Naval Reserve, the role she played during the World Wars, and her links to Dundee's maritime heritage give her important national associations.

### 1 – The Roof



One of the most distinctive features on board Unicorn – the ship's roof – was constructed shortly after Unicorn was placed in reserve in the 1820s. It is now the only remaining example of this once common fitting.

### 2 – Model Ships



Our collection of model ships highlights the evolution of vessels over five centuries, from the wooden warships of the 1500s to the iron-clad battleships of the Victorian Age.



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### 3 – The Ship's Bell



With each day on board a ship divided into separate “watches”, the ship's bell was used to indicate the time of each watch. The bell on Unicorn is from a later ship of the same name – the maintenance aircraft carrier HMS Unicorn of the Second World War.

### 4 – Unicorn Figurehead



HMS Unicorn was named after the legendary creature of the past, which for almost 1,000 years has been Scotland's national animal. The ship's figurehead represents the animal and its heraldic connection with Scotland.

### 5 – The 18-Pounder Guns



Running the length of the ship's Gun Deck are the Blomefield-pattern 18-pounder guns.

Named after the weight of shot they fired, each gun could have fired once every 90 seconds at a range of one-and-a-half miles.

### 6 – Captain's Cabin



The Captain's Cabin would have been the grandest and most comfortable space on board the ship. This room would have been for the sole use of the captain and been divided by canvas partitions into a day cabin and a sleeping cabin.

### 7 – The Rounded Stern



An innovation of Unicorn's designer Sir Robert Seppings, the ship's rounded stern is now the last surviving example left in the world. Not only did this design provide greater strength than a traditional square stern, it gave the ship a greater arc of fire to the rear.



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### 8 – Gunroom



The gunroom, commonly known as the wardroom, was where the ship's ten commissioned officers would live and eat their meals. Sparsely furnished, the gunroom would be converted into the surgery and sick bay during battle.

### 9 – Iron Knees & Riders



Built during the Industrial Revolution, Unicorn carries several innovative features, including iron knees and riders. These metal fixtures can be found throughout the ship and provided Unicorn with additional structural strength.

### 10 – The Mess



Making up the forward end of the Lower Deck, the Mess would have been the living quarters for over 250 of the ship's 300 crew. Mess tables

would have been set up at mealtimes and then removed to make space for the hanging of hammocks at night.

### 11 – The Hold



The Hold is the very bottom of the ship and would have been used as a large storage space for food and supplies. With at least 90% of the ship's original timbers intact, the Hold provides a view of the oldest and most unaltered part of Unicorn.

### 12 – Carpenters' Marks



The timbers of the ship's Orlop Deck are covered in curious markings known as carpenters' marks. Made during the period of the ship's construction at Chatham Dockyard, these markings were carved over 200 years ago and provide a rare insight into the creation of Unicorn.

We urge you to come back and visit HMS Unicorn again and spend a bit longer with us; there is so much more to see.

Thank you for visiting HMS Unicorn. The ship costs around £100,000 a year to maintain and we hope you will make a small additional contribution of £3 by "Tapping to Donate" at the reception desk as you leave or by visiting our [JustGiving page](#).