

ROYAL NAVAL PATROL SERVICE MUSEUM

The Royal Naval Patrol Service Museum, run by the Royal Naval Patrol Service Association, is based in the Sparrows Nest Gardens in Lowestoft and is in the original buildings built by the Royal Naval Patrol Service at the start of the Second World War. The Association and Museum have been in existence since 1975 and during that time have worked to foster a good relationship with the incumbent councils of the time and with the people of the area. Our aim, as a museum, is to show the work carried out by the RNPS during the war not only here in Lowestoft but right across the world. The base in Sparrows Nest Gardens, HMS Europa, was the Central Depot of the RNPS and from there controlled all the minesweeping and anti submarine work across all the waters of the world. Approximately 66,000 men, manning 6,000 vessels, were in the RNPS and at some point all the men came to Lowestoft with roughly 2,000 being here at any one time. The presence of the RNPS in Lowestoft meant that Lowestoft was the closest military establishment in the UK to the enemy in occupied Europe and as such attracted a lot of air raids resulting in a lot of damage and loss of life in the town. In Belle Vue Park is the Lowestoft Naval Port Division Memorial naming the 2,385 RNPS men killed but who's bodies were never recovered and also our own exclusive cemetery plot for the internment of RNPS ashes.

Our free entry museum continues to be a popular attraction particularly for those looking into their family history of people who had a RNPS connection. Our attendance is roughly between 1,000 & 1,500 a year and we regularly have visits from local schools as well as adult groups. We are open 3 mornings a week for 50 weeks of the year and recently have been recognised with a number of awards in the museums sector as well as the honour of the conferring of the Freedom of Lowestoft by Lowestoft Town Council.

It is our hope that we are able to continue in our work to update our displays, to maintain and improve our extensive acquisitions data base, to continue our research facility for family members and to be a recognised and valued asset to the town and heritage in general. We are a charity, registered with the Charities Commission and we are currently working towards full museum accreditation.

Leo Whisstock
National Secretary