HMS Unicorn
Accessibility Guide

Address
HMS Unicorn
South Victoria Dock Road
Victoria Dock
Dundee
DD1 3BP

For SAT NAV directions please use our postcode

Website
www.hmsunicorn.org.uk

Contact Details
Tel: 01382 200900
Email: enquiries@hmsunicorn.org.uk
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1. INTRODUCTION

This Access Guide does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with access needs, but aims to describe, as accurately as possible, the facilities and services that we offer to all our visitors.

At nearly 200 years old, HMS Unicorn is one of the world’s most remarkable historic ships. HMS Unicorn is now the oldest ship in Scotland and the most original old ship in the world.

As one of Dundee’s top tourist attractions, HMS Unicorn is Scotland’s only example of a wooden warship and has four atmospheric deck for visitors to explore.

So, step back in time and learn about life at sea during the ‘Golden Age of Sail’.

Further Information

We aim at making the visitor experience as accessible as possible at HMS Unicorn.

Our Welcome Desk and Gun Deck are accessible for wheelchair users or those with specific access needs. Entry is via South Victoria Dock Road and paid parking is available just outside the ship.

For further information about specific access requirements or advice on planning your visit, please contact us by calling 01382 200900 or email enquiries@hmsunicorn.org.uk
2. GENERAL INFORMATION

a) About us

- We aim to provide the best possible customer experience for everyone.
- Our friendly staff and volunteers are always happy to help and can provide guidance on your visit.
- HMS Unicorn has a Certificate of Excellence from TripAdvisor (2020).
- We have a large-print deck guide that is available to visitors on request.
- HMS Unicorn is a World Host Organisation.
- For seasonal opening times please go to our website – www.hmsunicorn.org.uk.
- The average visit to HMS Unicorn lasts 1 hour.
- We have accessible toilets on the dockside beside HMS Unicorn.

b) Getting here

- You can arrive at HMS Unicorn by car, bus, bicycle, taxi or on foot.
- On-street parking is available with a dropped kerb just outside HMS Unicorn. Parking is pay-and-display.
- Taxis can be called from HMS Unicorn’s Welcome Desk. Please ask a member of staff to assist with this if you require.
- Bicycles can be chained and locked along the dockside beside HMS Unicorn.

c) Arriving at HMS Unicorn

- On arrival at HMS Unicorn, you will find our Welcome Desk on board the ship, immediately in front of you.
- Entry tickets can be purchased for HMS Unicorn from the Welcome Desk onboard, or in advance online via our website www.hmsunicorn.org.uk.
• HMS Unicorn is berthed in a tidal dock and therefore her gangways rise and fall with the tide. This means the entrance to the ship can be very steep – up to a 50° angle at high tide.
• We recommend you consult BBC Weather Tide Tables for tides on the day of your intended visit - www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast_and_sea/tide_tables/7/236#tide-details - or telephone the ship before visiting.
3. PRE-ARRIVAL

a) How to find us

We are located a short distance from Dundee City Centre and only a few minutes’ walk from Dundee Railway Station (15 min approx.) and Dundee Bus Station (10min approx.)

Map showing location of HMS Unicorn, Dundee Bus Station and Dundee Train Station

b) Ways to get here

- By rail

The nearest railway station is Dundee (South Union Street). This is 0.7 miles from HMS Unicorn. There is a taxi rank outside the station

- By bus

The nearest bus station is Dundee (Seagate). This is 0.5 miles from HMS Unicorn. There is a taxi rank outside the station
- **By car**

For SATNAV, our postcode is DD1 3BP. Follow signs for Frigate Unicorn or City Quay. Parking (on street) is available adjacent to HMS Unicorn, with six parking spaces.

- **By taxi**

There is a dropped kerb adjacent to HMS Unicorn.

d) **Car parking**

As well as on-street parking spaces adjacent to HMS Unicorn, there is a public car park on the north side of Victoria Dock at City Quay.

Both the on-street parking and the public car park are pay-and-display.
d) Arriving by bicycle or on foot

If arriving by bicycle or on foot, HMS Unicorn is located within the City Quay area of Dundee City Centre. The ship is berthed on the south wall of Victoria Dock and is easily reached via the City Quay footbridge.

Bicycles can be chained and locked along the dockside beside HMS Unicorn.

e) Pre-arranged tours

HMS Unicorn can provide personal tours. However, these must be agreed by prior arrangement. To arrange a personal tour and discuss additional requirements, please contact our Learning & Engagement Officer at finlay@hmsunicorn.org.uk

Entrance and welcome desk on board HMS Unicorn
4. THE TOUR

a) Video Tour

HMS Unicorn has a subtitled video tour in a screening room with a low gradient wheelchair accessible ramp, automatic door and push to enter switches. This allows visitors in wheelchairs or with mobility requirements to see the interior of the ship who would otherwise find it difficult or impossible to move around Unicorn. The film is 10 minutes long.

*The Push to Enter automatic door button, and automatic door into the screening room.*
b) Exploring the ship

HMS Unicorn operates a complimentary ticket policy for carers.

HMS Unicorn has four decks to explore:

1. The Upper Deck – located at the top of the ship
2. The Gun Deck – the deck on which you enter the ship
3. The Lower Deck – located below the Gun Deck
4. The Orlop Deck – the lowest accessible part of the ship

The floor surface throughout the ship is wooden deck planking and there are several places on each deck to sit and rest during a tour of the ship – apart from the Orlop Deck.

HMS Unicorn Tour (displays, exhibits):

- There is background music/noise on the ship’s Gun Deck, Lower Deck and Orlop Deck. Some temporary exhibits may include other music and sounds. Please contact the ship in advance for further information.
- There are no displays that use flashing lights.
• Lighting is quite dark and atmospheric on the ship’s Lower Deck.

c) Upper Deck

Above the Gun Deck can be found the Upper Deck. This deck can be accessed via two sets of steep ladderways in the centre of the Gun Deck.

On this deck you will find the many original ship fittings including the wheel and capstan. There are several permanent and temporary displays on the Upper Deck, highlighting the rich history of HMS Unicorn.

There are two sets of steep ladderways on the Upper Deck. Both include a small step at the top, which are signalled with yellow high visibility tape.
Steep ladderways providing access to and from the Upper Deck

View along the Upper Deck from the aft (rear) end
Single ladderway with a top step measuring 9cm in height

Double ladderway with a top step measuring 10cm in height
d) Gun Deck

The head height on the Gun Deck is 185cm.

The Gun Deck is where you enter HMS Unicorn and is where the welcome desk is located. On this deck you will find an array of guns or “cannons”, typically of a frigate.

View along the Gun Deck from the forward end, with the welcome desk in the centre

View towards the stern (rear) of the Gun Deck, with the entrance to the Captain’s Cabin
e) Captain’s Cabin

The head height in the Captain’s Cabin is 185cm.

The Captain’s Cabin can be accessed from the Gun Deck and is located at the stern (rear) of the ship. It is accessed through a small doorway (165cm high x 73cm wide). There is a small step at the doorway, which is signalled with yellow high visibility tape.
f) Lower Deck

The head height on the Lower Deck is 168cm.

Located below the Gun Deck, this deck is where sailors would eat, sleep, and enjoy any free time. Please feel free to sit at the mess benches.

There are three steep ladderways which provide access to the Lower Deck from the Gun Deck. The deck is best accessed via the double ladderway located in the centre of the Gun Deck.

All three ladderways include a small step at the top, which are signalled with high yellow visibility tape.

View along the Lower Deck, with the mess benches running along the side
View along the Lower Deck, with the double ladderway in the centre of the deck

View of the double ladderway in the centre of the Lower Deck, 12cm high step at the top
Single ladderway leading to the Lower Deck, 26cm high step at the top

Single ladderway leading to the Lower Deck, 10cm high step at the top
g) Gunroom

The head height in the Gunroom is 166cm.

To the stern (rear) of the Lower Deck is the Gunroom (commonly known as the Wardroom). This is where the commissioned officers of the ship would eat and sleep. Please feel free to sit at the dining table.

The Gunroom is accessed through two small doorways (146cm high x 59cm wide). There is a small step at the base of both doorways, which are signalled with yellow high visibility tape.

![Small doorway entrance to the Gunroom, with a small 11cm high step](image_url)
h) Orlop Deck

The head height on the Orlop Deck ranges from 158cm to 127cm.

The Orlop Deck can be accessed via two sets of steep ladderways at the fore (front) and aft (rear) of the Lower Deck. The Orlop Deck would have been used to store provisions for voyages at sea.

From the Orlop Deck, visitors can view the lowest part of the ship, known as the ship’s hold. Visitors are not able to access the ship’s hold.

**Warning** – The Orlop Deck has both low head heights and narrow passageways. It may not be suitable for all visitors, particularly those who struggle with confined spaces.
View from the Orlop Deck into the ship’s hold

A narrow passageway on the Orlop Deck, with highlighted change in deck height
Photograph highlighting the different head heights on the Orlop Deck

Single ladderway providing access to the Orlop Deck
i) Public toilets

HMS Unicorn has public toilets in a building on the dockside beside the entrance to the ship. They are accessed via a keypad door and visitors can be provided with the code by any member of staff.

There are two toilets available, with one being an accessible toilet. We do not have any baby changing facility available.
Entrance to the dockside public toilets

Interior hallway of the dockside public toilets, with one toilet on the left and accessible toilet at the end
Accessible Toilet Dimensions

Outer door width: 910mm

Inner door width: 850mm

Distance from inner door to seat: 1700mm

Seat height: 450mm
5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

a) Wheelchair users

HMS Unicorn is an old ship and only the Gun Deck is accessible by wheelchair. All other decks are only accessible via a series of ladderways. If you require general assistance while visiting HMS Unicorn, our staff are on hand to help.

Shopmobility scoots are generally unsuitable on HMS Unicorn due to the gradient of the ship’s gangways.

b) Assistance dogs

HMS Unicorn welcomes all dogs on board the ship including assistance dogs. If your dog requires any drinking water, please inform a member of our staff who can assist with this.

c) Buggies and pushchairs

Buggies and pushchairs are welcomed on board HMS Unicorn; however, they can only access the Gun Deck. We have an area on the ship where visitors can safely leave their buggies and pushchairs.

d) Staff training

There is an ongoing programme of training with our staff.

e) Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on board HMS Unicorn, including on the ship’s gangways. If you wish to smoke, you must be on the pavement outside the ship.
6. FEEDBACK & CONTACT INFORMATION

Feedback

If you would like to provide us with any feedback on this Access Guide, we would welcome your comments. We would be interested to hear if there is any information we may have missed that would be of use.

Either contact us on the details provided below or simply speak to a member of our team when you visit the ship.

Contact information

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Tel: 01382 200900
Email: enquiries@hmsunicorn.org.uk
Website: www.hmsunicorn.org.uk

Local Taxis: 01382 505050