



The Maritime Volunteer

The Journal of the Maritime Volunteer Service

Year 26
Issue 2
June
2020



www.mvs.org.uk

Registered Charity in England & Wales No. 1048454 and in Scotland SC 039269

Chairman's Address



We are about to take a small step towards normal operations. Council has approved a limited, cautious return to afloat activities, subject to strict conditions. This is primarily so that Units who have understandings with local river and port authorities can resume safety patrols if they have enough members who wish to do so.

This is a welcome development. However enthusiasm must very much be tempered with reality. We still live in dangerous times. Covid-19 is still with us. It has killed one of our members. So we need to be extremely careful. IT IS NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL.

Please remember that Council has ALLOWED some afloat operations to take place but it is definitely NOT REQUIRING Units, whether they have agreements with harbour masters or not, to resume safety patrols.

Resumption of afloat activities may mainly be appropriate for younger, less-at-risk members. Council is NOT encouraging anybody who has doubts about getting involved in even restricted activities at this stage to take part. Members who are shielding must not get involved in any way until the arrangements concerning shielding are changed. Those over 70, or who for any reason may be considered vulnerable, should think carefully before putting themselves forward. The early indications are that only a limited number of Units will be running safety patrols in the next few weeks. If in doubt hold back for now, be patient.

The CVO has issued detailed instructions to Units on what is permissible at this stage. No afloat operations of any sort will be allowed until Unit and craft-specific risk assessments have been approved by the relevant RVO and the CVO and the HoU has been advised operational insurance cover for their craft has been put in place.

Whether you go afloat or not in the coming weeks,

Stay Alert, Stay Safe.

David Hughes
National Chairman of the Maritime Volunteer Service.

A Note from the Editor

I don't need to remind readers that the last few months have been very different for the MVS. Units have done a great job keeping things ticking over during lockdown and the restrictions inflicted upon us by government instructions.

With this in mind this Newsletter is somewhat different to previous issues and may be the way forward. Along with the limited number of activities published on social media, there are features of a maritime theme that we hope readers will enjoy and inspire members to write about similar from their areas.

Feedback and articles with suitable illustrations are always welcome.

Stay safe.

The Editor - Dave Spencer-Barnes

VE Day

MVS Birmingham Supports Bletchley Park VE Day Campaign

While MVS activities are suspended nationally due to the impact of COVID-19, members in Birmingham have been honing their skills at home to contribute to a national campaign.

Bletchley Park was once Britain's top-secret home of World War II codebreakers and launched the 'Bunting for Bletchley' campaign last month in a bid to decorate the park with more than 1,945 metres of homemade red, white, and blue bunting. The decorations will welcome visitors to the park once it reopens, but were originally intended to help mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day.



With keen sewers among the Birmingham Unit's ranks - and a few looking to improve their skills the campaign's challenge was taken up.

Dave Scotford, Birmingham's Head of Unit said: "Staying at home to help protect the NHS means we all have more time on our hands, and it's great to be using it to contribute to a campaign like this.

MVS activities might well be suspended, but we're encouraging members to keep practising their skills at home, whether it's sewing or going through training material to keep their knowledge up to date."

Photo: Volunteer Phoebe Belfield Shows off her handy work with a metre of red, white and blue bunting.

This year marks 75 years since the guns fell silent at the end of the war in Europe. We are now engaged in a new, collective struggle which means we are unable to commemorate together.



The MVS wants to pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of the entire Second World War generation, from British, Commonwealth and Allied Forces to evacuees and those who served on the home front.



Nick and Sue from the Tewkesbury Unit paid their own tribute by raising the MVS Ensign in their garden.

MVS Director of Communications John Spencer-Barnes is also the town crier of St Anne's-on-the-Sea in Lancashire.

Despite the coronavirus restrictions limiting celebrations across the globe John was one of hundreds of criers who performed the cry for peace on VE Day, at a social distance, just before 7PM.

Featured Unit: MVS Humber Unit (Scunthorpe)

The MVS Thorne Unit was formed in 1994 after the local RNXS was disbanded.

It continued with a diminishing membership until early 2007, when the charity 'Streetwise Trust' asked if the Unit would be willing to undertake management of their chartered fleet tender MV Hambledon with the aim of bringing the vessel into MCA Coding.

The Thorne Unit was subsequently closed down and transferred to MV Hambledon berthed at Grimsby Royal Docks.



Members of the Humber unit on a training weekend with East Sussex 1 in Eastbourne.

The membership increased dramatically to 15 through having the opportunity to both work and sail on a fleet tender.

The vessel was used to ferry volunteers to Bull Sand Fort situated in the Humber estuary on behalf of the 'Streetwise Trust'.

The main aim was to make the fort habitable so it could be used as a drug rehabilitation facility.



MVS Humber in attendance at the annual Rescue Day which is held at Crowle near Scunthorpe.

In early 2010 the agreement between the 'Streetwise Trust' and Grimsby Unit came to an end.

It was decided to close and rename the Grimsby Unit as Humber, to reflect the greater area of influence whilst relocating to SCC TS Ariadne in Scunthorpe.

After a spell at Scunthorpe MVS Humber decided to move back to SCC TS Thorne where Captain Nick Spencer is now president of the unit



The Humber Unit and guests celebrate 25 years of the MVS on Humberside.

Cleaning Up the Towpath

HoUs may wish to consider taking a look at the Canals and River Trust (CRT) website, particularly their 'Plastics Challenge' initiative.

This is a towpath clean scheme similar to beach cleans which some units are already doing in their local areas.

There are some safety do's and don'ts in the guide pamphlet and ways for people to sign up.

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/features/plastic-and-litter-in-our-canal>

Fundraising in a cashless age

"I'm sorry but I don't have any cash."

In these days of almost universal contactless payments, how many of us increasingly hear that said as we try to raise funds the old fashioned way by holding out our collecting bucket? Chris Todd has tried one solution and that is to use a SumUp card reader.

With SumUp accepting credit, debit and contactless payments, donors can choose the way they want to pay - whether it's via Chip and PIN, or a tap of their card or phone.

SumUp charges a fee of 1.6% (less than 2p in the pound) which means almost all the donation goes directly to the charity.

Chris's Unit has the machine mounted on a display stand alongside information about the MVS.

Maritime Day Out at Sunderland Point in Lancashire.



New signs have been installed on the causeway from Overton to Sunderland Point by the RNLi highlighting the dangers of crossing at high tide and a view of the causeway to the mainland.

Positioned on the edge of Morecambe Bay between the River Lune and the Irish Sea, Sunderland Point is intriguing and unusual and makes a fine day out with its rich maritime history.

It was used as a port for slave ships and cotton ships but its importance declined as other ports were opened up.

Sunderland is unique in the United Kingdom as being the only community to be on the mainland and yet dependent upon tidal access.

The only vehicular access to the village is via a single-track road from Overton which is 2 miles away over a tidal marsh.

Salmon enter the Lune here and you might see them being caught mid-river by traditional haaf-net fishing,



Fisherman Trevor Owen at Sunderland Point. Trevor still fishes the Lune in the traditional way.

It was developed as an out port for Lancaster by Robert Lawson who was a Quaker at the beginning of the 18th century.

Reportedly, stonework from the ruined Cockersand Abbey just across the river was utilised in the construction of the quay and buildings.

Ships could unload here, or wait for the tide before moving up to the main docks at St. George's Quay in Lancaster and registering at the Customs House.

Sailors were known to press-gang new recruits at the Three Mariners public house, just off the quay in Lancaster, and at the Golden Ball on the way back along the river at Snatchems.

The Port of Lancaster was once the third largest in the country and was part of the slavery triangle.

An African slave boy died at Sunderland Point in 1736 in the old brewery, which still stands on the corner of the pathway that leads to his grave.

The grave on the windswept shoreline of Morecambe Bay is still a local tourist attraction today.

The grave almost always bears flowers or stones painted by local children.



Along the quay at Sunderland Point are a number of fine late 17th century and Georgian dwellings which are well protected against the weather, one of which is a former hostelry.

There is also a fine early-18th-century gatepier on the quay and stunning views over the River Lune and Morecambe Bay.

The hamlet was featured in the TV drama *The Ruby in the Smoke* starring Billie Piper and Julie Walters in December 2006.

The village is also home to the Sunderland Point Shanty Crew who have performed at maritime festivals around the country.



The old quayside at Sunderland Point.

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

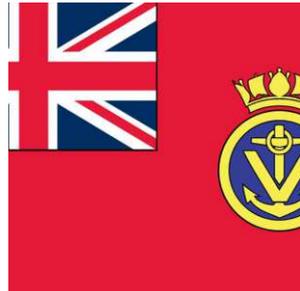
David Dobson
Mark Dustin

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



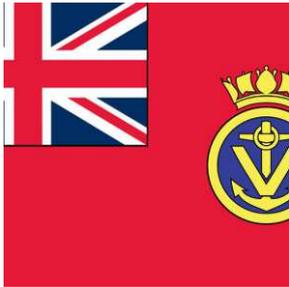
National Health & Safety Advisor
Kevin Gray



MVS Headquarters Manager
Chris Todd



National MVS Fleet Manager
Oliver Chasteauneuf

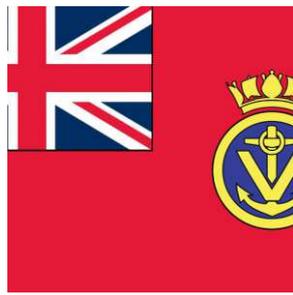


Medical Officer
Dt. Nigel Garbut

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](#)

MVS Contacts

Chairman	David Hughes	david.hughes@mvs.org.uk
Chief Volunteer Officer	Nick Spencer	nicholas.spencer@mvs.org.uk
National Secretary	Mark Dustin	secretary@mvs.org.uk
National Treasurer	Les Miller	treasurer@mvs.org.uk
Director of Resilience	David Dobson	david.dobson@mvs.org.uk
Director of Training	Liz Glare	liz.glare@mvs.org.uk
Director of Communications	John Spencer-Barnes	communications@mvs.org.uk
National PR Officer	Keith Newman	keith@highlightspr.co.uk
National Webmaster	David Hall	webmaster@mvs.org.uk
MVS Medical Officer	Dr. Nigel Garbutt	Tel: 01452 750128 / 07860716997 tudor_cottage@btinternet.com

The Maritime Volunteer
The Journal of the Maritime Volunteer Service
Newsletter Editor: Dave Spencer-Barnes - dave.spencer-barnes@mvs.org.uk

www.mvs.org.uk
Patron: H.R.H. Prince Michael of Kent GCVO KStJ
The Maritime Volunteer Service
A Company limited by Guarantee No. 3003565.
A Registered Charity in England and Wales No. 1048454 and in Scotland SC 039269