



Ahoy!

National Coastwatch Institution
www.nci.org.uk

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

Issue 18 October 2022

From the Editor:

You may have noticed that the publication of *Ahoy!* has been somewhat delayed for the past two issues, due to the current editor having taken on some additional family responsibilities and needing more time to pursue other hobbies. As we seek a new editor, the next issue will be published in January 2023.

And so, as I sign out, I wish you all the best for the forthcoming festive season and the new year (it's less than 9 weeks away!)

In this issue:

- **In Focus** - a regular feature about our volunteers
- **Training update**
- **Thank you** - to Friends & supporters
- **Been there done that** - a summary of recent Station activities
- **Looking ahead** – planned events
- **Stay in touch** – essential contact details



In Focus

**Name**

Mark Sherry

Role within the Station

Watchkeeper

When and why did you join NCI Hengistbury Head ?

I joined in 2019, a year after the Lookout opened on Hengistbury Head.

I was born and bred in Christchurch, so the Head, the sea and harbour were the playgrounds of my youth. I have been extremely lucky that as a family we have owned a beach hut on the

Sandbank. My parents paid £2,400 for it in 1976! I was part of the Christchurch Life Saving Club patrols at Friars Cliff when I was 16 before moving out of the area to work. Now semi-retired, joining the NCI has given me a chance to give something back to the area where I have had so much enjoyment.

Are you a sailor?

I am not really a sailor although I have been sailing a few times. I did a lot of windsurfing as a teenager and plenty of kayaking and rowing skiffs on the Thames. We have always had small boats for use whilst at the beach hut, so I understand the importance of the work the NCI does to keep people safe.

Tell us a little about your career.

I left Christchurch at 17 to join the Metropolitan Police Cadets. I went on to have a 30+ year career in the Met, finishing in 2014. I then did some security consultancy for a few years including working on the Mons, Somme and Passchendaele centenary commemorations. I am now in semi-retirement.

You must have had some real career highs and lows!

Thankfully I did not have too many lows. There were certainly a few dodgy moments. Running up scaffold ladders during the Poll Tax Riots whilst avoiding a hail of scaffold poles and bits of coupling was a bit scary, and I did end up with a case at the Old Bailey with someone charged with my attempted murder! But there were far more highs. My last 12 years were spent in the Royalty Protection Department working at all the London Palaces, Scotland and particularly Windsor Castle where I was responsible for the police planning and liaison for events including State Visits, Diamond Jubilee and the 90th birthday celebrations of the late HM Queen Elizabeth II. I had several presentations with HM The Queen and even had to dance with her at the Ghillies Ball at Balmoral! Unfortunately, my performance in the Canadian Barn Dance left a lot to be desired! My wife and I were also lucky enough to have our wedding blessing in St George's Chapel, Windsor. By total coincidence one of my old colleagues at Windsor and Balmoral is now a fellow Watchkeeper at NCI Hengistbury Head! I feel sorry for those who have shared our Watches and had to listen to our war stories. 😊

I was very proud of all my old colleagues for the magnificent job they did in the aftermath of the death of Her Majesty.

Hobbies

I do a lot of walking. We are looking forward to tackling the West Highland Way in Scotland next year. I do attempt to play golf but am finding the more I play the worse I become! And I enjoy watching sport, particularly Bournemouth football and Harlequins rugby.

Cat? Dog? Stick Insect?

No pets for us, perhaps once we are completely retired.

Favourite tipple

Ringwood 49er, a good scotch, red wine. I could go on!

Favourite Book/Film

I enjoy a bit of Lee Child's Jack Reacher series. Also, "Sarum and the Forest" by Edward Rutherford, which mentions both Christchurch and Hengistbury Head. I enjoy all sorts of films, especially musicals, but If I had to pick out a single film it would probably be "The Shawshank Redemption".

What, for you, is the best bit of being part of NCI Hengistbury Head?

It's great spending time with people with many different life experiences, but the best part is listening to the positive comments from local friends and hut owners about the work the NCI does and how safe it makes them feel when out at sea or on the Head.

And finally, where's your feel-good, favourite place?

That's easy. I have a soft spot for many places across the UK and beyond, but by far the best is the area I see all around me when on duty in the Lookout.

Thanks, Mark; what a fascinating "previous life" and associated experiences!

Should we bow, salute or curtsey when we next see you?! 😊

Training Update

There have been no further assessments since the last edition of *Ahoy!*

The most recent classroom-based, pre-booked training course was held on November 1st. We wish all those who attended a successful time with NCIHH.

Thank you....

We continue to be most appreciative of all the support for our Station, to those who give of their time and to those who support us through monetary donations and fundraising ventures.

Been there, done that.....

Visit from local Cub Scouts

NCI Hengistbury Head recently had the pleasure of hosting a number of Cubs from local groups based in Mundeford, Somerford, Highcliffe, Hurn, Christchurch Town and Burton. The children came to visit us as part of their day out completing tasks towards gaining proficiency badges, requiring skills in “a nature walk,... communications,and visual understanding of their surroundings”.

Luckily the Watch was quiet with very little activity on the water, and after sharing some general information on the work of the NCI, Watchkeepers on duty answered a variety of questions. Our visitors enjoyed some hands-on experience looking through the fixed binoculars for close-up views of The Needles and other local points of interest. The Cub leaders expressed their thanks for the time and attention given to the children. *(you never know - this experience may have inspired some to become Watchkeepers in the future! ed).*

After the visit, the Cubs continued their walk along the Head, checking off various other elements of their badge requirements – we wish them every success.

Incidents since the June edition of Ahoy!

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. Most recent Incidents appear at the top of this list.

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
29/10/2022	HMCG phoned NCI re. report of kite surfer in trouble. No visual established, CG informed. MOP informed NCI casualty was in blind spot from lookout. Casualty reached shore without assistance.	No
18/10/2022	HMCG called NCI re. abandoned wing foil seen in water by MOP. NCI did not establish visual, MOP called NCI with sighting. ILB and CRT tasked, and sail recovered by surfer, which had blown off beach., NFA.	Yes
13/10/2022	HMCG called NCI re. body boarder possibly in trouble, reported by MOP. NCI did not establish visual. CRT reported casualty was not in trouble, assets stood down.	No
13/10/2022	NCI had call from broken down motor vessel. HMCG advised, and asked vessels in area to assist. ILB tasked, and towed casualty to harbour.	Yes
12/10/2022	NCI observed upturned dinghy, no POB. HMCG informed. Canoe attended and tried to right vessel. CG informed. NCI lost visual, ILB contacted by CG re. recovery.	Yes

03/10/2022	HMCG contacted NCI Hengistbury Head - MOP had called concerned about possible vulnerables off Middle Chine - NCI found no visual; CRT on scene - nothing found	No
27/09/2022	HMCG tasked Hengistbury Head to search for object in water- possible upturned boat - NCI informed CG nothing found. HMCG stood down NCI. Subsequent day Kite from Kiteboard recovered, swimmer had made own way to shore	No
24/09/2022	NCI Hengistbury Head observed casualties in the water, Inflatable Kayak and paddleboards drifting out to sea NCI contacted HMCG. Casualties on quay, Kayak and paddleboard retrieved by passing vessel	No
23/09/2022	HMCG contacted NCI person in water, managed to swim to shore after falling from Windsurfer	No
17/09/2022	NCI observed unmanned jetski, HMCG informed. ILB tasked, but jetski taken under tow by motor vessel. Update - now 1 POB. LB alongside, and casualty returned to harbour under own power. NFA	Yes
14/09/2022	EPIRB alert from fishing vessel. HMCG issued Mayday, vessel traced to harbour, owner contacted and arranged to deactivate beacon.	No
10/09/2022	Pan Pan from yacht with steering problem. NCI located vessel via AIS and reported to HMCG vessel appeared to be safe and on passage. Monitoring continued.	No

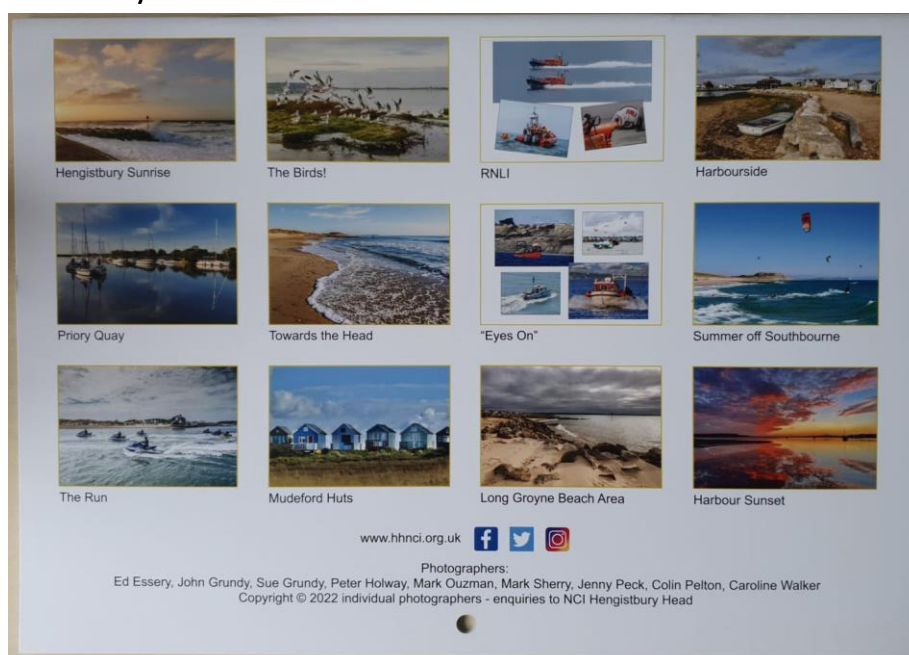
Looking ahead → → → →

Plans for next year? You need one of these!



Our 2023 calendars! With glorious photographs of local scenery, taken by members of the Watchkeepers' Photography Interest Group (aka *The Piggies*), our very own calendar can be yours for the princely sum of £6, rather than the £7.50 retail price from various outlets throughout Bournemouth and Christchurch areas. In order to comply with leasing regulations, calendars are NOT for sale directly from the Lookout. If you would like to purchase a calendar for yourself and/or friends, please contact our Friends Administrator Adele Orr Adele.Orr@nci.org.uk

Here's a taster of your illustrated 2023:



Stay in touch

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](https://twitter.com/NCIHengistburyH)
- Instagram @hengistburyheadnci

NCI Hengistbury Head is one of 57 NCI Stations around the UK keeping “*Eyes along the coast*”.

Current Station opening hours are 8am - 5pm or sunset if earlier.
