



29 June 2009

UKHO CELEBRATES ARMED FORCES DAY



PICTURE CAPTION: UK National Hydrographer, Rear Admiral Ian Moncrieff, is pictured inspecting the Guard of Honour staged by the Sea Cadets of TS Roebuck at the UKHO event.

The United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) showed our support for Britain's Armed Forces by holding a family open day and charity event on Saturday (27 June).

The event, which was organised by a group of staff volunteers, included a range of displays and activities to put the spotlight on the work of UKHO and the Armed Forces.

It was one of many held up and down the country as part of an inaugural Armed Forces Day to give the nation the opportunity to show their support for all service men and women.

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UKHO, which is part of the Ministry of Defence, opened up our Admiralty Way site in Taunton to staff and their relatives for a day of fun packed and informative activities.

Sea Cadets from TS Roebuck, which is based at UKHO, started the proceedings with a Guard of Honour before being inspected by UK National Hydrographer, Rear Admiral Ian Moncrieff. Rear Admiral Moncrieff went on to officially open the cadets' new headquarters, which has been moved out of a storage area in the oldest building to roomier accommodation at the centre of UKHO. The cadets and their staff are delighted with it.

Several parts of the UKHO laid on practical demonstrations to give visitors an inside view of the range of activities and teamwork that goes into delivering our paper and digital nautical charts and publications. These included our famous archives, seeing the printing of charts and publications being produced on the shift that day, a demonstration of paper chart compilation from the UK regional team and our sea bed data and practical displays of Electronic Chart & Information Display Systems with our new digital chart service – Admiralty Vector Chart Service (AVCS) .

We were also hugely grateful to our colleagues in the Fleet Air Arm from YEOVILTON and the Royal Marines from TAUNTON also gave up their day to join us. The exhibitions by 40 Commando gave visitors the opportunity to handle standard Royal Marines kit and equipment – including guns - and to test their stamina on their climbing wall. The Fleet Air Arm brought a Lynx Mark 3 helicopter, which is based at RNAS Yeovilton when not embarked on board HMS ENDURANCE. As the photo below shows, many youngsters ...and some not so young,... enjoyed the chance, to climb in the cockpit and have their photo taken at the controls and to chat with the aircrew.

Fundraising throughout the day on site raised money for UKHO's local charity of the year, Open Door, with raffles, lucky dips, craft stalls, an auction and a quiz.

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PICTURE CAPTION: Lt Matt Nelson from Yeovilton shows Ashley Hodge the Lynx Mk 3 helicopter. Photo courtesy of the Somerset County Gazette.

Rear Admiral Moncrieff said: “I am delighted UKHO played its full part in the inaugural Armed Forces Day. This event not only gave us an opportunity to honour the UK Armed Forces, but to highlight the role we play in supporting our defence colleagues, and to raise some money for Open Door. This was three laudable objectives delivered while also giving our families a fun and informative day on what was a gloriously sunny Saturday...arguably better than a day at Glastonbury Festival for us!”

Liz Stocker, part of the organising committee, said: “Our Family and Armed Forces Day was a huge team effort and I’d like to thank all my colleagues who helped make it happen and all those who supported it on the day.

“We have yet to finalise the total amount raised but we are confident it will be a big boost to our fundraising efforts for Open Door.”

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Notes for Editors

1. The UKHO, which is part of the Ministry of Defence, has been charting the world's oceans for more than 200 years with the primary aim of providing navigational services for the Royal Navy and merchant mariners to save and protect lives at sea. In addition it also serves the small craft and leisure mariners and provides a range of consultancy services.
2. The UKHO produces a worldwide series of some 3,300 paper nautical charts and 160 publications under the Admiralty brand and has a growing portfolio of Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs). These charts are sold globally and used by nearly 70 per cent of international shipping.
3. The UKHO is a Trading Fund which means it is a government agency owned by the MoD with the freedom to trade commercially to generate revenue and cover running costs.
4. The UKHO also plays a central role, in support of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, in discharging the navigation element of the UK's Safety of Life at Sea Treaty obligations for waters of UK national responsibility.