



Visiting Guide

This guide details everything we think that you will need to know if you are planning to visit us. If there is anything you would like to know that has not been

Outlined in this guide, please get in touch.

Have fun, talk, and laugh as well as reflect and please respect staff and other visitors.

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Where to find us?

Telephone number: 0151 277 2008

Email Address: hello@bigheritage.co.uk

Address: Western Approaches HQ, 1-3 Rumford Street, Exchange Flags, Liverpool, Merseyside, L2 8SZ

We are situated by Exchange Flags, just behind Liverpool Town Hall and Martins Bank.

Opening times

We are open 7 days a week but please check the website before your visit as we are sometimes closed for events or maintenance.

10:00AM – 5:00PM. Last entry 1 hour before closing time.

An average tour lasts for 90 minutes but can take up to 3 hours depending on your level of interest. We would recommend allowing at least 90 minutes for your visit.

Parking

There is pay and display parking on Rumford Street in front of the museum, there is also the NCP Rumford Street car park opposite.

There are a number of other car parks nearby.

Public Transport

There are two underground train stations in close vicinity to the museum;

Moorfields(150m) and James Street(400m).

The museum is also well serviced by local bus routes.

Western Approaches Entrance

On your approach to Western Approaches, you will be able to identify the museum by location the flags flying above our front door, or by the large signage along the corner of Exchange Flags.

Accessibility



Below are pictures of the staircases in the building. They are marked with a 'D' or 'U' to indicate whether they are stairs up or down when following the route. In addition, we also have several single small steps around the building. The Western Approaches site is across two floors with various staircases and steps in between. Due to the historic nature of the building, the only way around is via these staircases. Visitors with mobility restrictions preventing them using stairs can access some rooms on the upper floor (though not following the intended route, and we do not

charge these visitors an entry fee).

There are seats located around the building which can be used by visitors. We

also have small collapsible stools for visitors to take around if required.

Accessibility aids & prams should be left in reception if possible due to the limited space

Tickets

Visitors can purchase admittance tickets upon arrival. You do not need to book a ticket in advance, however if you prefer to do so, they are available from our website, where our up-to-date prices can also be found.

On arrival you will be given a replica entry permit (if you are over 16) or a replica

identity card (under 16) as your ticket to enter the site, which will be stamped with your visit date.

Unless you have booked a tour guide, your visit will be self-guided and there will be signage around the building to help you find your way.

Staff

On entering, our staff will welcome you and issue your entry permit.

Please let them know if:

- You have any problems at the Western Approaches site
- You want to know about any events happening at the Western

Approaches site

- You have become separated from your group
- You have lost anything
- If there is anything you are unsure of, or if you just want to talk about stories of the Second World War...

Our friendly staff are happy to help, listen and inform.

Gift shop & Reception

Located at the entrance and exit of the museum, our gift shop contains a wide variety of replica items, books, toys, exclusive souvenirs, and unique mementos of your visit. As a community interest company we are a non-profit organisation, which means all profit goes towards developing our museums and to making more of the site accessible to visitors.

We accept both cash and card payments. (The only currency we accept pound sterling)

Fire Alarms

There are fire alarms and activation points located throughout the building. If the fire alarm sounds please follow staff instructions and ask for assistance if needed. All staff are trained in the fire evacuation process and will be able to lead visitors to safety.

If there is a fire alarm test scheduled during your visit, you will be made aware of this on entry.

Toilets

The toilets are located at the bottom of a ramp near the reception area. These are our only toilet facilities on site. Whilst they do not have step access they aren't wheelchair accessible. We do have baby changing facilities but unfortunately are not able to provide a "changing places" facility.

Storage

There are no locker facilities on site. Downstairs can be quite cold in the winter,

and we would recommend taking your coat with you. If you have very large bags these can be left at reception at your own risk.

Multimedia

We have several forms of media playing within the bunker. These have been listed below for you.

Sounds -

There are subtle sound effects throughout the building, these include: Footsteps, ringing telephones, conversational chatter, speeches, morse code and louder sounds come from several videos within the building which are detailed below.

Videos -

There are rooms with video loops playing where some sounds can be quite loud.

Currently videos are located in;

Intro Room – An introduction to Western Approaches and the part it played in the Battle of the Atlantic.

The Radio Room – Morse Code demonstration.

Operations Room – Operations room in WW2

Tea Room – Victory Footage

Smells

Occasionally, due to the nature of the site the building can smell quite musty.

This is nothing to be alarmed about.

Photography

Visitors are encouraged to take as many photographs as they would like during their visit though are asked to please be aware of other visitors in the frame. We would love you to share your photos with us on social media.

Activities

Throughout the year we have several optional free activities for visitors to enjoy, these events tend to run during school half terms. Further information can be found on these activities by checking the website, emailing, or phoning reception.

School Groups

Western Approaches welcomes school groups and strongly believes in the importance of educating students about this site and the Second World War.

Groups of approximately 30 children are led by staff on a tour of the building that lasts for up to 1.5 hours alongside an optional workshop on Coding, Rationing or the Impact of War on Liverpool that lasts an hour. A lunchroom is also available to school groups.

Visitors are welcome to explore areas at the same time as school groups and are also welcome to return to areas once the school group has moved on.

If you wish to enquire or book a school visit, please visit:

www.liverpoolwarmuseum.co.uk/visiting/schools/

Installations and Maintenance

As this site is being continually updated there is a possibility that you may

encounter staff installing new exhibitions, moving heavy goods, placing artefacts etc.

There may also be staff carrying out building and maintenance work. If this is the case, your route around the building may be redirected by our staff team.

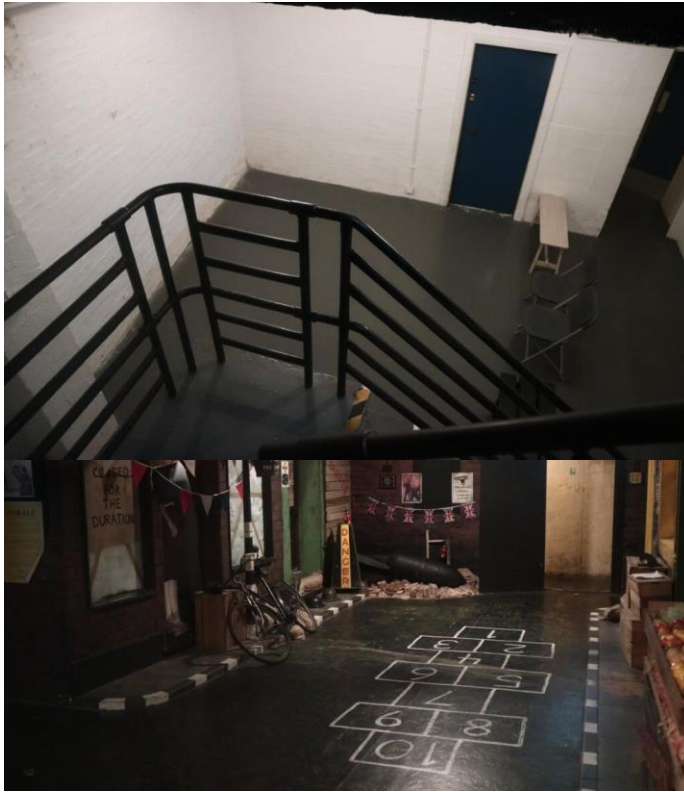
Room guide

The bunker is in no way a small, confined space. It was once the workplace for more than 300 people who often slept here during shifts, which means there are sleeping quarters, offices and secret rooms to explore – some rooms have yet to be opened to the public as this site is very definitely a work in progress when it comes to discovering new areas and making them accessible.

The vast bunker will take you approx. 1 hour 15 mins to explore, maybe more depending on what you find to see and do along the way, and at the end of the tour you will be pleased to find hot drinks and biscuits at war time prices.

Here is a brief list of some of the rooms you will find on your tour:

INTRO ROOM



The first room you will enter features a short film educating you on the key points surrounding the museum – there are places to sit!

DOCK LANE

The street scene is a recreation of a 1940's street based on original shops of the time. Visitors can go into the shops, pick up war time recipes to take home and look through the windows at photographs of Blitzed Liverpool. There are quiet sound effects in this room coming from the pub. There is also a hopscotch and a dressing up area. There is information on food rationing, clothes and the black market. Visitors are

welcome to use this space to play, read or just wander around.

RECRUITMENT ROOM

The recruitment room is an ongoing rotating exhibition space featuring uniform, documents and footage related to those living during WWII.



TELEPRINTER ROOM



Explore our Teleprinter room – an area of the museum that was hidden away behind a wall until it was discovered in 2020!

RN SECRETARY

Visit our newest room opened in the bunker, an area dedicated to the Secretary of the Royal Navy.



Off the corridor from here visitors can look in the Switchboard Room where information was received before being forwarded to the teleprinters and phones around the building. Here you can see the internal mechanisms that made these machines work. During the course of the Second World War we received over 30 million messages in the building!

SWITCHBOARD ROOM

Off the



RADIO ROOM



In this room you can try your hand at some Morse code, using our instructional video. Leave a message for future visitors or see how well you could find a signal on our receivers.

THE POWER CORRIDOR



The power corridor connects the Road to War room to the RAF Plotting Room. This area of the building is slightly narrow, although there is plenty of room for two people to walk side by side and stop to read the information on display. However, for larger groups it is more difficult to move around this section at the same time. On the wall there is a power board and an information panel.

THE CONVOY ROOM & MEMORIAL

In the next rooms you will learn about the convoy system and the men who were instrumental in carrying it out. You can listen to their stories as well as read about their history. You will also learn about the Merchant Navy and how they served alongside the men of the Royal Navy.

You will pass by our memorial to the men who served and died in the Battle of the Atlantic as well as our permanent poppy display.

THE MAIN OPERATIONS ROOM



This is the biggest room at the site. Visitors can walk around and sit down at desks which have recovered paperwork and documents, which can be handled, opened, and read to learn about the personnel who worked in this building. Visitors are encouraged to touch touched phones, typewriters and try on military jackets and hats to take photographs.

THE CABINS



The RAF and Royal Navy Cabins are also situated in the Operations Room. There three steps up to each cabin. They contain working typewriters which can be used by visitors. Exiting the rear of the Naval cabin, you will go up a staircase leading onto the next floor. To the right is a guard sentry point, a desk with a key cabinet featuring an original pin up girl poster still on the inside.

FLAG LT & SECRETARY SLEEPING

In these rooms you can see how the officers would have bunked, try out the beds and read some of the notices that the secretary spent days working on.

HORTONS OFFICE & BEDROOM



This room is laid out to replicate Admiral Sir Max Horton's bedroom and office with books, cigars and golf balls and communication equipment. His signature pinstripe pyjamas are also present. There is a speaking tube connected to the cabin below, so you may hear sounds from downstairs.

BATTERY CORRIDOR

The next section of the building is a connecting corridor. There is a slight ramp. There is currently an exhibition telling the story of Superintendent Wren Agnes 'Nan' Currie who was in charge of all of the WRNS based at Western Approaches as well as the stories of Elizabeth Copley and Mary Hall. In the same corridor area is an original Gaumont Kalee Dragon projector which is believed to have been used by Winston Churchill in order to watch war footage. It was donated to the museum many years ago and not originally sited here.

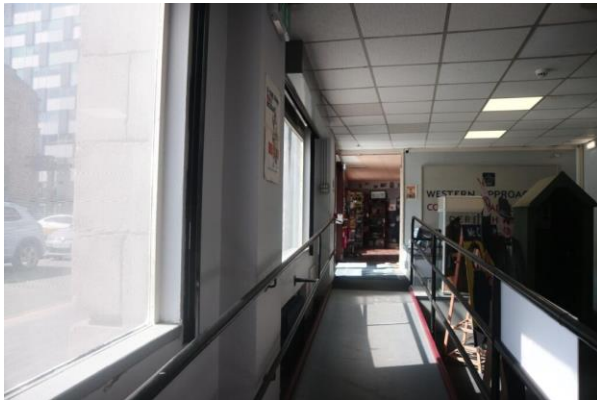


TEA ROOM



Opened in 2023, our WRENS Museum tells the story of the Women's Royal Naval Service from the 1910's all the way to the 1990's.

EXIT



Here you will be able to watch victory footage from the end of the war. We also have crafts rotating throughout the year which you can take home with you!

WRENS MUSEUM



You will now exit the bunker back on street level. There is a temporary exhibition on U534 as well as several free leaflets and booklets available to take before entering back in to the reception and gift shop.