



Year 27
Issue 1
May
2021

The Maritime Volunteer

The Journal of the Maritime Volunteer Service



www.mvs.org.uk

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

Chairman's Address



Dear MVS Volunteers

The months that have passed since Christmas have been difficult for everybody. Once again many people have been infected with Covid-19, tragically deaths have soared, NHS staff have toiled selflessly to care for those seriously ill and all of us have been in lockdown.

However the vaccination programme has exceeded all expectations and we now have the prospect of a gradual return to a more normal way of life. Things are getting better.

For the MVS that means a cautious return to activities. Units that provide safety patrols can expect a very busy season ahead. Last summer was hectic enough as more people than ever took to the water, in many cases with precious little understanding of the risks involved and all the signs are that this season will be even busier. Responding to demand will be a challenge.

Council is well aware though that another difficult challenge facing Units as a result of the pandemic is an acute shortage of funds. We are working hard to provide support for Units seeking grants. There will be more news on that soon. One of our external trustees, Jordan Meade, will be providing advice for accessing local sources of funding.

So there will be more challenges this year but I am optimistic that this will be a good year for the MVS. This season there will once again be the opportunity to get afloat and putting our skills to use. And, in the process, enjoying being afloat, operating craft.

So continue to be cautious and keep safe but also take the opportunity show our communities what the MVS is and what we can do to support them.

Safe sailing

David Hughes

Safe Passage and Stowage for MVS Northumbria



The Northumbria Unit has thanked two north east organisations for coming to their rescue by providing storage space for them during the lockdown.

The unit's nautical equipment has been found a temporary home by Fergusons Removals at their Fergy Space in Cramlington while their rigid inflatable boat has been given secure space at Newcastle College's Energy Academy at Wallsend.

Head of Unit, Angela Carrington was very grateful for the help the business community had given to the unit.

"Both organisations have been very supportive of our work on our region's rivers and we'd like to say thank you for their offers of help.

We look forward to getting our boats back on the river when circumstances allow and helping the community with our skills and experience.

Despite lockdown, we're still meeting and training via Zoom and we'd welcome new members too."

Pre-Covid, Newcastle College donated classroom space to the unit so that they could hold lectures and presentations in the right environment for training.

"We are very grateful to Newcastle College for their interest in the MVS and their willingness to accommodate our requests for help. We appreciate their help and support," said Angela.

Photo Shows: L to R: MVS member Keith Newman, Head of Unit Angela Carrington and Chris Heron representing Newcastle College.

Notes from the Editor

It is still anything but normal in the life of the MVS with afloat activities cut to the bare minimum. Hopefully there is a light shining at the end of the tunnel as more people get vaccinated and the country starts to get back to what will become the new normal. There has been very little activity from Units to document since the last Newsletter so a decision was made to produce a few general articles that we thought readers might find interesting.

Similar submissions from members is always welcome.

On the plus side Units and Council have been very inventive to ensure MVS business has been able to continue. A very successful Post Holder Training session was held using Zoom and Council has been holding regular online meetings to ensure important MVS business is discussed and acted upon.

Hopefully we will soon get back to doing what we do best.

Dave Spencer-Barnes

MVS Post Holder Training moves to Zoom

The MVS has moved post holder training to Zoom as the latest way in which the charity is combating the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.



CVO Nick Spencer said, "The turn out for the training was excellent. Out of our 23 active units and 1 project, we had representation from 17 of them with the other units having attended a previous session."

The two sessions were held via the Zoom platform and arranged by MVS National Marketing Manager Angela Carrington.

Chris Todd HQ Manager noted "Zoom is not quite like being aboard HQS Wellington but we have had a great turn out, probably better than if we had to transport everyone to London."

The MVS has now been able to cover the important topics of how the charity was formed, how we run and how we can go afloat.

Alex Nunns from MVS Bristol said, "The session gave me a great insight into the MVS and I found it highly useful and informative".

Own a piece of MVS History



A rare part of MVS history has been donated to the charity in the form of a highly limited number of art prints from the early days of the service.

'The Ropes' by artist Keith Holmes shows a volunteer and a RVO working on the forecastle of possibly a fleet tender.

The prints are now available for sale to members at a cost of £35 plus £5 P&P.

Payment via cheque made payable to The Maritime Volunteer Service and posted to:

Maritime Volunteer Service,
International Business Centre,
Delta Crescent,
Warrington,
WA5 7WQ

COULD YOU BE A LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER?



Occulting or Revolving Machinery

Occulting or revolving machinery including the revolving carriage of the lens, shall be kept scrupulously clean and all bearings and working parts carefully lubricated.

The machines shall be carefully wound up at regular intervals and on no account allowed to run down while they are required for service.

The keeper on watch is responsible for seeing that the clock driving weight is fully wound up at lighting-up-time and at the commencement of each watch the alarm arrangement, provided for warning when the weight is down to its lower position and in need of rewinding, shall be tested and proved to be in proper working order.

Excerpts from Trinity House Service Regulations

Entry to the Lighthouse Service

An applicant for admission to the service must be between the ages of 19 and 32 and preference will be given to those who have mechanical experience.

An education test is given to ensure ability to read and write and that the candidate has a fair knowledge of simple arithmetic. Candidates must have sufficient teeth.

Signalling Practice

Signalling by means of the semaphore and morse codes alternately shall be practised by the keepers every Monday.

All lighthouse keepers shall make themselves acquainted with the bearing plates fixed around the wall of the lantern room indicating compass points, also to the navigational dangers in the vicinity in order that they may warn vessels standing into danger.

Personnel are encouraged to volunteer in assisting the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in recording bird migration when asked to do so. This work should afford an additional interest in life but it must be voluntary and must cause no interference with official duties.

Ventilators

The Keeper-in-Charge shall see that the ventilators in the lantern pedestal are kept clean and free and carefully regulated in conjunction with the casement windows in the service room to maintain sufficient draught for the burners.

Appearance and Dress

All employees in the uniformed grades of the Light Service shall either clean shaven or shall wear beard, whiskers and moustache.

Personnel shall invariably be dressed in correct uniform when being photographed at Trinity House Lighthouses for press, screen or television.



Often out in the most hazardous corners of the country, lighthouses and the people who lived and worked in them have kept sailors safe for centuries.

In the modern era of automated lighthouses, these majestic landmarks are more of a nostalgic, romantic and historic visitor destination, silently standing guard over our coasts. Dating back to the Roman times, Britain's early lighthouses were often found in religious buildings sat on hilltops along the coast.

However, it wasn't until the early 18th century that modern lighthouse construction began in the UK.

An increase in transatlantic trade encouraged the building of lighthouses to warn trading ships against hazards, such as reefs and rocks and guide them to safety.

Trinity House is the General Lighthouse Authority for England, Wales, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar



The Europa Point Lighthouse stands on Gibraltar at the southern end of the Iberian Peninsula at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea.

It was inaugurated on 1 August 1841 in a brief ceremony witnessed by about 10,000 people.

It was fully automated in 1994 and converted to LED operation in 2016.

The corporation was founded in 1514.

Its first master was Thomas Spert (later Sir), the sailing master of Henry VIII's flagship Mary Rose. It provides marine navigation aids to assist the safe passage of mariners through waters in these areas.

It is also responsible for marking and dispersing wrecks which are a danger to navigation.

As the UK's largest-endowed maritime charity it disperses over £4 million every year towards the safety, welfare and training of mariners.



Souter Point Lighthouse was built in 1871 by Trinity House to ward ships from the dangerous rocks at Whitburn Steel.

The development of new technology like GPS and satellite navigation led to its decommission in 1988 after 117 years of service to shipping in the North East.

It's now owned and operated as a tourist attraction by the National Trust.

Funding for the work of the lighthouse service comes from "light dues" levied on commercial vessels calling at ports in the British Isles, based on the net registered tonnage of the vessel.

The rate is set by the Department for Transport, and annually reviewed.

Funding for the maritime charity is generated separately.

Trinity House is ruled by a court of thirty-one Elder Brethren, presided over by a Master.

These are appointed from 300 Younger Brethren who act as advisors and perform other duties as needed.

The Younger Brethren are appointed from lay people with maritime experience, mainly naval officers and ships' masters, but also harbourmasters, pilots, yachtsmen, and anyone with useful experience.

The completion of the lighthouse automation programme came with a ceremony held at the North Foreland Lighthouse on 26 November 1998, attended by the last six keepers and Master, the Duke of Edinburgh.

On 9 June 1989, the last manned lightvessel was towed from the Channel lightvessel station to Harwich.

Dermot Cronin was among the last lighthouse keepers in the UK when North Foreland in Kent was automated on November 26 1998.

He completed his service in a ceremony attended by Prince Phillip.

He told the BBC at the time "I had no idea I would be closing the door of the last manned lighthouse in the British Isles.

To me a lighthouse was meant to be lived in.

It was part of working life and ships passing, day or night, knew there was somebody there, looking at them."



The Beachy Head Lighthouse in East Sussex was automated and demanned in June 1983.

The lighthouse is now monitored and controlled from Trinity House's Planning Centre in Harwich, Essex.

The lighthouse's aids to navigation were converted to solar power operation in 2011 and further upgrades to the navigation light, control system and the solar power system were carried out in 2018.

Nautical Superstitions

Sailors are well known to be a highly superstitious bunch and over the years some interesting nautical traditions have developed, both good and bad. Whilst the MVS cannot guarantee the accuracy of any of the following, they are presented for your amusement.

Never Change a Boats Name

It's thought that changing a boats name will ensure that bad luck will follow you. You can try to follow every step of the renaming rituals and hope that this will be successful but it's definitely best not to try and simply choose a boat with a name you like.

Never Start a Voyage on a Friday

Starting a voyage on a Friday will bring bad luck on the vessel. It's believed that this originates from the crucifixion of Christ. Others avoid the first Monday in April as it was reputedly the day that Cain killed Able.

Always Step onto a Boat with your Right Foot

The belief is that stepping onto a boat with your left foot will bring bad luck. Surprisingly this remains popular amongst some older sailors. How many of you will think about this the next time you step on a boat.

Bananas on board bring bad luck

No bananas on board boats if you want to avoid bad luck. This dates back to the 1700's when many lost or ill-fated ships were noted to have been carrying bananas. As bananas ripen they give off ethylene gas that causes other fruit to ripen more quickly and perish before arrival at the destination. Ethylene is a highly flammable and reactive chemical and a dangerous fire and explosion hazard. Bananas are also known as hiding grounds for deadly spiders.

Swallows and Dolphins are seen as a good sign.

Swallows are seen as a sign that land is relatively close and sea life like Dolphins are a sign that a fishing boat is sailing in waters with rich pickings to be had.

Coins thrown into the sea as a Boat leaves Port

This is seen as a small toll paid to the God of the Sea, Neptune for a safe voyage.

Horseshoes on a Ships Mast

Sailors have been known to nail horseshoes to a ships mast to turn away a storm.

Red Sky at Night, Sailors delight. Red Sky in the morning, Sailors take warning

This is a phrase better known for shepherds but applies to sailors too. When the Sky is red at sunset, high pressure and stable air are approaching from the West. By contrast, red sky at dawn indicates approaching rain and possible stormy seas.

Patron

HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO KStJ

MVS Council

David Hughes: Chair of Council

Martyn Sharp: Vice Chair

Les Miller

John Spencer-Barnes

Jordan Meade

Graham Hedley

Liz Glare

Bob Symons

David Dobson

Mark Dustin

Alex Nunns

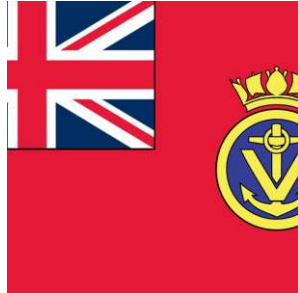
Angela Carrington

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



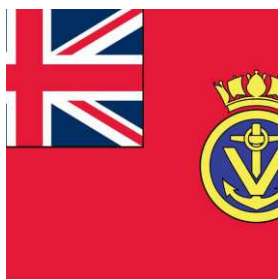
National MVS PR Officer
Keith Newman



National MVS Marketing Manager
Angela Carrington



National MVS Website Editor
Adam Swires



MVS Membership Secretary

David Scotford



National Health & Safety Advisor

Kevin Gray



MVS Headquarters Manager

Chris Todd



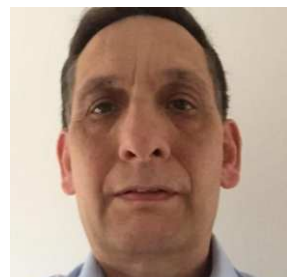
National MVS Fleet Manager

Oliver Chasteauneuf



Medical Officer

Dt. Nigel Garbut



National Specialist Officer - Pollution Control

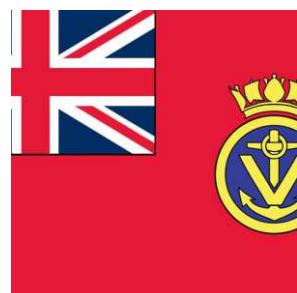
John Allam

Regional Volunteer Officers



RVO South (E)

Richard Mercer



RVO South (W)

Frank Revill



RVO Thames

Paul Marlow



RVO (Bristol Channel)

Gordon McDonald



RVO NW England & N Wales

Giles Pepperell



RVO Central England

Andrew Smith



RVO Scotland & Northern Ireland

Gareth Norman

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