



Ahoy!

National Coastwatch Institution
www.nci.org.uk

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

Issue 14 February 2022

Two months of 2022 have already passed and we are looking forward to longer days and better weather, which in turn will bring their own challenges from increased numbers of visitors to our beautiful stretch of coastline. Despite the removal of almost all Covid-19 restrictions, we continue to manage and monitor the welfare of our volunteer Watchkeepers by lateral flow testing before going on duty, maintaining good hygiene practices and respecting each other's personal space. Brighter days will see us resuming foot patrols on and around the Head; these are a popular activity for Watchkeepers, helping us to cover blindspots and to add to our service of maintaining "eyes along the coast". Such patrols are carried out only when circumstances allow; our Watchkeepers on foot patrol may be identified by their wearing a neon yellow tabard and their regular radio contacts with personnel in The Lookout.

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 issue of *Ahoy!* only one person has undertaken a final assessment. Congratulations to Dave Doodson, who passed his assessment on the 6th January; we wish you all the best for many years of enjoyable Watchkeeping ahead!

Congratulations are also due to Peter Morgan on completing ten years of service with National Coastwatch. Peter began his Watchkeeping career at NCI Shoreham, and joined NCI Hengistbury Head when he moved to this area in September 2018. We thank Peter for his service and wish him all the best in his Watchkeeping with us in years to come. Our Station Manager, Peter Holway, was delighted to present Peter with his commemorative certificate and badge.



Thank you!

...to Judy Gourlay, widow of the late Michael Gourlay whose passing we reported in the last issue of *Ahoy!* We are most grateful for the generous donation of £1100 received in Michael's memory; these funds will be put to good use to continue the voluntary work which Michael so much enjoyed with us.



In Focus

Name:

Michael Spinks

Role within the Station:

Watchkeeper

Tell us a little about how you see your role as a Watchkeeper



The Institution's strap-line says it all: "Eyes along the coast". Hengistbury Head's Watchkeepers are the Coastguard's eyes and ears in and around Christchurch and Poole Bay areas; we look out for vulnerable people on the water, the Head or the shoreline. A vulnerable person is someone we consider to be at risk - swimmers, paddleboarders, windsurfers, water and jet skiers, lone children, walkers, dogs, small open boats, and even commercial fishermen as they often operate on their own.

Once we spot a concern or an “incident” * we react quickly and follow NCI guidelines, working closely with the Coastguard and other emergency services. I try to do one Watch per week, and I regularly take on the role of Watch Leader as I like the responsibility of ensuring a smooth and successful shift for all concerned.

What aspects of Watchkeeping do you particularly enjoy?

I like the fact that you never know what you’re going to come across on a shift. One day it can be pouring with rain all Watch and you spend three or four hours chatting with colleagues over tea and biscuits, helping each other with aspects of Watchkeeping in which we may not be fully confident, whilst also being vigilant! At other times, you can be fully involved in a life or death incident where all your knowledge and skills are tested for the duration of the Watch. I never get bored in the Lookout and I’ve learned a lot of new skills, whilst feeling I am putting something back into the community.

What did you do in your working life?

Most of my working life was spent as Marketing Services Manager for a large building materials manufacturer based in Ightham in Kent. I was responsible for producing all the communications material for the company: leaflets, brochures, technical manuals, advertising, PR, exhibitions and conferences, with a hefty budget to boot. After redundancy I decided to be self-employed and set up a small marketing business looking after the below-the-line activities of small companiesgamekeeper turned poacher! During that time, when work was slack, I used my van for courier work all over the UK and Europe.

When and why did you decide to join NCI Hengistbury Head?

I have a friend who is a Watchkeeper at NCI Calshot, and after seeing that the Lookout on the Head had opened, I joined in December 2018 and qualified the following April. I thought it would be a good way to meet like-minded people whilst developing new skills and enhancing my boating knowledge, putting something back into the pastime I love.

What hobbies and pastimes do you have outside of NCIHH?

I used to play rugby when I was younger and love watching it now, especially the internationals. I play golf badly (not intentionally!) and look at it as an enjoyable walk in lovely surroundings! Several Watchkeepers have persuaded me to take up proper photography so I am learning how to use the bridge camera they encouraged me to buy - and apparently I’m coming on very

nicely! I mentioned earlier my love of boating, and more specifically powerboat racing. Although I took part in my last race in August 2014 I am still heavily involved in the sport as a safety boat driver in my own RIB and I love taking friends out on it. This year I hope to get over to The Hut in the RIB for a leisurely lunch!

Cat or Dog?

Dog. Or should I say dogs as we have five rescue dogs so they keep me busy and to a certain degree fit. We walk in the Forest every morning, usually Wilverley Enclosure, followed by bath time in the utility room sink. That's the dogs, not me!

Favourite tippie?

I'm a beer man and love a pint or two at a beach-side pub with a view or a Forest pub with an open fire. I also enjoy a single malt in the evening before bed. I blame my Dad for that; he was a great whisk(e)y drinker and encouraged me to buy the best I can afford so at the moment I am enjoying Caol Ila.

**an "Incident" is explained later in this publication: see the item "Incidents since the last issue of Ahoy!"*

Been there, done that....

Our Presentation Team out and about

A full report on our Presentation Team's activities will appear in the next issue of *Ahoy!*

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

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. During 2021 the Station was involved with a total of 28 Incidents out of a

National total of 697 across the 56 Stations – more than double the average for a Station. So far in 2022 our Incident count is six out of a National total of 60. Our 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

| Date of Incident | Incident Summary | Lifeboat involved |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 22/02/2022 | MOP called NCI to report possible upturned dinghy. HMCG tasked ILB so NCI monitored situation until casualty towed to shore | Yes |
| 20/02/2022 | HMCG called NCI re. kite surfers possibly in trouble. No visual contact due to poor visibility. Observation continued but no visual. casualty reported to have self-rescued. | No |
| 13/02/2022 | Police informed NCI of potential suicide victim at Hengistbury Head. HMCG also involved. Nothing visual. Casualty found at home address and taken into custody. NFA | No |
| 06/02/2022 | HMCG requested NCI look for 3 kayakers, reported by MOP. Nothing seen, but informed CG that HMS Severn may be able to help. Incident closed. | No |
| 02/01/2022 | NCI observed abandoned wing sail. Owner reportedly safely ashore. NCI kept visual watch, and sail eventually washed ashore and recovered | No |
| 01/01/2022 | MOP reported possible head in water. HMCG simultaneously called NCI asking if we had visual. NCI able to establish object was a weed covered pot marker. ILB had been called but stood down. | Yes |

Looking ahead → → → →

We are looking forward to participating in the following events, details of which will be published in future issues of *Ahoy!*

- Sunday 22nd May - Open Day at Christchurch Sailing Club
- Sat 4th - Mon 6th June - Queen's Jubilee on Mudeford Quay (engagement with Christchurch Town Council)
- Sunday 10th July - Sea Sunday
- Sun 24th July - Blue Light Day on Mudeford Quay, incorporating NCI Day.

2022 NCIHH Calendars

NOW ONLY 50% of the original price with over 83% of the year's planning and photographs to enjoy! We have a small number of calendars which are now priced at £3 each. Please direct all enquiries to our Friends Administrator Adele Orr Adele.Orr@nci.org.uk. Thank you!

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

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 – 5pm. From Sunday 27th March our Summer hours will be 8am - 7pm or dusk if earlier
