



# Ahoy!

National Coastwatch Institution  
www.nci.org.uk

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

Issue 12 October 2021

As we go to press, this weekend sees our return to our Winter shift pattern of 8am - 5pm or dusk if earlier. Although the holidaymakers are fewer in number at this time of year, the Head and its environs continue to attract walkers and water-sports enthusiasts, irrespective of the weather, and our Watchkeepers are kept as busy as ever. We are delighted to have recently resumed our recruitment programme, and welcome potential Watchkeepers as they undertake their Observation Watches to see whether becoming another pair of “eyes along the coast” is indeed their next challenge.

*In this issue:*

- **Congratulations** – recently qualified Watchkeepers
- **Thank you!** - a generous donation
- **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.....* 🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉

Since the last edition of “Ahoy”, there have been four successful Final Assessments bringing our total number of Qualified Watchkeepers to 93.

Congratulations to Christine and Steve O’Riley, Andrew Tizzard and Denis Cole. Denis has had a long wait for his turn as his original assessment was booked for the very first week of the Covid lockdown when we were forced to close the Station in March 2020!

Welcome to the team and we wish you all many years of enjoyable Watchkeeping with NCI HH.



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

.... to Boscombe Cliff Bowling Club for their kind donation to our funds. One of our Watchkeepers, Tim Orr, as President of the Club, put forward NCIHH as the Club's nominated charity for the duration of his presidency. At a recent Club event, Tim presented a cheque to Station Manager Peter Holway. Huge thanks to Tim and the Boscombe Cliff bowlers for their generosity!

# *In Focus*



**Name** Paul Johnson  
**Role within Station** Watchkeeper

***Tell us a little about your role(s) within NCI Hengistbury Head***

I joined NCI Hengistbury Head in the spring of 2018, when the Station was still situated within the Beach Office next to the Bistro on the Beach and, following a successful assessment with Chris Lloyd-Smith, became a qualified Watchkeeper that September.

Some months later I was asked if I would like to join our growing team of Trainers and although I didn't have any sailing/boating experience I had enjoyed a similar role in my career within Air Traffic Control, training new cadets. I always consider training to be a two way street: no one ever knows everything and as the Trainees learn, so do I. I genuinely love seeing NCI Hengistbury Head Trainees progress to become qualified Watchkeepers.

***So you joined NCI because of the similarities to your career?***

Basically, yes! A friend alerted me to the advert for Trainee Watchkeepers and after looking into it further I liked that there were echoes of what I had done previously - and I already had half the uniform!

I love the camaraderie between Watchkeepers. We're all different and have a wealth of knowledge and stories to tell but we share a common pride in our Station and want to make a difference in our local area. It's very much like having a huge extended family.

***You mentioned working in Air Traffic Control. Tell us more.***

I joined Air Traffic Control (ATC) in 1978 as an assistant at the London Air Traffic Control Centre (LATCC). I worked my way up to become a Flight Plan Supervisor handling flight plans for the UK - civil, military and general aviation - and went on to become a Flight Information Officer, dealing with almost everything that called us up outside of controlled airspace over the UK. I even got to speak to the Red Arrows as they came up from French airspace into the UK one day!

***How do you fill your spare time?***

I attained my Private Pilot's Licence (PPL) in 1998, in Florida, but haven't flown for a while now - not a real plane anyway. I have, however, been flying radio controlled aircraft for the past few years and belong to the Christchurch and Dorset Flying Group. I have various types of craft: 3 metre, 2 metre gliders, a few WW2 fighters and my favourite, a VC10 airliner.

Following my wife's slipstream I'm also into antique dealing and we've been on TV in 'Make Me A Dealer' and 'Bargain Hunt', both as individuals and as a team. Yvonne is far more proactive with this than I am but it's great fun.

During the COVID pandemic I've become a dog walker for some of my neighbours and friends when they are unable to do the walks; you may have seen me cruising around the Head with Buzby and Balo, the retrievers.

***Where's your favourite travel destination?***

We love going to Antigua and now that the COVID travel restrictions have been relaxed we're hoping to be there whilst you're reading this! Somehow we got involved with the animal welfare charity (PAAWS) on the island. They are a shelter for cats and dogs and do some wonderful work. The resort where we stay has a feral cat called Marley. I managed to arrange for her to be spayed and she even has her own Facebook page now!

*We're delighted that you've been able to do your bit for the environment by repurposing your uniform, Paul!*

***Been there, done that....***

***Station Manager Peter Holway recently visited the NCI Station on The Great Orme, Llandudno:***

The NCI Station is located on West Shore Beach and overlooks the Conwy Estuary, which at low water exposes large sandbanks where many beach visitors wander, unbeknown to them that the flooding tide can run at 7 knots, frequently cutting off the return to safety. The local authority has installed safety platforms for people to use if cut off from their normal entry/exit points to the beach. Currently in trials, NCI employs a drone which has a recorded voice facility telling people to get to the safety platforms whilst the inshore lifeboat is tasked. The waterway in front of the Station is busy with all sorts of commercial and leisure craft as well as swimmers.

The Station Manager is currently raising funds to have a purpose-built station constructed. The local council and harbour authority are very supportive of this objective.



The photo shows me with Station Manager John Humberstone sporting the “official” NCI summer uniform, appropriate for a (rare) fantastically warm day in Wales.

### ***Training Update from Chris Lloyd-Smith, Training Manager***

#### **Declared Facility Status (DFS)**

*Following on from our announcement in the last issue of Ahoy! ...*

In September, the Station was awarded Declared Facility Status making it now an official part of the UK Search and Rescue (SAR) organisation. I would like to thank all the Trainers for their amazing efforts in getting everyone up to very high standards of Watchkeeping, as acknowledged by the NCI DFS assessors.

#### **Live Exercise**

On September 26<sup>th</sup> the Station took part in a joint live exercise with Mudeford Lifeboat. The exercise proved very valuable to both organisations and the RNLI have asked that we repeat the process quarterly. Well done to all who took part.

#### ***Our Presentation Team out and about***

*Issue 11 of Ahoy! reported on our newly formed team of presenters. Peter Ellis, Presentation Team Co-ordinator, tells us of the Team’s recent work:*

The NCIHH Presentation Team recently started its Winter season with a presentation to The Cameo Ladies Group in New Milton, and soon after by a talk at Christchurch Library. These were followed by visits to Parkstone Yacht Club and Bure Probus; we are pleased to report that each of the presentations was well received by the various audiences.

It is evident so far that the local appreciation of the work we do at NCI Hengistbury Head Station is extremely high. With more talks booked through until next year, the income received from the speaker fees, calendar sales and donations from these events will be a welcome addition to the Station funds.

I would like to thank the volunteer presenters for their time and efforts: Sue Grundy, Ken Male, Colin Pelton, Robin Pellatt and Mary Turner.

If you belong to or know of a group which would like to have a presentation from us, please contact our Friends Administrator Adele Orr in the first instance: [Adele.Orr@nci.org.uk](mailto:Adele.Orr@nci.org.uk)

### ***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

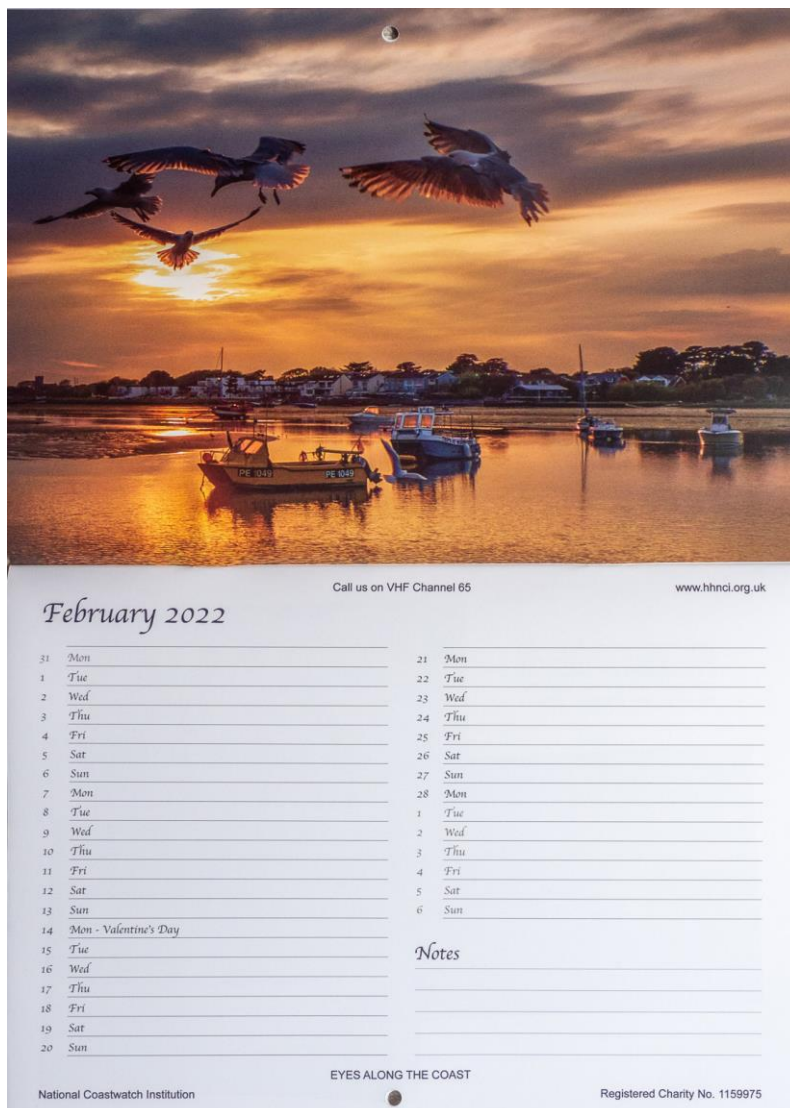
<b>Date</b>	<b>Incident Summary</b>	<b>Lifeboat involved</b>
11/09/2021	NCI observed kite surfer in difficulty. HMCG informed. Yacht picked up casualty, but not kite. ILB tasked to recover kite, but board not found.	Yes
07/09/2021	HMCG called NCI requesting visual on the motor boat - anchor not holding. Vessel then had engine failure, Pan Pan issued. ILB tasked and towed casualty to harbour	Yes
06/09/2021	Mayday from motor cruiser taking on water. NCI informed HMCG they had visual, asked to observe. LB tasked, and escorted vessel to safety. Vessel then able to continue.	Yes

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  
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The calendars are available to Friends, Watchkeepers, and their families and friends, at a special price of £6 each; they are currently 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](mailto: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

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



## *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](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](#)
- 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 – 5pm or dusk if earlier

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