

## REPORT FROM VISIT TO THE FORMER NAVAL HOSPITAL AT HASLAR

The Friends were hosted by the Haslar Heritage Group for an informative and fascinating visit on Sat 16 Sep 17. 46 Friends attended – 3 were members of the HHG as well! The picture shows Mark Traslar, member of the Friends and HHG giving the safety brief in St Lukes Church.



The chairman of HHG Eric Birbeck formally welcomed us and then gave a no notes, no slides, one hour, presentation on the history of the hospital. Fact after fact flowed in a most enjoyable and explanatory style.

Breaking into 2 groups, Friends toured in turn the outside of the main building, the water tower, pathology lab (the only one not on the overall axis in order to use microscopes with mirrors pointing into the sun), previous asylum buildings and dormitories/messes, and the Paddock and the Memorial Gardens. Grisly stories included the finding of 3 skeletons in the sewer where they had tried to escape. (Under where Mark is standing!) Hearing about the 30,000 bodies in the Paddock in un-consecrated ground, the Friends became noticeably quieter.



The Memorial Gardens are beautifully kept.

The lunch was splendid and it was different to be sitting in the pews of St Lukes Church enjoying lunch with a glass of wine. We felt really welcome.



Mark gave a personal account of his time in Uganda – the hospital ship in the Falkland's war. It was the first time he had done this and he was clearly moved by some of the memories it provoked. As well as highlighting the outstanding work done by all the medical staff on board, he wanted to pay tribute to the fantastic work that had been done in Gibraltar in the conversion from a luxury passenger liner to a hospital ship in the 65 hours allocated. A flight deck was fitted, a large casualty entrance created, wards and theatres fitted out. Vast quantities of stores were embarked.



The Friends are most grateful for the preparation that went into the visit and a most informative day. It is intended to have ongoing links with the HHG.

*Richard Lord 17 Sep 17*