

National Maritime Museum Cornwall

A Suggested Route

Large Print

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**NATIONAL
MARITIME
MUSEUM**
CORNWALL

We are delighted to welcome you to our museum here in Falmouth. This short guide will give you an overview of what there is to experience.

We sincerely hope you enjoy your visit!

We have attached a suggested route plan but you can take which ever route you wish. If you choose to follow our suggested route the visit begins at: **The Main Hall**

The Main Hall is the central part of the museum and from here you can begin your journey around the galleries.

The Main Hall introduces you to some of the themes running through the museum: Sea, Ships and Cornwall. From powered pleasure craft to hollowed-out logs, there are many examples of small boats here in the Main Hall. Boats have been built in all shapes and sizes for all sorts of purposes out of many different materials. Here we can see vessels designed for speed and racing, vessels designed for working at sea and working in the harbour, craft which have been pushed to their design limits and sometimes beyond.

Each boat has its own story to tell from saving the day when lost at sea to taking gold and sweeping all challengers aside. Take Waterlily, the fabulous Thames steam launch that helped set the fashion for wealthy people to be seen boating and holding river parties. Built in

1866 by John Thornycroft in Chiswick, Waterlily was the very epitome of opulence in the late Victorian period – bringing you to lazy sun drenched picnics and long summer days in the sun. She was restored in 1977-78. Her hull, made from riveted wrought-iron plates, is still in working order.



Cornish Quayside

Here you will find a replica sail loft and discover the harvest of the sea – the fish which fed so many people in Cornwall.

Pilchards were the main fish caught off the coast. Pilchards were exported to Catholic countries like France, Spain, Portugal and Italy

packed in barrels and so the Cornish often used to trade with these countries, even if they were meant to be at war!



Lewis Billing’s Fisherman’s Loft gives an impression of a life in the fishing industry. Lewis made his lobster pots through the winter from withies (a tough, flexible branch of willow) which he collected from the cliffs around Gorran Haven.

While in this gallery, why not have a go at tying some knots at the knotting station? A museum volunteer may be able to show you some useful techniques!

Cornwall and the Sea

“The sea has played a greater part in the life of the Cornish people than the land on which they dwelt”. This gallery shows how Cornwall as a county has been influenced by the sea. You discover the people and their enemies; the danger from the sea; emigration from Cornwall when the mines failed and some ships that carried the Cornish.

Here you can see the tales of a Cornish boat building family along with the tools and techniques of the trade. Cornwall has a rich and varied industrial history and boat building has played a vital role. See the

other ways the sea has benefitted the Cornish economy with trade and shipping.

This gallery also explores the military activity in Cornwall.

Falmouth was the base for the daring raid on St. Nazaire during the Second World War when a group of Allied forces sailed HMS Campbeltown, an old warship, onto the only Atlantic dock large enough to hold the huge German ship Tirpitz in Normandie.



The daring raid saw the Campbeltown, packed with explosives, destroy the dock gates and prevented Tirpitz from entering the Atlantic battlefield for the duration of the war.

The Falmouth Gallery

As the most westerly port in England, Falmouth was the easiest for a sailing ship to reach. It was therefore the centre of the international mail system for over 150 years. Ships from Falmouth took the mail to the expanding empire around the world.

This gallery shows you the ships and routes used and contains a replica of a typical cabin on a Packet Ship.

The Packet Ships were the life blood of the British Empire, carrying orders to the outposts and news and updates of political and military situations back to the Government. Falmouth was a vital port for the shipping industry – find out about “Falmouth for orders” and hear about Captain Snellman’s experiences here.

You can also see
The Old Curiosity Shop
A collection of interesting
(and horrific) artefacts from
around the world.



The Nav-Station

This gallery offers hands-on experience in meteorology and navigation. That means how we try to predict the weather and why that is important and how sailors have found their way across gigantic oceans without maps!



A satellite view of a weather system on Earth

Here you can try your hand at steering a boat, forecasting the weather or setting a course for a sea voyage.

The Look Out

Go to the top of the spiral staircase and you will reach The Look Out.

This area gives you the opportunity to enjoy spectacular views of the harbour which has grown up over the last 4 hundred years. Can you see the castle on the hilltop? It was built by Henry VIII to protect the harbour from invasion from both the Spanish and the French in the 16th century.

The Castle is here on the horizon.



Falmouth is the third largest natural deep-water harbour in the world, after Rio de Janeiro and Sydney and was once the first and last port of England. It is currently the home to many interesting vessels and hosts several Super-yacht builders, whilst being the home port for the Royal Navy Auxiliary Fleet, including RFA Argus and the new Tide Class ships.



Make your way back down the spiral staircase. You will pass the Quarter deck and reach the Main Hall again.

Now visit the **Boatbuilding Gallery and Workshop**, where you can learn about boatbuilding or watch volunteers at work restoring some of the boats in the collection.

Next to the Workshop you will find the **Bartlett Library**. The largest maritime library in the South West!

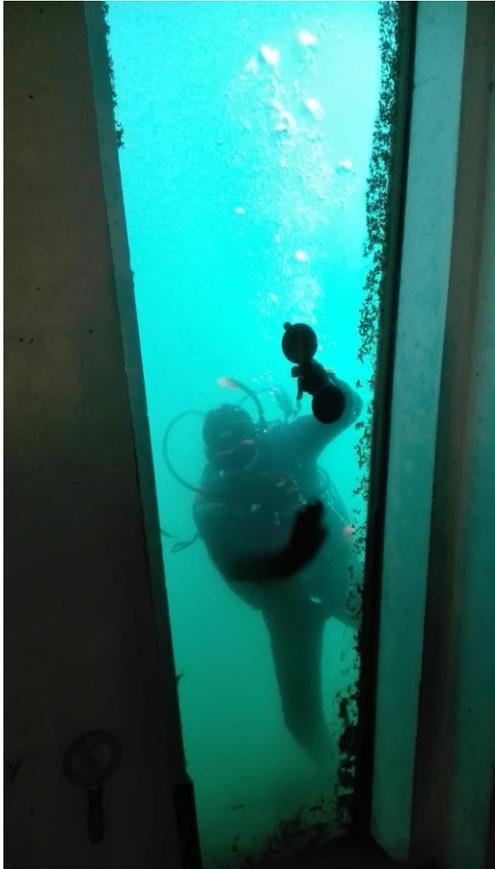
The library has over 18 thousand books and is open to visitors.



Now visit **The Hold** and see our current feature exhibition. This is always an exciting and informative place to be and changes regularly.

Finally, visit the **Tidal Zone** underwater!

Go down the spiral staircase again to reach the lower two levels called the Tidal Zone.



You can see creatures that live in the harbour and watch the tide go up and down. We have seen crabs, grey mullet, wrasse, prawns and limpets, jellyfish and seals!

Did you know, only two other locations in the world allow you to do this?!

A diver at the window in the Tidal Zone.

Thank you for visiting us at the National Maritime Museum Cornwall, we hope you really enjoyed your time here with us.