

## **UKTP Podcast Episode #92 - Transcript**

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Intro [00:00:03]:

Welcome to the UK travel planning podcast. Your host is the founder of the UK travel planning website, Tracey Collins. In this podcast, Tracey shares destination guides, travel tips, and itinerary ideas, as well as interviews with a variety of guests who share their knowledge and experience of UK travel to help you plan your perfect UK vacation. Join us as we explore the UK from cosmopolitan cities to quaint villages, from historic castles to beautiful islands, and from the picturesque countryside to seaside towns.

Tracy Collins [00:00:40]:

Hello, and welcome to this week's episode of the UK travel plan and podcast. This week's episode is a destination guide and I know these are very popular. Our chat with York travel expert and local Sinead in episode 3 is one of our most popular episodes. So this week, my focus is further south and on the coastal city of Portsmouth. Now Portsmouth is an easy train ride from London and has many attractions and museums which make this a perfect day out from the capital. As always, I love to chat to locals for their insider knowledge, recommendations, and tips. And this week's couple is no exception. So I began by asking them to introduce themselves and tell us how long they have lived in the Portsmouth area.

Kevin Patterson [00:01:23]:

Hi, everyone. My name is Kevin Patterson. I am related to Tracy. Tracy is the daughter of my cousin, Marge, and Tracy came to our wedding a long, long time ago in Britain. Pauline and I, who will sat alone in a minute, we've been together since 1972. We've lived in the Portsmouth area since 1971. We were in education for that length of time, and then when we finished in education, we've continued living here.

Pauline Patterson [00:01:52]:

Hi. I'm Pauline. I also went to Portsmouth College of Education where I met Kevin in 72. Originally, I'm from Birmingham. And when we got together, and we got married in 75 in Birmingham, We decided that we would actually stay in the Portsmouth area because we love living on the South Coast, And it's got so many attractions here, and it's a lovely place to live. And that's why we'd recommend it as a place to visit.

Tracy Collins [00:02:28]:

Oh, yeah. Absolutely. I agree a 100%. It is a fantastic place to visit. Could you explain to listeners exactly where Portsmouth is located in the UK?

Kevin Patterson [00:02:39]:

So Portsmouth is located on the south coast, as we mentioned, about 75 miles southwest of London. So direct line southwest, and you'll hit Portsmouth on the coast very close to the Isle of Wight. So if you look at the coastline of of of Britain, you'll see a little blob, which is the Isle of Wight. Portsmouth is very close to that. It's very easy to access from London. So if you're staying in London, there are regular trains from London to Waterloo, and it takes about an hour, just an hour and a half, sorry, to get down to the harbor station. And And if you get to

the Harbour Station, you're right in some of the major attractions. Alternatively, there are coaches with cheaper option, which go from London Victoria coach station, and that also takes you directly to Portsmouth Harbour.

Kevin Patterson [00:03:26]:

It's easy access to the Isle of Wight from there as well. The ferry, the passenger ferry, is at literally at the end of the train platform. Outside the train station, there's an interchange, so there are buses, coaches, and taxis that can get you all over the the city.

Tracy Collins [00:03:45]:

Yeah. It's very accessible, isn't it? It's a great, day trip from London. I know Doug and I are gonna be doing a a an episode of the podcast in a a few weeks' time talking about the best and easiest day trips from London. And Portsmouth is an absolute perfect example. A really easy place to get to by train and really easily accessible to all the sites when you actually get into Portsmouth itself. So that's great. Yeah. Right.

Tracy Collins [00:04:07]:

So guys, I'm gonna ask you now, what would be your top recommendations? And I know there's loads and loads of things to do in Portsmouth. Absolutely loads of things. But what would be your top recommendations of places to visit, particularly if somebody's visiting from London, for example? Would you like to talk through each of those places?

Pauline Patterson [00:04:24]:

Well, what we thought we'd do is the historic dockyard is the absolute number one attraction. And you could spend the whole day there because it's vast. There's so much to do and to see. So what I thought I'd do is if I just say a little bit about the jockeyard and what it's like and what the pass covers, And then that would definitely be probably a whole day. So

Tracy Collins [00:04:54]:

Yep. Perfect.

Pauline Patterson [00:04:55]:

Literally, you walk out of the railway station, and you can see the dockyard entrance. It's about a 5 minute walk. We looked up the cost the current cost to get in, and for an adult, it's £44. But it covers a huge number of ships you can go and see. Portsmouth was the base of the British Royal Navy, so it is the Royal Naval Dockyard. And it houses 4 main ships, if you like, historic ships. The oldest is the Mary Rose, which actually sank off South Sea, between South Sea and the Isle of Wight in the Solent, that's the stretch of water, And Henry the 8th, it was his flagship, battleship, and he was watching from South Sea Castle when it sank.

Tracy Collins [00:05:57]:

On the day that the Mero sank, that was actually July in 15 45, and it it kinda lay there for quite a long time, quite a few years until they discovered it in 1971. And then it was in 1982 that they actually decided that they were gonna bring it up.

Pauline Patterson [00:06:13]:

We watched the Mary Rose being lifted from the bottom of the Solent, and then it was taken to the dockyard where it's been preserved or parts of it have been preserved, and they've

built this most incredible museum, about the ship itself and the artifacts, and you can see through the glass the actual old timbers from half the ship. The other half has obviously rotted away, but it's a really excellent place to visit, and you'd probably need a couple of hours to go and see just that. So that really would be the number one attraction. There were 3 other major ones as well. There's HMS Victory, which was Nelson's flagship, and you can go on board there. And it's really interesting because you can see where the the gun ports are and where they sat at the tables to have their meals. You can see where the the officers slept and where they ate their meal at the front of the ship. So that's a really interesting ship to go on.

Kevin Patterson [00:07:34]:

It's also self guided. It's a self guided audio tour, so you can take as long as you like. Yeah. There's no kinda hurry for that.

Tracy Collins [00:07:43]:

And I remember that Doug and I visited, the historic dockyard with you guys actually in summer 2022, and I was blown away by the Mary Rose. I think it was probably one of the best museums I've ever been to. The way they've done it is absolute genius. And from there, obviously, we saw the victory as well. At the time, it was under a bit scaffolding. Is that still happening?

Kevin Patterson [00:08:06]:

The situation with it is is permanently under restoration because the age of the of the vessel. And, the moment the main mast are down, and there's a lot of scaffolding still around Tracy.

Pauline Patterson [00:08:18]:

But inside the ship, it's still as it was. Yeah. There's not much, going on particularly there at the moment.

Kevin Patterson [00:08:26]:

Side. No. But outside. There's work always going on.

Pauline Patterson [00:08:29]:

So we've got the Mary Rose. You've got HMS Victory. Then you've got HMS Warrior, which is the first ironclad ship. And, again, you can go onboard that, and, again, it's quite interesting to see the differences, but it's still quite old, and you get great views all across, Portsmouth Harbour. The sort of last ship, that is worth seeing is HMS M 33, which was a World War ship that served in Gallipoli. And that's quite a small boat compared with the others, but well worth a little walk around. That's probably about half an hour, maybe 3 quarters of an hour to do that one. So those are the 4 main ships, but there's still lots more you can go and visit.

Pauline Patterson [00:09:27]:

Obviously, it's got the museum of the World Navy. So if you're particularly interested in that, that's worth a visit. But the other good thing about the ticket for the jet well, no. It's it's an annual ticket, actually, the £44. You get the chance to do, a boat trip around the harbor. It includes that, or and or you can get a water taxi, which goes across this the, harbour to Gosport where there is the submarine museum, and you can actually walk through the old

submarine. And when we went quite recently with our granddaughters, 2 granddaughters, and we were met by a veteran, I think, who did an introduction. But then again, you walk through at your own pace, and you can look at the the periscope and across to Portsmouth.

Pauline Patterson [00:10:28]:

And so that was really interesting, and they enjoyed that too. You can also get the water taxi to the explosion museum, which is where, the naval firepower where they did all the ammunition, and you can find out about that as well. So there's quite an involved in that ticket, which is why I would suggest it a day. Or if you were able to stay longer, then you might want to split that and do, you know, a couple of ships one day and then a couple of ships another. Because there are a lot more attractions attractions in the Portsmouth area as well, which Kevin's gonna talk to you about.

Kevin Patterson [00:11:12]:

Well, we'll talk a little bit about hotels as well. So if anybody who is staying, but we'll mention that later on. Pauline mentioned that as you come out of the station, you can see the dockyard just to the left. If you turn right, another 5 minutes walk away, there's Gunwharf Quays. And Gunwharf Quays is built on an old navy base, but it is a mixture of shops and restaurants. There's plenty of places to eat. But there's also a very dramatic Spinnaker Tower, which was Portsmouth's Millennium Project, and it's shaped like a sail. You can get lifts up to the top 2 viewing platforms, wonderful views over the Portsmouth, Isle of Wight area, particularly to get a clear day.

Kevin Patterson [00:11:56]:

If it's not clear day, then you're not gonna see very much from the top. But you can also have up there an afternoon tea as well, and Paulie and I did that a couple of years ago. And, again, it's it's a really nice place to sit, have an afternoon tea with this wonderful view over the dockyard over the harbor. The entrance fee to get into that is about £16. You can have an afternoon tea for £40, and that includes the entrance to the the Spinnaker Tower as well. There's also a traditional pub, sorry, in the Gunwharf area, called the customs house that actually is in the old customs house. You know, if you look for a traditional English pub, there's one there, and there's another 3 traditional pub just at the end of the harbor, which is, called Old Portsmouth. It is about a 15 minute walk away, and you can't go wrong because all you have to do is look on the pavement.

Kevin Patterson [00:12:50]:

And on the pavement, in stone, if you follow the coiled rope walkway, it takes you around to Old Portsmouth, and there are 3 very interesting pubs down there. One of them, the, the stone west has been there for centuries, and it's right at the harbor mouth. All of those pubs do beer. They do food, so there's plenty places to eat, and plenty places to drink, all within walkable distance. Further attractions, again, a bus from the interchange just outside the railway station. The bus is every 10 minutes, and there are buses number 1, number 3, or number 23. They take you into South Sea only about 10 minutes away, and then you're very close to the d day museum. And, also, as Pauline mentioned before, South Sea Castle.

Kevin Patterson [00:13:43]:

Sansa Castle is free to get in. It's only open March to October, but it is where Henry the 8th, as Pauline said, watch the Mary Rose sink, so you can step back in history and imagine the

Mary Rose sink into the bottom of the soul. The D Day Museum has just been recently refurbished because, obviously, it's 80 years this year for and it's the story of the D Day invasion. And it's told in a really good way by the the stories of individual civilians and soldiers and also artifacts that they have as well. And it follows the story of the D Day invasion from, you know, the planning up to the battle for Normandy. That is, again, a good 2 hour trip. It's just about £14 to get in, £12 online. It's, again, another good 2 to 3 hours trip.

Kevin Patterson [00:14:38]:

There's a tapestry in there as well based on the Bayou Tapestry, but it's the d day story told as a tapestry.

Pauline Patterson [00:14:47]:

It's beautiful.

Kevin Patterson [00:14:48]:

And there's a huge landing craft, which is a fairly new addition, a tank landing craft outside. So So if you've got an interest in in World War 2 or that era, that again is worth well worth a visit.

Pauline Patterson [00:15:01]:

If you're interested in sewing, actually, and embroidery as well Yeah. The tapestry itself is worth seeing. It's beautiful.

Tracy Collins [00:15:09]:

I can imagine. It does sound amazing. It's, that's somewhere I'm gonna add to my next next time I come to visit you guys.

Kevin Patterson [00:15:14]:

Go and have a look at that. Yeah. And the other the other thing that, is probably worth mentioning, and this really is very specific for any fans of Sherlock Holmes or Conan Doyle because it's not very well known, but Conan Doyle worked for 2 or 3 years as a doctor in South Sea, and he actually wrote the first two Sherlock Holmes short stories, I guess, they were in South Sea and Portsmouth Museum, which is signposted from the train station about a 10 minute walk away.

Pauline Patterson [00:15:49]:

It's a bit more than about 15 minutes.

Kevin Patterson [00:15:51]:

It has the biggest collection of Sherlock Holmes memorabilia in the world. If you're into Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle, it's worth going. If you're not, probably give it a miss.

Tracy Collins [00:16:02]:

I know it'll be on Doug's list.

Pauline Patterson [00:16:06]:

On the floor above that exhibition, there's also an exhibition about the development of South Sea

Kevin Patterson [00:16:13]:  
Yeah.

Pauline Patterson [00:16:13]:  
As a seaside town.

Kevin Patterson [00:16:15]:  
That's another place that's free to get in. Yeah. So, you know, if you if you went in for half an hour or whatever, it's it would be fine. The thing with a lot of these exhibits, a lot of these attractions, they're weather they're weatherproof. You know, if you get a nice day, the all the rain is a bonus. The only one really is the, which you wouldn't wanna go because it's poor with rain because there's not much point. But everywhere else, they're all Good indoor attractions. Good indoor attractions.

Tracy Collins [00:16:43]:  
And that's good to know because, I mean, if somebody's basing themselves in London and looking to do a day trip or 2 and it's gonna pour down with rain, and then you know that if you head down to Portsmouth, you can take your umbrella, but you can go and see all the ships. You know? Yeah. You're gonna be indoors, so that's a great option for people to to consider. Because we always get asked that. So, you know, what do I do if it's pouring down with rain? Well, you know, what do you do as most British people do? You put an umbrella up, put a raincoat on it Yeah. And off you go.

Kevin Patterson [00:17:08]:  
Get used to it.

Pauline Patterson [00:17:09]:  
Yeah. You do need flat shoes

Kevin Patterson [00:17:12]:  
Yeah.

Pauline Patterson [00:17:13]:  
Particularly when you're going on the ships. Could you go up and down the,

Kevin Patterson [00:17:17]:  
Yeah. They're very steep.

Pauline Patterson [00:17:18]:  
The steep sort of ledgers.

Kevin Patterson [00:17:20]:  
Yeah. Anybody with mobility issues, the Mary Rose itself is very accessible.

Pauline Patterson [00:17:26]:  
Yeah.

Kevin Patterson [00:17:27]:

The other 2 the other 3 ships really aren't. You really need flat shoes to be able to get around. Yeah. Some of the walkways are very steep and very narrow. The d the DJ Museum is fine.

Pauline Patterson [00:17:40]:

I think that we've covered the main attractions. And, of course, the one thing we haven't mentioned is that, and I know Doug's doing a

Kevin Patterson [00:18:01]:

The other thing with the hovercraft, of course, it is the only scheduled work and service in the world now. So it's a unique experience, and there is a direct bus. It's called the hover bus. It doesn't actually hover. It goes from the interchange right outside the railway station directly to the hovercraft, and it's literally just 10 minutes across the Solent.

Pauline Patterson [00:18:26]:

Yeah.

Kevin Patterson [00:18:27]:

To to ride. It's the only service in the world now. It's a good thing to do as well.

Tracy Collins [00:18:31]:

Yeah. I think Doug did that. Oh, no. I did it did he do that last summer? I think he did that last summer, actually. He popped down in because I yes. I went to Paris for the day, and he he went over to Isle of Wight. And I think he took the hovercraft because I'd been on a hovercraft and when I was a child, and he had said, oh, I've never been on one. So I think he did that.

Pauline Patterson [00:18:47]:

I think he went to Carrisbrook Castle,

Tracy Collins [00:18:50]:

didn't he? Yes. He did. Yep. So that's on my list. Next time I get back over is to actually go and visit as well because I've never been to Isle of Wight, but he he was sent over on on a mission to go and explore Isle of Wight for for both of us. So that was good. So, obviously, you've given loads of suggestions of of places to visit. So have you got an an outline of an itinerary that somebody could pick up? I know you've mentioned that you could just spend the entire day going to historic dockyard, and I kinda second that because we did that.

Tracy Collins [00:19:20]:

But if somebody was like, okay. I'm gonna get a day. I've got a day. I'm gonna come down from London. What would you suggest would be kind of a good itinerary for a day? Well,

Kevin Patterson [00:19:29]:

I think if they're coming for the day and they are interested in ships, interested in the in the history bit of it. I would say probably head for the dockyard. If you're picking one ship to do in the dockyard, Mary Rose, because, a, the the it's one of the very well, there's only one other

one that I'm aware of in Sweden I mean, stored. But, you know, you can actually see and get an idea what the boat would have been like from, you know, 15th century. And as you said before, Tracy, the state of the art museum because they've done so. You could dip into the other ones, spend some time at the Mary Rose. If you wanted to dip into the other ones, do so. It's worth probably doing it if the weather's nice doing the harbor cruise.

Pauline Patterson [00:20:17]:

Yeah.

Kevin Patterson [00:20:17]:

You know, because it's a nice thing to do, and you get an idea of some of the other navy ships that are in there. So but we get then also, you know, then go and have possibly a lunch into Gunwharf. Yeah. There's plenty of place stops. And I would, probably get the bus and go down to Southsea and just have a look at the, you know, the the setting of the D Day Museum and Sazir Castle in summer months because, again, you get a really wonderful view.

Pauline Patterson [00:20:51]:

And there were 3 forts in the Solent Yeah. Called Palmerston's Folly, and they're forts, so they're sticking up, and they're worth looking at too.

Kevin Patterson [00:21:02]:

And then if you wanted to walk back, you could again just follow the sea into Old Portsmouth, go and have a pint or a pint at the still in West, you know, probably the one of the old well, probably the oldest pub in Portsmouth, and then follow that rope path back to the railway station.

Tracy Collins [00:21:20]:

That sounds absolutely perfect, Kevin. A really amazing itinerary for a day.

Kevin Patterson [00:21:24]:

Anybody who's coming by car, they wouldn't necessarily come by London, but I know some of your visitors might be coming Yeah. You know, from elsewhere, from from Bath or Dorset or somewhere. There's a very large car park, and it's signposted from the Alaska Sportsman.

Tracy Collins [00:21:41]:

Oh, perfect. And is that paid parking or free parking?

Kevin Patterson [00:21:44]:

That's paid.

Tracy Collins [00:21:45]:

Paid. Okay. Yeah. Usually, it's paid in the UK. I think in Australia, we're kinda used to most of the time, it's free. So it's always a bit of a shock when we go to UK and Most of the time, it's paid. Yeah. You have to pay for it.

Tracy Collins [00:21:55]:

So I've talked about places to eat. We've talked about good places to have a pint. So all of those we'll put in the show notes. So that's really useful. Just thinking, if I was gonna go to the historic dockyard, would you recommend the weekdays, weekends? Would you say it's gonna be busier at certain times of the year?

Kevin Patterson [00:22:12]:

School holidays will be busy. Bank holidays, school holidays, busier. Mid midweek. I mean, if they were going midweek in May, June, September, you'd get some school parties in places like the Mary Rose visiting, but it's not gonna be horrendous at any time. The only times that we would avoid was probably like holidays, really.

Pauline Patterson [00:22:36]:

But even there

Kevin Patterson [00:22:37]:

It's it's such a big site.

Pauline Patterson [00:22:38]:

Big site.

Kevin Patterson [00:22:39]:

It's such a big site. You can get around.

Pauline Patterson [00:22:41]:

In some ways, it's quite buzzy having people around, isn't it?

Kevin Patterson [00:22:45]:

And and Gunewolf can be busy, but there's so many places to eat. It's not a problem. You could wander in and just say, you know Yeah. If you got a table, you you'd find somewhere to eat.

Pauline Patterson [00:22:55]:

All the attractions but then maybe go to Gunwharf

Kevin Patterson [00:23:08]:

or one of the

Pauline Patterson [00:23:09]:

pubs for, you know, an evening meal before you had John back.

Tracy Collins [00:23:13]:

Well, I always end the podcast with the same question. What would be your top tip for someone planning a visit to Portsmouth for the very first time?

Pauline Patterson [00:23:20]:

Definitely the Mary Rose. Yep.

Kevin Patterson [00:23:23]:

Yep. Yeah. I'd go without the Mary Rose. Somewhere unique, and you're not gonna see anything like that anywhere else in the world.

Tracy Collins [00:23:29]:

I kinda third that as well because it was somewhere I'd always wanted to go and it absolutely blew my mind. I've never been anywhere that has done just such a good job with with how they've designed that museum. It is very, very special what they've done there. But, guys, thank you so much for coming on the podcast. I've been asking for a while, and you've been saying that you'd love to do it. So it's been the podcast. It was wonderful to talk about Portsmouth. I say we always love visiting you guys, and it's just a wonderful place to go and explore.

Tracy Collins [00:24:08]:

You can find links to everywhere that Pauline and Kevin talked about including the different museums the historic dockyards and the pubs in this week's show notes [atuktravelplanet.comforward/episode92](http://atuktravelplanet.comforward/episode92). That just leaves me to say until next week, happy UK travel planning.