

Sleep inside **HMS Belfast** on a school trip to remember

- Hop aboard HMS Belfast with your class and 'kip' in the spaces once used by the crew.



Photo credit: © Imperial War Museums.



Photo credit: © Imperial War Museums.

Elizabeth Fagg of Imperial War Museums, tells us about Kip in a Ship, an exciting and memorable experience in which pupils sleep inside iconic HMS Belfast.



Few people can say they have slept on a 1930s warship, and we are incredibly lucky to have such a well-preserved space with so many original features intact. The Kip in a Ship sleeping quarters look exactly as they did in the 1950s (with proper bunk beds!), which creates an incredibly authentic and immersive experience. You also have the sleeping quarters entirely to yourselves, so it's a truly exclusive thing to do.

Q. What can schools expect from their experience on HMS Belfast and in particular, Kip in a Ship?

A. HMS Belfast is an iconic London landmark. From the moment schools arrive at the ship, they are walking in the footsteps of the 950-strong crew who served on board during the Second World War and beyond.

Kip in a Ship offers groups the unique opportunity to immerse themselves where history happened. We often meet adults who delight in telling us about the time they took part in a Kip on a Ship visit sometime during its 20-year history so it's an experience that the kids will never forget!

Q. What are the different packages on offer?

A. We have three packages available: The Officers' Package is for those looking to get the most out of their visit where groups enjoy a traditional Royal Naval dinner, an evening activity and a tour. The Ratings' Package is more of a relaxed itinerary where schools can choose to take part in either the activity and tour or the dinner. The Cadets' Package gives schools the flexibility to plan their own evening itinerary either on board, or elsewhere in London. All packages include breakfast and a complimentary teaching session in the morning.

Q. What activities are on board and what is popular?

A. Groups can take part in one of three activities. Mess Mugs is our most popular and artistic activity, where pupils will learn about the unique experience of living and sleeping in a mess deck and decorate their own mess mugs using imagery from around the ship.

We also have the Signalling activity which is quite practical, as children learn about the flag signalling method 'Semaphore' and create their own miniature flag pole.

Lastly, we have Morse Code which is our most technical activity, where pupils take on the role of a ship's telegraphist and encrypt and decrypt messages to their friends using historic Morse Code tappers.

Q. What sets Kip in a Ship apart from other sleepover experiences?

A. The historic environment - HMS Belfast is actually the largest object in Imperial War Museums' collection!

Q. What can pupils learn about the history of the ship and its significance?

A. Visitors will get an insight into life in the Twentieth Century Royal Navy, learning about the different roles on board, what it was like living and working in such close quarters, and the ship's important role in historic events and conflicts, such as D-Day and the Korean War. We highly recommend that groups allow time for the complimentary learning session in the morning, as kids can relate their experience of sleeping over to that of the ship's crew, and have the opportunity to handle original objects from the ship's collection and see historic photos of its adventures and crew.

“Kip in a Ship offers groups the unique opportunity to immerse themselves where history happened.”

Q. For teachers who have never booked a school sleepover, why should they give this a chance?

A. Kip in a Ship is a great choice for first-timers. Once you arrive on board at 6pm into our safe and secure environment, you can let our practitioners, with 20 years' experience, take the wheel and provide an incredibly fun and informative experience for your students, right through until 10am the next morning. Over 150 groups visit us every year, and of those, 64% are repeat bookers – so take it from them that this is a trip worth adding to the school's calendar.

Q. Finally, how can teachers book?

A. All bookings must be made through the online booking portal on our website. Dates can be reserved by paying a £100 deposit, and then our team will be in touch 8-12 weeks before your booking with more information and the booking forms.

We have a dedicated Kip in the Ship team which means there is always a familiar person waiting at the other end of the phone or computer, ready to help you plan your visit and answer any questions you may have. ●

Useful contact

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Snow much fun to be had



• Helen Bainbridge below and Kerry Daines (inset) are passionate about getting more children to experience the thrill of a snow-themed school trip.



We spoke to Snozone's UK General Managers Helen Bainbridge (Milton Keynes) and Kerry Daines (Yorkshire) to discover more about how a day on the slopes can benefit pupils.

What is Snozone and how does it benefit schools?

Helen: Snozone operates three indoor real-snow centres in Yorkshire, Milton Keynes and Madrid in Spain. As a business, we're celebrating our 25th anniversary this year! We offer a very wide range of activities from ski and snowboard lessons for beginners through to more advanced coaching sessions – we're open all year round except for Christmas day.

We benefit schools hugely in several ways; We realise there are several barriers that prevent children participating in snow sports - skiing in particular has a long history of elitism and is an expensive sport to participate in abroad. We offer very affordable skiing and snowboarding as an all-year-round sport, so you don't have to travel overseas.

Being indoors, we offer a very safe, weatherproof environment for school children to stay engaged in a sporting activity which helps to maintain good physical and mental health. We welcome schools and groups to help children and students achieve new sporting and social skills, confidence and resilience.

Kerry: For those schools that undertake an annual skiing trip away, we offer lessons at almost half the price of ski schools abroad, meaning that students will get more out of their ski trip when they're away because we can equip them with the necessary skills before they go. This enables students to get more quality time on the slopes and for schools to get more from their budget.

We also assess the snow sports components for GCSE and A Level PE, again meaning they do not have to go to any great expense travelling abroad to attain these accreditations. These are two-hour sessions where our coaches provide written and video feedback for the student linked to AQA, OCR and Edexcel examination boards

In addition, we provide great fun sledging sessions for teachers to give their students a fantastic mid-term or end of term treat and our team always make them entertaining.

What makes Snozone unique?

Kerry: We are the only UK indoor ski centre to own and operate our very own Disability Snow School and have developed this since 2015. We believe in providing full accessibility to snow sports. We also believe in supporting the school curriculum all year round, including during the school holidays. Our school holiday camps include a lot of off-slope activities that promote 'good citizenship' outside of the classroom such as a certified first aid course called 'mini medics', sign language lessons and conversational French and Spanish lessons.

Helen: We are also very proud four-time winners at the School Travel Awards for Best Sporting Venue, and have held the Quality Badge from the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom for several years. The LOfC badge is the only national accreditation that recognises good quality learning and safety provision at least equal to that delivered in the traditional classroom setting.

What's covered in a Snozone booking?

Kerry: All equipment is provided in the ticket price; skis or snowboards, boots, helmets and poles. All the students have to do is bring warm waterproof clothing and gloves with them - although we sell gloves at all our venues. Snozone also has unique event spaces that cater up to 400 guests and are ideal for educational events and actual lessons in a different environment. Our packages are fantastic value and include fresh food prepared by our Alpine Kitchen chefs.

Is there anything new for schools this year?

Helen: We are holding open evenings every three months this year at both UK venues where our management team will talk with groups of teachers about our range of activities. These meetings start at 5:30pm and conclude at about 7:30pm and there is no need to book in beforehand. Both venues will host these meetings on 19th March, and again on 18th June.

We have revamped our Polar Experience. This is our own unique children's adventure activity based on a rescue exercise on our slope. This problem-solving activity develops confidence and teamwork. We also deliver a 90-minute presentation on how Snozone operates as a commercial organisation which can be tailored appropriately for GCSE or A Level Business Studies coursework. This year we are also able to deliver the assessment of the 'Snow Badge' for Girl Guides and Scouts.

You also now own the indoor venue in Madrid, does this operate in the same way as your UK venues?

Kerry: We acquired our Madrid venue during lockdown in early 2021. Like our UK venues, it's co-located in a multi-use leisure/retail centre where we are the anchor tenants. It operates mostly the same with regards to the activities offered in the UK. We already had a significant schools programme in operation there which we've developed over the past few years. Madrid now offers the Polar Experience too which many schools participate in, which has been amazing! •



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• Children can try a range of activities like skiing and snowboarding.



Educational tours with a difference



We caught up with **Silvia Vintem**, general manager of school tour operator **Visions in Education**, to find out about some of the school visits on offer and how its new website has more resources and information than ever before.



Q. Can you tell us about Visions in Education?

A. Visions in Education in West Sussex provides high quality educational travel for schools. We offer immersive experiences and carefully designed itineraries to maximise the learning outcomes from each tour. Our attention to detail, specialist technical input, precise tour itineraries, and total support throughout the booking process means teachers can be confident their trips are set up from day one for the best tour ever! It's part of the 'Visions Difference' – something we are proud of and delighted to share with our schools.

Charter your own plane

Visions in Education and Visions Ski can charter your very own plane for your school trip abroad through its partners, IAG. So, for large groups or for groups travelling to the same destination on the same dates the team offers this service. It's part of the 'Visions Difference'.

Q. How can the team help schools create memorable educational visits?

A. We offer exclusive programmes and ski resorts where Visions groups are treated as VIPs from the start. We have our own charter company in-house and can offer private charter flights to our groups. We have experienced staff who are experts in educational travel, plus multi-linguists with educational backgrounds. We offer quality and reassurance to the schools that travel with us.

Q. Tell us about some of the exciting educational tours that you've recently launched?

A. We already excel at what we have been doing best which is specialising in ski and STEM trips. So, we have now launched our new educational tours for history trips, language immersion experiences, school geography fieldwork tours, classical history tours, practical food technology trips, and politics tours for all secondary schools.

Q. What else is new at Visions in Education?

A. We have a new website which showcases our expertise, as well as downloadable brochures for each tour, curriculum links, teacher resources, sample tour itineraries and accommodation examples with detailed information. Our

- Allow your pupils to feel the thrill of walking on Mars by visiting Euro Space in Belgium.



- Visions in Education offers plenty of ski destinations, including Jay Peak in Vermont.



new educational tours offer guided walking tours, language lessons, simulations, workshops and activities designed to help inspire and broaden a variety of pupils' interests.

Q. Are there any tours which are particularly popular?

A. One example is our exclusive NASA Houston tour which is the ultimate educational experience. It's a five-day mission developing teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking skills, creativity, communication and adapting to unexpected problems. It is an excellent cross-curricular school trip for students of physics, chemistry and biology, as well as maths, economics and psychology. Next year is the perfect time to visit as NASA is preparing for *Artemis 3* – set to be the first moon landing since Apollo 17 in 1972. The Artemis mission aims to land the first woman and the first person of colour on the Moon. NASA aims to land humans on Mars by 2033.

Ski is also our passion, and we believe we can deliver an experience that beats any other school ski trip for value and quality. Popular destinations are Jay Peak and Snowbasin in the USA and Panorama in Canada.

Visions created and continues to operate the 'Exclusive Resort' concept for school travel, often as the only operator in these tried and tested resorts.

Q. Why is it so important to get children out of the classroom on educational visits?

A. Most of our management team are also parents of secondary school aged children. We have witnessed first-hand what they have lost by not being able to enjoy these experiences over the last few years due to the pandemic. Residential visits are so important to children's development, and it is vital that we now offer them as many unique opportunities as we can. ●

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