

## The History of NCI Whitstable

NCI Whitstable was set up in spring 2002 with Eddie Baker as Committee Chairman. It was formed by a group of 6-7 watchkeepers from NCI Herne Bay.

In August 2002 Roy Brook replaced Eddie Baker as Chairman. By the end of 2002 Chris Laws had persuaded Canterbury City Council to lend NCI Whitstable a beach hut at the western end of Tankerton Slopes (near the beacon).

VHF radio training commenced in 2003, but in spring 2004 Canterbury City Council reclaimed the beach hut. Subsequently the Station operated on Sundays only from a mobile caravan on the grass at Priest and Sow Corner (at the eastern end of Tankerton Slopes near the present Sea View cafe). Roy Brook left NCI Whitstable in September 2004. The late Mike Hancock took over as Station Manager at this time.

NCI Whitstable then raised £3000 to purchase its own, purpose-built look-out (the current one) which it has occupied since September 2006. At the same time, it commenced operating Saturday and Sunday watches.

Mike Hancock retired as Station Manager in December 2006. The new Station Manager was, briefly, Denis Kemp, who was forced to retire after 3 months owing to ill health. Clive Austin stood in as Station Manager for a further 3 months before leaving the NCI.

Julie Skinner took over as Station Manager in June 2007 and continued in office until standing down in January 2012. During her period in office, the watch cover was increased to include Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays.

Chris Brown was elected Station Manager at an Extraordinary General Meeting in January 2012. He set in place a programme to raise equipment and performance levels to DFS standards, to seek improved accommodation and relations with NCI Herne Bay.



Largely as a result of efforts by former watch-keeper Robert Knibbs, two £1000 donations were received from the wind-farm operators Vattenfall and London Array. These were presented at a ceremony on 6th June 2012. £250 from each donation was given to NCI Herne Bay.

Former Station Manager and long-time Deputy Station Manager Eddie Baker was presented with a 15 year long-service certificate (covering service with Whitstable and Herne Bay) by trustee Nick Barham on June 13 2012, and resigned shortly thereafter.

During 2014 and 2015 an extensive programme of improvements works was carried out which included new windows and door and new furniture.



The refurbished Lookout

Chris Brown stood down as Station Manager in October 2015 after three successful years in charge. Steve Ware became the Station Manager.



Steve Ware

In 2018 Steve Ware stood down and John Frost, his deputy, took over having been with Whitstable NCI since 2010