



Ahoy!

National Coastwatch Institution
www.nci.org.uk

**The bi-monthly newsletter for Friends of
Hengistbury Head Lookout and its Watchkeepers**

Issue 11, August 2021

Celebrate!



Apologies for the late publication of this issue of *Ahoy!* - but for good reason - to report the outcome of the DFS assessment which took place on September 1st and 2nd - WE PASSED!

DFS stands for “Declared Facility Status” and is the benchmark qualification to a challenging national standard which must be attained for a body - in this case, our Station - to be officially recognised by Her Majesty’s Coastguard as an integral member of the Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) emergency services. DFS assessment usually takes place within two years of a Station’s opening, but our planned assessment for March 2020 was frustratingly postponed due to lockdown. Two NCI Assessors arrived on Wednesday 1st September and scrutinised our files; pored over procedures, log books, training manuals; keenly observed Watchkeepers on duty; grilled the management team and drank copious amounts of tea! The ordeal was over by Thursday afternoon with the following remarks from the Assessors:

“to reach DFS in the period of a year of the pandemic restrictions is exemplary”

“very impressed” - “documentation is very good” and our procedures are “spectacularly thorough”

This doesn’t mean we rest on our laurels: we have some minor issues we need to address, and we must maintain the standard!

Please join us in congratulating the Station Management and wonderful Watchkeeping volunteers who have worked to help NCIHH achieve this well-deserved accolade.

CONGRATULATIONS ALL!

In this issue:

- **Congratulations** – recently qualified Watchkeepers
- **In Focus** – a regular feature about our volunteers.

- **Been there, done that...** – a summary of recent Station events
- **Looking forward** – planned events
- **Stay in touch** – essential contact details

Congratulations..... 🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉

Peter Lucas, whose progress had been halted for nearly a year, became the first Trainee in 2021 to attain qualified Watchkeeper status when he passed his final assessment at the end of July, followed by Kim Sanders on August 10th. Congratulations both and thank you for your patience! We wish you many years of enjoyable Watchkeeping ahead!



In Focus



Name	Mary Turner
Role within Station	Watchkeeper, member of Presentation Team*

Why and when did you join the NCI?

I heard about NCI about five years ago and thought it might be something I would be interested in. I visited my nearest Station which, at the time, was Calshot Tower.

I was somewhat daunted by the height of the building and even more so when I saw the spiral staircase with wide metal steps with big gaps in between! However, I signed the disclaimer and started up the wet slippery steps; I think I managed two flights before I decided it was not for me!

A few months later, my ears pricked up when listening to Radio Solent and I heard that NCI Hengistbury Head had opened. As is the procedure for all prospective Watchkeepers, I did an Observation Watch, and knew straight away this was something I would enjoy.

What did you do in your working life?

I worked as an Air Traffic Controller at Luton Airport for over 25 years. When I started my career in the seventies, there weren't many female Controllers. I certainly enjoyed my cadet course, being the only lady in the group of 22 cadets - very nice!

At Luton I was Tower, Approach, and Approach Radar Controller. As part of my duties, I trained up-and-coming Controllers, a role which I really enjoyed. Around 1995, the Radar Unit was moved from Luton to London Airport, but I decided not to go with it. I knew I would miss working in the visual tower as well as with radar, and decided a new challenge was required.

I applied for and was accepted as an Air Traffic Control Instructor at the College of Air Traffic at Bournemouth Airport. In this role I taught both in the classroom and on simulators. This was a particularly rewarding job, which I did for 8 years before retiring.

How do you spend your leisure time?

I enjoy walking, which I do twice a day with my dog. When we're not in lockdown I do Pilates. I'm involved in Amateur Dramatics and belong to the Burley Players, where I have acted, directed and also provided special effects which I do on the computer and play through the sound system - more high-tech than banging two coconut shells together for the sounds of hooves!

I belong to the Rotary and have become involved with several projects. I read a lot, and like thrillers and mystery. I also like some of the classics; my favourite book is "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen.

What is the best thing about volunteering with the NCI?

The interesting work and working with like-minded volunteers; in many ways the discipline is similar to Air Traffic Control, and I feel part of an important safety system. I also look forward to the social side resuming now that we are out of lockdown.

Thank you, Mary, for sharing your busy life with us!

** The Presentation Team is a newly formed group of Watchkeepers who give presentations to a variety of interest groups, spreading the word about being “Eyes along the coast”. If you are a member of a club, team or other group and would like to find out more about the establishment and work of NCIHH and the wider national organisation, please contact our Friends Secretary in the first instance:*

Adele.Orr@nci.org.uk Thank you.

Been there, done that....

Training Update from Chris Lloyd-Smith, Training Manager

As soon as we were once again allowed to have more than one person at a time in the Lookout, our ten-strong team of Trainers became very busy catching up with the training of our latest group of recruits.

Most of our current Trainees have completed their formal training and are now consolidating pending final assessments. At the time of writing, we have 89 qualified Watchkeepers and 10 Trainees. Another training course is planned for later in the year.

With many Watchkeepers carrying out few or no Watches during these difficult times, it was considered to be unfair to carry out annual assessments this year. However, to maintain our high Watchkeeping standards we have continued sending out the bi-monthly Watchkeeper Exercises and all volunteers are required to carry out at least one Watch with a member of our training team this year as a refresher session. This is now around 80% complete.

HHNCI annual BBQ, Thursday 8th July, 2021

With thanks to Lisa Randle for this report ...



The weather was fair, air temperature 21 degrees; the wind: south easterly force 2-3; tide flooding; sea state smooth, sea temperature 16.6 degrees; a few clouds in the sky and visibility just 4 nm. You never stop being a Watchkeeper!

With all the equipment required to have a pleasant evening cooking and eating (and drinking) on the sand, we congregated at 18:00 hours on the beach in front of the Southbourne Beach Office where it all began,

set up camp with our chairs and picnic hampers and proceeded to light our barbeques. I think Anna must have been a scout in a previous life as her skills got ours going in no time! After 20 minutes the flames began to die down and the charcoal turned grey; time to start cooking, and we soon discovered it was not best to sit downwind of the smoke!

To be fair, we didn't do too badly - the food tasted pretty good, we managed not to get sand on anything we ate, and nobody contracted food poisoning; I'd say generally it was great tucker and we did have fun with our friends.

Some of us went swimming (not me, I'd already done my 800m that morning), some enjoyed a cold beer or a glass of wine, others just enjoyed chilling out on a warm summer's evening.

It made a nice change to be this close to the sea without wearing a uniform, doing a boat count or having binoculars glued to our eyes! and it was great to have the opportunity to meet our colleagues away from the Lookout in a relaxed social setting.

Once again the HHNCI Annual BBQ was a success - a very pleasant evening!





We DO enjoy our food!

NCIHH at the Christchurch Food Festival

Over the August Bank Holiday weekend, NCIHH had a pitch at this event where we engaged with members of the public keen to learn more about us, sold our calendars (read on!) and raised funds for the Station. It was good to be at a large local event to spread the word about our work - thank you to all the Watchkeepers who gave up even more of their free time to represent us there!

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 30th 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.

Date	Incident Summary	Lifeboat Involved
15/08/2021	NCI informed of yacht with jammed main sail. HMCG informed and asked NCI to monitor. ILB tasked. ILB alongside, sail down, and ILB took casualty under tow, and secured to mooring	Yes
07/08/2021	HMCG phoned NCI Re. abandoned boat. W/K walked to location, took photos, identified vessel, and HMCG attempted to trace owner.	No
05/08/2021	NCI received call re. possible drowning. HMCG aware. LB, Police, CRT, Ambulance tasked as possible suicide. Casualty found at home, safe but unstable.	Yes
27/07/2021	HMCG phoned NCI, concerned for wing surfer, unable to reboard. NCI kept under observation, and eventually casualty reached safety ashore.	No
11/07/2021	HMCG requested NCI to look out for floating lifejacket. LBs tasked to search. Not known if body attached. Nothing found. Incident suspended.	Yes
11/07/2021	HMCG requested assistance for broken down vessel. NCI had visual as casualty toed to safety by motorboat.	No

10/07/2021 Mayday heard, HMCG requested visual and weather report. 2nd yacht No assisting. 3rd yacht on scene. yachts escorted casualty to Poole harbour and towed her to mooring.

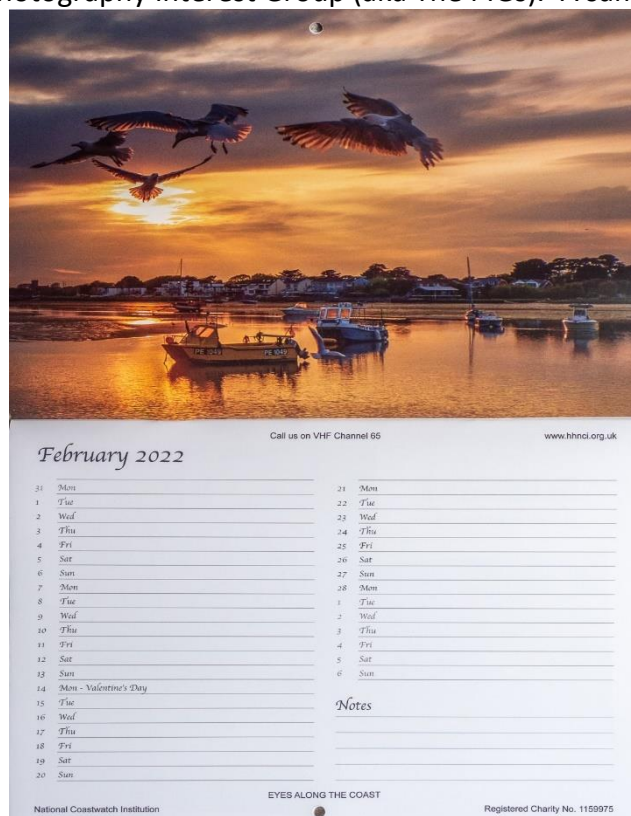
04/07/2021 HMCG requested visual on vessel with smoking engine. Sighting Yes confirmed. LB tasked, put crew member on board and escorted vessel to harbour and safety

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

Looking ahead → → → →

2022 NCIHH Calendars

Our third calendar is now available - every Friend and Watchkeeper should have one on their wall! Now is the time to stock up on the Christmas present which lasts for a whole year and share the joy of our wonderful local scenery with friends and family. The photographs in the calendars are of our beautiful surrounding areas and all were taken by members of the Watchkeepers' Photography Interest Group (aka The PIGs). A sample month's "spread":



...and an overview of the year's photos...



Towards Barton on Sea



Harbour Sunset



HM Coastguard and RNLI



Dinghy Sailing in the Harbour



From the Long Groyne



Fishing Boat at Mudeford



Christchurch Harbour



Hengistbury Head



Mudeford Quay Sunset



Harbourside Walk



Tuckton in the Mist



Let it Snow!

www.hhnci.org.uk   

Photographers:
Ed Essery, John Grundy, Sue Grundy, Steve Marks, Mark Ouzman, Jenny Peck, Caroline Walker
Copyright © 2021 individual photographers - enquiries to Hengistbury Head NCI

The calendars are available to Friends, Watchkeepers, and their families and friends, at a special price of £6 each; they are already on sale in a number of local retail outlets, where the recommended price is £7.50.

We have a limited stock so please order soon before they sell out! Please note that the calendars are NOT on sale to the public from the Lookout.

Friends who would like a calendar should contact our Friends Administrator Adele Orr Adele.Orr@nci.org.uk.

Calendars will be despatched / arrangements made for collection or delivery to local areas on receipt of full payment. Please make cheques payable to "NCI Hengistbury Head". Please include the cost of postage and packing should you require this:

one calendar p&p
two calendars p&p to same address
more calendars p&p

first class = £2. second class £1.75
£2.50 and £2.25 respectively
prices on application

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

Stay in touch

- Facebook Hengistbury Head NCI
- Twitter [@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. 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](#)
- Instagram @hengistburyheadnci

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

Current opening hours are 8am – 7pm

From Sunday 31st October our Winter hours will be 8am - 5pm or dusk if earlier
