



## Unicorn Preservation Society

### Job Description

**Job Title:** Museum Officer

**Location:** Dundee City Centre

**Line Manager:** Heritage & Learning Manager

**Job Family:** Heritage & Learning

**Working Hours:** Part-time (21 hours, 0.6 FTE) including occasional evenings and weekends

**Annual Leave:** 34 days inclusive of public holidays and closures (Christmas and New Year) pro rata

**Contract Length:** Until end May 2026. Contracts may be extended beyond this, subject to funding.

**Grade:** 2

**Salary:** £26,500 per annum pro rata

### Introduction

Launched in 1824, HMS Unicorn is the third oldest ship in the world still afloat and Scotland's only surviving wooden warship. Now an Accredited Museum in Dundee's City Quay, visitors can explore four decks that offer a unique glimpse into 19th century naval life.

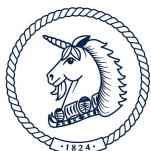
Our mission is to deliver a world-class museum experience while safeguarding HMS Unicorn's future and making our collections accessible to all. We aim to inspire visitors and staff alike, providing lifelong learning and engagement opportunities for our local communities and beyond.

The Unicorn Preservation Society has recently secured nearly £1 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to advance Project Safe Haven - our ambitious conservation initiative to relocate HMS Unicorn to Dundee's East Graving Dock. This critical move will ensure the long-term preservation of this irreplaceable maritime treasure while creating a purpose-built visitor centre that will transform Dundee's historic waterfront and enhance community engagement.

This role is made possible through National Lottery Heritage Fund support and represents an exciting opportunity to join our team at a pivotal moment in HMS Unicorn's 200-year history.

### Main Purpose of Role

The Museum Officer plays a vital role in the Heritage & Learning team, with primary responsibility for collections management, documentation, and care. Working under the guidance of the Heritage & Learning Manager, this role will support the maintenance of Museum Accreditation standards as HMS Unicorn prepares for re-accreditation in 2026.



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The postholder will manage the collections store, implement appropriate documentation procedures, and work with volunteers on collections-related projects. A key aspect of this role is supporting the interpretation of HMS Unicorn's tangible and intangible heritage, including documenting and acquisition of related objects as part of the ongoing restoration and conservation work for Project Safe Haven. Working closely with the Heritage & Learning Manager, the Museum Officer will assist in providing authoritative guidance on historic aspects of the ship during Project Safe Haven, helping to document what can and cannot be altered during the conservation process. The Museum Officer will research and help tell the ship's stories, including challenging or hidden histories, contributing to exhibitions and interpretive displays that engage diverse audiences.

This role provides crucial support to ensure that HMS Unicorn's unique collections are properly documented, conserved, made accessible, and effectively interpreted for visitors, researchers, and staff.

### **Key Duties and Responsibilities**

#### Collections Management and Documentation

- Support the Heritage & Learning Manager in maintaining and improving collections management systems and documentation procedures
- Implement and maintain collections documentation, including accessioning, cataloguing, and location recording using appropriate collections management database systems
- Manage the HMS Unicorn collections store, ensuring appropriate environmental conditions, security, organization, and tidiness
- Lead on acquisitions processes, ensuring appropriate documentation and provenance research
- Maintain appropriate museum records and standards in line with recognised guidance from organizations such as the Museums Association and Museums & Galleries Scotland
- Contribute significantly to HMS Unicorn's re-accreditation process in 2026, particularly focusing on collections management standards

#### Research and Interpretation

- Research and document the intangible histories of HMS Unicorn and its collections, including challenging or hidden histories
- Record and document the restoration and conservation process of HMS Unicorn as part of Project Safe Haven, creating an archive of this significant project
- Research and document the historical and archaeological connections between HMS Unicorn, Victoria Dock, East Graving Dock, and the conservation journey to support the Heritage & Learning Manager's advocacy for the heritage aspects of Project Safe Haven
- Research objects, the ship, and collections to enhance understanding and interpretation



- Support the refresh of interpretation panels and displays throughout HMS Unicorn
- Assist with collections-based enquiries from researchers, visitors, and other stakeholders

### Conservation and Collections Care

- Monitor the condition of collections and carry out preventive conservation measures as appropriate
- Ensure health and safety procedures are followed in all collections-related activities
- Advise the Unicorn Preservation Society on best practices and approaches for collections management, conservation, and interpretation
- Support the Heritage & Learning Manager in assessing the historic significance of ship elements and providing guidance on conservation decisions during Project Safe Haven

### Exhibition and Engagement

- Work with colleagues in the Heritage & Learning team to design and deliver heritage-focused exhibitions and events that showcase the collections and communicate the significance of HMS Unicorn as a historic vessel
- Coordinate and deliver object handling sessions with the Heritage & Learning team
- Raise awareness of HMS Unicorn's collections through various means, including contributions to digital content and publications
- Coordinate with volunteers working on collections-related projects, providing guidance and training
- Support the work of the Heritage & Learning team in delivering high-quality visitor experiences

### Strategic Planning and Development

- Contribute to the development of collections policies and plans
- Assist with the planning for collections aspects of Project Safe Haven, considering future storage and display needs
- Help identify funding opportunities for collections projects and assist with relevant applications

### General Duties

- Adhere to HMS Unicorn's policies and procedures including health and safety, security, and fire regulations
- Represent HMS Unicorn professionally to visitors, stakeholders and partners
- Participate in team meetings and staff development activities as required
- Undertake training and development as required for the role and maintain professional knowledge and skills



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- Undertake any other reasonable duties as directed by the Heritage & Learning Manager

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

This section details the attributes, skills, knowledge, qualifications and competencies which are required in order to undertake the full remit of this post.

### Essential Criteria

- Experience of working with museum collections and in a heritage setting
- Knowledge of collections management principles and procedures
- Understanding of preventive conservation practices
- Experience of documentation systems and procedures
- Knowledge of interpretation techniques and approaches for museum collections
- Experience of researching historical objects or maritime heritage
- Experience of contributing to exhibitions or interpretive displays
- Experience of working with or supporting volunteers
- Experience of digital collections management systems
- Ability to handle historic objects and materials safely and appropriately
- Strong attention to detail and accuracy
- Good organisational and time management skills
- Ability to work effectively as part of a team
- Proficient in Microsoft Office 365 applications, including Teams
- Self-motivated and proactive approach
- Creative problem-solving abilities
- Good communication skills, both written and verbal
- Commitment to inclusive practice and accessibility
- Willingness to work occasional evenings and weekends

### Desirable Criteria

- Degree or qualification in museum studies, heritage management, or a related field
- Experience of working with maritime collections
- Experience of working on digitisation projects
- Experience of using museum collection documentation software such as Axiell
- Experience of working in a small/independent museum environment
- Experience of working with challenging histories or sensitive topics
- Knowledge of Museum Accreditation requirements
- Understanding of SPECTRUM documentation standards
- Knowledge of current interpretation trends and best practices
- Knowledge of conservation issues relating to maritime collections
- Awareness of relevant health and safety considerations for collections work



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*Essential Criteria – requirements without which a candidate would not be able to undertake the full remit of the role. Applicants who do not clearly demonstrate in their application that they possess the essential requirements will normally be rejected at the shortlisting stage.*

*Desirable Criteria – requirements which would be useful for the candidate to hold. When shortlisting, these criteria will be considered when more than one applicant meets the essential requirements.*

## **Access Information**

HMS Unicorn is currently not fully physically accessible for all users, and there are therefore physical requirements that come with this role on board a wooden, historic ship.

- HMS Unicorn is accessed via an entry gangway which can rise up to a 50-degree angle at high tide and dip to a 50cm drop at low tide.
- The different decks on board HMS Unicorn are only accessible via ladderways.
- For a full description of access aboard HMS Unicorn, please refer to our access guide available on request.

## **Career Development and Fair Work**

At the Unicorn Preservation Society, we are committed to supporting the professional growth and development of our staff. While we recognise that as a small organisation advancement opportunities may be limited, we have a duty to support our team members to be their best and to prepare them for future career growth. We create clear progression pathways, support skills development, and empower staff to achieve their professional potential, whether within UPS or as they move on to broader opportunities in the heritage sector.

As a Fair Work employer, we adhere to key principles that ensure an equitable and supportive workplace:

- **Voice:** We ensure staff have opportunities to contribute to organisational decisions
- **Security:** We provide appropriate job security and consistency of hours where possible
- **Opportunity:** We support skills development and career progression
- **Respect:** We foster a workplace culture of dignity and respect
- **Fulfilment:** We create meaningful work environments

UPS is committed to ensuring all staff receive at minimum the Real Living Wage as defined by the Living Wage Foundation. Our salary structure reflects both Museums Association recommendations (adjusted for regional context) and competitive positioning within the Scottish independent museum sector. We believe fair pay is essential to maintain staff wellbeing, reduce turnover, enhance engagement, and uphold our reputation as a responsible employer.



Through our formal grading structure, we provide clear pathways for progression and professional development, with regular reviews to support your growth and career aspirations.

## Equal Opportunities

The Unicorn Preservation Society is a Disability Confident Committed employer and operates a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for people living with a disability who fulfil the essential criteria in the job specification. If you would like to be considered under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, please let us know as part of your application.

HMS Unicorn is committed to the principles of Fair Work and paying the real Living Wage to all our employees. We believe that fair work practices lead to better outcomes for individuals and organisations, contributing to a more successful economy and inclusive society. As an employer, we are dedicated to providing appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, investing in workforce development, opposing inappropriate use of zero-hours contracts, and offering flexible working from day one of employment where possible.

Our commitment to fair work extends to addressing workplace inequalities, including pay and employment gaps. We strive to create a workplace where all staff are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their background or personal characteristics.

All staff and volunteers working with UPS must undergo Disclosure and PVG checks.

## How to Apply

We encourage applicants to apply by submitting:

- A CV and covering letter explaining how you meet the requirements of the role

Please submit informal enquiries and applications to: [recruitment@hmsunicorn.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@hmsunicorn.org.uk)

Application deadline: **10:00AM on Monday 12 May 2025**

Interview date: **Tuesday 27 May 2025 TBC**

Applicants will be required to bring proof of right to work in the UK to the interview. This should either be a UK passport, birth certificate, or form of ID recognised by the Home Office. Further details here - <https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work>

