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The Maritime Volunteer

The Journal of the Maritime Volunteer Service



25 Years of the MVS

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25 Years of the MVS

A message to the members of the MVS from their Royal Patron, Prince Michael of Kent GCVO KStJ, on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the foundation of their charity.



“I would like to congratulate the Maritime Volunteer Service and its members on the 25th Anniversary of the Charity’s foundation.

I am proud that due to your hard work in your local communities over the years, you have established the MVS as an organisation others look to for support.

I am sorry that due to other commitments I cannot be at the Church Service at All Hallows Tower Hill on 4th April to commemorate your Anniversary. You will, however, be in my thoughts.

I will continue to look out, as your Royal Patron, for opportunities to give whatever help and support I best can do for your organisation and I hope to be able to meet some of you over the year.”

25 Years of the Maritime Volunteer Service

The Maritime Volunteer Service (MVS) is a recognised national maritime training organisation founded in 1994 after the disbandment of the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service (RNXS). The MVS is a UK registered charity headed by our Patron HRH Prince Michael of Kent KCVO.

About us

The MVS has 25 active units around the coasts & estuaries of the United Kingdom providing training to nationally and internationally recognised standards, serving local communities especially in times of need or emergency and taking part in resilience exercises ashore and afloat.

The organisation's aims are to help to keep the UK's maritime tradition alive by training and delivering practical seamanship, communication and engineering skills.

These skills are put to good use in the community at events and at times when called upon by the appropriate authorities.

Any one over the age of 18 can join the MVS and there is no upper age limit.

Members are volunteers and receive no payment for their time or service.

Members wear a uniform.

What We Do

The MVS educates members in all aspects of maritime and communication skills and knowledge, promotes the preservation of life and property within the maritime environment, helps local organisations and events with skilled support, stimulates interest in maritime affairs, and excites members to achieve through training and helping their local community.

Our Vessels

Many of our units operate their own vessels.

They range from small rigid inflatable boats primarily for harbour and river use to larger vessels capable of longer voyages and extended training periods at sea.

Each vessel is maintained to a high standard and safety is of the utmost importance.

Training

Training takes place at units in the evenings and at weekends both ashore and afloat.

Members are also encouraged to progress through the various levels in their own time to supplement the training given at the unit.

Previous experience in either a professional or voluntary capacity will be taken into account towards qualification, providing suitable documentary evidence of such experience can be provided.

We Change Lives

The service has many examples of how becoming a member has changed their lives.

Whether it's by raising self-confidence, learning a new skill or becoming a Cadet with a major global cruise line thanks to the experience gained in the MVS, we do change lives.

How to Find Out More

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Chairman's Address



Time has rushed past since our successful and enjoyable AGM in Poole. Once again we are about to embark on another boating season. That is not to say, though, that a good number of our members haven't got afloat at times during the winter. They have, but in general the past few months have been a time of training and preparation, of getting ready.

Your Council has been busy behind the scenes getting ready too, getting ready for the next 25 years! Our charity has changed, evolved over the past quarter century and there have been some difficult times and many challenges over the past few years. And none of us, I think, would pretend we are really where we want to be as enter our 26th year.

However I firmly believe we now have a strong base to work from. The wide range of very good work done by our Units around the country can be seen from the News section of our website. The number of reports during 2018 was truly impressive.

So what has Council been doing to build on this foundation? Council minutes are published on the website and I encourage members to read them. And talking of the website, developing it is one part of Council's programme to improve all aspects of communication. This stems from the very clear message that came from the AGM. In the same vein, Council has been working hard to produce an email address list of those members who use email. One of the first uses of this list is to conduct a survey of members to find out how they want our charity to progress over the coming years. I should add that Council has also gone to considerable lengths to make sure we comply with the new data protection laws. Your data is safe with the MVS.

As well as working on communications, Council has also approved a new, leaner management structure which has been implemented by our Chief Volunteer Officer, Nick Spencer. It is intended that this will allow the Units to be supported effectively. Having this team of Regional Volunteer Officers in place should also improve communications between Units and the national organisation.

In addition some very important, and painstaking, work has been underway on updating our policies and procedures. This may sound unglamorous but it is essential if our charity is to operate efficiently and grow in the way we all hope it will.

There are many challenges ahead but let us now celebrate the MVS's achievements of the first 25 years and get on with enjoying volunteering and being a benefit to our local communities.

David Hughes

National Chairman of the Maritime Volunteer Service.

25 Years of the MVS

The MVS is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Keith Newman who was a founder member writes about what the service means to him.



I joined the MVS 25 years ago when the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service was disbanded. I wanted to keep the skills alive that I had gained in my time at sea and help in my local nautical community.

I have seen many changes in the organisation during this time and enjoyed meeting new people and taking part in events such as the Tall Ships Race and the International Festival of the Sea.

I now have a host of nautical qualifications including RYA Level 2 power boat, First Aid and VHF DSC radio plus a wealth of experience handling boats, liaising with other organisations and individuals and gained many lifelong friends throughout the country.

Highlights of my time in the MVS include taking part in major river-based events and exercises, receiving the Maritime Service Medal and seeing people with no previous maritime experience learning and succeeding in the service and beyond.

As the charity's Public Relations Officer, it's not always been plain sailing.

As you'd expect with any organisation there have been some stormy situations that have needed all of my professional PR skills but I am confident that we are now on a straight course for the better where our members will learn, engage with the community and enjoy a great sense of achievement.

VO Keith Newman
National PRO

First Boat for MVS Putney

MVS Putney has taken ownership of a boat following the recent closure of the City of London unit.

Seax is an Avon Searider RIB which was built to navy specification.

Deputy Head of Unit at MVS Putney, Duncan Thomsen says, "Seax will need engine work and rewiring as it's been on the trailer and unused for some time but we have this in hand and will begin getting her running".

Seax is the first boat the Putney unit has had to get on the water and call their own.

It means the unit can begin water based practical training and instruction for the RYA external certification of Helmsman, Powerboat 1 & Powerboat 2 for all the members.

Duncan says, "we have concentrated on lectures and training on theory but we believe that the boat will help with fund raising activities that will result in Seax remaining on the water. We are also looking to introduce other vessels and increasing our membership"



Beached Boat Recovered by MVS

The MVS in Gloucestershire has recovered a boat which caught fire on the river.

The boat owner had managed to extinguish the flames but it needed towing back to Tewkesbury.

Head of Unit Nic Price said, "It was late in the afternoon when the call came and we were told that the owner had managed to extinguish the fire but the boat needed towing back to Tewkesbury.

By then it was dusk but a crew of three MVS members, Tim Huckvale, David Peet and Will Fish responded immediately and took our cruiser Minerva up river to look for them.



The boat was beached half up the bank and tied to a small tree. The MVS crew was able to pull her off the bank and take her safely in tow back to Tewkesbury.

Regional Head of Seamanship Tim Huckvale said, "We regularly train on the river so that our unit members can deal with this type of situation, but having to do the job in the dark makes it even more difficult and we were pleased how well the operation went and that everyone aboard the stricken vessel was safe and well".

Picture: David Peet and Will Fish on the river in Tewkesbury.

MVS Returns to All Hallows for our 25th Anniversary

In our early years the MVS held a thanksgiving service each year at All Hallows-by-the-Tower. The church is one of the oldest, if not the oldest in London. It was first established in 675 and its proximity to the Tower of London meant that it acquired royal connections, with Edward IV making one of its chapels a royal chantry.

The church was badly damaged by an explosion in 1650 which was caused when barrels of gunpowder being stored in the churchyard exploded. It only narrowly survived the Great Fire of London in 1666 only to fall foul of the Blitz.



The RNXS laid up its colours in All Hallows and to celebrate our 25th year the MVS is returning to the City of London and All Hallows for a service of celebration on Thursday 4th April 2019. We hope to see every unit represented and have planned the service for 15:00 to allow people to travel from all corners of the country and still return home.

Chair of Council, David Hughes said, "We hope to see as many of our members and their partners as possible and all are welcome regardless of faith".

Day Skipper Training for Medway and Putney

In Three MVS members have spent four days training on Londinium 1 in conditions up to Force 8 for their Day Skipper course.

The crew comprised Chris Rogers, Jason Sibly and Duncan Thomsen, along with Andrew from First 4 Boat Training, who was with them throughout the practical training.

Deputy Head of Unit at MVS Putney, Duncan Thomsen says, "we had an enjoyable experience and built our team working skills when taking the skipper's role and relied on each other for navigation, safe passage and engineering."

The learning curve for the crew was steep as they approached open water and experienced high on two meter waves and strong winds but after careful planning and using their training from the previous six months they successfully brought the vessel home to Chatham.



Medway Training.

Duncan Thomsen, DHOU at Putney writes about the experience gained on a recent Medway training day.

The outlook was very fair, with predicted flat waters, 4mph winds and zero precipitation, possibly up to the 20s.

Amazing we thought, except that fate had dropped a fog bank across the Medway that resulted in zero visibility.

Not to be put off, and as an essential part of learning, training and with a trust in good fortune, we slipped off with nothing but charts, GPS and experience to get us through. I took the role of Skipper, under Dave Bonner's watchful eye and was told to be confident, cruise slowly and make sure my crew were on watch.

Within 10 minutes, we had 20 metres visibility but with Kevin Read, glued to the foredeck, eyes peeled, we motored on through the blank whiteness, hopping from buoy to buoy as we had been trained to do.



It was at this point that a light, a day fishing boat appeared out of the fog and to our port side. With nothing better to lock on to, I took L1 into a following pattern and we tracked the lateral buoys along towards Queenborough.

Ghostly boats and shapes were constantly appearing out of the mist, and often we lost sight of the fisherman, who were directly in front of us.

Jason Sibley decided that if we were to have an MOB, it would very quickly result in a fatality and so made sure that all external crew were tied by safety harnesses to L1.

The whole journey was one of the very real dangers that we were in but would push through to bring our experience level up. During all this, Alan Metcalf was keeping a firm eye on proceedings and let us carry on, confident with James Kennedy on aft watch and Kevin remaining forward.

Then the fishing boat broke down and we suddenly found ourselves in a live rescue situation. The crew shone brightly as we came alongside, put fenders into position, swapped lines between vessels and offered them a tow should their boat fail to start.

As they were adrift in dense fog and a shipping channel, this could have been nasty.

Suffice to say, their engine fired, and we set off again in Tandem, cruising 6 knots.



Finally we saw clearance of the fog as we approached our destination. Again, Dave Bonner gave me confidence to approach the mooring and let me bring her in under my own steam.

Jason Sibley took us off the mooring and home in blue skies, mirrored water and brought her to berth at Chatham with a perfect manoeuvre. All in, it was a very enjoyable day, with confidence built by the crew and a sense of enjoyment and fun to boot.

Patron

HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO KStJ

MVS Council

David Hughes: Chair of Council

Robert Gidden: Vice Chair

Les Miller
Nigel Barrow
Peter Lutterer
Gill Hale

Graham Hedley
John Spencer-Barnes
Andrea Gerrish
Glynis Northwood-Long

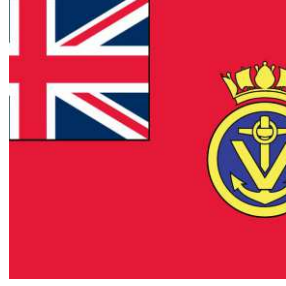
Sri Gutta
Liz Glare
Bob Gidden

David Dobson
Rodney Morgan
Nick Spencer

National Officers



Chair of Council
David Hughes



Vice Chair of Council
Robert Gidden



Chief Volunteer Officer
Nicholas Spencer



National MVS Treasurer
Les Miller



National MVS Secretary
Graham Hedley



Director of Communications
John Spencer-Barnes



Director of Training
Liz Glare



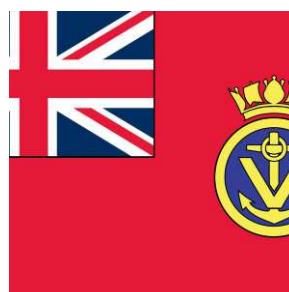
Director of Resilience
David Dobson



National Admin Officer / Newsletter Editor
Dave Spencer-Barnes



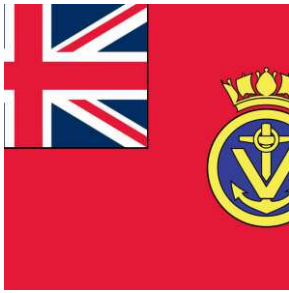
National MVS PR Officer
Keith Newman



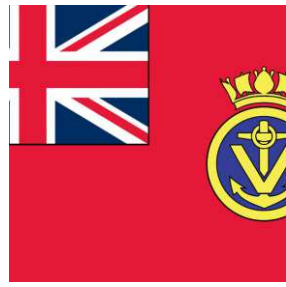
National MVS Website Editor
Vacant



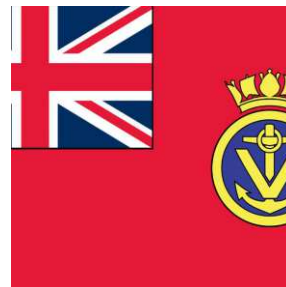
National MVS Fleet Manager
Oliver Chasteauneuf



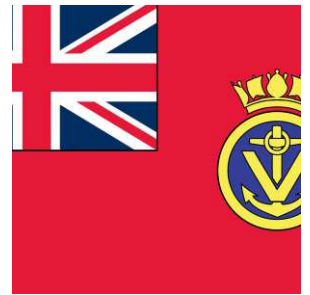
National MVS Registrar
Vacant



National Health & Safety Advisor
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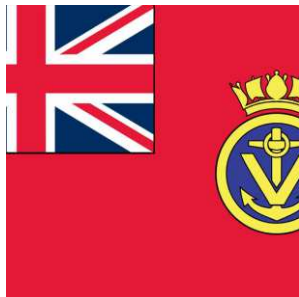


National MVS Fundraising Manager
Vacant

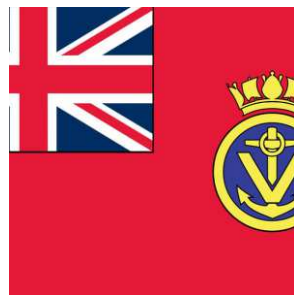


Medical Officer
Dr. Nigel Garbutt

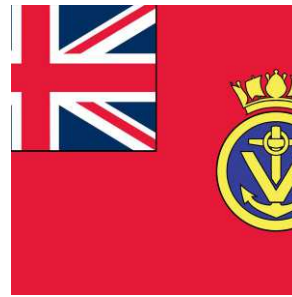
Regional Volunteer Officers



RVO South (E)
Richard Mercer



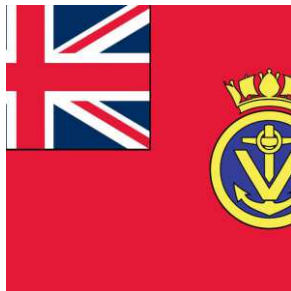
RVO South (W)
Frank Revill



RVO Thames
Phil Collins



RVO (Bristol Channel)
Gordon McDonald



RVO NW England & N Wales
Giles Pepperell



RVO Central England
Andrew Smith

Facebook and Twitter

The MVS has an official Facebook page. Search for 'Maritime Volunteer Service Official' when you are logged in to find the group. You simply have to 'like' it to be kept up to date with the latest MVS news.

You can also get all the latest feeds by following us on Twitter [@MVSHQ](#)

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