

## Imperial War Museums - HMS Belfast Warship Conservation Team



*Some of the Warship Conservation Volunteers Team in front of one of the 4-inch gun mountings on HMS Belfast.*

Name	Jim Hutchinson
Organisation	Imperial War Museums
Job Title	Head of Volunteering
Title of Case Study	HMS Belfast Warship Conservation Team
Case study	<p>The Warship Conservation Volunteers team is made up from a diverse group of people, ranging from job seekers, students, full time workers to retired professionals. The more experienced members of the team actively pass on their skills to the younger members helping them learn a range of skills for the future.</p> <p><u>Achievements</u></p> <p>The formal volunteer programme for HMS Belfast was launched during the autumn of 2006. Since that time up to March 2015 our Warship Conservation Volunteers have collectively donated over 29,000 hours volunteering in support of the conservation plan.</p> <p>The team have worked hard to restore compartments in the superstructure of the ship. Many new pieces have been built on site to aid interpretation of the spaces. The boat crane is also undergoing a complete restoration which includes preservation of the control components to heavy engineering on the jib. A gun director has had a complete restoration carried out and is now having covers fitted to the original design to allow it to be used in conjunction with gun firing demonstrations.</p>

	<p>In support of the practical work another small sub-team has been digitising the original drawings for the ship and making maintenance and operating manuals available at computer workstations. These have been of enormous help to ensure that the equipment's are presented in a historically accurate manner.</p> <p>Over and above the practical work that the volunteer force carries out, they have also been involved with special events hosted by HMS Belfast. They have provided gun crews for salutes, given demonstrations of drills and narrated the evolutions being carried out. Members of the team also man an information centre where they can explain to the visitors what is being done to preserve the ship, how work is carried out and what pieces of equipment are currently undergoing treatment.</p> <p>The project that they are engaged in, to preserve the last of Britain's big gun armoured ships from the World War Two and Cold War era, is in itself unique within the UK. Over and above the value of what they are doing to assist IWM with the challenge of keeping HMS Belfast afloat to educate and inspire current and future generation the friendly and positive way in which the team has come together to help both our organisation and their fellow team members is inspiring.</p> <p>We are delighted to add that the HMS Belfast Warship Conservation Volunteers Team won the 'Best Team' Award in the 7th London Volunteers in Museums Awards on 9 September 2015 and were awarded 'Outstanding Contribution' in the 2015 National Historic Ship UK's Marsh Volunteer Award for Historic Vessel Conservation on 22 October.</p>
Contact email	jhutchinson@iwm.org.uk
Web link	Not applicable.