

GRIMSBY FISHING HERITAGE CENTRE



At last we are regaining some of our freedom and can start thinking about places to visit. One place you may not have considered is the Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre (Alexandra Dock, Grimsby, DN31 1UZ). Back in January 2020 (pre-pandemic, remember those days?), I visited together with other members of the Dunholme Camera Club and found it very interesting.



Great Grimsby was able to connect to the famous fish markets of London, such as Billingsgate, when

the railway connected the two in 1848. This led to the rapid growth of Grimsby as a fishing port, indeed becoming the world's premier fishing port. It enabled fresh fish to become available nationwide and made it possible for fish and chips to become a nationwide dish. By the 1950s there were about 700 trawlers operating out of Grimsby.



The Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre, a multi-award-winning attraction, transports us back to the 1950s heydays. Just imagine the docks filled with boats, the sound of all the fish being craned ashore and people milling about among great crates of fish. It must have been a sight to behold. Terrible to think that now there are just five trawlers operating out of Grimsby and the fishing industry contributes just 10% or 1% of our economy. That is less than Harrods!

The Heritage Centre consists firstly of collections of artefacts before you enter the fishing world. There are various full-size scenarios which give you a visual impact of fishing in the Arctic together with sounds. They are impressive but you need to go there to understand what I mean.





Once you have seen the collections and worked your way through all the scenarios there is a good café in which to sit and reflect with a tea or coffee, cake or perhaps a meal.

To complete your visit, you go outside for a guided tour of a trawler, the Ross Tiger, which is moored close by. In the 1950s this was a state of the art trawler that had her maiden voyage in 1957. She had powerful modern diesels made by Ruston of Lincoln, more internal space together with central heating, flushing toilets, baths and even a shower, which were considered luxuries at the time (normally, a bucket sufficed for all those functions).

Grimsby Trawler



We were fortunate to be guided round by an ex-skipper of the vessel and you could almost feel him reliving his experiences. You can easily imagine the noise of the engines, the smell of the diesel and the fish, the sound of men clattering up and down ladders and all of this often in heavy seas and sometimes, in the Arctic, having to go up on deck and hack the ice off to prevent the ship turning over due to its weight. It is

sad and

thought-provoking that in Grimsby alone 32 trawlers were lost at sea in just the one decade of the 1950s. Fishing was rated as the most dangerous peacetime occupation.



The visit to the museum was interesting and informative and also a reminder of some of the things that are part of our heritage.

Deckhands Cabin



Jim Blainey

[As restrictions relax and we are able to get out and about more there are many places nearby that you can visit where you can learn more about our heritage and our past. If you visit somewhere locally that you think our readers might enjoy learning about, why not write something and send us your photographs. The Editor]