

VISIT – HMS CHIDDINGFOLD

HMS Chiddingfold is one of eight Hunt-class minehunters in the Royal Navy which make up Second Mine Countermeasures Squadron (MCM2) based in Portsmouth.

Chiddingfold returned from her recent 3 year deployment to the Gulf protecting vital sea lanes and taking part in major exercises with the US and NATO on the 1st September 2017. Since then she has been in a Support Period (in Dock) and her crew, MCM2 Crew 4, have been engaged in maintenance and training roles.

The Parish Council were delighted to be able to host some of the crew of HMS Chiddingfold at a lunch as part of commemorative events on Remembrance Sunday this year and the links between the Parish and Ship were extended through a visit to the Dockyard at Portsmouth at the invitation of the commanding officer Lt. Cdr. Adam Ridlett on 17th December 2018.

The Clerk to the council, along with representatives from the Chiddingfold Society, Bonfire Charities Association, St. Mary's School, the Village Liaison Officer and a local student, were invited to a special event to celebrate 35 years of active service by Chiddingfold and the completion of a major maintenance package undertaken by BAE Systems in their Ship Hall in HMNB Portsmouth.

We were hosted on the visit by S Lt Tom Adlam, the Gunnery Officer of MCM2 Crew 4. As Chiddingfold was in the Ship Hall we were not able to go aboard on our visit, but were still able to view her from the viewing platform and had a chance to meet with crew members and see demonstrations of equipment used on board. It was a pleasure to see the Flag presented to the ship by the Parish Council in April 2001 on proud display during events (see photograph).

Although not able to get aboard Chiddingfold, we were treated to a special tour of the Navy's flagship HMS Victory, including a tot of rum which was well received on a cold December day. The day proved most informative about Navy practices old and new.



HMS Chiddingfold was due to return to the water the day after our visit and once work is fully completed on her refit, is due to return to operations in the Gulf later in 2019. She will see a change of crew going forwards and it will be Crew 2 aboard HMS Chiddingfold from 14th January. The Parish Council wish Crew 4 a safe and successful deployment on their new vessel and look forward to maintaining the affiliation between the Parish and HMS Chiddingfold with her new crew going forwards.