



# Ahoy!

National Coastwatch Institution **The bi-monthly newsletter**

**for Friends of**

[www.nci.org.uk](http://www.nci.org.uk)

**Hengistbury Head Lookout and its Watchkeepers**

**Issue 9 April 2021**

With the gradual easing of lockdown arrangements, since the end of March Watchkeepers have returned to work at the Lookout in teams of two; this is welcomed by all concerned. Not only is this safer for all, but it has enabled the resumption of camaraderie and training, both of which are crucial elements in our service as we maintain *“eyes along the coast”*.

## ***In this issue:***

- **In Focus** – a regular feature about our volunteers: this month, we congratulate one of our Watchkeepers for his five years of service with NCI
- **Thank you.....** to two local and very diverse community groups
- **Been there, done that** – a summary of recent Station events
- **Amateur Radio** - our Watchkeepers have diverse hobbies
- **Looking forward** – planned events
- **Stay in touch** – essential contact details



# *In Focus*

John Hill is our most senior Watchkeepers at 85 years young, and this month achieves 5 years' service for NCI.



**Name:** John Anthony Hill  
**Role within Station:** Watchkeeper

### **When and why did you join NCI?**

I remember having been impressed by a TV advert I saw for NCI and later, after my wife was admitted into a care home having been diagnosed with dementia, I went on my first cruise, and was sat next to a lady who happened to be a Watchkeeper in Devon - it's a small world! I initially visited NCI Calshot on 7th April 2016 and did my first Watch with them on 9th May 2016.

### **How did you finding single manning\* at the Lookout?** (\*COVID-19 compliant safety procedure within NCI until very recently)

It was a strange feeling initially as we're so used to working as a team at NCIHH and it certainly got the brain working! It was very good for building confidence as a Watchkeeper and great practice for being a Watch Leader. Of course, having 'phone buddies' who checked in with us at very regular intervals to make sure everything was ok with both the Watchkeeper and the ongoing activity was very reassuring, but it's great to be back operating as a team again in the Lookout.

### **Tell us a little about your very interesting career**

In 1950, at the age of 15, I joined the Royal Navy -HMS St Vincent at Gosport. Funny, the memories that stick with you - my first breakfast was kidneys on fried bread. During my 12 years I served on frigates, destroyers and minesweepers. My last posting was as the Flag Officer sea training coxswain and driver at Portland and that seemed very cushy!

In 1962 I joined the Prison Service at Portland Borstal and my first posting after training was to North Sea Camp open borstal (now an open prison) in Lincolnshire. I applied to be a physical training instructor and after a 12 month course was posted to HMP Wormwood Scrubs which was quite a scary thought having spent my early prison officer days at borstals! In 1967 I requested a transfer to the high security HMP Albany which had just opened on the Isle of Wight (in 2009 it became part of HMP Isle of Wight) and my final posting was to HMP Winchester. I left the prison service in 1989 after 27 years service.

I then went on to work at the Wessex Nuffield Hospital at Chandlers Ford for five years, first as a theatre porter and later as a care assistant on the wards before finally retiring.

### **What hobbies do you have?**

My wife and I used to enjoy metal detecting but once she became ill I lost interest. I took up short mat bowls, followed by grass and indoor bowls, and played in all three in local leagues. It really was the best thing I ever did after my wife went into the care home as it got me out meeting and talking to people once again. I also enjoy cycling, walking and swimming (short distances these days) and have recently turned my hand to watercolour painting; I'm a complete beginner but am enjoying exploring all the aspects.

### **What are you currently reading?**

Because I had cataracts in both eyes, which have now been operated on, I subscribed to Audible UK so that I could download and listen to books. I still use this service and am currently listening to 'Origin' by Dan Brown - the story of a desperate bid to escape Bilbao and flee to Barcelona on a perilous quest to locate a cryptic password and unlock the secret. I also enjoy Wilbur Smith and Tom Clancy novels.

### **Cat or dog?**

Definitely dog. When my wife and I were both working we always had two dogs, one large and one small, and all trained by my wife. The breeds varied from Alsatian, Doberman, Weimaraner, Cairn to Yorkshire terriers.

### **And your favourite tippie?**

I do enjoy a whiskey and dry ginger, or a gin and tonic, or a pint. Really, if the truth be told, I would drink anything!

*Thank you John, for your five years of service with NCI. We all raise a glass in your honour to toast this milestone and wish you many more years of enjoyable Watchkeeping with NCIHH !*



*John receives his 5 year Award from Station Manager Peter Holway, with Deputy Station Manager Ed Essery sharing this significant moment. (Note - Covid-19 compliant; this presentation took place at a Watch handover, when there are four personnel at the Lookout for approximately 10-15 minutes).*

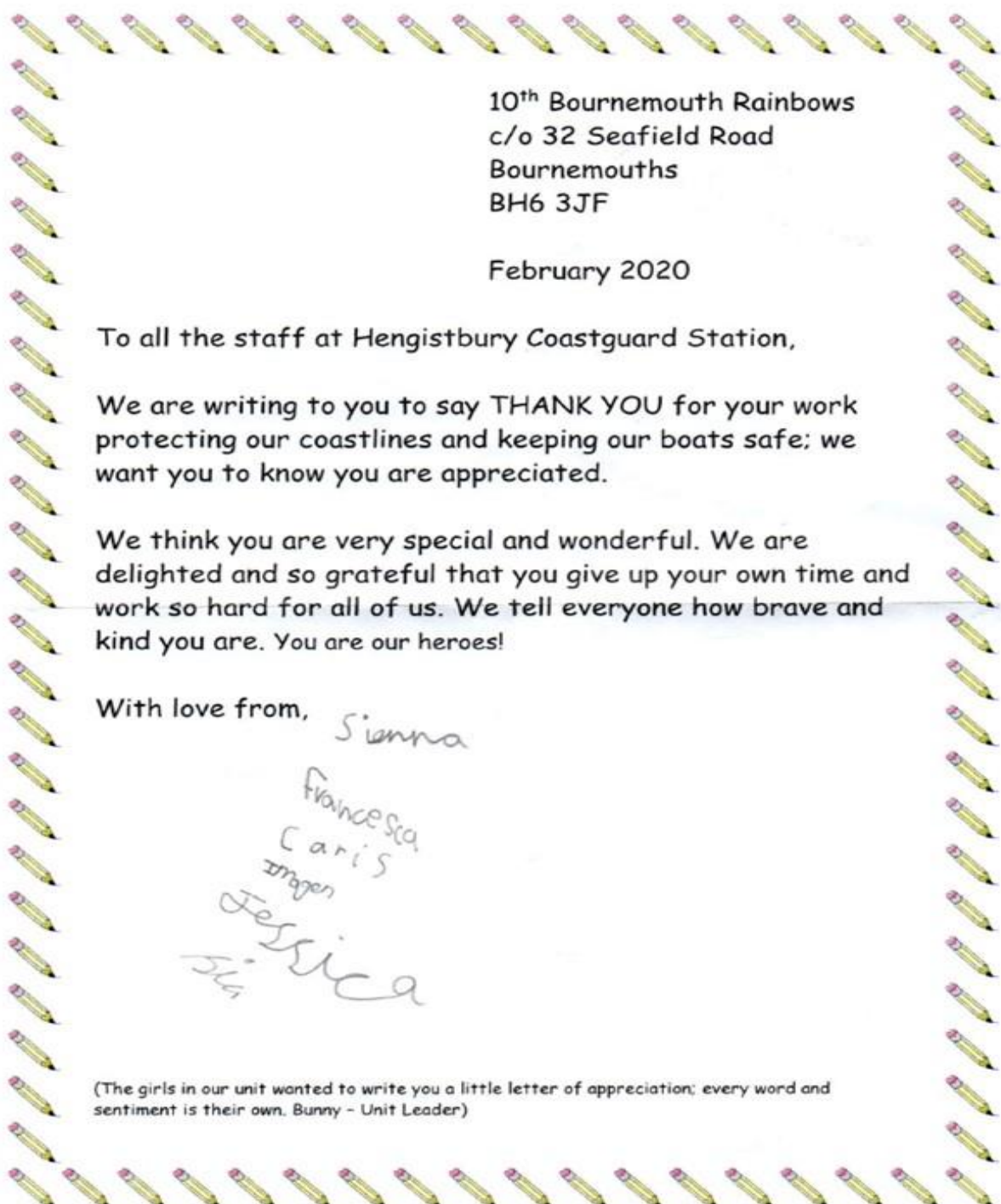
## ***Thank you...***

### ***Donation from Christchurch Harbour Association***

We are pleased to report that we have received a totally unexpected donation of £500 from Christchurch Harbour Association. This is another demonstration of the value by the local community placed upon the work we do. Christchurch Harbour Association is a volunteer group of Sailing Clubs, fishermen and marine businesses, who are responsible for the laying of channel marks in the harbour and the entrance channel, and whose funding comes from a levy on all Christchurch Harbour mooring fees. They have been busy doing exactly this job during the past week, which will be very much appreciated by water users as they enter and exit the harbour. Thank you, CHA, for this most welcome contribution to our ongoing work.

### ***Not all our fans are necessarily “water-based” ...***

We were delighted to receive the following letter from a local Rainbows (junior Brownies, aged 5-7yrs) group commending us on our work:



10<sup>th</sup> Bournemouth Rainbows  
c/o 32 Seafield Road  
Bournemouths  
BH6 3JF

February 2020

To all the staff at Hengistbury Coastguard Station,

We are writing to you to say THANK YOU for your work protecting our coastlines and keeping our boats safe; we want you to know you are appreciated.

We think you are very special and wonderful. We are delighted and so grateful that you give up your own time and work so hard for all of us. We tell everyone how brave and kind you are. You are our heroes!

With love from,

Sianna  
Francesca  
Caris  
Imogen  
Jessica  
Sia

(The girls in our unit wanted to write you a little letter of appreciation; every word and sentiment is their own. Bunny - Unit Leader)

## Been there, done that... – a summary of recent Station events

### ***Fridays 11am***

Watchkeepers have again been enjoying weekly online coffee mornings to keep in touch with each other during lockdown, but these will cease as they have the opportunity to conduct Watches with different people.

### *Incidents since the last Friends Newsletter*

An "Incident" in NCI terms is a situation concerning the safety of life or property, during which an NCI Station has observed, or had any involvement of supporting the Coastguard (CG) or other Search and Rescue (SAR) resource. In the 12 months to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, NCIHH was the second busiest Station in the country after Porthcawl (64 Incidents), having been involved in 47 Incidents. This consolidates the importance of our presence on the Head. Most recent Incidents appear at the top of the list below.

CRT = Coastguard Rescue Team; MoP = Member of Public CG = Coastguard; ILB = Inshore Lifeboat; LB = Lifeboat; nfa = no further action; cas evac = casualty evacuation; FAWGI = False Alarm with Good Intent

<b>Date</b>	<b>Incident Summary</b>	<b>Lifeboat Involved</b>
25/04/2021	Motor boat with 2 POB reported problem outside Christchurch harbour. NCI had visual. ILB took casualty under tow safely to harbour	Yes
17/04/2021	MOP reported dog ran over cliff, HMCG CRT team abseiled cliff and recovered dog safe and well	No
12/04/2021	Whilst Police and CRT searching for suicidal MoP casualty arrived at Lookout asking for help. HMCG/Police notified MoP at cliff edge. All emergency services arrived. Casualty eventually in police custody.	No
31/03/2021	Reported to CG that disabled speedboat was visual. Monitored casualty until a local FV towed it in.	No



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24/03/2021	HMCG requested visual search for downed paraglider. Mist reducing visibility - nothing seen on bearing given. Shoreline Engineer later confirmed all chutes accounted for. NFA	No
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### ***Amateur Radio***

*Watchkeeper and Membership Representative (Welfare), David Wilkins, has another hobby (how dare he!) and would love to hear from like-minded AmRad buffs. David writes....*

“During the month of May I, together with many of my fellow Amateur Radio enthusiasts in the UK, will be operating our home radio stations with special one-off radio callsigns as part of an event called "SOS Radio Week" (which actually lasts for all of May).

SOS Radio Week was created by two Amateur Radio operators from Lancashire to promote and support both NCI and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Full details of the organisation can be found online at [www.sosradioweek.org.uk](http://www.sosradioweek.org.uk), along with suggestions on how the public can donate to us.

My personal radio callsign is G5HY but I've been granted the special callsign GB5NCI by OfCom (who also administer our marine Short Range Certificate (SRC) licenses and the Coastguard (HMCG) /NCI/RNLI channels) and I'm making contact with other Amateurs both locally on our VHF frequencies and nationally/internationally on HF to promote our organisations.

I first took part in SOS Radio Week last year, making contact with stations all over the world, including Tasmania, America, St Lucia, Oman, Kenya, Japan and a lot of European countries. However, in practice I've been trying to concentrate on UK stations and especially those on the South Coast, as they're more likely to have heard of NCI and the RNLI and to be willing to donate to support us. My closest contact has been just a quarter of a mile away from my home here in Ashley Heath!

I'd also like to hear from any HH Watchkeepers or Friends of NCIHH who are licensed Amateurs, or just interested in Amateur Radio - please get in touch!"

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## ***Looking forward*** – planned events

### **Summer BBQ**

Subject to whatever restrictions may be in place at the time, we hope to be able to hold our annual BBQ on Thursday 8th July (reserve date Thursday 22nd July). Please write this event in your diary now! Further details in the next edition of *Ahoy!* at the end of June, when we will have a fuller picture of any Covid-19 regulations which will apply at that time.

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### ***Stay in touch***

- Facebook      Hengistbury Head NCI
- Twitter        [@NCIHengistburyH](https://twitter.com/NCIHengistburyH)
- Instagram     @hengistburyheadnci

Please let us know if any of your personal contact details change. Please address all correspondence to our Friends Administrator Adele Orr [Adele.Orr@nci.org.uk](mailto:Adele.Orr@nci.org.uk). who will also be happy to provide details of how to become a Friend should you know of anyone interested.

You can keep up to date with our activities via various social media:

- Facebook      Hengistbury Head NCI
- Twitter        [@NCIHengistburyH](https://twitter.com/NCIHengistburyH)
- Instagram     @hengistburyheadnci

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NCI Hengistbury Head is one of 56 NCI Stations around the UK keeping “eyes along the coast”.

Current opening hours are 8am – 7pm

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The next edition of *Ahoy!* will be published at the end  
of June 2021