

Press Release
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**Communications, Performance and
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For Immediate Release

Get yourself a ticket to the most exclusive event in town

Tickets for the most exclusive event in Medway will be up for grabs from this Friday (26 May).

In just over two week's time The Historic Dockyard Chatham will host more than 2,000 guests and VIPs to officially launch the start of the long awaited Battle of Medway commemorations.

From 8-17 June, Medway Council will host an extensive programme of events and activities to mark 350 years since the epic raid that took place on Medway's doorstep - one of the most significant moments in Anglo-Dutch military history, when the Dutch sailed up the River Medway and attacked the Royal Navy at Chatham.

The battle had monumental consequences and led to huge investment in new ships and dockyard facilities, laying the foundations of British supremacy at sea for the next 200 years and contributing to Britain's economic success and the growth of the empire.

The special opening ceremony on Thursday, 8 June, will include a royal salute, speeches and a parade with performances by the combined British and Dutch Royal Marine Bands – one of the very rare occasions when they will perform together.

VIPs attending include:

- His Highness Prince Maurits of Orange-Nassau, van Vollenhoven
- The First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Sir Philip Jones
- The Viscount De L'Isle the Lord Lieutenant of Kent

- Former Commander-in-Chief Fleet of the Royal Navy Admiral and Chairman of the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust Sir Trevor Soar
- Leader of Medway Council Cllr Alan Jarrett

Taking place in Museum Square within the dockyard site, the event will welcome a limited public ticketed audience of 1,800. Tickets are free and will be released at 10am on Friday, 26 May, at www.thedockyard.co.uk for local people and visitors, who can secure up to ten tickets each.

Leader of Medway Council Cllr Alan Jarrett said: “We’re very much looking forward to formally opening our Battle of Medway commemorations on 8 June in partnership with The Historic Dockyard Chatham, and welcoming a selection of VIPs to Medway.

“It’s going to be a very special one-off ceremonial occasion and I’d urge Medway residents and visitors wishing to join us, to secure tickets as quickly as possible when they are released on Friday, to avoid disappointment.”

Director of Preservation and Education at The Historic Dockyard Chatham Richard Holdsworth said: “We’re absolutely delighted to be hosting this historic event. The dockyard was, after all, the reason for the battle 350 years ago. It also played a pivotal role in the shipbuilding programme that took place after the battle, which went on to secure Britain’s command of the oceans for over 200 years.

“The day will be very special. Not only will we see the combined British and Dutch Royal Marines Bands performing together but also the pageantry of a Royal visit.”

On the day tips for visitors

Guests are advised to arrive between 1pm-1.30pm ready for the event the start at 2pm. The ceremony will finish at 3pm. The Historic Dockyard Chatham attractions and exhibitions will not be open for general admission on this day and guests attending the event are required to leave the site by 4pm.

There will be no on-site parking within the Historic Dockyard Chatham other than for blue badge holders who should enter the site via Western Avenue, Chatham. Non-blue badge holders are encouraged to use public transport to get to the event and can walk onto the site via Western Avenue or via the main gate entrance on Dock Road, Chatham.

Guests are advised not to park at the Dockside Outlet Centre car park - which is for customer use only. Public car parking is available within Chatham town centre, a 15 minute walk from The Historic Dockyard Chatham.

Access to the event is strictly for ticket holders only and anyone arriving on the day without a pre-booked ticket will not be allowed into the event. The Historic Dockyard Chatham may operate bag searches upon arrival. Full terms and conditions can be found at www.thedockyard.co.uk

What's on?

There will be lots going on around Medway from 8-17 June to mark the 350th anniversary of the Battle of Medway. From arts and crafts, to a chance to climb aboard navy ships, to story telling sessions for children, exhibitions and more – there will be something on offer for everyone. To find out more visit www.medway.gov.uk/BoM

Headline events

A landmark exhibition called Breaking the Chain will run at The Historic Dockyard Chatham from 9 June – September. It will bring together for the first time an extraordinary array of Dutch and British art, literature, historic manuscripts and objects on loan from a number of national and international museums, including the National Maritime Museum, and the Rijksmuseum.

A permanent exhibition at Upnor Castle will also open to the public on 9 June, which will tell the story of the Battle of Medway through specially commissioned paintings and extracts from diarists of the time including Samuel Pepys.

Upnor Castle was in the middle of all the action 350 years ago, as it is from here that the British fired at Dutch vessels in an attempt to stop the onslaught of their ships.

Both exhibitions have gratefully received support and funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Ten-days of events and activities (8-17 June) will culminate in river-based finale spectacular called Medway in Flames on the evening of 17 June. It will re-create the battle through special effects, fireworks, pyrotechnics, film and more. The finale can be viewed from Chatham Maritime, at the river wall stretching the distance of Leviathan Way.

While the main event begins after 9pm, river entertainment will take place from 2pm, including jet-ski demos, army boat and tug boat displays.

There will also be various zones around the Dockside Outlet Centre and Ship and Trades pub, where crowds can enjoy live music, food and drink, craft stalls, a funfair and have a go water activities. More details about Medway in Flames and on the day activities will be released in the coming weeks.

Join the conversation on Twitter with #BoM350 #TNC350

Media invite

In the coming weeks members of the media will be invited to attend this formal Battle of Medway launch event at The Historic Dockyard Chatham on 8 June. In addition, media will get exclusive access to Upnor Castle on the morning of 8 June when His Highness Prince Maurits of Orange-Nassau, van Vollenhoven will formally open a new Heritage Lottery Funded Battle of Medway exhibition and salute a 50 vessel sail past. To register your interest email

medway@fourcommunications.com