

Signs of the Past project video: subtitle text

Introduction to the video

Welcome to the Old Royal Naval College. A group of Deaf young people from DeafQuake came to find out about the history of the buildings. We decided to make videos about our favourite places and to find out who lived here in the past. We also worked with students from the University of Greenwich to make films for the website. We hope you enjoy the videos and come and visit.

The Painted Hall

This is the Painted Hall at the Royal Hospital for Seamen, today known as the Old Royal Naval College. The Painted Hall was built to be the sailors' dining hall. The buildings were designed in 1696 by Sir Christopher Wren and Nicholas Hawksmoor. It was painted by Sir James Thornhill. It took nineteen years to paint the Painted Hall. During that time the sailors ate in the undercroft beneath the building. When it was finished the sailors thought it was too posh. They changed the Painted Hall to become one of London's first tourist attractions.

Admiral Nelson was killed at the Battle of Trafalgar. His body was kept in a barrel of brandy and taken by boat to the Royal Hospital in 1806 to lie in the Painted Hall. Thirty thousand people came to see Nelson's body before he was taken to be buried at St Paul's Cathedral.

The Chapel

This is the Chapel of St Peter and St Paul. This part of the Hospital was finished in 1751. The old people who lived here were called Greenwich Pensioners. They had to go to Chapel every day, including Sunday. If they didn't go to Chapel they would be fined or expelled from the Hospital.

The Chapel is decorated with Greek patterns and symbols of the sea. The floor includes an anchor and rope design. To save money with the decoration you can see that the marble column is not real, it's fake. They used plaster called scagliola and they didn't use sculptures, they used 3D paintings.

The Skittle Alley

Welcome to the Skittle Alley. This room was first used as an operating room in the Hospital. The Hospital was for sailors in the navy. It was more like a retirement home than a modern hospital. On the window ledge are marks where knives were sharpened. This room was later used as a mortuary where bodies were kept before being buried across the road. In the early 1860s the skittle alley was built to entertain the sailors. The wooden balls were practice cannon balls.

The Chalk Walk or Ripley Tunnel

This area is called the Chalk Walk. It is a secret tunnel. It is also known as the Ripley Tunnel. This secret tunnel connects the Painted Hall and the Chapel. To stop the sailors getting wet the tunnel was built half underground so that they could move between the buildings. Today it's dark and hard to see. There used to be windows to let light in. The windows are now blocked up. The sailors came down here where it was warm to smoke their pipes, relax and talk to each other. The pipes were made out of white clay. When they had finished with the pipes they were thrown on the floor and crushed into chalk. That's why it's called the Chalk Walk.

Now I'll explain about this painting. This is the crest for officers studying at the Royal Naval College. There are two similar shields in the Old Royal Naval College. One is here in the Chalk Walk and one is in the Chapel. Although they look the same they each have a different Latin motto. [This one says] '*Tam Minerva Quam Marte*'. This means '*by wisdom as much as war*'. This motto would have been known by the sailors.

There is a merman and a half lion, half fish. The merman and the four anchors on the English flag remind us of the Naval College and Hospital for sailors. This is half lion, half fish. We think they used a lion on the shield to represent England's control.

The end.