

Samuel Pepys  
 Of the arsenals for the royal navy in Kent  
 in Camden's Britannia, edited by Edmund Gibson  
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Of the Arsenals for the Royal Navy in KENT.

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THE Navy of England has in all times (as at this day) been owing to this one County, more than to the whole number beside, for the Diversity and Importance of the places serving therein, to the Building, Repairing, Safe-harbours, and Equipping of the same. Here therefore we choose to offer (under a distinct head)

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what has occur'd to us worthy observation on that subject; after first doing right to our Author, in reference to the more than ordinary scantiness of his Remarks on those Places, by observing only the different States of the Royal Navy of England about the time of his writing and at this day.

The different States of the Royal Navy.	In Mr. Camden's time.	At this day.
1. The number of Ships and Vessels, from 50 Tons upwards	but 40 Ships	above 200 Ships.
2. The general Tonnage of the whole	under 23600 Tons	above 112400 Tons.
3. The number of men requir'd for manning the same	under 7800 Men	above 45000 Men.
4. The medium of it's annual charge during the last 5 years of Peace War	under 15500 l. under 96400 l.	above 400000 l. above 1620000 l.

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Which Disproportions in the Naval Action within this Century, must have been attended with suitable Alterations and Improvements (unseen by our Author) in it's Yards, Docks, Storehouses, &c. the Scenes of that Action. And therefore proceeding to the places themselves, we observe as follows, viz.

Chatham.

1. Chatham. This Yard was, at the time of our Author, confin'd to a narrow slip on the edge of the river, beneath the Church, furnish'd only with one small Dock. Which becoming too streight for the then growing Service, was assign'd to the use of the Office of the Ordnance (where it still remains) while that for the Navy was about the year 1622. remov'd to where it now rests, accommodated with all the Requisites of a Royal Arsenal, and those since augmented by additions of Docks, Launches, Storehouses, (one no less than 660 foot long) Mast-houses, Boat-houses, &c. all of late erection, exceeding what had ever been before known in the Navy of England.

Here also is repositd (however unobserv'd by our industrious Author) that solemn and only yet established Fond of Naval Charity for the relief of Persons hurt at Sea in the service of the Crown, under the name of The Chest at Chatham, instituted An. 1588. When, with the advice of Sir Francis Drake, Sir John Hawkins, and others, the Sea-men then serving the

Queen, did voluntarily assign a portion of each man's Pay to the succour of their then wounded Fellows: which method receiving Confirmation from the Queen, has been ever since maintain'd, and yet continues.

Nor is our Author's silence any more to be overlook'd in reference to the Hospital here also erected for the like pious use, at the private Costs of Sir John Hawkins, in the 36th of the same Queen.

Sheerness. 2. Sheerness. As an Appendix to Chatham, there has been also since established here, a Yard furnish'd for answering all occasions for the same upon Ships of the Lower Rates, resorting thither in time of Action.

Deptford. 3. Deptford. To the Dock and Storehouse (our Author's only Observables at this place) we have now to add, the widening the whole area of that Yard to more than double what it then was, with a Wet Dock of 2 Acres in superficies for Ships, and another of an Acre and half for Masts; besides an Enlargement to it's Store-houses, Dwelling-houses, Launches, &c. suitable thereto, and to the greatness of the present Service.

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But here we have to observe, a Mistake relating to the neighbouring College, said by our Author 'to have been ordain'd for the use of the Navy.' Forasmuch as by a Grant 4 Hen. 8. to the Shipmen and Mariners of this Realm, they were indeed enabled to begin (to the honour of the blessed Trinity and S. Clement) a Guild or Brotherhood perpetual, concerning the Conning or Craft of Mariners, and for the encrease and augmentation of the Ships thereof; which, as the body Corporate of the sea-men of England, still continues (and this the seat of it) under the Stile of the Trinity-House of Deptford-Strond; but without the least share assign'd thereto, either of Trust or Authority, in the Navy-Royal.

Woolwich. 4. Woolwich. How this, of all the places appropriated to the Service of the Navy, should come to be overlook'd by our Author, as well as by Mr. Lambert and Mr. Philpot, is hard to account for. And the more, for its having contributed to the number of our Ships-Royal equally with any other two; besides it's Right, by seniority, to the Title of Mother-Dock to them all; witness her having given birth to

	Harry Grace de Dieu.	3 Hen. 8.
	Prince Royal.	8 Jac. 1.
The	Sovereign Royal.	13 Car. 1.
	Nazeby, afterwards the Charles	7
	Richard, afterwards the James	10 Car. 2.
	St. Andrew	22

But whatever that Omission is to be reckon'd owing to, Woolwich must be own'd to serve the Crown amongst those of the greatest importance thereto at this day.

5. Nor will it be unuseful towards the further illustrating the Disparity between the Naval Action of England in the time of Mr. Camden and now, to add here, what would have appear'd more properly in Devonshire, would the advancement of the Works we are to mention have then so well admitted it: name=

Plymouth.

ly, the New Yard (1200 foot square) now in erecting at Plymouth. Where a Dry-Dock, capable of a first Rate Ship, is already finish'd, with a Bason before it of above 200 foot square; as also Dwelling-houses, Store-houses, a Rope-house, and all other Conveniences required to an Arsenal calculated for the Service of so important a place.

<This account of the dockyards in Kent was published as an appendix to the description of the county in Gibson's edition of the 'Britannia' (1695, cols. 229–30). It is identified in the preface as Pepys's contribution. – C.F. March 2011.>