

DOCKYARD PORT OF PLYMOUTH

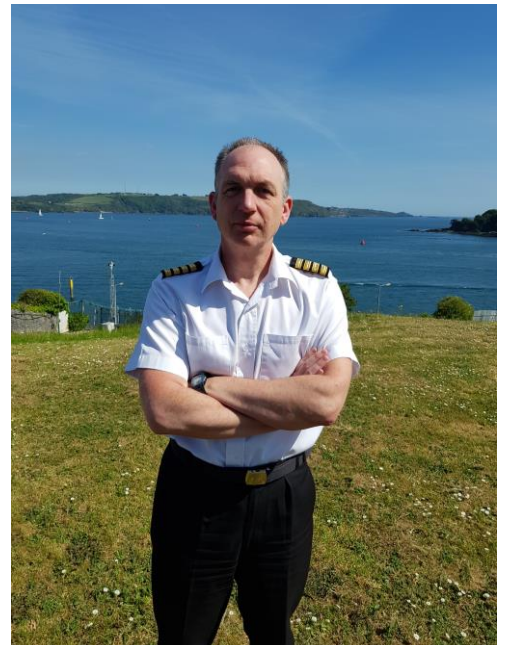
ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Carl Necker, Queen's Harbour Master Plymouth

Foreword

Despite the many difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Dockyard Port of Plymouth has continued to support the MOD's strategic defence aims throughout 2020, while ensuring that commercial, leisure and other activities operate effectively in a harmonious and mutually beneficial fashion. Safety and environmental compliance have remained at the top of our priorities. The Port's annual Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) formal compliance audit was conducted in November 2020; this determined that Plymouth was substantially compliant with extant policy. The following particular strengths were noted:

- *A hardworking, candid and supportive team dedicated to the safe operation of the Dockyard Port.*
- *A mature safe system of work that assists in the safe delivery of maritime operations.*



Of note, the non conformances noted at the audit have since been closed out, with the result that the Port is now Fully Compliant with the PMSC.

Our aim for 2021 is to maintain and, where possible, improve marine safety within the port for all water users. Indications are that naval and commercial moves will remain steady while, as the COVID lockdown gradually lifts, recreational activity on the water is likely to increase substantially. QHM is already being approached for permission to conduct a considerable number of leisure and sporting events later in the year. The major ongoing infrastructure improvement to fully upgrade of the Vessel Traffic Management System and ensure IALA compliance is nearing completion, and will considerably improve the capability, service and safety provided by the Vessel Traffic Service (VTS).

I commend this report to you.

Carl Necker

BACKGROUND

The aim of this report is to demonstrate the Dockyard Port of Plymouth's (DPOP) compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code, whilst meeting the Ministry of Defence's needs to maintain core operational outputs. Throughout 2020, QHM's Department successfully delivered on all the commitments set out in QHM's Safety and Environmental Management System (SEMS) and Harbour Safety Plan, as well as achieving the core output of the organisation in supporting the Royal Navy and UK's allies.

Relevant information, including details of the SEMS and the whole port risk assessments, can be found on the QHM web site: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/qhm-plymouth>. This website also hosts all local Notices to Mariners, Navwarns and daily movements.

SAFETY and ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SEMS)

The PMSC mandates that all ports maintain an effective SEMS. The purpose of the DPOP SEMS is to improve the level of safety for everyone using the waters under the jurisdiction of QHM Plymouth. The application of the SEMS is the responsibility of the Queen's Harbour Master through the Delegated Duty Holder (Naval Base Commander).

COMPLIANCE UPDATE

- The Dockyard Port Order (1999) has now been replaced by the Dockyard Port Order (2020) (<https://www.DPO Plymouth 2020>). Key changes include:
 - The extension of reporting requirements to all vessels over 20m vice 25m.
 - The incorporation of the requirement for adequate levels of bridge manning in vessels over 20m (as previously detailed in Plymouth Notice to Mariners 17/20).
 - Removal of the rules associated with the Port Control traffic signals. As an alternative, the establishment of a moving exclusion zone (moving haven) around designated vessels will be introduced.
 - The Incorporation of Plymouth Local Notice to Mariners 16/20 in order to clearly define responsibilities between small craft and the Torpoint ferries.
 - Renaming the skiing areas as high-speed areas.
 - Removal of special sound signals which are no longer used, placing greater emphasis on the use of manoeuvring signals as detailed in the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.
 - Extension of the requirement to maintain a watch on VHF Ch14 to all vessels engaged in commercial activity, diving operations or over 20m in length.
- Plymouth Notices to Mariners have been published throughout 2020, each are specifically annotated as Directions or Information notices.
- All incidents and reported near misses are reviewed by QHM with further actions recorded and followed up on the incident database. All incidents are recorded on the MarNis database which integrates incident data from all three dockyard ports.
- The SEMS is regularly reviewed with amendments to all port risks being generated through the periodic HAZMAN II risk reviews in June and December each year.
- The HAZMAN database was reviewed in its entirety during 2020 and all hazards audited for validity and application of appropriate mitigation measures.

CONSULTATIVE BUSINESS

CONSULTATION AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION – QHM continues to consult and share information with a wide variety of authorities, organisations and groups in order to discharge his statutory duties, ensure navigational safety and to promote collaborative working, thereby enabling a diverse and fair use of the waters within the bounds of the DPoP. Key bodies are:

THE HARBOUR AUTHORITIES LIAISON COMMITTEE (HALC) – The HALC consists of QHM and the Harbour Masters of Cattewater Harbour, Millbay Docks and Sutton Harbour. The Plymouth City Council Pier Master is also a member of the group. This forum brings together regulatory stakeholders to promote the delivery of integrated safety management for the DPoP. A key function of the HALC is to annually review all the hazards within the HAZMAN whole port risk assessment database.

TAMAR ESTUARIES CONSULTATIVE FORUM (TECF) AND PORT OF PLYMOUTH MARINE LIAISON COMMITTEE (PPMLC)

– The TECF comprises all the organisations with statutory powers or functions relating to the Tamar Estuaries. It has developed and oversees



the Tamar Estuaries Management Plan which delivers statutory compliance and best practice in the management of Plymouth Sound and Tamar Estuaries Marine Protected Areas. It is supported by the PPMLC which provides a mechanism for consultation with port users. The last few years have seen significant change for the marine and coastal environment with the emergence of legislation to safeguard and protect this precious resource. The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 introduced far-reaching measures which included the establishment of the Marine

Management Organisation, the introduction of marine planning, new structures for managing fisheries and the establishment of a network of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). A great deal of work has been done to produce a comprehensive management plan for the period 2013-2018, incorporating updated legislation, new structures for managing fisheries and Natural England's European Marine Site Risk Review. A two-year extension to the plan was agreed and implemented to ensure stability post BREXIT, and a new five-year management plan is in development. A rolling biennial tactical level action plan has been developed to detail how TECF members are achieving strategic outcomes. Key achievements in 2020 have included the continued delivery of the Marine Recreational Impacts Project, the sowing of seagrass meadows in Plymouth Sound, Advanced Mooring System trials and further modernisation of the website. The "Plymouth Waterways Guide for Small Craft" continues to provide the necessary information to allow all water users to navigate safely and with due regard to the environment within the DPoP.

The latest edition can be found on the TECF website - www.plymouth-mpa.uk/pste-water-users-guide/



Proposals for the creation of a “national marine park”, which will include the extent of Plymouth Sound and its estuaries, are currently being explored and led by Plymouth City Council (PCC). Whilst the existing management system for environmental protection (led by TECF) and Port activities (led by QHM) is highly regarded and will remain unchanged, PCC consultants are looking for ways to further expand education, engagement and branding opportunities.

CONSERVANCY

BUOYAGE – The Port Control Stations continuously

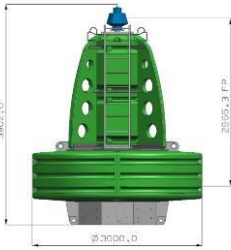


monitor the position and operation of all navigation buoys within the Dockyard Port. This is augmented with reports from QHM staff on the water and other port users. Detailed positional accuracy, light characteristic and material state checks are conducted monthly

by the Port Conservancy Officer. Any buoys found to be off station or operating incorrectly are reported by NAVWARN and corrected at the earliest possible opportunity.



As the Design Authority for QHM, SERCO is undertaking a rolling replacement programme aligned with the planned maintenance schedule to upgrade lighting and buoy type. The upgraded lights and system embrace new technology and consume less power which necessitates both smaller batteries and solar panels. In addition to upgrading floating navigation aids, a rolling upgrade of beacons and lit marks has commenced. The upgraded lights and buoys conform to International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (I.A.L.A.) standards.



PANAR – (Port Aids to Navigation Availability Reports) All the Dockyard Port navigation buoys and beacons are monitored for availability and the results inputted into PANAR. PANAR is distributed by Trinity House in order to assist QHM, as the Local Lighthouse Authority for Plymouth to fulfil his responsibility to maintain records of Aids to Navigation availability and to provide summaries of these to Trinity House, as the General Lighthouse Authority for England. The annual Trinity House PANAR audit raised no non-conformances or observations in the conservancy process and the inspection of Aids to Navigation was satisfactorily conducted.

DREDGING AND HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY



Pre and post dredge and monitoring surveys of all maintained areas are conducted by Boskalis Westminster Dredging Company. A 10 year licence is in place to allow essential maintenance dredging and disposal at sea. A full dredge and disposal campaign

was completed in February 2020 and the smaller scale bespoke dredging of small boat facilities was completed in October 2020. Full survey data of the Rivers Lynher and Tamar have been submitted to the UKHO for inclusion on the Admiralty charts.



MOORINGS – The number of moorings and marina berths within the DPoP remains static at approximately 3800. The availability of useable waterspace and proximity to slipways, combined with lack of shoreside infrastructure, especially parking, and environmental pressures will preclude further significant expansion. All mooring areas are licensed by QHM and checks are ongoing to ensure compliance with the licence conditions. Trials are underway in conjunction with Natural England to test the viability of helical screw piles as replacement

for traditional weighted sinkers in sensitive areas with the aim of reducing the impact on the seabed habitat in support of the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation.

PORT OPERATIONS

NAVIGATIONAL HAZARDS AND UNUSUAL ACTIVITY – During 2020, 73 Local Notices to Mariners (LNTMs) were issued, 62 for information and 11 as Directions. A total of 33 Navigation Warnings (NAVWARNs) were issued during the period, the majority of which concerned unlit or out of position aids to navigation.

PILOTAGE – Plymouth’s Admiralty Pilots undertook 906 acts of pilotage during 2020. This provision is a key risk reduction measure in support of the Port’s Safety Management System. Providing round the clock cover 365 days a year, they are also available to give advice and guidance on ship handling, berthing and towage operations.

HARBOUR ROUNDS –QHM and his team are regularly afloat. The purpose of these patrols



includes monitoring water activity within the confines of the port limits, ensuring compliance with the DPoP Order, checking the shoreline interface and inspecting navigation aids. A harbour launch flying QHM’s flag and operated by Serco is used together with a Pacific 22 rigid-hulled Inflatable boat, which allows access to the shallower areas of the port. Additionally, the regular MOD police waterborne patrols assist in this role and

Admiralty Pilots report any observations back to QHM as required.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE (MDP) - The MDP Marine Unit continues to provide



security to MOD assets and RN vessels within the confines of the dockyard port. In addition to their constabulary powers, they are granted authority by QHM, through a Memorandum of Understanding, to give directions and to assist in enforcing the Dockyard Port of Plymouth Order 2020. Using a combination of launches and RIBs, they deploy a minimum of 3 vessels throughout the port at any time. Given this 24/7 presence on the water, they are frequently first on the scene to

assist mariners in distress, manage other emergency situations or immediately react to reports of dangerous activity on the water. 2020 saw the police marine unit respond to a wide variety of incidents ranging from unlit vessels and speeding offences, to assisting grounded and broken-down craft.

ENFORCEMENT – In recent years the irresponsible and dangerous use of Personal Water Craft (PWC) or jet skis by a minority of operators has been an increasing concern, particularly in periods of warm weather. During 2020, a successful prosecution for speeding was brought by the Cattewater Harbour Commissioners against a speeding PWC owner which resulted in a considerable fine. To reduce and deter irresponsible and dangerous PWC use, regular media messages are published and the TECF has published a guide for the use of PWC. As well as regular MDP patrols, QHM is also working with Devon and Cornwall police and Plymouth City Council to maintain a data base of PWC reports. Working closely with PCC allows Anti-Social Behaviour Instructions to be handed to offenders without the need for the higher evidential requirements of a formal prosecution. To aid education for PWC users as well as assist enforcement in cases of irresponsible PWC use, a PWC Registration Scheme will be active for 2021.

INCIDENT SUMMARY

Incidents within the Dockyard Port of Plymouth in 2020 were as follows:

93 Reported Incidents/Near Misses:		Capsizing	0
		Contact	7
Fire/explosion	2	Equipment Failure	3
Collision	2	Other	11
Grounding	6	Near Miss	43
Pollution	21		
Striking	5		



These 93 incidents, of which 43 were reported as near misses, should be seen against the context of over 30,000 moves within the port during the year.

All incidents were investigated in compliance with the PMSC. Recommendations and conclusions were forwarded to the organisations and personnel concerned and, where applicable, to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) or Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB). No incidents reported during the period were classified more severe than a “Marine Incident”.

All incidents inform the HAZMAN port risk management system; for 2020, the top 10 ranked hazards for the port were as follows:

Rank No	Hazard Title
01	Vessel contact with breakwater
02	Grounding of warship in port approaches and north of breakwater
03	Collision involving non-seagoing (charter) passenger vessel
04	Collision involving small military vessel
05	Recreational / fishing / Chartered Passenger vessel in contact with ship moored or anchored
06	Rogue Vessel
07	Seagoing passenger ship grounding in port approach /north of breakwater
08	FV / charter passenger vessel / non-seagoing passenger vessel contact berthing
09	Recreational vessel grounding
10	Two recreational vessels in collision

All hazards scores were assessed to be As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP) or less.

OIL POLLUTION CONTROL - During this reporting period, 21 oil spills were reported. All were small scale requiring minor clean up operations. Of the reported spills, 11 were MOD related and the remainder from commercial craft and spills in marinas, etc. As required, QHM deployed appropriate equipment and personnel to respond to these spills.

A periodic review of the Tamar Estuaries Oil Spill Plan was completed 2019 and Issue 7 of the plan was published in January 2020. A Tier 2 Oil Spill Response Exercise is exercised every two years within the Dockyard Port. Most recently, Associated British Ports, supported by QHM, led a Tier 2 spill exercise, which included deployment of a boom across the entrance to Millbay, in November 2019. Full equipment deployment checks have been conducted throughout the year to demonstrate the effectiveness of Tier 1 & 2 equipment. The next Tier 2 oil spill response exercise is planned for late 2021 and will be led by Sutton Harbour supported by Cattewater Harbour.

MARITIME EMERGENCY AND CONTINGENCY PLAN - "SOUND OFF", the Port's maritime emergency and contingency plan currently at version 4 was subject to a successful live exercise (Ex Sound Move) in November 2018. The exercise programme normally runs on a 3 yearly cycle (1-Call out check, 2-Table Top,3-Livex) but has been been delayed by COVID restrictions however, it is hoped to restart the programme with a "Table Top" exercise and plan validation (postponed from November 2020) during the Summer of 2021, which will put the exercise cycle back on track.

VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE (VTS) – Despite COVID-19 restrictions, a safe and effective VTS has been provided throughout the year from the two Port Control Stations. Any reduction in the service has been notified to port users via PLNTM. An independent review of the current and future provision of VTMS for the Dockyard Port concluded that the VTS policy and procedures are robust and comprehensive and the risks to navigation are As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP). The report also identified that the radar suite did not fully meet the latest IALA guidelines, resulting in the suspension of a full Navigation Assistance Service. During 2020 a comprehensive upgrade to all VTS equipment (including radars, radios and CCTV) to ensure IALA compliance has been ongoing and is now nearing completion, with a planned in service date of June 2021.

LOCAL EVENTS – The effect of COVID-19 restrictions on the planned waterborne events for 2020 was considerable, resulting in the cancellation of such major events as Armed Forces Day, the National Fireworks Championships and many of the Mayflower 400 events. Looking forward to 2021, as the lockdown relaxes, a number of events are planned for the Summer and Autumn including Sail GP races, Mayflower 401 and a Military Muster, in place of Armed Forces Day.

NAVAL ACTIVITY

FOREIGN VISITORS – Notwithstanding the pandemic, Plymouth Naval Base continued to play host to a number of overseas vessels during the year including a variety of warships, auxiliaries and submarines from foreign/NATO navies, the majority of which were undergoing operational sea training.



NUCLEAR VISITS – Nuclear Powered submarines continue to operate from the port even though the remaining Trafalgar Class submarines have rebased to the Clyde. Devonport will continue host submarine visits as required and will continue to refit, maintain and support nuclear submarines for the foreseeable future.



MARINE SERVICES CRAFT FOR THE PORT – Serco Ltd continued to provide the Marine Services, including provision of tugs and personnel transfer by boat, for the Naval Base. They conducted more than 30,000 moves within the port in 2020.



Harbour Safety Plan 2020 – Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Performance Indicator	Requirements/Remarks	Actual Achievement during 2020
1. Incident Reporting	All reported incidents and near misses to be noted on the MarNis database. 80% of incidents to be investigated and closed out within 2 months of report.	95% of all incidents closed out within 2 months of report. Some major incidents remain open longer owing to major investigations being undertaken by MAIB, HSE or the MoD's equivalent bodies.
2. Port Risk Assessments	All Port Risk Assessments to be reviewed annually.	All Port Risks reviewed June/December 2020
3. Maritime Emergency and Contingency Plan (SOUND OFF) Exercise Cycle.	<p>"Sound Off" to be regularly exercised in a 3 yearly cycle:</p> <p>Year 1 – Cascade Call Out contacts check.</p> <p>Year 2 – Table top exercise, including validation of Sound Off Plan</p> <p>Year 3 – Live Exercise</p>	<p>Livex completed 2018.</p> <p>Cascade call check completed 2019.</p> <p>Table Top exercise(Sound Move series) postponed to Summer 2021 owing to COVID-19 restrictions.</p>
4. Tier 2 Oil Spill Response Plan(OSRP)	To be updated at least every 5 years	Tamar Estuaries OSRP – Issue 7 published January 2020
5. Tier 2 Oil Spill Response(OSR) Exercise	To be exercised every 2 years, led in turn, by one of the Plymouth SHAs.	Successful Tier 2 OSR exercise, led by ABP Millbay and supported by QHM completed November 2019.