

## The History of NCI St Ives QAVS



Situated on the northern side of the town of St Ives, the Island promontory is an exposed headland with virtually uninterrupted views across the St Ives Bay. From here one can see the western approaches to St Ives, beyond Clodgy Point and as far north as Trevoise Head, near Padstow, some 26 miles away. The promontory was originally named Pendinas meaning 'the fortified headland' and for centuries it played an important role in local defence. There are parish

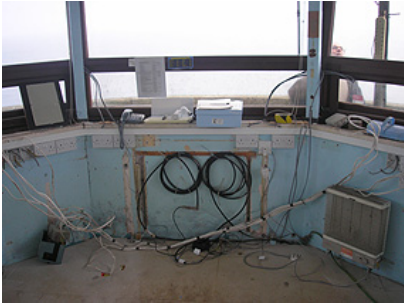
records of the site being fortified in 1638 and it was stated that at one time up to 15 guns were present. The granite battery walls to the south of the lookout were erected in 1860 against a possible French invasion by Napoleon III. These additional fortifications show clear evidence of three large cannon positions together with supporting armouries. The cottage to the south was originally the barracks for the battery. The guns were dismantled in 1895, and St Nicholas Chapel to the south west of the battery, which had been used as a store, was demolished soon after. It was later rebuilt and re-opened in 1911.

At the north east end of the island promontory is Lamp Rock, the site of the current NCI St Ives Station. The name is derived from the tall pole, fitted with a lantern, that was installed there as an aid to local seamen, sailing at night into Porthgwidden Cove, adjacent to the east of the Island, which was then the main landing place for St Ives.

In 1908, HM Coastguard built an enclosed lookout station within the site of the abandoned battery. This was operated continuously until 1994 when most visual watch stations around the country were closed. The building remained unoccupied until 1999 when the National Coastwatch Institution leased the site from the local council and reopened the station to provide a visual watch. The station was equipped with public support, and now maintains a watch seven days a week in order to safeguard the lives of sea and coastal users.



In 2001, St Ives had over was awarded Declared Facility Status and had forty fully trained, volunteer watchkeepers, from all walks of life, operating the Station during normal working hours, while maintaining an emergency team on standby, 24 hours every day.



The founder members of NCI St Ives had originally furnished the abandoned building with second-hand kitchen cupboards and had managed to equip it thanks to contributions from the public and the volunteers themselves. But after thirteen years, this equipment was beginning to deteriorate. After several years of fundraising by the members and generous donations by the public and commercial sponsors, it was possible to replace those original fittings. At the same time the opportunity was taken to re-wire the station to modern day specifications and to decorate the lookout both internally and externally.



By 2019, the station roof at NCI St Ives had deteriorated and needed replacing but raising the funds for the project and the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic delayed the project for over a year. St Ives Fundraising Officer,

Trevor Peake, applied for a contribution towards the cost and was delighted when the Morrisons Foundation offered to fund the entire project May 2021. "We were absolutely astounded when they came back saying they would donate the full cost," said NCI St Ives Station Manager Helen Simpson.

"Over the years the building has been subject to the elements in all weathers, including the sea, and the time had come to take on some substantial repairs as the roof needs serious attention. This a wonderful and generous gesture by the Morrisons Foundation and it's so appreciated by NCI St Ives".

