



NATIONAL COASTWATCH INSTITUTION

Volume 1, Issue 4 Summer 2003

INCORPORATING FRIENDS OF STEPPER

..STEPPER POINT NEWS

Welcome Rick

Mr Rick Stein OBE has agreed to become a patron of NCI Stepper Point together with Mr Peter Prideaux-Brune our present patron. Rick as you know is one of the top chefs in the world of cuisine and has demonstrated this by his skills at the world-renowned seafood restaurant and the school of seafood in Padstow.

Rick has kept very close to the port and the fishermen of Padstow over the many years I have known him, I would estimate about 30 years, when he was a DJ in the “Puffin Club”, which is now his Seafood restaurant on the quayside at Padstow. In most of his local programmes he can be seen on one or other of the local fishing fleet of Padstow chatting and working with the crew, I often wonder if when at sea with the local boys does he cook a fish meal for them?.



His skills as a chef and teacher make me feel very proud to have his name associated with our station. At this time Rick is away filming another series in Australia and we look forward to him returning to Padstow and perhaps a watch

session at the lookout, or even a regular recipe/article from him to add to your magazine.

D. C Lindsey Station Manager



View from Stepper in a force 10



Peace prevails .May 03

The Padstow Seafood Restaurant

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Station Managers Report

Since our last news letter I am very pleased to see so many members have taken home their home work and have been hard at work with the modules set by our training officer Sid, also the station is becoming so professional with the installation of a direction Finder (DF) a fully operational weather station giving accurate wind speed and direction into the lookout, gone are the days when one had to walk outside in all weathers to check conditions with a wet finger!

It is hoped that Rob Osborne will soon be able to install the radio to the weather station enabling the weather to be transmitted to the port of Padstow and displayed on the outside of the harbour office for all to be able to check the conditions before leaving port. It is also hoped that links will be made to Rock sailing club, Rock Lifeboat house Padstow sailing club and others.

Going back to the DF we will only use this in conjunction with Falmouth Coastguard to take a bearing from Stepper and from Trevoze Head and pinpoint a vessel, which may be in difficulties off our coast.

Our Radar is also up and running and proving to be a great asset to watch keeping as we are able to monitor up to 27 miles to the north and 24 to the south west, plus all river activity, with this facility there's nothing that we miss. It has proved its worth during the recent foggy weather when visibility down to 50 metres for long periods of the watches.

A great piece of news Rick Stein OBE is joining Mr Peter Prideaux-Brune as one of our patrons. Rick has done so much for Padstow and the fishermen of our port. He was invited to join us last April, as soon as he returned from his filming his next series, he replied and accepted our invitation. Welcome Rick!

Recently there have been a couple of major incidents, a brand new local fishing vessel making for Padstow at night in thick fog ran into one of the rocks off Newland Island and sent out a Mayday, the Padstow life boat was launched but the crippled vessel managed to make port, she was escorted by the lifeboat.

On the same day a yacht left Padstow and passed Stepper 12.35. The wind was blowing a south easterly force 5, at about 15.30 a Mayday transmission was heard from this yacht giving her position as in the middle of Padstow harbour? After being questioned by Falmouth coast-guard, the yacht was found to be off Newquay, the lifeboat and helicopter were dispatched,. The yacht was taking in water from scuppers and portholes which had been left open, the crew discovered the problem and rectified the matter, the emergency was cancelled.

In another incident showing how incorrect information can easily be given, a visiting lifeboat gave its position as being 60 miles North of Stepper. Watch keepers Ian Kendall and Hillary Datchens realised that the wrong co-ordinates had been given and found the boat to be just 7 miles from Stepper Point. Upon entering the estuary they noticed the lifeboat was not following the safe channel and was attempting to cross the doom bar in heavy seas to access Hawkers Cove, the watch keepers alerted HM Coastguard advising them that unless the lifeboat turned due East she would be carried on to the doom bar and a casualty would have been inevitable. HMCG Falmouth radioed and advised them of the danger reported by Stepper Watch, the boat corrected its course and made its way safely into port. The doom bar has claimed many hundreds of wrecks & lives over the past two centuries, this could have been yet another statistic if Stepper watch keepers had not intervened.

I was very pleased to see only last week an old converted Lowestoft steam trawler No LT 122 entering the port on passage, these trawlers visited the port back in the 1920/50s as part of their fishing activities to which I can remember them only too well as a lad I would spend a lot of my time on board with my father Bill Lindsey who was the boat builder in the port who looked after most of the fleet. and for those of you who read the last magazine she was a similar ship to the trawler Lady Luck who went to the aid of H M S Warwick off Trevoze Head.

During the seasons we have been invited to the Rock Life Boat AGM and we were met by some very brave people I am talking of the crew who will launch to any trouble at any time day of night ,the back room boys and ladies what a fine group we found them to be and what a wonderful job they do to keep this service up to date and ready for action. I for one learnt a lot from them all on the evening, and I feel sure it has brought u, as a member of t he emergency teams together.

Our 2nd visit was to RAF St Mawgan to celebrate the Battle of the Atlantic we were invited by Flt Robert Harris and his lady. During the evening we were introduced to the station commander and many other leading officers of the station, we witnessed the service of remembrance to those who served in the battle, watched the RAF Band and the fly past by a Sea King carrying the colours and flag of the RAF.

Further story to follow

The lookout has now received its 5th coat of paint since its restoration and is looking splendid ,this unfortunately is an ongoing time consuming task which needs to be undertaken every six months. We have had reports from several fishermen that they can see Stepper Point lookout from quite a distance whilst at sea, and how re-assuring it is to know that there is somebody looking out for their safety .We have one fishing boat that passes the look out each day and over the radio we get "good morning Stepper Point" its great to know that we are getting known within the community.

Derek Lindsey

Our Treasurer writes

As you will be aware we completed our first operational year on 28th March 2003, it is now possible to reflect on our basic operating costs. Looking at the crystal ball this time last year I concluded that we would need approx £3000 per annum to cover our normal operational costs. I am pleased to report that we kept within that figure.

Some adjustments to the estimated operational costs will be necessary for the financial year 2003/2004 as we become liable for capitation fees payable to central funds. These capitation fees are a contribution to block insurance policies against accident & public liabilities. As well as capitation fees we now have to cover other insurances of equipment, building, fire & theft.

Major equipment expenses have been met from some small but generous donations.

Our financial year runs from 1st Oct to 30th Sept, our annual accounts for Oct 2001 to Sept 2002 were submitted for audit during Oct 2002, as these have now been published in the annual statement of accounts for the National Coastwatch Institution we can assume that the accounts were proven.

Our efforts to attract more funding must be pursued actively in the future to ensure continuing success of the station.

We are investigating the possibility of rebuilding part of the station premises, this will need a considerable amount of support and funding, we would welcome any help in achieving this improvement to the station.

I would like on behalf of our station, to thank all those persons who have given their support & help at our fundraising events, without these events our finances would be in a less healthy position.

The Technical Bit

by George Barnes D/SM

As many of our members & supporters will know the very position of our station presents big logistical problems in terms of access and maintenance.

Our station is as well equipped as any other station in the UK, and is a leader in some aspects, being the first eco friendly station in the country.

A small but highly efficient wind turbine, producing sufficient power to charge the deep cycle storage batteries giving us enough power to run our electronics for a period of 2-3 days under normal usage.

If higher usage equipment i.e. radar, D/F & lights were used only as and when necessary the period of standby power available could extend to 10 days, (how many days are there when we get no wind at Stepper)? Answer not many!

Coupled with the wind turbine we have a solar energy panel, which can supply up to 4-amp trickle charge during windless conditions (assuming there is sufficient ambient light available). This was in fact our saviour when in Oct 2002 our wind turbine and mast were destroyed by storm force winds; the repairs were not completed until Feb 2003 in the meantime the supply to the equipment was maintained by solar power.

As a means of communication we have to use mobile phone systems (being that BT wanted £56,000 to connect a land line.) This is a matter of some concern at the moment. the unit failed about 3 weeks ago and we are now using an old Vodaphone mobile, which was our reserve. On testing the main unit it is evident that we had a lightning strike, which has rendered the unit irreparable. I am now looking for a suitable replacement, as large a format as possible, preferably one with an extendable handset cord.

We sport a self-composting toilet facility conveniently sited in an old WWII blockhouse, basic but adequate and of course exclusively for the duty staff.

All this technology is fine it works, but I might add it can be a pain in the b--- when I have been called as many as 3 times in a day to sort problems, not always in the most clement of weather.

I must add at this point my thanks to the tenant farmers Charlie & Jane Watson-Smythe for their kind co-operation in allowing us to have the security keys to the headland by 4x4 when necessary.

I often think my vehicle is a mobile workshop, the major problem with running repairs at the lookout is that one must take everything that may be needed, it's a long way home if you have forgotten the vital bits, (there are many occasions when the track is impossible which then means human backpacking of tools etc), perhaps we should buy a donkey!

A Tricky Watch by George Barnes

It was my turn to do the morning watch at Stepper, rising early as I do summing up the weather through bleary eyes, I was thinking 'wish I had not to walk to the lookout today, knee joints burning ankles, not looking to good, have breakfast, swallow some pain killers and off we go.

The morning was sultry, but dry, with a strange aurora about it. I drove to Lellisick and the parked car, debating shall I need rain gear, 'no can't be bothered to carry extras' Now all I had to do was make it to the lookout 2 kilometres out on the headland.

I could see squally showers down to the west, these were far enough away not to bother me, but what I didn't see was the one creeping up on me from behind, all of a sudden the heavens opened, and then suddenly fork lightning, a pretty awesome site, was stabbing the high ground around the Daymark. I must say the thought did cross my mind this not a good place to be, out in the open, I at was the tallest thing around, anyhow must press on. As I got to the top of the rise and turned towards the lookout more fork lightning in the direction of the lookout, all a bit to close for comfort. I was fortunate; I was chasing the lightning and not it chasing me!

On reaching the look out it was prudent to delay playing around hoisting flags etc while the Lord was playing the drums, eventually after about 10-15 minutes the storm drifted away in the direction of Lundy. I could now get on with normal duties. The watch was fairly routine with half the Welsh Navy deciding to set sail with that generous wind on the stern, they kept me busy for an hour, some interesting seamanship! was observed. The weather was determined to make its mark, the barometer fell gradually during the morning; the wind increased gusting to over 30 knots (as measured by our state of the art anemometer).

On opening the door to go out it was as though someone had left the oven door open, it was Hot! Hot! Hot!

About midday the weather started to improve and by the time I finished my watch at 13.30 I was able to take a pleasant stroll back to the car.

There's nothing dull about doing a watch at Stepper, I would say never twice the same!

Watch keepers View. By David Glover

As someone who has always had a very well developed imagination, some of the potential incidents that I have seen over the last year have certainly made the adrenaline flow.

Picture a lone local pot boat half way to Pentire, no other boats anywhere near. It is a sunny day with a two-foot swell. The boat has a rope round its propeller and the sole fisherman on board is hanging over the stern trying to undo it. The mind races, if he goes over in those oilskins and wellies he will never be able to climb back on board unaided. Get a bearing and estimate the distance. Where are the nearest boats? Who are they? He is trying a boathook now. Oh no...he is right over the stern with one foot hooked under the gunwale. The fisherman finally managed to tie a line to his pot rope while he cut away the tangle round the prop. I don't suppose he thought for a minute that anyone was watching or that he might fall in, but I was and he might have done.

A hot sunny afternoon, calm sea and an afternoon high tide. "A" levels are over, testosterone flowing and there is no surf. No doubt while drinking pints of lager in the sun at lunchtime, someone had suggested cliff jumping. There they all are, the girls in their bikinis on the rocks below, the lads climbing down the cliff to the top of the cave mouth. Egging each other on and no one prepared to admit that they are scared. In the end they all jump safely but why is it that the smallest and least athletic lad is the last one down. He is the very person who is most likely to get it wrong.

Early evening at high tide. The lifeguards have gone home, there is not much surf but there are still plenty of people in the water. Hello... that speedboat is going very fast and far too close inshore. He will hit someone if he is not careful. The silly fool hasn't seen the buoyed safety rope down the centre of the beach. There are eight people in that boat. If it turns over at that speed someone will be hurt. The boat rode over the rope then came to a very sudden stop when the outboard hit it. The startled occupants spent an uncomfortable few minutes rolling in the swell while the engine was secured before the boat limped home.

One of the funnier incidents involved a call from the coast guard about a dinghy reported drifting down the estuary from Rock. The only potential casualty was soon identified. The dinghy was off Brae Hill and had two young male occupants who seemed to be sunbathing. They each had paddles and occasionally took a few strokes. The coastguard asked for the dinghy to be monitored and it came ashore on the beach at Daymer. Half an hour later they set out again, drifting with the ebb tide and exploring the rocks off Greenaway and Broadagogue. They then carried the heavy dinghy over the rocky shore and up the steps from the beach. When last seen the dinghy was being carried with difficulty along the coast path towards Daymer. I wonder if they ever got it back to Rock.

Watching from Stepper we see so many potentially dangerous situations. Overloaded inflatable, kids without lifejackets sitting on the bows of speedboats, boats carrying too much sail for the conditions, surfers and windsurfers too close to the rocks, the list could go on and on.

Let us hope that there is never a serious incident off Stepper but if there is our presence may make all the difference because we are watching. I cannot think of a better reason for spending a morning or afternoon in such a superb spot.

Stepper Point's First Lady

For anyone considering becoming a watch keeper, I want to say come out and give it a try! Where else could you be in a more beautiful environment than Stepper Point?

Derek and Sid will give you your necessary training and they are both very patient, allowing for everyone to proceed at their own pace. They are so full of enthusiasm and encouragement themselves that they make us all feel the same way.

Through on going fundraising we have excellent equipment out there, the most recent being a new radio and radar, about which Sid will teach us to use in a matter of a few minutes. Heating, toilet and all mod cons are all up to H&S standards. Derek, Sid and George are always mindful of our safety out there. The winter watches close at 15.00 so we are able to return to Lellizzick in daylight, I and I am sure all of us welcome the spring and summer when we are open until 18.00. I would like to mention one very cold day in January blowing a gale and the gas for the heater ran out, it was one quick phone call to Derek who within the hour was at the lookout with a full bottle having had to trolley it across the fields and cliffs, since this Derek has also installed a thick velvet curtain to the back of the watch room to keep us even warmer and keep the draughts out, what more could one wish for?. At present we don't have enough watch keepers to carry out a dual watch, it is nice to have someone to help with chart work and watch keeping duties, two pairs of eyes are better than one.

If you would like further details please phone Derek our Station Manager on 01841- 540505. I promise you joining us at Stepper is one decision you will never regret.

Jennifer (The First Lady)

OSS - OSS KEEP HER GAIN ALL NIGHT

May Day, the world famous 'Obby 'Oss celebration, is on the 1st. May. The origin of the Padstow 'Obby 'Oss lies in the mists of antiquity. It is probably one of the oldest survivals in the country, if not in Europe.. There is reason to believe that the ancient British people had a settlement near the harbour mouth at Padstow and that the 'Obby 'Oss is a link with them and their times - four thousand years ago. (One of the largest iron age sites in the country is situated on the Camel Estuary).

The celebration of the first day of Summer commences at Midnight with unaccompanied singing around the Town. As the Church Clock strikes midnight, out side the Golden Lion the Night singing starts with this first verse :

Unite and unite and let us all unite,
For summer is a come unto day,
And whither we are going we will all unite,
In the merry morning of May.

In this verse is reference to a gown of green

Arise up Miss ---- all in your gown of green
For summer is a come unto day,
You are as fine a lady as wait upon the Queen,
In the merry morning of May.

In years past a man used to dress up as a woman in a green summer gown and accompanied the Blue Ribbon during the daytime celebration. Unfortunately this custom is no longer practised.

During the day accordions and drums accompany the respective parties around the Town. The verses are different, with this chorus at intermittent intervals:

O! where is St. George, He is out in his long-boat all on the salt sea O.
Up flies the kite and down falls the lark O,
Aunt Ursula Birdhood she had an old ewe
And she died in her own Park O.

The Farewell

This is a very moving part of May Day, at the close of the day celebration the farewell is sung, this is unaccompanied and I have been informed is a song from New Zealand, but whatever its origin it blends in with the close of day. You will see many Padstonians moved to tears at this time. One verse follows.

Farewell farewell my own true love
Farewell farewell my own true love

How can I bear to leave you
One parting kiss I'll give you
I'll go what 'ere befalls me
I'll go where duty calls me

After the Oss's are stabled until the following year, the musicians and dancers attend some of the inns, finalising the day at midnight around the Maypole.

This Custom will never be allowed to die out in Padstow. There are two main parties, Old Oss and Blue Ribbon, with more than one junior Oss Through the long centuries, of course, the May Day celebrations at Padstow have changed, and round the central figure, the 'Obby 'Oss itself, have gathered customs which, in other days, were widely shared. The greenery and the flowers and the Maypole are well-known survivals elsewhere.

Ian Kendall.

My Uncle's Adventure By Canon Michael Fisher

The account in the last newsletter about the adventures of the "Lady Luck" reminded me of an incident in the life of my late uncle. Like me he was brought up at Breage, on the shores of Mount's Bay. Like me, he was no seaman, but unlike me, he spent six years at sea in the Merchant Navy as an engineer officer during WWII. So little did he appreciate the sea, however, that he told me that he had once sailed from Liverpool to New York and back without ever coming on deck or even setting eyes on the ocean!

He spoke little of his experiences, except to tell me that he had been torpedoed twice, once when he was in the "heads", and among the few pieces of advice I remember him giving me was "Never be torpedoed with your trousers down!" and I am happy to say that so far I have followed that tip.

Whether it was on that occasion or the other that the following incident happened I don't know, and as Uncle died 14 years ago, I can't ask him. Many of the details came to me through his sister, my mother, and as her hobby was writing short stories for women's magazines, it may be that a certain amount of exaggeration occurred. But I was confident enough of the main facts to include them in Uncle's funeral address and no one contradicted me then.

Uncle was second engineer in a ship sailing from Falmouth into the Atlantic. The officers were all British, but the crew was Chinese. Not far out of the Channel the ship was torpedoed, and abandoned. As an officer, albeit no seaman, Uncle was in charge of one of the lifeboats. Everyone else in it was Chinese. The attack happened at dusk and in the dark they soon lost touch with the other lifeboats. When dawn broke they found they had rowed around in a circle and arrived back at their ship, which although badly holed, was still afloat. Uncle reckoned that if it had stayed afloat that long, it would last a bit longer, and led his lifeboat crew back on board. He got the engines going and a Chinese quartermaster in his lifeboat crew steered the ship. Neither he nor my uncle could read a chart, but when land came in sight, my uncle declared that he could recognise the church tower at Breage, where he had been brought up. That was the case, so the Lizard was not far away and once round the Lizard, they were soon in Falmouth. What happened to the other lifeboats, I don't remember.

Today such a story would be headline news in the WWII there were so many extraordinary things happening every day that this exploit passed almost unnoticed, but my uncle had a letter of commendation from the Chinese Government.

If there is a moral to this story it must be (1) don't abandon ship until your vessel is actually sinking; (2) Be familiar with the day marks in your area!

Tribute to Len Peppiatt

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of one of our founder members Mr Len Peppiatt.

Len worked with us, getting our ideas down on paper, doing site measurements, drawing up plans to adapt the building for our needs.

This took hours of dedicated work and he never complained (well maybe once or twice), when at the last minute we thought of another change of plan he took it in his stride to accommodate it, Len we will always be indebted to you.

Len passed, we hope to the great lookout in the sky and still keeps a watch over us, still making sure that we follow those goals we set out to achieve in March of 2000.

I speak for all the staff at Stepper in when I convey our condolences to his wife Ann and his family.

Derek

PADSTOW HARBOUR
BY
TREVOR PLATT HARBOUR MASTER.

When Padstow harbour is mentioned one tends to think of the actual harbour in the centre of Padstow. Nothing could be further from the truth. Padstow harbour starts at the mouth of the camel estuary with an imaginary line drawn from Stepper Point to the Gulland to the Newland rock and back to Pentire head. This is the seaward limit of the port.

The commissioner's area takes in the whole river including Little Petherick creek through to Wadebridge to Polbrock. This is as far as the tide flows which is almost two miles inland from Wadebridge. I think you will agree that it is quite an area.

The Padstow Harbour commissioners were established in 1844 under an act of Parliament. The act specified what the commissioners' duties and powers were. Until the 1980's there were 27 commissioners appointed and elected. It is hard enough to get an agreement with such a few and I am sure that it must have been extremely difficult with so many.

The original act lasted until 1987 when it was repealed in favour of the Padstow Harbour Revision Order; this act not only brought the duties and powers of the commissioners up to date but also gave the commissioners a new constitution. Until the revision order was put into place elections for commissioners were held each year but one could only vote by showing a rate demand for your property- if you owned six properties you were entitled to six votes, I think you will agree that it was hardly democratic.

By the Revision Order the number of commissioners was reduced to 10, three from the Parishes of Padstow and St Issey, three from Rock the parish of St Minver Lowlands three from Wadebridge, the Parishes of Egloshayle Wadebridge and St Breock The tenth commissioner was to be appointed by the Lord of the Manor Mr P Prideaux- Brune. The Duchy of Cornwall and HM Customs and excise declined to appoint a commissioner as they had under the former regime.

All commissioners are now elected by secret ballot using the current electoral roll. Each year in January one commissioner from each of the three areas is invited to retire, He /She is eligible to stand for the post again but notice of the forthcoming elections and invitations for nominations of candidates are published in the local newspaper. If more than one candidate is nominated then we would hold an election before the middle of March. This takes the format of a Parliamentary election with anyone appearing on the current electoral roll eligible to vote, the winning candidate is elected to serve for a three-year term of office. This maintains continuity of policy as only a third of the commissioners could possibly change each year. This year there was no opposition to the sitting members at Padstow or Rock but we had two nominations from the Wadebridge area and an election was held.

Considering the fact that the harbour is so very important to the area very few people actually vote. Your area is probably the best for voting turnout in all three areas. Having said that, in year 2000 the department for transport has now brought out a document called "A guide to good governance. This was in response to yet another document known as "The trust report view". Padstow like Newlyn, Fowey, Falmouth, Mevagissey and Port Isaac, is a trust port and is obliged to comply. The document spells out that any person wishing to become a commissioner should be whiter than white and squeaky clean. In former times the boards running trust Ports have, to some extent, been self-interested. Also within this document the Lord of the Manor is to lose his right of appointment and the chief executive officer, which just happens to be me, will have a seat on the board as a right, The Department for transport originally insisted that our democratic system of electing commissioners should cease and be substituted with an appointment process. I am pleased to say that with pressure from and help from articles in the Cornish Guardian they have relented. We have been given a five-year period to incorporate all the changes in a new harbour revision order.

Other changes include a maximum of three, three-year terms for commissioners and an age limit of 70. To become compliant in the short term, prior to a new revision order. The lord of the Manor has appointed me to the board as his appointee.

THE PORT

The commissioners are responsible for regulating the navigation on the river and are therefore empowered to make by-laws to assist in maintaining order on the water. The commissioners meet, normally once a month, at the harbour office. These meetings are open to the public and also the press, these meetings make policy for the port and it is my job to make sure it all works, At this time of the year we have a staff of 17 covering the administration, operations, ferry and Rock beach, we are also the local lighthouse authority with lights to maintain at Stepper Point and St Savours Point as well as five lit navigation buoys in the river, once a year usually in May all lights under our jurisdiction are inspected by Trinity House.

Padstow was transformed about 1990 when the Southwest Water Authority installed a tidal gate to the inner harbour as part of the Padstow flood prevention scheme, not only did it keep the water out at time of high spring tides it also allowed us to maintain 3 Metres of water in the inner harbour at all times. During the winter months we are kept busy with visiting fishing vessels, mainly from Plymouth Brixham and Belgium, they come for what is known as the Trevoise season, which is when the Dover sole is most prolific in this area. Not so long ago they would arrive shortly after Christmas but because of the EEC quota cutbacks it is now mid February before they arrive, The season ends towards the end of April and the trawlers usually head north to Liverpool bay following the Dover soles. They come into Padstow to land their catches and we supply them with fuel, Ice and water ready for their trip.

Surprisingly this year we have had four or five of these beam trawlers working from the port up to last week. We have one Belgium trawler the Artevelde that uses the port regularly, landing their catches to road transport to Zeebrugge, every third trip they come in and leave their boat in the harbour for a week or so and return to Belgium for a break with their families.

From Easter we cater for the leisure market of yachts and motor cruisers, Mayday is important to us as we normally have up to 50 yachts booked over that period and if, like last year and to some extent the weather is poor it means a loss of revenue for us. Padstow is the only port on the north coast where vessels are able to remain afloat and it has become enormously popular with what we call the Welsh Navy and Birmingham Navies, most visiting craft come from South Wales and the Bristol Channel area some spend their whole holiday with us whilst others stop a day or two Southbound to the Scillies and returning for a night or two on their home ward journey.

The Port contd.

Until the year of the eclipse, 1999 we did think that our facilities were more than adequate but with over 100 yachts in port I am afraid that we were sadly lacking. In one respect it did us a favour as the wooded harbour office had been condemned in 1982 and was the catalyst to build a new office with extra facilities for the mariner. Our new offices-three years old now is a super building and I am extremely proud of it.

Our leisure trade has grown year on year and last year we had in excess of 4500 yacht nights throughout the season. Our main advertising is by word of mouth but at Christmas we send every yacht and fishing vessel on our data base a Christmas card, a short newsletter and a tide table, last Christmas we sent out 1562 cards and newsletters all personally signed by me, it really is appreciated by all our visiting yachtsmen.

Much our leisure business comes from people returning year after year, but during the past couple of years we have seen many more continental yachts from the France, The Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, and Sweden plus three from the United States, recently we had our first yacht from Finland. We have approximately 200 moorings in the river the majority being at Rock, which are let out for the season and holiday moorings. It will be a busy summer as our holiday moorings for July and August were virtually booked up before the end of January.

These moorings are suitable for the smaller class of boats that can be towed by car, our season for moorings runs from 1st April until the end of October. Our moorings at Padstow are beginning to be popular with the small boat fraternity mainly because we are unable to lay any more at Rock, Three years ago the twenty or so moorings we had in the river were so under-utilised , we have almost sixty now and have a waiting list, once again we have no more room to lay more.

The Commissioners own and run the Black Tor Ferry under an ancient lease from the Duchy of Cornwall, which runs from Padstow to Rock each day during the summer and each day except Sundays in the winter, It may interest you to know that the ferry carried almost 170,000 passengers last year. We have car parks at Padstow and Rock, which are pay and display, and also the North Quay car park, which is annual subscription. We lease the dinghy park at Rock again from the Duchy of Cornwall where small boats sailors can park their craft, even though it has been extended we never seem to have sufficient room during high season. We also own Commissioners quay and Commissioners road at Wadebridge, this is now becoming popular as the waterfront at Wadebridge is certainly going up market with the new development taking place.

We are the competent authority for pilotage and have two licensed pilots, one of which is myself, we aren't used much these days but because we are a CHA or competent harbour authority we are duty bound to maintain a service. Under an act of Parliament of 1973 the harbour commissioners have always licensed the leisure craft carrying up to 12 fare paying passengers. This all changed two years ago when we were appointed a certifying and competent authority by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency for surveying and the issue of passenger vessel licences and boatmen's licences for the 12 and under tripping boats, we were in fact, the very first in the Country to be appointed. I actually check the safety equipment on each vessel prior to issuing a passenger licence, I now look after 40 vessels 10 at St Michaels Mount 9 at Mevagissey and the rest are made up with our own vessels and the odd ones from Port Isaac , last year I licensed a boat from Instow in Devon but luckily he managed to find a certifying authority a little closer to his home. Each year my system for certification is audited by top the brass of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency from Southampton.

That in a nutshell is what we are about.....Captain Trevor Platt

North Sea View.

Greetings once again from the North at the time of writing we are enjoying a lovely spell of weather.

Since last update I've had a change of vessel, I'm now on the Viking Viper a 46M Emergency Response Rescue Vessel sailing out of Aberdeen, she's an ex Norwegian fishing vessel converted in the Faeroes in 1992 and very kindly at sea.

During the last month at sea we had a relief contract at 3 rigs in Liverpool bay. This meant a round trip of some 1300 miles departing Aberdeen up to and through the

Fair Isle channel then down through the North and South Minch, west about the Isle of Man to Liverpool bay approximate steaming time 60 hours each way. Should any of our readers ever get the chance to go to Liverpool bay area North about, I think they will find the scenery spectacular (not as good as Cornwall) and provided the weather is favorable a thoroughly enjoyable experience. While down in Liverpool bay we had to respond to an incident on one of the rigs, when a man fell 60 metres into the sea, although we were at what is termed 'normal standby' meaning there is no requirement for the vessel to remain within the rigs 500 metres zone, we were able to recover the casualty from the sea in 2 ½ minutes from a distance of 1 mile and he was in our treatment room (hospital) within 6 minutes of the alarm being raised, despite every effort being made after an hour we were unable to revive him, so treatment was discontinued, but I must stress that the training the crew go through week in week out to cover incident such as this was very much realized during the debrief of the situation. Many letters were received from the various companies involved with the rig praising the training and efficiency of the crew.

Despite the end result of this incident, as far as the rescue went it was a text book scenario mainly due to continuous training and updating of knowledge, which brings me to Stepper Point training, this is proceeding VERY well indeed, we currently have some 30 watch keepers who have either completed or are in the process of completing their Personal Achievement Record with a further 6 watch keepers under training. Please note we are always ready to take on new entrants who wish to become watch keepers and NO prior knowledge is required as complete training will be given, so if you're looking for a challenge with a very worthwhile outcome please contact

The PAR is a means by which Stepper Point and its watch keepers can be audited to gain Declared Facility Status (more on this next time).

Current training program is 1 session mid July with C.C. Fire Brigade Training Officer for 16 watch keepers, with another session planned for early September for the remaining watch keepers, and 2 sessions on 1st Aid for late August – early September.

There are also arrangements in hand for radio training for all watch keepers in the autumn, so all in all Stepper Point is on course to achieve all of the training aims we planned for during the current year.

Thanking you all for your continued effort and support in training for Stepper Point.

Safe sailing to those that go to sea, and good and safe watch keeping to all.

Sid Porter

Sid Porter Training Officer.

Tele No: - 01841 532067, E-Mail:- sidporter@talkgas.net

The Kids Obby Oss

I would like to say a big thank you to Tim Tutton and his merry band, who on May Day performed with their Obby Oss, collecting for various charities as they danced and sang their way through the streets of Padstow.

They have kindly donated £250.00 to our station for a new telephone system, after our system was hit by a lightening strike.

In this day and age the kids don't get the thanks and mentions they deserve, well done to you all and please feel free to visit and see the equipment in use, as I hope one day you will be our future watch keepers.

Thanks again from all staff at Stepper Point..

Derek C Lindsey Station Manager.

Incident log actioned by Stepper Point

29/03/02 Assist HMCG, surveillance surfers in difficulties Greenaway Rocks . Alert MRCC & co-ord info

03/04/02 MRCC Falmouth to Rock ILB two persons missing 9 mins later persons reported safe. Stepper passed visual report to MRCC.
Surveillance & report

29/05/02 MRCC Falmouth call to Padstow Ferry no response. Stepper respond to call. MRCC Falmouth persons cut off by incoming tide. Stepper to MRCC Falmouth persons are in our view and two are fishing and the others are walking out to them and are okay but will keep you informed. Info MRCC
Surveillance

28/06/02 Capsized dinghy in estuary 2 POB , Padstow Rock ILB launched, rescued two persons unable to get a line to the dinghy. MRCC Falmouth request Stepper to keep a watch on the dinghy. and later watch keeper reported to MRCC Falmouth the dinghy had gone ashore at Pen-Glaze haven. Recovered by beach guards Surveillance & Report

17/07/02 Stepper to MRCC Falmouth inform casualty with broken limb near to lookout and request for air ambulance to attend the casualty. Airlifted to Treliske. Action

18/07/02 The crew of a yacht, which had left Milford Haven 3 days before, were unsure of their position, they thought they may be either off the French or Welsh coasts and were seeking assistance from the Coastguard.
On hearing of the yachts problem over the radio, the duty watch keeper at Stepper Point informed Falmouth Coastguard of a vessel answering their description. A bearing from the lookout was passed to the coastguard and when checked with the bearing given by the yacht, was found to be reciprocal, proving the lost vessel and the one under observation were one of the same. This yacht had been observed and logged for some time prior to the incident some 2 miles off Stepper Point, sailing in an erratic manner. Action
Coordination MRCC
Surveillance

21/10/02 from MRCC Falmouth. Persons in trouble windsurfing on Doom bar. Stepper notified by MRCC Falmouth, Rock ILB Launched Stepper kept MRCC Falmouth updated and position passed to Rock ILB windsurfer recover all well SW 6-7 visibility 10 miles heavy swell. Surveillance

27/11/02 Fishing vessel reported to MRCC Falmouth position 50°39' 004'57 bearing from LO 353* engine failure. Stepper to MRCC Falmouth report fishing vessel making for PI Bay to await tide to go over bar MRCC Falmouth requested observation Weather SW 4-5 Mod sea and swell visibility 4 miles Surveillance

----- **Commence Year 2003**

21/01/03 Coast walker escorted over headland to her vehicle by watch keeper who happened to be going off duty. Person diabetic and believed going into a hypo. Action Assistance given

18/03/03 Stepper reported to MRCC Falmouth and Padstow harbour authorities, raft or rubbish observed drifting off Stepper. Action inform & Surveillance

15/04/03 Air ambulance landed at Greenaway to recover casualty to Treliske Hospital. Surveillance

15/04/03 MRCC. Falmouth to Stepper. Request keep watching brief. Boy missing between Trevone and Padstow Missing boy recovered
Surveillance & reports

18/04/03 Fishing vessel 'Arunda' dragging net fouled around prop, requests fishing vessel 'Shelia Pat' for a tow. Stepper monitored casualty Surveillance

02/06/03 Padstow Lifeboat called on service to assist broken down fishing vessel bearing 240 degrees Trevoise Head. Stepper reported the local conditions and kept watch until the casualty was brought into Padstow. Surveillance

09/06/03 Air Ambulance attending casualty at Daymer Bay Surveillance

19/06/03 The 'Levington Lass' with 2 men on board suffered engine failure due to fuel problems, 3 miles off Newland Island just outside of Padstow. The boat managed to restart its engine, the lifeboat escorted the boat towards Padstow, then took the boat in tow when it suffered total engine failure. Padstow's relief lifeboat 'Sarah Emily Harrop' was launched at 5.20pm to go to the aid of the 35ft sloop. The lifeboat returned to the station at 8.30pm
Radar & DF checks carried out from Stepper Watch gave, actual position bearing 306* 5 miles. Padstow Harbour was advised Co-coordinating PHC & Surveillance

29/06/03 May Day from yacht "Boy O Boy" monitored require immediate assistance engine failure 8 Persons on board

20/07/03 Padstow lifeboat launched. 2 divers reported overdue surfacing 2 miles N Trevoise Head. Rescue aircraft search. Missing divers found W of dive site. No casualties. Surveillance

02/08/03 Injured bird of prey (Kestrel) brought to watch by cliff walker Taken to local Screech Owl Sanctuary by member of crew

Friends of Stepper Point

If you have enjoyed reading this edition of our newsletter, please feel free to pass it on to a friend, whom you think could be interested in supporting us. You may wish to visit our web site at [www. stepper-point.co.uk](http://www.stepper-point.co.uk) where you will find regular updates of newsworthy items. And forms for your friends to join you with yours and our worthwhile project. Membership forms for the Friends of Stepper are on our web site.

Stepper Point contact numbers.

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Future Coffee morning dates for your diary at The Padstow Memorial Hall

Sept 24th, Oct 29th from 0930 till 15.30 hrs.

PADSTOW MUSUEM

Market Street Padstow.

Padstow museum opens Easter week
Free Entry for the Easter period.

You are always sure of a welcome

Why not visit our web site at www.padstowmuseum.co.uk

All enquiries to Mr J Buckingham 01841 532 470 or e-mail jebuki@aol.com

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