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The Maritime Volunteer

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Christmas Message to the MVS from Prince Michael of Kent

I was very pleased to hear about the progress you have made in implementing your growth and development plan with the Caledonia Investment Trust and that you have secured a third year of funding from them.

I understand that this funding was crucial to getting you through the Covid recovery period and to building the foundations for you to become a much more effective charity.



Being able to use Cayzer House has been of great benefit to you.

You held your 2021 AGM there, which was an amazing morale boost for your members; it was also where you hosted a reception for Parliamentarians and officials last September which opened many new doors for us.

Recent support from Capita and Jigsaw has come as a direct result.

I gather that you would very much like to hold another reception there soon to target other potential corporate sponsors.

I understand that your progress in developing good relations with Parliamentarians was also boosted greatly by the reception there last September.

This very much led to a new role for you in providing the Secretariat for All-Party Parliamentary Group on Local Resilience and Civil Contingencies.

You have trained and qualified most of your volunteers to DEFRA 1 standards for Flood Response and are now able to support your local Emergency Services in this area.

I understand that over the past two years MVS has been called out to assist the Emergency Services both ashore and afloat.

You have also continued to provide routine safety patrols for Harbour Authorities to help implement the Port Marine Safety Code and have been supporting the relevant authorities on inland waterways.

One of your published aims concerns protecting the marine environment and you have assisted your local authorities by removing plastic waste from around the coast, in rivers and in ports.

East Sussex Unit is continuing to remove plastic waste from an area near Beachy Head inaccessible by land.

Other MVS Units are conducting safety patrols and assisting with environmental work.

One of the agreed objectives in the Caledonia development plan was to increase your membership numbers.

The Caledonia funding enabled you to encourage veterans from disadvantaged groups such as BLESMA (the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association) to join you as members.

You are also building better links with Merchant Navy training colleges and have set up a new Unit in Southampton to work closely with the Merchant Navy Cadets from Southampton Solent University's Warsash Maritime School.

It would seem you expect to build on experience gained through this to establish similar arrangements with other Merchant Navy nautical colleges and have already held preliminary discussions at both Fleetwood and South Shields.

Next year and the year after will see the celebration of two very significant anniversaries for me.

In April 2024 we will celebrate the MVS's 30th anniversary and in May 2025, as Honorary Admiral of the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships, I will be leading the celebrations for the 85th anniversary of the Dunkirk Evacuation.

This was known in 1940 as "Operation Dynamo".

The background to the 2025 event is that we were due to have celebrated the 80th anniversary of Operation Dynamo in 2020 but this had to be cancelled due to the Covid -19 pandemic.

So, it was decided to mark the 85th anniversary in 2025 instead.

Operation Dynamo of course took place in May and June 1940 and was one of the most remarkable events in our national history.

Approximately 850 private vessels and 20 warships evacuated over 339,000 British and French troops from the Dunkirk beaches and brought them back to England to carry on the fight.

Not all vessels participating were documented or known, and more than 200 vessels were lost due to enemy action.

The term "Little Ships" applies to all craft originally privately owned and includes commercial vessels such as barges, plus British, French, Belgian and Dutch fishing vessels, as well as pleasure steamers. In the Association we also include some ex-Service vessels, which are now privately owned, as well as ex-Lifeboats.

Only 120 of the original Little Ships remain, but the owners are keen to keep the "Spirit of Dunkirk" alive and more than 50 of them took part in the 70th anniversary celebrations in 2010.

So, in practice, this could mean that in May 2025 as many as 60 of these fragile little vessels will be retracing their 1940 journey from Dover across the Channel to Dunkirk and back.

I very much hope that MVS will be able to help us by providing an accompanying safety vessel or vessels.

I take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy Christmas and a successful New Year.

PM.

Severn Unit called out on Trafalgar Day Flood Rescue

Just 12 hours after attending their Trafalgar Night Dinner the Severn Unit received a request for assistance from a couple who were marooned in their boat out on the flood hit moorings by Avon Lock in Tewkesbury. Members took out their Rigiflex dinghy and managed to squeeze under King John's Bridge to reach the lock. The couple and their dog Buddy were rescued and taken ashore until the flood water dropped.



The rescue came the morning after the unit held its annual Trafalgar Night at Brown's Restaurant in Tewkesbury. Guests at the event included Tewkesbury Town Mayor, Cllr Chris Danter and her husband Rob.

Simon Brady proposed the toast to "The Immortal Memory".

MVS Sea Experience Trips for MN Cadets



Eleven officer cadets who have just started their Merchant Navy careers at the Warsash Maritime School at Solent University have been able to experience coastal navigation in the busy waters of the Solent on board the MVS's national training vessel East Sussex 1.

Cadet Liaison Officer at WMS, Suzanne Galloway, said: "A huge thank you from all of us at Warsash to the MVS volunteers from the East Sussex and Southampton units for facilitating the experience and to Skipper Neil Hunter."

MVS Liaison Director Nick Spencer commented: "The weekend with the WMS cadets enabled us to offer them a 'small ship' experience before they step aboard vessels where they will continue to develop their chosen careers."

First meeting for new Southampton Unit



The inaugural meeting of the new Southampton MVS unit has taken place in the south coast city. There were ten members present and the Head of Unit was selected by the members.

This unit has a close working relationship with the Southampton Harbour Master in assisting in the PMSC and patrolling the local waters under the direction of the Harbour Master.

The unit also has a good working relationship with the local maritime college which will allow cadets to undertake small boat training prior to going on their first posting.

MVS marks Remembrance Sunday 2023



The MVS has again marked Remembrance Sunday in towns and cities around Britain.

The Northumbria Unit held a parade of sail for the 11th year on the River Tyne. A wreath was laid in the river before the two minutes silence was held.

Members of the Putney unit paid their respects at the Merchant Navy Memorial at Tower Hill in the City of London. The Merchant Navy Memorial commemorates men and women of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets who died in both World Wars and who "have no grave but the sea."



The Tewkesbury based Severn Unit attended the annual parade through the centre of the Gloucestershire town.

MVS aids in evacuation of Bristol Tower Block

MVS Bristol were among the local agencies called in to assist in the evacuation of a tower block in the city after structural problems were discovered.

Around 400 people who live in Barton House were told to pack a bag of clothes and leave.

Bristol City Council said surveys conducted on three of the 98 flats found there to be a "risk to the structure of the block" in the event of a fire, explosion or large impact.

Residents who were evacuated from the tower block amid chaotic scenes may not be able to return for weeks.



Storm Debi rescue for Severn Unit

Just as Storm Debi hit Gloucestershire, the Tewkesbury based Severn Unit went to the aid of a 28ft cruiser which had sunk five miles up-river on the Avon.



HOU Nic Price said, "With extremely high winds gusting over 30mph this proved to be a very difficult operation. We used our 26ft cruiser Minerva and our Rigiflex dinghy and between the two boats were able to tow the stricken vessel back to Tewkesbury Marina."

The boat had been partly pumped out by the time the MVS crew arrived with a bilge pump to try and keep her afloat. The boat eventually reached the safety of Tewkesbury Marina where the dock officers were awaiting her arrival.

The MVS spreads Christmas joy

The MVS is bringing Christmas cheer again this year to the Neonatal Unit at Warrington Hospital after donating cuddly toys, which will be used as gifts for babies who are not ready to go home for Christmas Day. The toys were handed over by Chris Todd the Headquarters Manager for the MVS.

Erica Wiles from the Neonatal Unit said: "Chris Todd's generosity is heartwarming, and we are forever grateful to him on behalf of the Maritime Volunteer Service for the soft cuddly toys for our babies to wake up to on Christmas morning. This is the seventh year that Chris has donated to the Neonatal Unit, and we look forward to seeing him every year and are grateful to him and the Maritime Volunteer Service for their continued support of our hospitals."



Certificates of Commendation for Lancashire Crew

Three members of MVS Fleetwood have been presented with Certificates of Commendation for their involvement in the search for missing Lancashire woman Nicola Bulley.



The 45-year-old disappeared from St Michael's on Wyre in January.

The MVS crew took their RHIB Tom Hale as far upstream as tide and depth would safely permit and on a second day worked downstream towards the river mouth at Fleetwood.

The team were tasked by Lancashire Police to investigate various culverts and streams leading down from local farms along with the many pillars supporting the dock infrastructure where the Wyre meets Morecambe Bay at Fleetwood.

Peter Hill, Kevin Gray and Andy Robinson all received their certificates from MVS Liaison Director Nick Spencer at Skippool Yacht Club.

Severn Unit go behind the Iron Curtain

The MVS Severn Unit is continuing with its season of show and tell evenings where members have the opportunity to bring items to meetings and explain all about them.

In their latest event they had the chance to find out about life behind the Iron Curtain.

HOU Nic Price said "member Guy Brady was the speaker this week and he brought along an array of memorabilia and photographs concerning his late father Major Tony Brady who died in 2014.

Major Brady served in the Irish Guards as a sniper in the Second World War then served in Korea and Cyprus and then in Brixmis during the Cold War years.

Brixmis was a military liaison mission which operated behind the Iron Curtain in East Germany and Guy recalled what life was like for him and his two older brothers living there with their parents during that time."



The talk gave an insight into his father's experiences during that period and then afterwards how he became an archivist for the Irish Guards and made friends with a former enemy General Von Rosen who was able to provide an insight into German records from that time. Among other awards Major Brady was proud to be given the Legion d'Honneur which is the highest French Order of Merit to be awarded.

He also produced a section of a German Tiger tank track his Father had recovered from a field in France.

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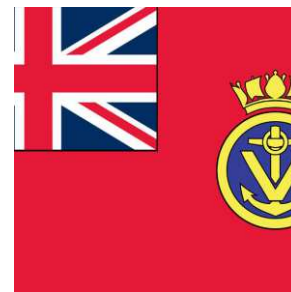
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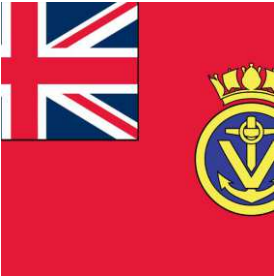
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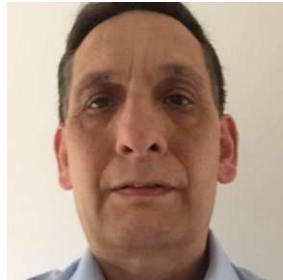
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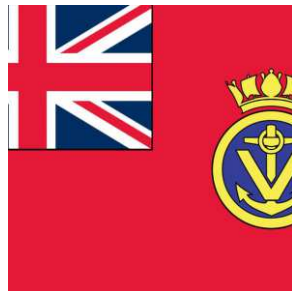
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Vacant



RVO North

Angela Carrington

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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