

## DOCKYARD PORT OF PLYMOUTH

### ANNUAL REPORT 2022

**Brigadier Mike Tanner, OBE, ADC, Naval Base Commander, Devonport**

#### Foreword

For the first time in years, 2022 saw some changes at KHM Plymouth. First and foremost, the organisation commenced the year as the Queen's Harbour Master Authority, with a title change to King's Harbour Master Authority (KHM) on 8 Sep 22, on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and the accession to the throne of King Charles III. There have also been personnel changes. This is my first Annual Report as NBC – I assumed the role, and that of Port Duty Holder in July 22. Further to this, Rob Giles became Queen's Harbour Master (QHM) on promotion from Deputy Queen's Harbour Master (DQHM) on 5 Aug 22, taking over from Carl Necker at the end of 11 years at the helm. I wish to formally thank Carl for his service in the role, and for handing over the Authority in such good heart. Winding the clock back a little further, at the end of 2021 Neil Trathen stood down as DQHM, following his 15 cumulative years in this role. Carl and Neil performed an excellent double act and can be proud of the exemplary safety record they achieved – my heartfelt thanks to them.

Both of these key figures departing in a relatively short space of time may give some concern over loss of corporate safety knowledge, but I am reassured that Rob has been a successful Harbour Master previously in a different port for 5 years, and has been working in a military marine safety environment for most of his career. He is joined by the new Deputy King's Harbour Master, Andy Jones, of maritime background and a qualified Harbour Master, who has 8 years experience with KHM in safety related activity prior to his promotion. Rob and Andy, alongside the experienced members of their Senior Management Team, are well placed to pick up the safety mantle and take the Authority forward.

This has been a good year for port safety, and I look forward to the new management team taking the Authority forward in 2023.

As Port Duty Holder, I commend this report to you.



M Tanner, OBE, ADC  
Brigadier Royal Marines  
Naval Base Commander (Devonport)  
Port Duty Holder



## Robert Giles, King's Harbour Master Plymouth

### Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to introduce my first Annual Report for the Dockyard Port of Plymouth. Although in post as KHM for the final 5 months of the year, I have closely monitored port safety for the whole year, either from the viewpoint of Deputy, or as KHM. Whilst there is a new KHM / DKHM team, DKHM and I are most excellently supported by experienced members of the Senior Management Team, such as the Chief Admiralty Pilot (Alan Clements), and the Vessel Traffic Service and Movements Manager (Tim Faull). For those wishing to read KHM documentation, the change from QHM to KHM causes no safety concern for the harbour. It will nevertheless mean that the old title of 'QHM' in lieu of KHM appears until all relevant documentation and signage go through periodic review. Seeing QHM on a document does not mean that the document is out of date, and the abbreviation KHM should be inferred in its place.

The year has seen port usage numbers return to near pre-pandemic levels, for which we were prepared. The aim has been to manage port activity returning to these levels as safely as possible, whilst prioritising the port for military use. This has been managed with no significant avoidable incidents, which is to the credit of all Authority sub-teams: be it in port operations, pilotage, conservancy or support activity.

Commercial activity has flourished, furnished by the Cattewater Harbour Commissioners. The port continues to thrive and KHM remains committed to supporting this activity alongside military use, including the 600 ferry sailings this year from Millbay to continental Europe. There have been many leisure activities and events in the year, including the return of the National Fireworks Competition, and Sail GP – a globally televised sailing event encompassing the whole of Plymouth Sound. Both events required significant planning and teamwork in execution and were delivered safely, to the credit of all agencies involved.

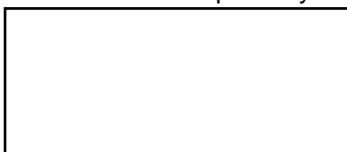
Contained in this Annual Report is a Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) required set of statistics of usage of the port, with incident data with accompanying analysis. There is also a brief review of management and operational activities of significance that contribute to overall port safety.

In support of running a safe port, activity has continued apace in port conservancy. There have been 3 formal surveys of the port, and the dredging programme remains sufficient to keep the port navigable by all vessels that choose to use it. I continue to support environmental issues by Chairing the Tamar Estuaries Consultative forum, preserving the Marine Protected Area, and am soon to renew the Tamar Estuaries Management Plan.

Looking forward to 2023, I intend to build on the good start already made by the new team: we intend to continue to deliver port operations that are as safe as possible – communication with the other Plymouth harbours through the Harbour Authorities Liaison Committee, including risk review, is essential to this. Port risks and incidents will continue to be delivered to the Port Duty Holder, and finally I look forward to attempting to gain an improved audit result by our Designated Person at the end of 2023, following observations of some administrative shortfalls in 2022.

There is more detail of specific harbour activity contained within the main body of this report, which I thank the contributors for producing.

I commend this report to you.



Robert Giles  
King's Harbour Master  
Dockyard Port of Plymouth



## 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 2022, KHM's Department successfully delivered on all the commitments set out in KHM'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 KHM web site: <https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/khm/plymouth>. This website also hosts, or directs to, 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 KHM Plymouth. The application of the SEMS is the responsibility of the King's Harbour Master through the Delegated Port Duty Holder (Naval Base Commander).

## COMPLIANCE UPDATE

- As a reminder, the Dockyard Port of Plymouth Order (1999) was replaced by the Dockyard Port of Plymouth Order (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.
  - 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 standing Plymouth Local Notice to Mariners 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 maneuvering 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 for vessels over 20m in length.
- Plymouth Notices to Mariners have been published throughout 2022, each are specifically annotated as Directions or Information notices.
- All incidents and reported near misses are reviewed by KHM 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 military port/harbour facilities.
- The SEMS is regularly reviewed with amendments to all port risks being generated through periodic risk reviews in June and December each year.
- The risk database (HAZMAN II) was reviewed in its entirety during 2022 and all hazards audited for validity and application of appropriate mitigation measures.

## CONSULTATIVE BUSINESS

**CONSULTATION AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION** – KHM continues to consult and share information with a wide variety of authorities, organisations and groups 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:

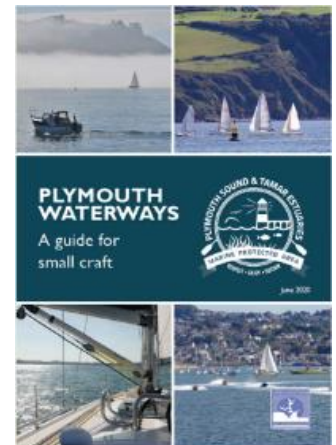
**THE HARBOUR AUTHORITIES' LIAISON COMMITTEE (HALC)** – The HALC consists of KHM and the Harbour Masters of Cattewater Harbour, Millbay Docks and Sutton Harbour. The Plymouth City Council Pier Master is also a member of the group. This forum brings together regulatory stakeholders to promote the delivery of integrated safety management for the DPoP. A key function of the HALC is to annually review all the hazards within the HAZMAN II 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 Plymouth Sound and Tamar Estuaries Marine Protected Area (MPA). It has developed and oversees the Tamar Estuaries Management Plan (currently under review) 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 contains far-reaching

measures of which the Marine Management Organisation competent organisation, these include marine planning guidelines and permissions, new structures for managing fisheries and the continued work on the network of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). A great deal of work was done to produce a comprehensive management plan for the period 2013-2018, and its extension document 2019-2020, these documents are now undergoing extensive review to incorporate updated legislation, new structures for managing fisheries and Natural England's European Marine Site Risk Review. A rolling biennial tactical level action plan has been developed to detail how TECF members are achieving strategic outcomes. Recent achievements 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: <http://www.plymouth-mpa.uk/>

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 KHM) is highly regarded and will remain unchanged, PCC consultants are looking for ways to further expand education, engagement and commercial opportunities.



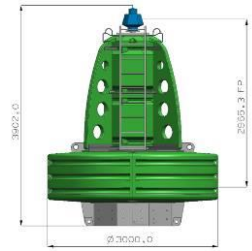
## CONSERVANCY



**BUOYAGE** – The Port Control Stations continuously monitor the position and operation of all navigation buoys within the DPoP. This is augmented with reports from KHM 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 KHM, SERCO is undertaking a rolling replacement and upgrade programme aligned with the planned maintenance schedule. 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 is underway. The upgraded lights and buoys conform to International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) standards.



### LOCAL AIDS TO NAVIGATION REPORTING SYSTEM (LARS) previously PANAR

– All the Dockyard Port navigation buoys and beacons are monitored for availability and the results inputted into LARS. LARS is operated by Trinity House to assist KHM, 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 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 March 2022. The next campaign is expected in February 2023 with the inclusion of dredging the large Class 1 mooring D buoy in Plymouth Sound.



**MOORINGS** – The number of moorings and marina berths within the DPoP remains static at approximately 3800. The availability of useable water space 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 KHM, 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.

**SEAGRASS** – KHM's Port Conservancy Officer is assisting The Ocean Conservation Trust and Natural England in reintroducing Seagrass to Jennycliff bay, Plymouth Sound. Up to four hectares will be planted and monitored. A 'Voluntary No Anchor Zone' has been put in place to protect the seagrass whilst it establishes.

## PORT OPERATIONS

**NAVIGATIONAL HAZARDS AND UNUSUAL ACTIVITY** – During 2022, 57 Local Notices to Mariners (LNTMs) were issued, 37 for information and 20 as Directions. A total of 38 Navigation Warnings (NAVWARNs) were issued during the period, the majority of which concerned unlit or out of position aids to navigation.

**PILOTAGE** – KHM's Admiralty Pilots undertook 1000 acts of pilotage during 2022. 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** – KHM 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 KHM'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 and Admiralty Pilots act as an excellent interface with regular port users and regularly report feedback to KHM.



### **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 KHM, 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. 2022 saw the MDP respond to a wide

variety of incidents ranging from unlit vessels and speeding offences, to assisting grounded and broken-down craft, particularly where danger to life or navigational safety are concerned.

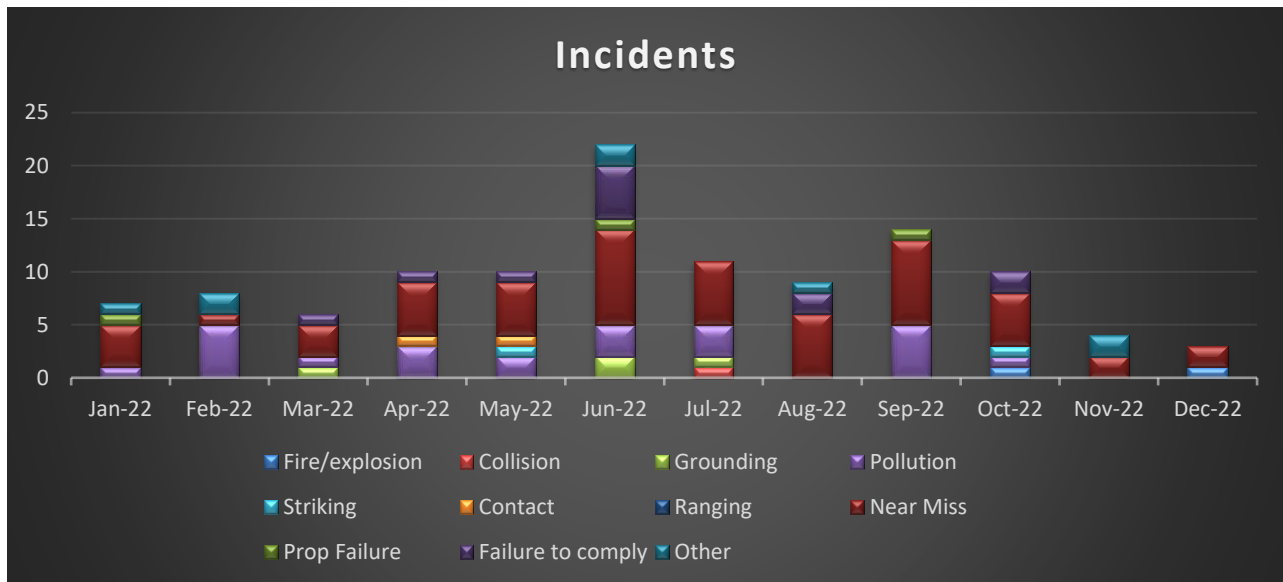
**ENFORCEMENT** – In recent years the irresponsible and dangerous use of Personal Water Craft (PWC), frequently known as jet skis, by a minority of operators has been an increasing concern, particularly in periods of warm weather. During 2022, further successful prosecutions for speeding and failing to comply with the Port Order were brought by the MDP and the Cattewater Harbour Commissioners resulting in considerable fines for the offenders. To advise responsible recreational water users and reduce and deter irresponsible and dangerous PWC use, regular media messages are circulated and the HALC has published a guide for the use of PWC. As well as regular MDP patrols, KHM 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 the MDP to hand Anti-Social Behaviour Instructions 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 has been set up, detail are at: [PLNTM 005 Personal Watercraft Registration Information](#).

## INCIDENT SUMMARY

Incidents within the Dockyard Port of Plymouth in 2022 were as follows:

102 Reported Incidents/Near Misses:

Fire/explosion	2	Capsizing	0
Collision	1	Contact	2
Grounding	4	Equipment Failure	3
Pollution	24	Other	8
Striking	2	Near Miss	56



These 102 incidents, of which 56 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), Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) and Defence Accident Investigation Branch (DAIB). No incidents reported during the period were classified more severe than a "Marine Incident".

All incidents inform the HAZMAN II port risk management system; for 2022, the top 10 ranked hazards for the port were as follows:

Rank No	Hazard Title
01	Collision with Torpoint Ferry
02	Vessel grounding / collision with breakwater / Mountbatten breakwater
03	Vessel fire when underway i.e., not alongside
04	Collision involving non-seagoing (charter) passenger vessel
05	Grounding of warship or auxiliary in port approaches and north of breakwater
06	Collision involving small military vessel
07	Vessel drags anchor
08	Non seagoing (charter) passenger vessel in contact with buoy in harbour
09	Two recreational vessels in collision
10	Small military / harbour support vessel loses stability during ship / barge handling operations

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

**OIL POLLUTION CONTROL** - During this reporting period, 25 (up from 16 in 2021) oil spills were reported. All were small scale requiring minor clean-up operations. Of the reported spills, 17 were MOD related and the remainder from commercial craft and spills in marinas, etc. KHM deployed appropriate equipment and personnel to respond to these spills as required. KHM is actively seeking a dramatic reduction in pollution incidents, through positive communication with appropriate bodies.

The Tamar Estuaries Oil Spill Plan was reissued as Issue 7.2 in February 2023. A Tier 2 (medium sized spill) Oil Spill Response is exercised every two years within the DPoP. Full equipment deployment checks have been conducted throughout the year to demonstrate the effectiveness of Tier 1 & 2 equipment (including a successful International Spill Accreditation Scheme Audit of SERCO as the T2 Responder).

**MARITIME EMERGENCY AND CONTINGENCY PLAN** - "SOUND OFF", the Port's maritime emergency and contingency plan was subject to a successful "Table Top" exercise/discussion (Ex Sound Move) in October 2021. Notwithstanding delays owing to COVID restrictions, the exercise featured 2 scenarios involving both large and small passenger ferries, with a good attendance from key stakeholders. The exercise also validated version 5 of the SOUND OFF plan. A 'Tabletop' exercise to test command and control is planned for October 2023.

**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. A full upgrade the VTS hardware including radars, CCTV and communications suite is now complete. The system now meets the latest International Association of marine aids to navigation and Lighthouse Authority (IALA) guidelines.

**LOCAL EVENTS** – The popularity of the natural amphitheatre of Plymouth Sound as a venue for waterborne events has returned post Covid. A full range of events were held in 2022 ranging from local sailing regattas, gig rowing regattas, breakwater swimming challenges, National Fireworks Championships and the international event of SailGP. All events passed without incident following careful planning, review of the appropriate risk assessments and the imposition of proportional safety measures such as traffic restrictions to ensure the safety of both participants, spectators and other water users.





## NAVAL ACTIVITY

**INTERNATIONAL 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 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 25,000 moves within the port in 2022.



## Harbour Safety Plan 2022 – Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Performance Indicator	Requirements/Remarks	Actual Achievement during 2022
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 may 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 2022
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 contact information 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) completed Oct 2021, after postponement during 2020 owing to COVID restrictions.</p> <p>Next exercise scheduled to be Table Top exercise in Oct 2023, and a LIVEX Nov 24.</p>
4. Tier 2 Oil Spill Response Plan (OSRP)	To be updated at least every 5 years	Tamar Estuaries OSRP – Issue 7.2 published February 2023.
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 Sutton Harbour and supported by Cattewater Harbour Commissioners completed November 2021.