



## **PROPOSED COLD WAR & MARITIME HERITAGE MUSEUM** **PLYMOUTH**

For over 15 years HMS COURAGEOUS has been open to the public in Plymouth.

Visitor numbers are relatively low as she remains within the Dockyard security perimeter but over 5,000 people visit her every year. In contrast, the only other nuclear submarines open to the public, USS NAUTILUS in the USA and FS REDOUTABLE in France, each receive over 125,000 visitors a year. HMS COURAGEOUS is scheduled for disposal and without action will eventually be scrapped.

Operational submarines are being relocated to HM Naval Base Clyde. Within 5 years the only submarine presence in the South West will be those submarines in deep maintenance or awaiting disposal in Plymouth.

A paper was submitted recently to the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN), recommending the permanent preservation of HMS COURAGEOUS as an exhibit in Devonport dockyard. There is wide support for this proposal, but preserving the boat alone is not sufficient. A small team is building on this initial proposal to develop a more ambitious project to tell the Cold War story of submarines and Plymouth based ships. Working with Plymouth City Council, the Royal Navy, MoD, COURAGEOUS volunteers and with the support of the NMRN, we have started to scope a concept to preserve Plymouth's recent maritime heritage.

Not just a single historic submarine but a place where the Cold War role of submarines, the surface fleet and aircraft can be told. The Museum, with COURAGEOUS at its core, would explore the wider theme of nuclear power at sea in submarines and display relevant artefacts, photos and personal stories with a library and archive for future reference. The Museum would have a strong theme about the part Plymouth played in supporting submarines, submariners and their training with artefacts from the shore-side trainers for both the S & T Class submarines.

If our vision can be achieved it will explain the importance of maritime power to the UK, raise public awareness of Plymouth and offer a number of other benefits:

- explain the challenges of technology at and under the sea,
- the relevance of nuclear-powered submarines and the Royal Navy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century,
- explain the safety case for nuclear power, civil and defence, and recognise the importance of nuclear engineering and technology in the South West,
- support education in the South West and recruitment to both the Royal Navy and defence industries and,
- promote Plymouth the Oceansgate City, tourism and employment in the South West.

The first phase of this ambitious project is to complete a rigorous feasibility study in 2021 to determine practicality, costs and timelines. To deliver this will cost an estimated £40K which, with your help, we hope to raise by Christmas 2020. Every contribution, great or small, will help us make this ambition real. **Details of how to donate are overleaf.**

### LINKS:

- a. For a short concept video of how a Cold War Maritime Heritage Museum might look see here:

<https://vimeo.com/436833987/9519216412>

- b. To see some of HMS COURAGEOUS and the current visitor experience see:

<https://youtu.be/oancp37Dnyc>

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your support, in particular financial support, to enable us to determine how realistic and costly our ambitions are. Should you wish to discuss our ideas in more detail or to offer assistance please do get in touch with me ([johnweale898@btinternet.com](mailto:johnweale898@btinternet.com)) or Ian Whitehouse ([ian@fradds.co.uk](mailto:ian@fradds.co.uk))



A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read "John Weale".

**John Weale CB, OBE**

### **How to Donate**

Your support in being able to tell the unique underwater Cold War with the maritime history of Plymouth and the Submarine Service, before it is lost, is greatly appreciated.

If you wish to donate please follow the Crowd Funding link here:

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/hmscourageous>

*The RNRMC have kindly agreed to support this project and handle all initial donations. The Feasibility Study Fund is managed by the Royal Navy Royal Marine Submarine Fund (RNRMC SMF).*

*Should there be a surplus left in the fund after commissioning the Feasibility Study it will be donated to the Submarine Memorial Fund.*