



**Year 26
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2020**

The Maritime Volunteer

The Journal of the Maritime Volunteer Service



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Chairman's Address



Much has happened since I announced online that MVS activities would cease until further notice due to COVID-19. Several members expressed concern that we were withdrawing from any Resilience role during this crisis. I explained that the nature of this emergency and the vulnerability of many of our members gave us no choice. The PM's announcements have made clear the gravity of the situation we face. Sadly, but predictably, the severity of this crisis is now being underlined by increasing numbers of deaths. The MVS's duty of care is to protect its members.

While we may not be taking part in activities, that does not mean we should be 'inactive'. At a Unit level HoU's will be if anything busier than usual, on their phones and computers. It

is vital that we keep in regular communication with all our members.

Most importantly this is to make sure they are alright and to see if they need any assistance or just want to talk. This does not necessarily mean us physically assisting, for instance by doing their shopping for them. It could be a case of helping arranging online shopping or putting them in touch with specific resources.

All members should bear in mind when looking to help others that official guidance to keep social interaction to minimum applies to us all. Moreover restrictions on unnecessary movement are only likely to increase significantly as we go forward. This is going to be a long haul and the phone and the keyboard are the key tools for us during this emergency.

We can and should go further, though, in using the phone and Internet to keep the MVS going as a lively and dynamic organisation. At least one Unit is using its weekly newsletter to distribute information of interest to members and to run a quiz. It is also running a 'virtual Unit night' and organising distance learning for members who wish to take part.

This could also be a good time for Units to update their Safety Management Systems, for example. This terrible period will eventually come to an end and we must be properly prepared to hit the ground running when it does.

MVS management is also far from 'inactive'. The RVOs and the CVO are working hard to keep communications going, support HoUs and to address issues as they arise. The management structure is in place and should be used. Meanwhile Council is carrying on with its work with an extended 'email meeting'.

I am aware of the frustration of many of you that we are in the midst of the worst national emergency since the War and the MVS is unable to play a role. All I can say is that this is the current reality and we have no choice but to accept it. The best contribution we can make is to ensure that our 400 members, many of whom are within the vulnerable group, stay safe and do not add to the strain on the NHS.

Take care of yourselves.

David Hughes
National Chairman of the Maritime Volunteer Service.

New Year 'Dook' in Dundee

Water trained safety volunteers from MVS Dundee turned out on New Year's Day to support the annual Amphibious Ancients Bathers Association 'Dook' at Broughty Ferry harbour.

Hundreds of people braved freezing temperatures to take part in the event and despite a wicked wind whipping in off the Tay, hundreds more people lined up to watch the Dookers take the plunge.

The MVS crew assisted by providing water safety for the record 200 plus participants who were raising money for charity.

The water temperature was a balmy 4.9C.



First Aid Success for Severn Unit

Twelve members of Severn Unit successfully achieved their RYA First Aid certificates.

Unit Training Officer David Peet said, "We were grateful to our instructor Sue Baker from the Rushden Unit for her practical approach which brought us up to date with the latest changes in procedures".

Head of Severn Unit Nic Price added, "All our members agreed that this is an excellent course and has helped give us the knowledge and confidence so we can assist in a medical emergency if needed".

Pictured: Instructor Sue Baker with Severn Unit members.



Post Holder Training in Birmingham



The latest session of MVS Post Holder Training took place in Birmingham on Saturday January 25th.

Our newest Head of Unit Dave Scotford from MVS Birmingham arranged a venue very close to New Street Station.

Nine members attended with a wide range of background and service with the MVS between them.

The meeting focused lively

conversation around the table while looking at topics ranging from the MVS Structure to the new policies we have introduced to keep the service compliant with current regulations. Our CVO Nick Spencer delivered an important session focusing on going afloat. The whole day was choreographed by our office manager Chris Todd.

MVS Member Heads to New Horizons

Puilam Mok is leaving MVS Putney to join the Royal Navy.

She has served with the MVS over the last year and has been a valued and loved member of the crew.

She made Volunteer rank and passed out as a medic during her time with the Unit.

The team wish her good luck and safe travels in her new career.



Sponsored Walk for MVS Dundee



MVS Dundee has taken part in a sponsored walk from Broughty Ferry Harbour to Tayport Harbour, a total distance of 8.5 miles.

The weather was favourable with just wind blowing at Broughty Ferry and on the Tay Road Bridge.

The team stopped off at the International Submarines Monument, HMS Unicorn, RS Discovery and the V&A museum before heading across the Tay to Tayport.

A total of £500 has been raised to purchase water rescue equipment.

Joint Training with Eastbourne Lifeboat

The MVS East Sussex Sovereign Harbour Unit recently joined with Eastbourne RNLI in a training exercise in which our vessel East Sussex 1 took on the role of being lost and disabled, with only a hand bearing compass and VHF radio available onboard.

The lifeboat crew were to locate ES1 and take the vessel under tow.

ES1 was told to drift off Beachy Head and for MVS crew to take compass bearings of coastal features and relay them by VHF to the lifeboat.

This scanty information enabled the lifeboat crew to practice finding a casualty by three-point bearing fixes and to use their radio direction finder (RDF) on the casualty's VHF transmissions.

Once the lifeboat crew had fixed the position, they headed out to take ES1 under tow.

It was a rare opportunity for Eastbourne lifeboat to practise towing a large, heavy vessel.

MVS Skipper Tim Apps thanked all the MVS members taking part and said: "It was a good training session for the MVS crew".

The RNLI has thanked the MVS for our assistance.

Photograph: Elaine Bowdery



Severn Unit Responds to Help a Parrot in Need

Severn Unit had an unusual call from the Avon Lock Keeper Nicky Lancaster who needed to be taken across the rising floodwater to her lock house to check on her parrot Chip after she and her husband had been evacuated from their home in the Gloucestershire floods.



Their parrot was left in the house as they expected that they would return home quickly but with water levels rising it was not possible.

Nicky Lancaster said, "A huge thank you to the unit for getting me safely across flooded ground so I could check on Chip. The MVS really are a lifeline!!"

The Unit has been keeping a constant watch on the river levels over the last few weeks and members have helped in a number of ways ranging from offering assistance to a local business who needed help putting stock above flood level to

assisting householders to deploy flood defences across their doors.

The team also transported people from the local Aschurch Station into the town when the roads became submerged and the buses were unable to run.

First Training Course for MVS Putney

MVS Putney has begun its first year of power boat training with Phil Collins instructing new recruits on the recently acquired 'Storm'.



The team spent five hours on the water teaching the crew in the basics of MOB, slipping and coming along to moor, stemming the tide and general handling of the boat in preparation for Pb2.

HoU Duncan Thomsen, Gigi Goh and Niki Bayard were in attendance for the first session.

The weather was calm, no rain and little river traffic downstream at Albert Bridge where they carried out their MOB training.

Putney has spent a year building up kit, vessels, training and recruits before becoming a fully functional unit.

George Mellett celebrates 10 years service with the MVS

George was a working boat-man on the Kingston to Hampton pleasure boat

He joined MVS City of London before moving to Putney a few years later.

He is now their key instructor in rope work, river navigation and local Thames knowledge.



From the Director of Communications



As the coronavirus situation intensifies can I ask you to join the MVS Facebook group.

It is only available to MVS members and you MUST enter your MVS membership number to be granted access.

The group will enable MVS officers and members to quickly share information and enable us to all keep in touch during this difficult period.

The group is different to the MVS page which is our main means of communication with the general public.

Please keep well and keep safe and I hope to see you all soon.

John Spencer-Barnes

Director of Communications

The link to the group is here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/32215806071/>

Patron

HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO KStJ

MVS Council

David Hughes: Chair of Council

Martyn Sharp: Vice Chair

Les Miller
John Spencer-Barnes

Graham Hedle
Liz Glare

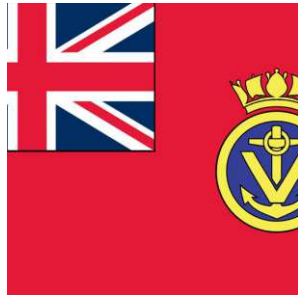
David Dobson
Mark Dustin

Angela Carrington
Nick Spencer

National Officers



Chair of Council
David Hughes



Vice Chair of Council
Martyn Sharp



Chief Volunteer Officer
Nicholas Spencer



Director of Finance
Les Miller



**National MVS
Secretary**
Mark Dustin



**Director of
Communications**
John Spencer-Barnes



Director of Training
Liz Glare



Director of Resilience
David Dobson



**National Admin Officer
/ Newsletter Editor**
Dave Spencer-Barnes



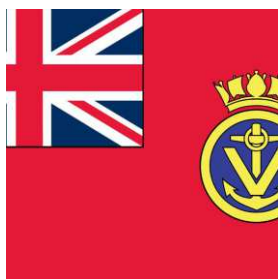
National MVS PR Officer
Keith Newman



**National MVS
Marketing Manager**
Angela Carrington



**National MVS Website
Editor**
Adam Swires



**National MVS
Registrar**
Vacant



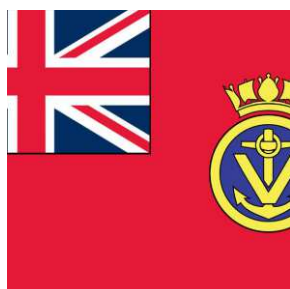
**National Health &
Safety Advisor**
Kevin Gray



**MVS Headquarters
Manager**
Chris Todd

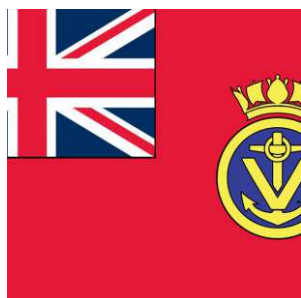


**National MVS Fleet
Manager**
Oliver Chasteauneuf

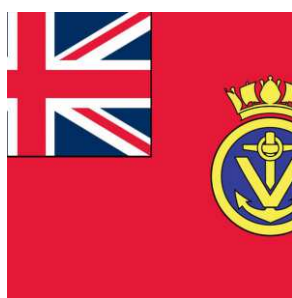


Medical Officer
Dt. Nigel Garbut

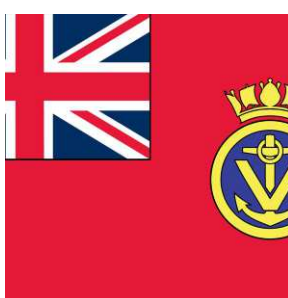
Regional Volunteer Officers



RVO South (E)
Richard Mercer



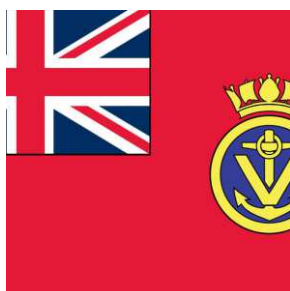
RVO South (W)
Frank Revill



RVO Thames
Vacant



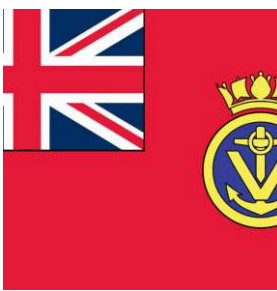
**RVO (Bristol
Channel)**
Gordon McDonald



**RVO NW England &
N Wales**
Giles Pepperell



RVO Central England
Andrew Smith



**RVO Scotland &
Northern Ireland**
Vacant

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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