Buckler’s Hard Deputy Harbour Master and Yacht Harbour team develop new emergency ladders

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Author:

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Rescue safety at top of the agenda for Buckler’s Hard…

Just down the road from Beaulieu (and linked with it), is the fascinating and historically important riverside village of Buckler’s Hard, tranquil today but vital to this country’s

shipbuilding in years gone by. The village and the Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour are well worth seeing, but of course both are adjacent to water and safety is vitally important…

Kim says, "I realise that this is not a motoring-related story as such, but Buckler's Hard is geographically close to, and related to, Beaulieu, and for visitors to this motoring attraction it is well worth taking time to drive the few miles further to visit Buckler's Hard, where rescue safety in the Yacht Harbour has just been improved."

The Buckler's Hard team tells us:

(Photograph and all words from Buckler's Hard).

Deputy Harbour Master Adam Lewis has worked with the Beaulieu River team to create a new design of safety ladder which make rescues from the water even safer.

After reviewing incidents, procedures and equipment, the river team felt that while the provision of emergency ladders at Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour exceeded guidelines, improvements could be made to make rescues easier.

Adam Lewis explains: "If someone falls in the water, the panic which can follow means that both the person in the water and their friends or partners can struggle to locate installed emergency ladders easily.

"So what we wanted to create was a mobile ladder which we could attach anywhere in the marina and is available for anyone to use. I also wanted to make it long enough so they could stand on the bottom rung, without having to bend their legs which makes it as easy as possible to climb out of the water."

He added: "Experience has shown that entering cold water has a debilitating effect on strength and flexibility. Combine this with an inflated life jacket and it becomes a real struggle to climb some ladders, where you have to get your foot up on to a ladder rung 50cm below the surface of the water.

What we made in the end was a 2 metre long, lightweight ladder which has an additional ribbed stainless steel flat bar on the top to allow it to be hooked over a cleat on a pontoon, so you are never more than 4 metres from where we can put the ladder. It is also slightly angled when hooked on to a cleat, making it easier to climb."

The new style of emergency ladder has also been fitted with a buoyant Man Over Board sling, which can be clipped around the casualty to keep them safe if a member of staff needs to call for help or alert emergency services.

Two new-style emergency ladders have been placed on the visitors' pontoon at Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour, as well as at the bottom of the gangway leading to the marina. Members of staff can now take them with them, while answering any calls for assistance.

Adam added: "We have tried and tested our new style of ladders and they are proving very successful. Casualties can climb the ladders with no difficulty and we can get them out of the water in a short space of time."

Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour was recently ranked as one of the UK's best marinas by being placed in the top 5% of 5 Gold Anchors winners by The Yacht Harbour Association. The Beaulieu River marina was the first to be assessed under a new scoring system and received an outstanding 95.06%.

It was also voted the best place for sailors to call home when it won the prestigious Marina of the Year title in British Yachting's awards in 2022.

A £2m redevelopment of the boatshed is providing new opportunities for marine-based businesses to relocate to one of the most desirable marinas on the south coast. Planned upgrades will provide new waterfront offices, workshop units and the use of meeting rooms which will be available to rent from spring 2025.

Notes of interest are now being taken and preference will be given to tenants who provide value-added services for owners of boats on the marina's 200 fully-serviced walk-ashore

pontoon berths and 300 river moorings.

For more information about the available space to let, visit www.beaulieuriver.co.uk/boatyard-redevelopment or contact the Harbour Master at wendy.stowe@beaulieu.co.uk.

To find out more or check the latest availability for berths and moorings, visit the website at www.beaulieuriver.co.uk, email harbour.office@beaulieu.co.uk or call 01590 616200. Follow the latest news on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn /beaulieuriver.