



National Maritime Operations Centre - NMOC

The National Maritime Operations Centre (also known as Solent Coastguard) was established at Fareham in 2015 as a coordinating centre working alongside nine coastal, and one London, coastguard operations centres around the UK. They form a network of integrated, 24-hour search and rescue stations developed in such a unified way that personnel can walk into any one of them and be instantly familiar with set-up, equipment and facilities; desk layouts, furniture, fittings, even carpets and decor are duplicated throughout.

On March 2 this year a large group of watchkeepers from Prawle Point NCI visited NMOC by coach. Security procedure was thorough, each of us producing ID in exchange for a lanyard with plastic card enabling passage through subsequent secure entrances to the inner areas of command. We were escorted briskly; no time to look and linger as robust doors would become alarmed if kept open beyond a designated period. There was however just time to notice the barrel let into a blue wall - it was dated January 2007 from the *Napoli*, wrecked off Branscombe in Devon.

Once seated in a conference room, Daniel Winter, NCI liaison officer for our area, welcomed us with an introductory talk on the areas of management and their comprehensive interrelationships with SAR, maritime safety and security, pollution response, vessel traffic management, accident and emergency response, drug, weapon and people smuggling, law enforcement, border and fisheries control. Each station can be paired with a flanking station to help deal with incident overload while a major emergency would summon coordination from further surrounding areas. The UK coastguard organisation is divided into 6 divisions comprising 18 areas with 72 senior coastal operations officers in charge. Communications are handled through 165 remote radio sites with Aberdeen, Fareham and Dover functioning as chief data control centres. All the 96 coastguards based at Fareham undergo an extensive, twelve month training programme including live exercises with lifeboats and CG rescue teams and nautical and technical based training.

Introduction completed, remotely controlled blinds lifted along one wall transforming our venue into an observation gallery. We were now looking down into the main operations room where a hierarchy of management was immediately apparent. Radiating from the central desk of Rescue Co-ordination Centre Manager, Mark Rodaway, the next tier of management comprises three controllers of tactical commands, beyond which are separate, yet interactive pods controlling different UK areas plus one station devoted to air rescue. Installed at each desk position are five computer screens delivering the vast array of resources available to each operator while a large overhead screen, high on the far wall displayed immediate situations nationally and internationally. One map of the UK showed 24 red spots locating incidents currently in process, (not all coastal) a corresponding list alongside gave locations and incident numbers, another showed water temperatures and wind directions with strengths indicated by colour coding. Amazingly a world map

displayed EPIRBs currently activated. Across the top of this huge screen a block graph represented the extent of traffic activity within each coastguard area.

Having answered a flow of questions, Daniel escorted us down to this hub of activities, which seemed surprisingly quiet and very controlled considering emergencies are here the essence of existence. We were joined by Mark Rodaway for further in-depth explanations. He thanked us for our services as a valuable capability within the search and rescue system and we were encouraged by the close interest taken by UK coastguard as they visit NCI stations and attend training and assessment meetings. A tab against the name of NCI stations, logging on each morning, indicates open for duties such as notifying emergencies spotted from the lookout, giving information on vessels in the area of incident, guiding a lifeboat to the casualty



Alan Davey

if needed, the occasional relay of unheard mayday or pan pan messages, descriptions and many other ways of aiding assistance.

As watch keepers at Prawle Point well know, an innate ability to home in on the unusual is vital in watching shipping activities. Coastguards may notice a fishing vessel circling a merchant ship giving suspicion of drug exchange, they watch vessels from West African ports and may launch a challenge, once in UK waters, to prevent the spread of infections such as ebola; every day is different. Major incident rooms can be set up in other areas of the building with links to fire, police and ambulance services and a Skype link to the main operations room. Large sailing events such as the Round the Island Race are handled in this way.

Jonathan Mustard, controller of aviation SAR throughout the UK gave us a brief survey of his autonomous area of operations. With helicopters at the ready and the facility to call on military fixed-wing aircraft, he can direct tasking for all emergency services on land and sea. Helicopter crews include paramedics, they have infra-red cameras and automatic search and target acquisition systems, liaise with air ambulances and maintain direct medical communications with destination hospitals.

We are grateful to NMOC for a fascinating and very informative visit.

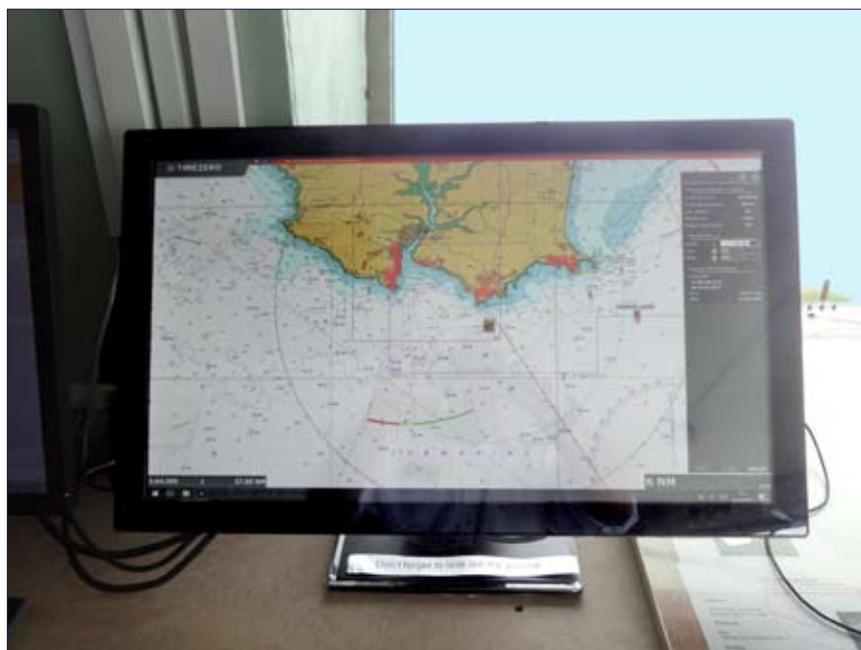
New Radar

A new state-of-the-art radar has replaced the old radar at the Lookout. The introduction of this radar technology will enable us to identify and track vessels and guide the Lifeboat to casualties quickly and easily. All without having to venture into deeper menu systems as was the case with the old radar.

For the techies. The new radar uses a solid state radar transmitter instead of the revolving array that we used to have. Solid state radars eliminate the magnetron, and replace it with a solid-state, broadband transmitter that outputs a clean, frequency-stable signal. It's coupled to a receiver tuned into a more precise band of frequencies, so it eliminates much of the background noise that would mask the faint echoes from a target.

- Solid-state radar is able to run on approximately a quarter of the power of the old magnetron radar.
- There's no waiting for warmup time or complicated setup every time it's switched on.
- You can see targets that are closer to PQ than was the case with the old radar.
- Operation can be via touch screen or mouse whichever the operator is more comfortable with.
- Range and bearing of all vessels can be checked quickly and easily.

The sensitivity of the new radar means that a paddle boarder up to 2nm away can be detected utilising the zoom and synchronise



function. Once located, the bearing and range from any point or vessel to the paddle boarder can be shown using the divider function. All of this can be achieved quickly and simply from the screen functions.

The Watchkeepers are now quite used to using the radar and it is becoming a valuable tool in our role at PQ.

Kim Tucker

Fund Raising & PR

Sarah Procyk, our PR Officer has transformed the ways in which NCI Prawle Point is presented to the public. Stands at local shows are attractive, eye-catching and professional. A wide variety of items are on sale, including books, and volunteers are always pleased to offer information, supply leaflets and take names and details of anyone thinking of becoming a watchkeeper. Sarah works tirelessly for the station and reminds us we need to raise £10,000 each year just to keep the Lookout running. Come and see us at Frogmore Regatta on August 20 and Kingsbridge Show on September 2 or find us outside Morrisons Supermarket on July 29 and August 25, at the 'Celebrate Start Bay' event, Field Centre, Slapton on August 13 and at Ashby's in East Charleton on September 27. The following photographs show just a few of the events so far this year.



Prawle Fair



Salcombe Crabfest



Stokeley Fundraiser



Marine Awareness at Salcombe



Stokeley Pop Up Shop

PQ NEWS

Anyone wondering what PQ stands for on the front page of our new look newsletter may be interested to know this was the code assigned to Prawle Point Coastguards, our predecessors at the lookout, and was in use as part of their callsign from at least the 1930s.

The station was assessed on March 19 this year for the annual Declared Facility Status (DFS) as an inclusive capability within Search and Rescue services and was passed with commendation by assessor, Peter Clements from NCI Bass Point. Salcombe

Lifeboats were unable to join us for practical exercises but we were very honoured to welcome Daniel Winter, our liaison officer from Solent Coastguard who, not only began his journey from Hampshire in the small hours but presented us with a box of shortbread! Pip Hall, Senior Coastal Operations Officer of Area 10, Lyme Regis to St. Austell, came to address the May meeting on recent developments regarding the service capabilities of new rescue helicopters within the re-organised coastguard national network.

RECENT INCIDENTS

07.03.17

Motor Cruiser "*Stress Free*" called the Coastguard with engine failure off Start Point. She was running on one engine, heading for Salcombe. We monitored her until lost in low visibility. She eventually successfully entered Salcombe.

08.03.17

Yachts *Martlet* and *Pegasus* were both calling the Coastguard on Channel 16. Coastguard could hear them, but neither boat could hear the Coastguard. We telephone Coastguard and received permission to call on Channel 16. Both ways were loud and clear and eventually both boats were able to speak to the Coastguard.

05.04.17

We logged a jet skier out of Salcombe and past Prawle Point, later noticing it had stopped just past Langerstone Point and the person on board was waving their arms at a couple of yachts. We plotted his position and called UK Coastguard who launched Salcombe RNLi Inshore Lifeboat. The jetski was now very near rocks. The Lifeboat took him in tow away from the rocks and then proceeded to tow him back to Salcombe.

Later we were contacted by The National Maritime Operations Centre team who were very impressed with the professionalism of NCI and the quality of information passed to them. They gave us a big well done and their thanks.

20.04.17

Local police telephoned to report a blue container washed ashore at Hallsands. We advised them to call the Coastguard. We were then contacted by the Hazardous Waste unit. We also advised them to contact the Coastguard.

We then heard on Channel 0 that Prawle Rescue team had been tasked as the container might contain hazardous material and the label was in German.

23.04.17

We heard *Sea Ray* calling the Coastguard on Channel 16. This was repeated but without response. We telephoned the Coastguard to see if they had heard, but they hadn't. *Sea Ray* called again and stated that she was adrift with engine failure and requested a tow into Salcombe. We telephoned CG again and this time CG established contact, perhaps with a more powerful transmission. Another vessel, *Mollymawk* contacted the CG and said they would tow *Sea Ray* into Salcombe. Later we heard that

the tow had been handed over to Salcombe Harbour Authority. Coastguard thanked us for picking up the transmission as they would not have known the vessel was in trouble.

29.04.17

Yacht *Shibumi* heard reporting to the Coastguard that, due to problems, they were abandoning their passage to Guernsey and would head for Salcombe. We had the yacht visual and monitored her slow progress as far as Salcombe. Both the vessel and Coastguard thanked us for our watch.

29.04.17

We overheard *Harvest Reaper* requesting a radio check with the Coastguard unsuccessfully. They then contacted us on Channel 65 and we informed the CG. Successful radio contact with the Coastguard was established and we were thanked for our assistance.

08.05.17

We saw yacht *Jonas* heading west from Prawle hitting a pot-buoy and fouling her rudder. Reported to UK Coastguard who asked us to keep *Jonas* under observation. *Jonas* eventually freed herself and continued on her way.

13.05.17

Yacht *Suinabhel* seen passing Prawle Point - no persons visible. We telephoned the Coastguard and they put out a call to the yacht. Eventually it was answered. They were using an inside cockpit.

20.05.17

Potential hazards observed on beach east of Prawle, a length of rope attached to a fishing box. Reported to Coastguard who tasked Prawle Point Coastguard Rescue Team. They agreed it was a hazard and also a large piece of driftwood. Items dragged to above the waterline and we were thanked for our assistance relaying instructions between the Rescue Team and the Coastguard.

Pods of dolphins have been sighted on 10 occasions, plus 1 dead on the beach. Porpoises have been seen passing the lookout on 3 occasions and a small whale once. All sightings were reported to Lindy Hingley of Brixham Seawatch.

A sheep in distress was reported to the local farming landowner.

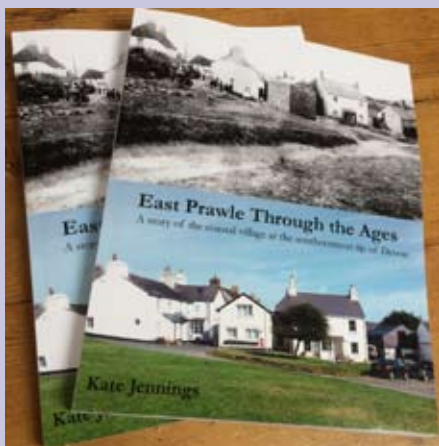
Book Review

East Prawle Through the Ages - A story of the coastal village at the southernmost tip of Devon

Author: Kate Jennings

Published by Eden Valley Editions in May 2017

ISBN 9780992972363 price £20



Co-founder of the East Prawle History Society, Kate's skilled historical research and interest in the village she loves, motivated the writing of this remarkable book. Over seven years she gathered memories from local residents, collected old photographs, found or commissioned drawings and explored archives with a passion. The resultant social history is not only a triumph of meticulous investigation into the intimate structure of village life in all its aspects but a reminder of fascinating details of daily life so easily lost.



Chapters on fishing, eyes along the coast, wrecks and rescue will be of particular interest to anyone associated with Prawle Point. The book may be purchased from venues in East Prawle and nearby villages, the Harbour Bookshop in Kingsbridge or from the author by email - katejennings02@gmail.com

BRITANNIA of BEESANDS



Anita Hutchings

Frequently observed from Prawle Point lookout is *Britannia of Beesands*, a 10 metre Gemini catamaran, registered fishing vessel DH 141, working from Dartmouth with skipper and two crew. All year round she routinely leaves harbour at 4am, potting for lobster, edible and spider crab and netting for varieties of wet fish, mainly skate, monkfish, turbot and brill. Whelks are a winter speciality and diving for scallops is permitted from October to the end of June. Start Bay and all Devon waters out to the 6 mile limit, are closed from July to the end of September for all scallop fishing to aid conservation and allow stocks to replenish. Watch keepers are familiar with charts issued for the South Devon Inshore Potting Agreement showing areas designated specifically for potting, those where trawling is prohibited and zones controlled according to date.

Shellfishing from Beesands by locals, tracing their ancestry over 300 years, was once a busy, sustainable way of life for many families including the Lynns, Stones, Steers, Crispins and Hutchings. Their small boats were launched from the beach or slipway just below the church and Ned Steer, the owner of a small petrol station, would supply fuel for boat engines, leaving the petrol cans out at night for collection by fishermen early the next morning. When Nick and Anita Hutchings established their Britannia Shellfish Limited company in 1995, they began with several of the Dartmouth crabbers landing crab and lobster and small boats landing shellfish, bass, mackerel and

pollock on the beach. *Pisces* DH 74, 4.8 metres in length, *Jiz Weasle* DH69 and *Moonfleet* DH62 skippered by Nick and his father, all of similar lengths were launched from Beesands. Daily catches were sold, both wholesale and retail, from 'The Shack' on the site of the old petrol station using live holding tanks for the shellfish. However, since storms in February 2014, when erosion of shingle resulted in a huge drop below the slipway, the three boats now land at Hallsands until such time as beach profiles may be restored by wind and tide in future years.

In 2006, as business was developing, a purpose built unit employing five people, was erected further up the hill leading to Beeson village. Not easily seen from the beach area, being built into the hillside and well screened by trees, it is approached down a lane. Crab and lobster, from *Britannia of Beesands* and other local vessels, is delivered from Dartmouth each day the boats are at sea. Here they are weighed, graded and accordingly transferred to tanks containing chilled, filtered water. 95% of shellfish leaves the unit live, packed in polystyrene boxes, bound for a refrigerated transport depot in Paignton for onward, next day delivery countrywide. The other 5%, is cooked to order. There is a walk-in fridge and freezer and an area for preparing wet-fish. Nick and Anita's company is now divided into three businesses namely Britannia Fishing for sourcing produce, Britannia Shellfish Limited- the holding and processing unit and Britannia @ The Beach, otherwise known as 'The Shack', the original little depot, once the petrol station, which is rapidly becoming popular and well known as a traditional fishmonger, village stores and unique, semi al fresco cafe employing twelve people, both full and part-time including locals and students, serving seafood at its freshest.



Malcolm MacGarvin

SERVICES TO SEAFARERS ON CHANNEL 65

By calling NCI Prawle Point on Channel 65, seafarers can obtain actual weather conditions in the local area as well as radio and AIS checks during operating hours 09.00-17.00 in winter, 09.00 - 20.00 in summer.

You may also phone 01548 511259 or visit www.nci-prawlepoint.org.uk where you can view our weather station and webcams.

From June 2017 an additional service becomes available. Watch keepers will be broadcasting daily local weather information at Prawle Point on this channel every 2 hours at approximately 09.45, 11.45, 13.45, 15.45 and 17.45 in summer. Broadcasts will cover current wind strength and direction, sea state, swell and any poor visibility.

We look forward to receiving and answering your transmissions.