

THE LIFEBOAT

THE JOURNAL OF THE RNLI



Volume XLIV Number 452 Summer 1975

25p

'AIRFLOW' COAT JACKET & LIGHTWEIGHT JACKETS ARE WATERPROOF OUTER CLOTHING FREE FROM CONDENSATION

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Bill Boddy in 'Motor Sport'

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*Letter of 28 February 1974
from Assistant Superintendent (Stores)
Royal National Life-boat Institution*

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*Extracts from Report on
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by Bill March, a very
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Mountain Guide*

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Verglas in 'Motoring News'

... to Lapland for the Tunturalli, protected from the icy effect of the Arctic cold by garments made in Manchester by Functional ... snug and warm in temperatures often as low as minus 40°C

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CLOTHING FOR ACTION FIT FOR FUNCTION WARM IN WINTER COOL IN SUMM



THE LIFEBOAT

Summer 1975

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Number 452

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COVER PICTURE

Coxswain Albert Bird (right) and Motor Mechanic Ian Jack of Aberdeen were awarded silver medals for gallantry (see page 11) for the rescue on April 13, 1974, of the crew of 12 from the trawler *Netta Croan* which was on fire and circling out of control at over 9 knots. The photograph was taken by Margaret Murray.

All editorial material submitted for consideration with a view to publication in the journal should be addressed to the Editor, THE LIFEBOAT, Royal National Life-Boat Institution, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ (Telephone Poole 71133). Photographs intended for return should be accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope.

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The next issue of THE LIFEBOAT will appear in October and news items should be sent by the end of July.

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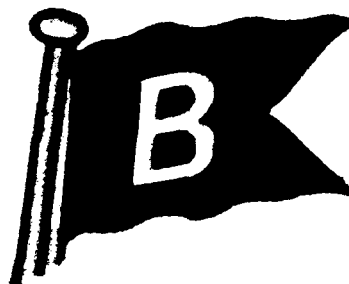
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NOTES OF THE QUARTER

by the Editor

THE PRESENTATION of no fewer than 23 medals for gallantry, an exceptionally high number for any one year, provided the central feature of this year's annual general meeting and served as a reminder to the large number of supporters present of the complexity of the task of lifesaving at sea. Among the feats of skill and courage described were the action of the Hastings doctor, Peter Davy, who broke seven ribs while being lifted into a helicopter from the lifeboat and carried on with helping the injured; the outstanding seamanship showed by the Clovelly staff coxswain, Stafford Houchen, who had to bring the 70' lifeboat alongside a trawler three times in a violent storm force wind; and the rescue by the Tynemouth inshore lifeboat in a gale force wind when she was in imminent danger of being driven under a tug whose crew she rescued.

Silver medals were presented to the Aberdeen and Dungeness coxswains, Albert Bird and T. R. 'Ben' Tart. The two stations are linked in a remarkable way. One of the greatest rescues in the history of the Dungeness station was from the motor vessel *Teeswood* in 1956. One of *Teeswood's* crew was the present Aberdeen coxswain, Albert Bird, and it was his experience on that day which was largely responsible for making him volunteer for lifeboat service.

Exploits of the Young

Ways in which teenagers and children are maintaining the RNLI's traditions were also made manifest at the annual general meeting. Jayne Edmunds, a 13-year-old girl, and Eric Jones, the 14-year-old son of the Porthdinllaen coxswain, were both presented with inscribed wristwatches for the courage, coolness and discipline they showed in lifesaving operations at sea.

Later in the meeting attention was called to the fund-raising efforts of the young when representatives of the Scout Association presented a cheque for more than £91,000, the outcome of the remarkable 'Operation Lifeboat' in which many thousands of Scouts took part. One of the first sights to catch the eye of those coming to the Royal Festival Hall for the meeting was the Atlantic 21 lifeboat produced by the efforts of Girl Guides.

Committee Lib

History was made at the annual general meeting when it was announced that two women had been voted on to the Committee of Management. This recognition of equality in a service in whose annals Grace Darling played such an important part is not perhaps as belated as it may appear. There have been women honorary secretaries of lifeboat stations, a girl coxswain of an ILB and women doctors who have gone out on service. In fund-raising, women over the years have played a much more important part than men, and for some time now women have served on the central fund-raising committee.

The two new members of the Committee of Management, Lady Norton and Mrs Georgina Keen, both have exceptional records as fund-raisers, Lady Norton as chairman of the Central London women's committee and Mrs. Keen as chairman of the Kidderminster guild.

Journal changes

Inflation has had the same disastrous effect on the cost of THE LIFEBOAT as it has had on most other contemporary activities. A detailed examination of costs and of how to save money was therefore instituted a few months ago and certain decisions have been reached. These include raising the price of the journal to those who pay for it to 25p per copy, increasing the advertising rates, using a lighter-weight paper and limiting the number of pages to 36.

The proposals were adopted after examination by the Institution's public relations committee, which includes, in addition to members of the Committee of Management, Lord Cudlipp, Raymond Baxter, Wynford Vaughan-Thomas and Bernard Hayman, editor of *Yachting World*. These distinguished public figures all, of course, give their services voluntarily, an example of the quality and range of expert advice on a wide range of subjects, including naval architecture, engineering, medicine, finance and administration, which is made freely available to the RNLI.

Variety of Support

Anyone who has been an official of the RNLI for any length of time must have been struck periodically, not only by the ingenuity and energy which its active supporters show in raising funds, but also by the extraordinary variety of

the sources from which the RNLI benefits.

On my desk recently two letters appeared which illustrate this. One was from a man in Hillingdon, Middlesex, who enclosed a donation which had come from the former chief engineer of the German battle cruiser *Scharnhorst*. At his funeral the German engineer had stipulated that no flowers were to be given but that donations might be made either to the German lifeboat service or to the RNLI.

The other letter came from the author of a book on the provision of lifeboats by freemasonry. The proceeds of his book are being split between the RNLI and the Royal Masonic Hospital, Dorking Lodge, having recently made a donation to the hospital, instructed him to send all the money received from purchases by its members to the RNLI.

'Your contribution from the sale of the book', he wrote, 'should be in excess of £1,000'.

Tax concessions

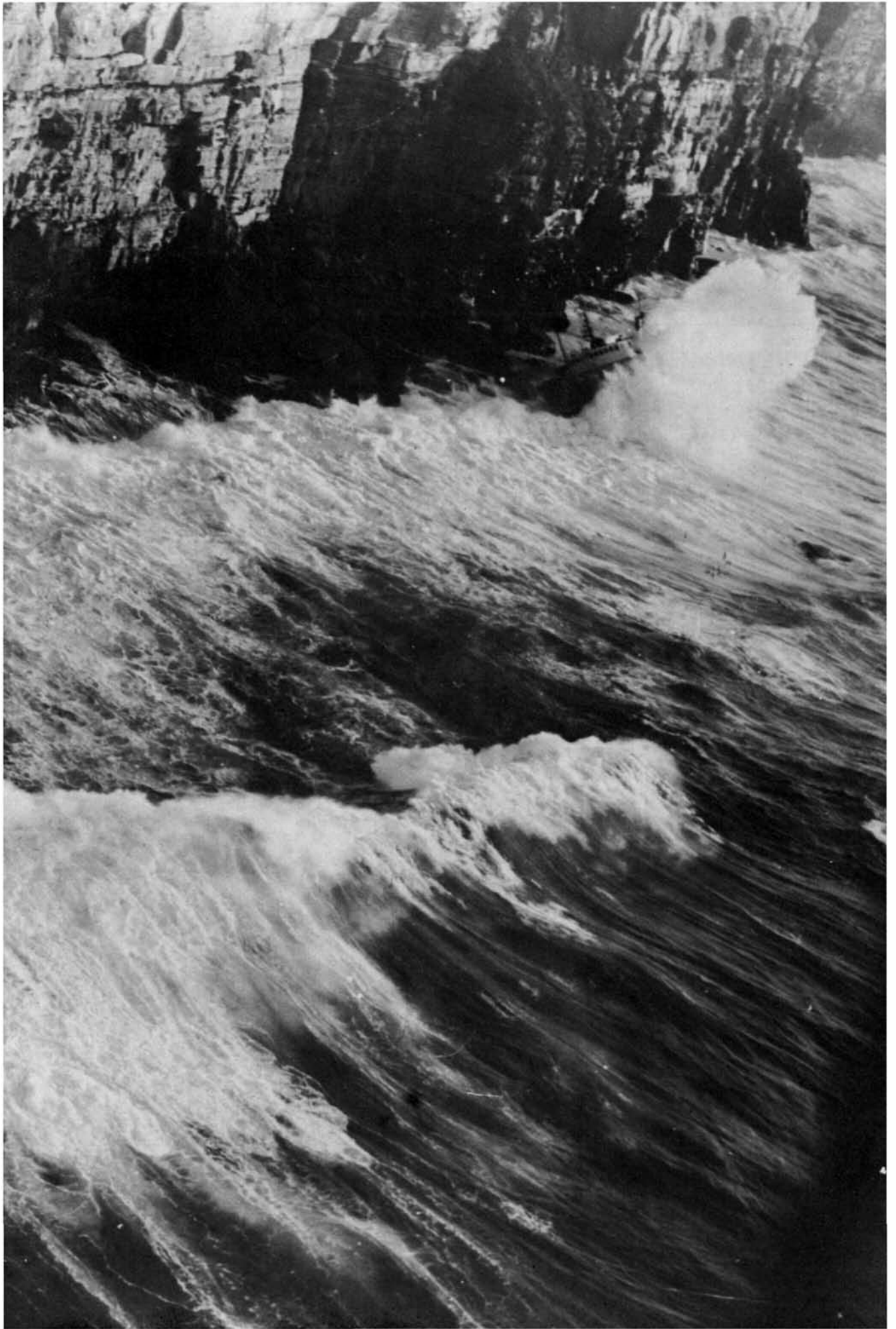
The Institution is still very dependent, in carrying out its work, on the help of those people who are able to make large gifts to the lifeboat service either during their lifetime, or in the form of legacies. Concessions to charities in the recent Finance Bill have greatly improved the position. Gifts to the Institution and other charities are now entirely free of Capital Transfer Tax except where these are made within a year before death, when they are exempt up to an accumulative sum of £100,000. Legacies are similarly free of tax for the first £100,000.

On page 23 of this issue the reader will find suggested clauses covering bequests to the Institution which may be of help to their solicitors in preparing their wills, should they wish to remember the RNLI in this way.

In the House of Lords on May 8, 1975, the Duke of Atholl in a written question asked Her Majesty's Government whether they would convey to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution the congratulations of the House on the completion of its 150th Anniversary.

Lord Beswick: Yes, my Lords. I should be delighted to convey to the RNLI on behalf of the whole House, if it agrees, our congratulations on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the Institution. I should like to add our tribute, and I am sure that of the nation, to the dedication and valour of the crews of the lifeboats, who so frequently and willingly encounter great perils and sometimes tragedy in their work of rescue of life at sea. The nation owes much to these crews and indeed their families who share with them both their trials and tribulations.

A motion in similar terms was carried in the House of Commons.



LIFEBOAT SERVICES

Scotland North Division

Cliff face helicopter lift

LONGHOPE honorary secretary was informed by the Coastguard at 2352 on December 20, 1974, that the Belgian trawler *Lans* was ashore on the north side of Tor Ness and required immediate assistance. Longhope lifeboat, 48' 6" *David and Elizabeth King and E.B.*, launched at 0015 (December 21), setting course westwards towards the casualty area.

It was two hours before high water; the wind was south-westerly force 2 with a very heavy south-westerly swell.

As the wreck position was not definite and there were nine men on board the trawler, Stromness honorary secretary was also informed at 0045 and decided to launch. At 0100 Stromness lifeboat, 52' Barnett class *Archibald and Alexander M. Paterson*, slipped her moorings and sailed for the casualty area.

Longhope lifeboat found *Lans* at 0105; she was under Berry Head, Hoy, broadside on to the sea, hard against the 600' cliff face and inside the reefs. Her radio was not working but a torch was seen to be flashing on board.

The lifeboat dropped her anchor and tried to veer down on *Lans* in the very heavy swell, but even veering right up to the heavy breakers over the reef she was still well outside breeches buoy distance. Coxswain John Leslie decided that the men on board were in no immediate peril and shortened up his anchor to wait for daylight. He asked that the Stromness lifeboat should still come as it was thought that some of the survivors might have taken to a liferaft and would have been swept north. The continuous spray made counting of the survivors on board impossible.

At 0230 Stromness lifeboat reached the area and at 0645, with the northerly stream easing, made a further attempt to veer down on *Lans* from a different angle, but she was unable to get close

Lans in the grip of the sea: as she lay aground under the cliffs of Hoy her crew of nine were lifted by helicopter to Longhope lifeboat.

enough. On attempting to lift the anchor it was found that the hydraulics were unable to lift in the heavy swell and the windlass was put into hand operation. As the lifeboat lifted on a large breaking swell the sudden weight on the anchor wire bent the windlass stopping-catch shaft, and the windlass spun back, the handle catching Crew Member James Flett and breaking his arm. At 0745 the anchor had been rehoosed and Stromness lifeboat returned to base with the injured man, as there was then no need for two lifeboats to be on the scene.

At 0815 a Whirlwind helicopter crew from RAF Lossiemouth, after dropping two Coastguards on the cliff top, surveyed the scene and decided that they could rescue the survivors. They lifted off the survivors from the bows of *Lans* in four sorties, lowering them on to Longhope lifeboat on each occasion. The lift was completed by 0910.

The cliffs at this point overhang and the helicopter was working with her rotors only feet from the cliff face. The nearness of the lifeboat meant that the whole operation was possible without refuelling; this might not have been so if the survivors had had to be lifted to the cliff top. Longhope lifeboat then weighed anchor and sailed for Stromness with the survivors.

For this service, Flight Lieut. David Cosby, the helicopter pilot, and Master Air Loadmaster Peter Barwell, who was lowered to the deck of the trawler nine times, were both awarded the Air Force Cross. Flight Lieut. Charles Taylor, who operated the winch, received the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air. A personal letter of appreciation signed by the Director of the Institution, Captain Nigel Dixon, was sent to Squadron Leader I. H. R. Robins, Officer Commanding 202 Squadron, RAF.

Ireland Division

Force 11 gusting 12

HEARING FROM Fishguard Coastguard at 2200 on Monday, January 13, that *Michael* of Famagusta, whose engine had broken down, was drifting about 18 miles off the entrance to Waterford, Dunmore East honorary secretary gave instructions for the maroons to be fired. As the crew were assembling a new position for the casualty was received: 11 miles 115°T from Mine Head. *Euphrosyne Kendal*, a 52' Barnett lifeboat, slipped her moorings and cleared harbour at 2220.

The weather was extremely bad: wind south south west force 11 gusting 12—visibility about half a mile in rain and otherwise 3 to 4 miles but, with a low height of eye, much reduced by spray. It was four hours after high water and the wind against the strong ebb resulted in a very heavy short steep sea off the

Hook. The height was estimated at 16–18', which forced the lifeboat to reduce speed drastically.

A course of 205°M was set for the last reported position of *Michael*. Later reports of her position were received from the German vessel *Bell Venture*. At 2345 the lifeboat made contact with *Michael* on RT and the master was asked to fire a flare. The lifeboat sighted the flare at 2355 and the coaster's lights 15 minutes later; she then fired a flare which *Michael* acknowledged by RT.

At 0030 the lifeboat came up with *Michael* and twelve minutes later a message was passed to Coningbeg Light Vessel for Fishguard Coastguard reporting that the lifeboat was approaching the casualty and preparation was being made to pick up the crew.

Michael was lying stopped in the water with a list to port 6 miles off Tramore, drifting ashore at about 3 knots. Her ship's head was about 090°T and she was rolling and pitching heavily. The wind was still south south west force 11 gusting 12, but the sea was more regular than it had been off the Hook, with a long swell and heavy sea. The tide was setting westerly but weakly.

After approaching the casualty from the east the lifeboat turned and lay astern for about 20 minutes, then to the port side, astern again and finally ahead. By this time it was about 0145 and Coxswain Stephen Whittle asked the master of *Michael* for his intentions, and whether the crew were going to abandon ship; she was drifting at about 3 knots towards a dangerous coast, and to try to make contact direct would have been extremely difficult in the prevailing conditions.

The master of *Michael* decided to abandon ship. He was instructed to make sure that his crew were warmly dressed and wearing lifejackets before taking to the liferaft. When in the liferaft they were to veer down from *Michael* on a light line and would be picked up by the lifeboat. This the master agreed to do.

The liferaft was launched from the port quarter and secured alongside head and stern. It was about 0200 and the lifeboat had moved to a position about one cable off the port side of *Michael*, illuminating the liferaft with her searchlight. Each of the crew was counted into the liferaft.

There was now a delay of some 15–20 minutes during which time the lifeboat crew discovered by signs that there was no knife in the liferaft. Coxswain Whittle was just going to attempt to go alongside when the master found a small pair of scissors and the painter was successfully cut.

As the liferaft was swept rapidly to leeward Coxswain Whittle manoeuvred the lifeboat to take the raft amidships on the starboard side. The crew of the lifeboat held the raft, the lifeboat went slow astern to keep the raft against her side, and in about five minutes all

seven members of *Michael's* crew had been helped on board.

Owing to the extremely bad conditions the liferaft had to be abandoned, and at 0220 the lifeboat started her return passage to Dunmore East, keeping about three miles off the coast by radar. At 0445 she entered Dunmore East, landing the survivors at about 0500. *Michael* subsequently went ashore at Tramore beach, probably at about 0600.

For this service the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to Coxswain Stephen Whittle. Vellum service certificates were presented to Second Coxswain John Walsh, Motor Mechanic John Curtin, Assistant Mechanic Sean Kearns and Crew Members Brendan Glody, Joseph Murphy and John R. Tod.

Eastern Division

Biscaya sinks

AT 0144 on December 13, 1974, Great Yarmouth and Gorleston honorary secretary was informed by Gorleston Coastguard that the 493 ton motor vessel *Biscaya* had been in collision with a French tug and tow in position 52°24'N 02°55'E. Lowestoft lifeboat had already been launched and Gorleston lifeboat crew were assembling to attend another casualty to the north; after consultation between the Coastguard and the two honorary secretaries, it was agreed that

Lowestoft lifeboat should divert to the inshore casualty north of Gorleston and Gorleston's lifeboat, *Khami*, should go to the assistance of *Biscaya*, some 45 miles east south east of Gorleston.

Khami, a 44' Waveney class lifeboat, slipped her moorings at 0154. The wind was north north west, severe gale force 9 gusting storm force 10, with heavy breaking seas of 20' running against an ebbing tide. Predicted high water at Yarmouth Roads had been at 2111, December 12. It was cloudy with showers; visibility six miles.

Coxswain/Mechanic John Bryan set course 112°M from Corton Light Buoy at 0225, making good a speed of 12 knots in quartering seas. Some 12 miles clear of the land the swell lengthened, causing *Khami* to surf frequently until on two occasions the swell carried the boat into the trough with bows awash and she slewed to port, her guard rails under water. Second Coxswain David Bennington kept a lookout aft to warn Coxswain Bryan of approaching large swells, estimated at 25', and the coxswain had to work continually at the helm to maintain course.

At 0500 the lifeboat asked *Biscaya* to fire flares, but they were not sighted. However, at 0515 a Nimrod aircraft, which had taken off from St Mawgan at 0304, arrived at *Khami's* position after locating the casualty. The aircraft directed the lifeboat to alter course to 145°M and at 0546 flares were seen. Due to the height of the seas *Biscaya* was not detected on radar until within a range of three miles.

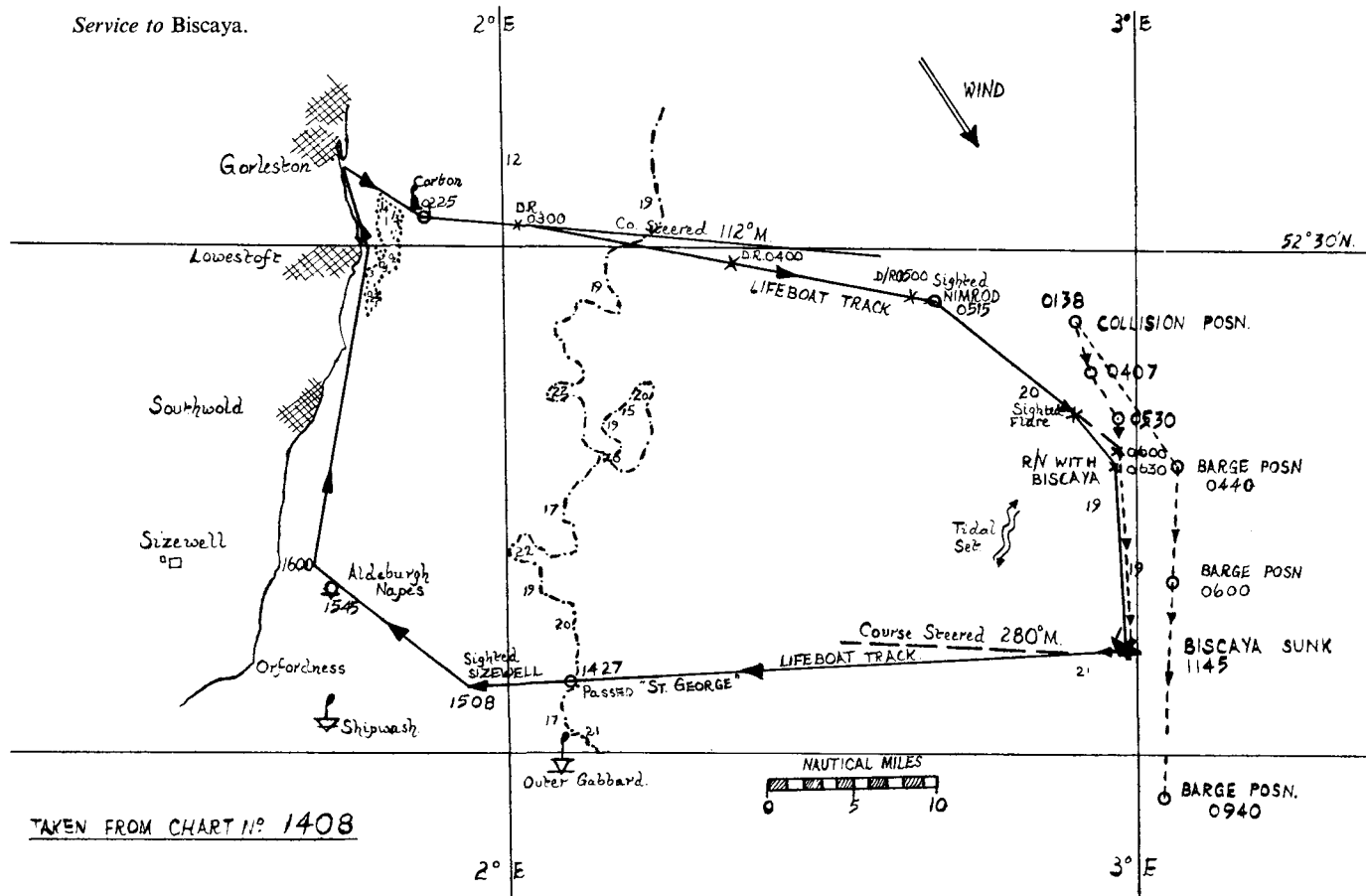
For some hours before the ebb tide slackened at 0530 *Biscaya* had been

drifting south south east. By 0600 the flood tide was running southerly at 1.5 knots and the ship was located in position 52°16.5'N 02°58'E. The barge, having parted her tow at 0407, was some 9 miles south south east of this position with the French tug in attendance.

Khami came up on *Biscaya* at 0630 and found the ship listed slightly and stopped in the water with pumps working on the forward compartments where damage had been sustained by striking the barge towline and the 475' barge. *Biscaya's* steering gear was out of action; her stern had swung into the barge after the collision. The five-man crew were safely on board and the master thought that the vessel would be saved. Salvage tug *Titan* was on her way from Ijmuiden and was expected to arrive at 1030, so Coxswain Bryan said he would stand by until *Biscaya* was safely in tow of the tug. Swedish cargo vessel *Hans Oscar* had remained standing by since 0245, but continued her passage when the lifeboat arrived.

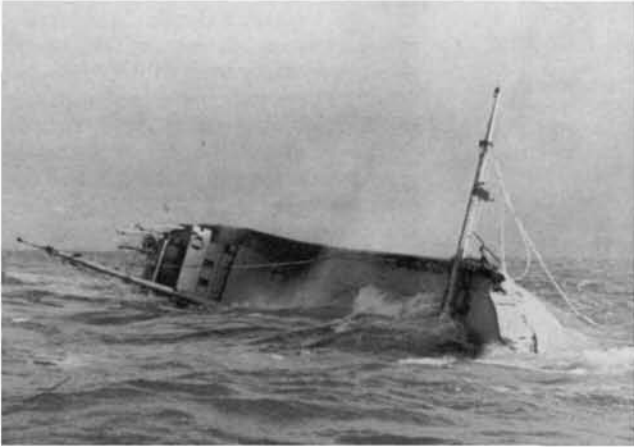
The weather remained severe, with wind north north west force 9 and a heavy north north west swell; the tide was flooding southward, so the seas moderated slightly.

Titan arrived at 1034 and a portable pump, attended by a tug crew member, was placed aboard *Biscaya* whose own pumps had ceased working at 0859. The pump, however, could not adequately be man-handled into position and was not operated, and at 1045 *Biscaya's* list increased to 45°. Three of her crew took to a liferaft and were immediately picked up by *Khami*. The master, chief engineer and the tug crew member remained on





Sinking of Biscaya: four photographs taken in her last five minutes. One minute after the first photograph was taken (left) three men were snatched from Biscaya, including the Dutch crew member from salvage tug Titan.



board until 1125 when the vessel began to settle as the list increased to 65°.

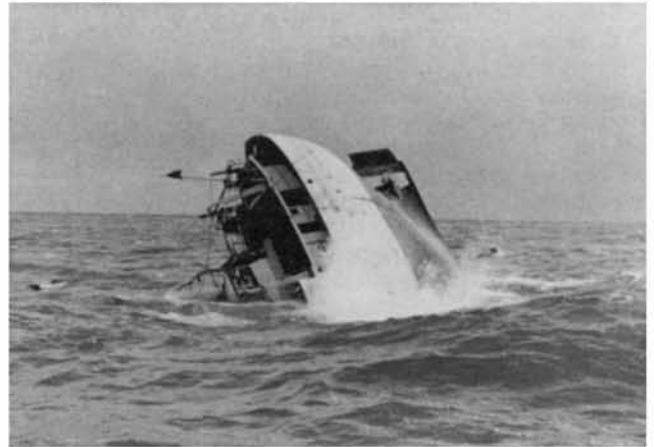
Coxswain Bryan took *Khami* into the lee of *Biscaya*, close to the port bilge keel, and called for the three remaining men to abandon ship. The angle of the ship's hull and the heavy swell made it very difficult for them to scramble over the side into the lifeboat. The master injured his shoulder, wrenching it as he hung from the guardrails over the near-horizontal ship's side. During the transfer *Biscaya's* hull could be felt surging against the underside of the lifeboat and only the coxswain's expert seamanship ensured the safety of the survivors; they were recovered only three minutes before the ship finally sank at 1145.

The tug crew was returned to *Titan* and *Khami* set course west by north to close the coast as soon as possible; Coxswain Bryan was concerned about fuel shortage, but a speed of 11 knots was made good into the head seas. The wind moderated slowly to north north west force 6 in the two hours after leaving *Biscaya*.

Khami closed the coast at Sizewell at 1545 and altered course northward in moderate north-north-west winds and slight seas. She arrived at Gorleston at 1825 and was refuelled, ready for service, at 1919. The survivors were met by the ship's owners and the lifeboat station's honorary medical adviser, and then taken to the Missions to Seamen hostel.

For this service a bar to his bronze

Photographs by courtesy of H. E. Appleton



medal was awarded to Coxswain/Mechanic John Bryan. Medal service certificates were presented to Second Coxswain David Bennington and Crew Members Brian Coleman and Herbert Appleton. A letter of appreciation was sent to the honorary secretary, Dr R. Cox.

North Eastern Division

Search in breaking seas

ON THE AFTERNOON of Friday, August 30, 1974, four young children were swimming in the sea off Golden Sands Chalet Park about one mile south of Withernsea ILB station. The wind was fresh and the sea rough and it was not

long before the children started to get into difficulties. Two of the youngsters managed to reach the shore and both ran towards Withernsea to alert the Coastguard. Very distressed, they reached a small cafe opposite the ILB boathouse and told the owner, 'Our friends are drifting out to sea!'

An immediate telephone call to the police was received just as Police Constable Ben Usher, a crew member, was signing off duty. He went directly to the boathouse, arriving at 1402. It was clear that the situation was critical, so, deciding that further delay would be unacceptable, he asked a colleague to inform the Coastguard and honorary

secretary while he opened the boathouse. Then he asked Terry Dawson, who was present, to put on a lifejacket and go with him as crew.

The ILB was launched at 1405. It was three hours to high water with the wind east north east force 4 to 5. The sea was rough with heavy surf on the beach at the launching site.

At first the ILB was thrown broadside up the beach but the crew persevered and they succeeded in negotiating the heavy surf to reach the relatively calmer water beyond. Course was set for the reported search area, about a mile to the south, and by about 1410 the ILB was off Golden Sands Chalet Park. Here the beach has a gentler slope so that the seas were breaking further out, making a search more difficult and hazardous. In order to cover as much

ground as possible as fast as possible, Ben Usher conducted his search by running in with the surf at an angle of 45° and coming away from the shore directly into the seas. Some of these seas were 8 or 9' and breaking. Considerable skill and judgement were required to avoid the ever-present risk of capsizing.

This saw-tooth search pattern was continued until 1420, when a police officer on the cliff sighted a child and indicated that the boat should search further south and to seaward. Ben Usher followed these directions and after a further short search saw a girl rise on a crest and slide into a trough. He took the ILB straight to the position, but at the last minute a sea threw the boat away from the child.

Conditions were such that a fresh run in was needed. It was clear that the girl was in very poor shape and might slip under the waves at any time, so Ben Usher told Terry Dawson to enter the water and support her until he had made a second approach.

Without hesitation or thought for his own safety, Terry Dawson jumped over the side, grabbed the young girl and supported her until the ILB came alongside. She was lifted into the boat and Ben Usher immediately started artificial respiration, continuing for some minutes until a positive response was observed. He then helped Terry Dawson back into the boat and they ran straight in to the beach where an ambulance had been seen, continuing artificial respiration as they went.

On reaching the beach the ambulance men administered oxygen while awaiting a helicopter to take the girl to Hull Infirmary. It was learnt that the fourth swimmer had not drifted out more than 30 yards and had been recovered by men wading out from the beach.

The ILB returned to station at 1435 and was ready for service at 1455.

For this service the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to Crew Members Ben Usher and Terence Malcolm Dawson.

South Eastern Division

Despite injury

FAIRLIGHT COASTGUARD informed the Hastings deputy launching authority at 1120 on December 23, 1974, that there had been an explosion on board the Argentinian warship *Candido de Lasala* and medical help was needed. Maroons were fired and *Jane Hay*, a 37' Oakley class lifeboat on temporary duty at Hastings, was launched with the station honorary medical adviser, Dr Peter Davy, on board.

There was a south-by-easterly fresh breeze force 5 and a moderate sea. After making good 1.5 miles towards *Candido de Lasala*, *Jane Hay* was joined by rescue helicopter 41 and Dr Davy was asked to transfer to the helicopter for quicker

transit to the ship. The coxswain was requested to steer into wind at full speed. The lifeboat prepared for the lift and the coxswain briefed his crew.

The second crewman from the helicopter was lowered to the lifeboat and,



Dr Peter Davy

Photograph by courtesy of George E. Gregory.

after several attempts, landed on board. While he was putting Dr Davy into the other strop the helicopter lost contact with the lifeboat. Both men were dragged off the deck with a pendulum motion, smashing back into the lifeboat stern before being separated in the water; Dr Davy drifted away. The helicopter was re-positioned, Dr Davy was recovered and taken on to *Candido de Lasala*. The injured men were tended and one transferred by helicopter to hospital with the doctor in company.

On arrival, and only after ensuring that the injured man was being cared for, Dr Davy allowed himself to be examined by another doctor. He was found to have seven broken ribs and must have been in great pain throughout the service.

For this service the silver medal for gallantry was awarded to Dr Peter Davy.

South Western Division

Coal cargo shifts

THE CREW of Clovelly lifeboat, the 71' Clyde *Charles H. Barrett* (Civil Service No. 35), at anchor in Lundy Roads at 1125 on Tuesday, January 21, sighted *MV Robert* and saw that she had a 30° list to starboard. As she approached she asked the lifeboat to take off her crew of four. *Robert* was a two hatch coaster registered in Panama, of about 350 gross tons; her list was due to her cargo of coal having shifted.

The lifeboat's ILB was despatched immediately. By 1148 *Robert* had put down her anchor and *Charles H. Barrett* closed the casualty.

There was a gale force 8 to 9 westerly wind blowing in the lee of Lundy Island; the sea was rough to moderate, the day cloudy with good visibility.

After taking on board the captain and crew at 1150 the lifeboat crew spent an

hour and twenty minutes examining the condition of *Robert* from all sides; her master was convinced she would capsize at any moment. At 1310 *Charles H. Barrett* returned to her anchorage, about 220 yards away.

Between 1830 and 1845 the lifeboat moved more into the shelter of Lundy Island and by 1900 three of *Robert's* crew were transferred to *MV Polar Bear*, making for Ilfracombe. *Robert's* master remained on board the lifeboat and between 1915 and 1950 he made two brief visits to the stricken vessel.

By 1115 the following morning, Wednesday January 22, the list had increased to 70°. *Robert* had dragged her anchor during the night and the lifeboat closed on her position. She finally sank at 1140: 1 $\frac{5}{16}$ nautical miles from Lundy South Light on a bearing of 205°M and $\frac{9}{16}$ nautical miles from Tibbett's Point.

After reporting the outcome to Hartland Coastguard at 1145, *Charles H. Barrett* sailed for Ilfracombe where the master was landed by 1340. Leaving Ilfracombe again at 1530, the lifeboat returned to her station by 1730.

Eastern Division

MFV standing into danger

SHEERNESS deputy launching authority heard from Warden Point Coastguard at 2200 on March 22, 1974, that a boat three-quarters of a mile east north east of the Coastguard lookout was exhibiting red hand flares and was apparently in difficulty. The Coastguard had signalled the boat at 2150 that she was standing into danger, but no apparent action had been taken despite the Coastguard illuminating the adjacent cliffs with parachute flares.

The DLA gave instructions for the maroons to be fired and the lifeboat, the 46' *Watson Gertrude* built in 1946, cleared her mooring in Sheerness Harbour at 2210. The wind was north east force 5 to 6 with moderate seas. The night was overcast and high water at Sheerness was predicted for 0106.

Gertrude set course at full speed for a position received from Warden Point Coastguard north of the Southern Boom, in an attempt to reach the casualty before she was driven by wind and tide among the wreckage of old barges and boulders of the wartime boom.

At 2240 the Coastguard alerted the Coast Rescue Company to go to the shoreward end of the boom, just as *Gertrude* reached the sector light at the boom's seaward limit. Realising that the casualty would be among the foul ground before *Gertrude* could reach her, Coxswain Charles Bowry turned the lifeboat and, on a southerly course, made for the westward side of the boom.

continued on page 33

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

and presentation of awards

'1974 — A YEAR OF TRIUMPH'

— His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent, President RNLI

THE WORD WHICH SEEMS to have been most readily used by people describing the RNLI's annual general meeting in 1975 was 'moving'. On page 30 we publish a letter in which the writer describes how she, 'a case-hardened journalist', was moved 'quite genuinely to tears'. To anyone of any sensibility the occasion must have been moving, with the reading of matter-of-fact, unvarnished accounts of the bravery of ordinary men and women and the recognition of the voluntary help given, without hope or thought of reward, by children, by the old and the frail and by active people in the prime of life.

The day started at the Royal Festival Hall with the gathering of medallists and their families on the forecourt, overlooking the River Thames, while the governors of the RNLI met inside for their annual general meeting; it continued after lunch with the presentations of awards, before a 'full house' audience, by the President of the RNLI, His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent; and ended with tea, when the President joined in the throngs of lifeboat people talking in the Festival Hall's foyer.

Each year, this is a day of reunions, and perhaps the happiest meeting of 1975 was that between two coxswains awarded the silver medal for gallantry in 1974, Coxswain Albert Bird of Aberdeen and Coxswain 'Ben' Tart of Dungeness; their story is told on page 3.

Presenting his report of 1974, 'The Year of the Lifeboat', to the governors at the morning meeting, Commander F. R. H. Swann, CBE RNVR, Chairman of the Committee of Management, said:

'It was a record year operationally with over 2,800 launches on service. We claim to have saved nearly 1,400 lives and our lifeboats rendered assistance, mostly by towing, to nearly a thousand small craft. It was a very arduous year with exceptionally bad weather in the late summer and autumn. During the great gale on the second Saturday in September we had 25 lifeboats at sea at the same time between Harwich and the Isle of Wight. Many of them were called out two or three times that day. During the year 23 medals were awarded for gallantry.

Commander Swann went on to speak of the part played by the Institution as an important member of the Government Search and Rescue Committee and its close co-operation with HM Coastguard; of the operations room which will be

incorporated in the new Headquarters at Poole to improve operational control; and of the appointment of a training officer and the establishment of a mobile training caravan to provide more advanced training for lifeboat crews. He continued:

'We had several serious accidents to lifeboats during the year but I am glad to say that no lifeboatman lost his life.

'The first Arun class boat built of GRP is commissioning and will be shown at the International Lifeboat Conference at Helsinki in June. This class can be considered a well tried one by now and a great success. We have two further GRP boats of the class on order. The Atlantic 21 is also a great success and we have a number building. We have also given a self-righting capability to a considerable number of old lifeboats, either by structural alterations or by fitting them with air bags, so that we are only about 30 boats short of our target of a virtually self-righting fleet.'

Reviewing shore works, Commander Swann reported that the pen for a 44' Waveney lifeboat at Whitby was complete, that Fleetwood was making slow progress due to engineering difficulties, but that the new houses for the crew at Spurn Point were coming along well. No further major shore works were contemplated at present.

Commander Swann then turned to fund raising, commenting that 'The Year of the Lifeboat' had without doubt

brought the Institution to the notice of everyone in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland and had caused great enthusiasm among RNLI supporters; he also paid tribute to the debt owed to the press, radio and television whose reporting of the RNLI had been extensive and scrupulously fair.

Revenue from branches and guilds had increased in 1974 by over 30%. Legacy income at just under £2 million was much the same as for the previous year. The total increase in revenue was just over £800,000. Unfortunately costs had increased by the same amount so that the income and expenditure accounts were practically in balance. The surplus of £275,000 shown in the accounts represented the increased amount transferred from restricted funds as compared with the previous year. Commander Swann continued:

'I have often pointed out the inadequacy of our free reserves. It now costs about £5 million per annum to run the RNLI, rising all the time, whilst our free reserves, now about £1½ million, tend to decline.'

Turning to the current year, Commander Swann spoke of the good headway being made by the membership scheme: there are now 2,800 governors and a total of 23,000 members, bringing in an annual revenue of £132,000. The new Head Office building at Poole

The afternoon ended with tea in the foyer: The Duke of Kent, President, with Commander Ralph Swann, Chairman, talks with bronze medallists Trevor Fryer and Frederick Arkley of Tynemouth. Photograph by courtesy of Peter Bradley.



should be ready next October, but because of the present financial situation, a modified and less expensive scheme will have to be considered for the Depot site. Commander Swann concluded:

'The RNLI is in good repute in Great Britain and in Ireland. Morale is high, the main problem is financial. We are affected by economic circumstances over which we have no control. The current high rate of inflation is causing our costs to rise dramatically whilst the effect on our income is uncertain. And this at a time when our free reserves are only equivalent to a few weeks' expenditure. It is a worrying situation.

'Finally I must thank the staff of the Institution for their loyal support and splendid efforts in "The Year of the Lifeboat". It has been a very busy time for everyone, with many very memorable occasions.'

The report and accounts for the year 1974 were adopted almost without comment.

The Duke of Kent was then re-elected as president, the vice-presidents elected and the Duke of Northumberland re-elected as treasurer: all unanimously.

In the reappointment of the auditors, Price Waterhouse and Co., particular thanks were expressed to Mr C. H. Bailey for the great personal interest he takes in RNLI affairs and his invaluable advice.

In general discussion at the end of the meeting there were a number of suggestions made from the floor: That meetings should be held, perhaps biennially, of operational honorary secretaries, and also that there should be a chain of command at inshore lifeboat stations (Dr I.T. McLachlan, Eastney); and that a lifeboat due to be sold out of the service should first spend a year on fund raising projects up and down the Thames (Mr Brightwell, Reading, seconded by Mr Gothard, Henley-on-Thames). It was agreed that all the ideas put forward

should be given careful consideration.

Mr M. L. Thomas (Langley) asked whether the names of governors and members were passed to branches, as nobody had contacted him or asked for help. In reply, Captain Nigel Dixon, Director RNLI, said that there are a large number of governors and members who are prepared to support the Institution but who wish to preserve their anonymity; however, a new form of application for membership would be devised so worded that those people willing to be contacted by local branches can indicate that this is their wish. Existing governors and members would have to be circularised.

There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

* * *

The Festival Hall was crowded for the afternoon presentation of awards, to be made by the President, HRH The Duke of Kent, and, as the seats filled up, it was particularly pleasing to see, among the lifeboat people, representatives of such good friends as the Chelsea Pensioners, the Scouts and the Girl Guides. Nine Members of Parliament, from maritime towns whence came some of the medalists, were there, too, in support of their constituents, including the Rt. Hon. Jeremy Thorpe (Cloveley lifeboat station) and the Rt. Hon. James Prior (Lowestoft lifeboat station).

Commander Swann welcomed the Duke of Kent, saying how particularly delighted the Institution was that he had honoured it with his presence at a meeting when the RNLI was looking back not only on the history of one year but also the history of 150 years. Commander Swann said that he himself felt proud and honoured to have been chairman during the great year of "The Year of the Lifeboat", and he paused to consider some of the changes that had occurred since he had become a member

of the Committee of Management 22 years ago:

'The report which was then presented to the annual general meeting told a very different story from that of 1974. The cost of the lifeboat service was still under £½ million. Of the active fleet of more than 150 lifeboats not one had a speed of more than 9 knots, and the report said that "as an experiment" direction finding apparatus had been fitted to two lifeboats. The Waveney, Arun and Rother lifeboats did not exist, the first Oakley self-righting lifeboat had not yet been built, and there was no such thing as an inflatable ILB, nor indeed the Atlantic 21 such as the one given us by the Girl Guides Association which is on display outside this hall.

'I think, therefore, we can truthfully say that during these last two decades there have been greater advances in lifeboat technology and design than in any other comparable period in the RNLI's long history. Matching this progress has been the tremendous growth in the support which the RNLI has received from the public as a whole and from its voluntary workers in particular. Last year the cost of the service was not far short of £5 million, yet we managed to achieve a surplus. At the meeting 22 years ago, when the cost was under £½ million, there was in fact a deficit.'

Commander Swann spoke of the close co-operation and friendly working relations which the RNLI, a voluntary body, enjoyed with governmental and other bodies engaged in the task of search and rescue at sea, and greeted Mr Peter Shore, Secretary of State for the Department of Trade, and Lieut. Commander John Douglas, Chief Inspector of Coastguard, both of whom would be making presentations to the RNLI.

Referring to current events, Commander Swann welcomed the two ladies elected that morning to the Committee of Management. Both had worked very hard for the Institution: Lady Norton as chairman of the Central London women's committee and Mrs Keen as chairman of Kidderminster branch and vice-chairman of the central appeals committee. He then announced that the central appeals committee would be holding its final meeting later that afternoon. It had been formed at the suggestion of Mr Norman Crumbie after the Institution had incurred a deficit of nearly £½ million in 1967; since then the committee had raised a total of £250,000. It was due to its initiative that the Scout and Girl Guide Associations undertook projects to raise funds to pay for new lifeboats. The Girl Guides, with an initial target of £5,000, finally presented the Institution with a cheque in excess of £25,000; the Scouts raised nearly £100,000. Finally, Commander Swann announced that the 'Lifeboat Service Memorial Book', prepared at the inspiration of Lord Saltoun and an anonymous benefactor, and containing the names of members of lifeboat crews and others who had lost their lives whilst going to the help of

Silver medallists 1974: (l. to r.) Motor Mechanic Barry Pike (Torbay); Coxswain Ben Tart (Dungeness); Coxswain Albert Bird and Motor Mechanic Ian Jack (Aberdeen); Helmsman Edward Brown and Crew Member Robin Middleton (New Brighton); Coxswain/Mechanic John Martin and Dr Peter Davy (Hastings).



people in distress at sea, was on display in the foyer. He concluded:

'I now have the greatest pleasure in inviting His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent, to address you as your President.'

Seldom can a president, when he rose to give his address, have been more in accord with his people:

'For the lifeboat service 1974 was a year of triumph. I see no point in mincing words or concealing facts. Although in our national life as a whole the year was one of much doubt and anxiety, and even a little despondency, yet during this year the RNLI had a record of sustained and brilliant achievement.'

Reviewing the operational record, the Duke pointed out that the total number of people saved from death at sea since the RNLI began to keep detailed records about a century and a quarter ago was very nearly 100,000. He continued:

'In 1974, as you are all aware, the Institution celebrated the 150th anniversary of its foundation. Sometimes people suggest we should not emphasize our past over much but rather concentrate on telling of our modern technological progress. I see no contradiction whatever in emphasizing the importance of both these factors. The history of the lifeboat service is to a considerable extent that of the steady progress made in the methods whereby men may combat the forces of nature. This progress takes the form of new designs, equipment, communications and materials. All this is supremely important now and will continue to be so in the future. Nevertheless, it is a fact that you can go out and buy products of advanced technology, but you cannot buy 150 years of history and experience.'

When the immediate applause of unanimous agreement had died down, the Duke went on to recall some of the outstanding events of 1974, and continued:

'In our celebrations of the past we were in a sense also looking ahead by using the anniversary year to build up the strength of the service. For this strength lies in the personal support and participation which it attracts throughout Britain and Ireland. This is obtained largely through the dedication of our lifeboat crews and the efforts of our voluntary branches and guilds, for whose work during 'The Year of the Lifeboat' no praise can be high enough.

'1974 was a year also which called forth almost superhuman achievement in the field of fund raising when a total of £4,162,000 was brought in from all sources, which represents an increase of 20% on the previous year. It would be wrong I think to single out the work and generosity of any one branch or individual, civic authority or organisation, company or business house, but I feel I must say how pleased I have been personally by the widespread help given to the RNLI last year by young people, by Scouts, Guides, schools and a great many others. The enthusiasm they showed and their understanding of the nature and needs of the service must

surely give us much encouragement for the future.'

'Our anniversary year was also a year of triumph of planning, for which our staff should, I feel, receive due credit. Credit also should be given to your governing body, the Committee of Management.'

The Duke then announced with regret that the Chairman, Commander Ralph Swann, would be retiring later this year:

'Commander Swann has served the RNLI with a dedication and expertise of which thousands in the service are aware and I am happy to be able to announce that as a tribute the Committee of Management has decided that a new lifeboat shall bear his name . . .'

The warmth of the applause which met these words left no doubt of the general approval and pleasure with which they were received . . .

'It is particularly appropriate that this boat should be one of the 44' Waveney class, for Commander Swann played such an important part in introducing this class of lifeboat into the RNLI fleet.'

Speaking of the formidable financial challenges of the future, the Duke ended:

'In the present climate it is difficult to regard the immediate future with much equanimity, but 1974 has shown what can be achieved, particularly by those in the hall today and those whom you represent. For the future the resolve of all of us must, I believe, be to ensure that we maintain the standards we have set ourselves and that we be worthy of those who over the last century and a half served the RNLI with dedication, skill, courage, compassion and, where the occasion demanded it, readiness to give their own lives. I am confident that with that resolve we shall make 1975 another year of success for our great Institution.'

The Chairman then invited the President, HRH The Duke of Kent, to make the presentations for gallantry:

Motor Mechanic Barry Pike, Torbay: silver medal

On October 5, 1973, Torbay ILB went to the aid of a woman in the sea off Meadfoot Beach. Very rough seas and shoal water prevented the ILB from closing the casualty's estimated position, but Motor Mechanic Barry Pike, sighting the woman's body, immediately jumped overboard to her rescue. Rough seas threw him on to the beach but, although exhausted, he re-entered the sea several times until, in a state of complete collapse himself, he succeeded in bringing the woman's body ashore; it was then found she was already dead as a result of a severe head injury.

Coxswain Tom Richard Tart, Dungeness: silver medal

Assistant Mechanic Peter Edward Thomas, Dungeness: bronze medal

On February 11, 1974, Dungeness lifeboat *Mabel E. Holland* was launched

across the beach in the worst conditions ever experienced at the station to land an injured man from MV *Merc Texco*. There was a south-south-westerly hurricane blowing. On reaching *Merc Texco* the lifeboat had to manoeuvre alongside on two occasions before the injured man could be taken off, with the help of Assistant Mechanic Peter Thomas who had volunteered to board *Merc Texco*.

Coxswain Albert Bird, Aberdeen: silver medal

Motor Mechanic Ian Jack, Aberdeen: silver medal

On April 13, 1974, lifeboat *Hilton Briggs*, on temporary duty at Aberdeen, rescued the crew of 12 from the trawler *Netta Croan*. *Netta Croan* was circling out of control, burning fiercely over the entire stern so that her crew could neither stop her engines nor steer her. Approaching the trawler, Coxswain Albert Bird handed the wheel over to Motor Mechanic Ian Jack and positioned himself to command both deck and helm operations. The lifeboat came alongside at full speed and the crew were taken off within a minute. Throughout the whole operation the lifeboat was under threat of fire, explosion and the possibility of being rammed by the trawler.

Helmsman Edward B. Brown, New Brighton: silver medal

Crew Member Robin Middleton, New Brighton: silver medal

Shortly after midnight on June 8, 1974, New Brighton ILB launched to the aid of MFV *E.B.H.* anchored on a sandbank in a confused sea and a strong westerly wind. As the ILB attempted to veer down to her, the fishing vessel's cable parted and she drifted towards a submerged groyne. Helmsman Edward Brown drove the ILB over the groyne on to the deck of the listing vessel and rescued two of her crew. An injured man still remained, and Crew Member Robin Middleton jumped on board to rescue him. Shortly afterwards the fishing vessel broke up.

Coxswain/Mechanic John H. W. Martin, Hastings: silver medal

Second Coxswain George Douglas White, Hastings: bronze medal

On September 27, 1974, lifeboat *Jane Hay* on temporary duty at Hastings rescued the crew of three of MFV *Simon Peter* in a violent storm force south-westerly wind and a very rough sea. The lifeboat had to close the vessel twice before the rescue could be effected, Second Coxswain George White having to lean across to the casualty to make fast the headrope, risking being crushed as the boats came together in the heavy seas.

Doctor Peter Davy, Hastings: silver medal

On December 23, 1974, lifeboat *Jane Hay* on temporary duty at Hastings launched with the station honorary



Bronze medallists 1974 in order of presentation, starting on the left with Assistant Mechanic Peter Thomas (Dungeness).

medical adviser, Dr Peter Davy, on board to go to the help of Argentinian warship *Candido de Lasala* which had suffered an explosion. While being transferred from the lifeboat to a helicopter Dr Davy was swung against the stern of the lifeboat and then washed into the sea. Despite suffering from seven broken ribs, he refused medical attention until he had tended the injured on the warship.

Coxswain Kenneth Gibbs, Torbay: bronze medal

On December 16, 1973, Torbay lifeboat *Princess Alexandra of Kent* rescued the sole crew member of Guernsey fishing vessel *Petit Michel* in a west-north-westerly gale and very rough seas. As it was too dangerous to approach the vessel from leeward, Coxswain Kenneth Gibbs brought the lifeboat around to the windward side, and a lifejacket was passed to the casualty. Storm oil was sprayed to reduce the wave crests, and the survivor was able to jump and be pulled aboard the lifeboat at the first attempt.

Staff Coxswain Michael Stafford Houchen, Clovelly: bronze medal

On February 6, 1974, Clovelly lifeboat *Charles H. Barrett* (Civil Service No. 35) went to the aid of a trawler, *St Pierre*, reported sinking 26 miles from Hartland Point. When sighted she did not appear to be in immediate danger of sinking and Staff Coxswain Michael Houchen felt that it would be best to tow her, with the crew aboard, to an anchorage off Lundy Island. At the third attempt a tow was passed. Two hours later in the steep seas of Lundy Race, the trawler's transom was stove in and both vessels were in danger of broaching. A safe anchorage was reached, the trawler pumped out and she was then towed on to Ilfracombe.

Crew Member Trevor Fryer, Tynemouth: bronze medal

Crew Member Frederick Arkley, Tynemouth: bronze medal

On March 10, 1974, Tynemouth ILB launched in a gale force easterly wind and rough seas to help the tug *Northsider* driven on to rocks while trying to assist a grounded oil exploration vessel; she was being swept by breaking seas. A young boy was taken off and transferred to the ILB station. When the ILB returned, escorted by Tynemouth lifeboat, she found the tug driven under the cliffs and in danger of breaking up. Three attempts were made to go alongside the rolling tug before the three crew members were successfully taken off.

Coxswain/Mechanic Thomas Victor Knott, Lowestoft: bronze medal
Second Coxswain Peter Gibbons, Lowestoft: bronze medal

On April 13, 1974, lifeboat *Canadian Pacific* on temporary duty at Lowestoft launched to help the yacht *Sarina* which, with a crew of four on board, was dragging her anchor and aground in heavy surf. The wind was strong to gale with large breaking waves. The lifeboat grounded twice as she approached, but Second Coxswain Peter Gibbons succeeded in jumping aboard the yacht, which was towed stern first to deeper water and then back to harbour.

Helmsman Mervyn Lloyd Thomas, New Quay: bronze medal

On July 30, 1974, New Quay ILB launched to help a small power boat which had broken down and, with her owner still on board, was anchored near dangerous rocks at the foot of cliffs. Two of her crew had swum ashore; one was safe on the cliff top but the other was stranded, exhausted, on a rock. In a strong wind and rough sea, Helmsman

Mervyn Thomas anchored the ILB and then went astern in to the cliffs, first under power and then under oars. The man on the rocks was helped aboard and, as the owner refused to leave the power boat, New Quay lifeboat was called out and towed her to safety.

Crew Member David Eilian Williams, Aberdovey: bronze medal

Jayne Edmunds: inscribed wrist watch

On August 10, 1974, Aberdovey ILB launched to search for a man reported fallen overboard from a cabin cruiser crossing Dovey Bar in a strong west-north-westerly wind and a rough sea. Found clutching a lifejacket and suffering from shock and exposure, he was the owner of *Lady Jane* which had subsequently been wrecked on a sandbank; three children who had been on board were still in the sea. The ILB could not reach them because of the shallow water, so Crew Member David Williams waded and swam to the children, and with the help of another crew member, brought them ashore.

It was later learned that the oldest child, Jayne Edmunds, aged 11, had thrown the lifejacket to her father when he fell overboard. She had also fired the distress signals, instructed her friends to put on lifejackets and had supported one of them in the water after their boat was wrecked.



Jayne Edmunds and Eric Jones were each presented with an inscribed wrist watch.

Helmsman Sydney S. R. Thayers, Eastney: bronze medal

Operational Swimmer William Charles Hawkins, Eastney: bronze medal

Crew Member Dennis Faro, Eastney: bar to his bronze medal

After flares had been sighted on September 7, 1974, Eastney ILB launched in very difficult conditions caused by storm force winds and very rough seas. Despite the extreme weather, she made for the casualty at full speed, with the help of directions from the Coastguard, and found it to be a motor cruiser with a man and his 11-year-old son on board, suffering from shock and exposure. They were taken on board the ILB after great difficulty. The return to harbour was very slow because of steep seas and zero visibility.

Coxswain G. J. Jones, Porthdinllaen: bronze medal

Eric Jones, Porthdinllaen, inscribed wrist watch

On September 20, 1974, a report was

received that two people were missing from a boat. Coxswain Griffiths Jones was on leave, but he and his 14-year-old son Eric watched the launch of Porthdinllaen lifeboat. Eric then sighted a man on an isolated rock and he, his father and another man, launched and manned the station boarding boat. In a confused sea, Coxswain Jones had to negotiate extremely narrow channels between the rocks to reach the stranded man, who, shocked and exhausted, was pulled into the boarding boat by Eric Jones.

Coxswain/Mechanic John Bryan, Great Yarmouth and Gorleston: bar to his bronze medal

On December 13, 1974, Great Yarmouth and Gorleston lifeboat *Khami* rescued the crew of five of *mv Biscaya* and a crew member of salvage tug *Titan* in a north-north-westerly storm and very high seas. *Biscaya*, which had been in collision with another vessel, was listing with her steering gear out of action. When the list increased to 45° three of the crew took to the liferaft and were picked up by the lifeboat. Hampered by the increasing list and heavy swell the remaining crew were taken off by the lifeboat only three minutes before *Biscaya* finally sank.

Since the last annual presentations of awards meeting the Committee of Management has awarded five honorary life governorships and 15 gold badges to honorary workers for long and distinguished service. Presentations were made at the Festival Hall by the Duke of Kent to all but Mrs E. P. Hill, who was unfortunately unable to be there, and the late Mr A. W. Hawkes and Mr W. C. Prethero.

HONORARY LIFE GOVERNOR

Mrs H. D. Ford

Lifeboat day organiser for Margate station branch, 1940 to 1955; founded Margate guild, 1955; guild honorary secretary, 1955 to 1972; retired from guild and joined Margate station branch committee, 1972; branch lifeboat day organiser, 1974.

Mrs Ford is wholly dedicated to the lifeboat service, having been actively involved in fund raising since 1940. She has recently again taken on the task of lifeboat day organiser and attained a new record for the Margate street collection.

Mrs G. F. Newman

Committee member and lifeboat week organiser of Hounslow branch since 1937; chairman since 1967.

A most enthusiastic and hard working supporter of the lifeboat service, Mrs Newman has held many offices with the Hounslow branch since first joining the committee in 1937. She continues to give magnificent support to the Institution, the proof being in the continued rise in revenue in her area.

Mr F. W. H. Park, MBE

Honorary secretary of Torbay station since 1948.

Mr Park, well known in the Torbay area, has carried out his job as honorary secretary in a reliable and enthusiastic manner. He has given outstanding service to the RNLI over many years.

Mr R. K. Sayer, MBE

Honorary secretary of Newhaven station since 1936.

Mr Sayer has given devoted service to the RNLI since 1936, as shown by the efficiently run station where he is greatly respected.

Mr A. P. Weaver, MBE

Crew member of Bembridge station branch, 1921 to 1936; assistant mechanic, 1937 to 1951; head launcher, 1952 to 1956; station honorary secretary since 1956.

Mr Weaver has dedicated a lifetime of service to the Institution. His enthusiasm and devotion to duty hold the respect and admiration of all who come in contact with him, and the Institution owes him a great debt for his invaluable work over so many years.

GOLD BADGE

Miss A. Ainsworth

Honorary secretary of Darwen branch since 1947.

Miss Ainsworth is an extremely active honorary secretary, carrying everyone along with her enthusiasm. It is largely due to her dedication and energy that a steady revenue is maintained in her area.

Mr K. E. Mooring Aldridge

Honorary treasurer of Weymouth station branch, 1940 to 1950; honorary secretary since 1951.

Mr Aldridge has given conscientious and devoted service to the Institution over very many years. His name is synonymous with lifeboats in the Weymouth community.

Mr C. F. Baker, JP

Joint honorary secretary of Eastbourne station branch, 1949 to 1953; honorary secretary since 1953.

Mr Baker has given 25 years devoted and valuable service to the Institution and in particular to the Eastbourne station branch, where he is considered to be an outstanding honorary secretary.

Mr R. W. Berkeley, CBE JP

Committee member of Belfast branch since 1940; chairman of Northern Ireland 1974 committee.

Mr Berkeley has for many years organised a docks collection; he is also a regular subscriber to and supporter of this successful branch. As chairman of the Northern Ireland 1974 committee he was personally responsible for a major portion of the effort which went into this 150th Anniversary appeal.

Mrs Q. H. Boutwood

Honorary secretary of Stanmore branch since 1949.

Mrs Boutwood has been responsible for running this active branch and has worked unstintingly during the past 25 years. Her drive and enthusiasm resulted in the 1974 lifeboat collection being the highest ever.

Mrs J. S. Goddard

Honorary treasurer of Mottram and Broadbottom guild since 1945; chairman since 1973.

Mrs Goddard has been a most loyal and devoted worker who for many years has been the main force on the committee. It is largely due to her enthusiasm that the guild has continued to flourish.

The late Mr A. W. Hawkes

Committee member of Ipswich branch since 1937; branch publicity officer.

Mr Hawkes had given long and enthusiastic service to the Institution, personally raising many hundreds of pounds, giving talks to various organisations and also making and selling 'novelty boats in bottles', the proceeds of which go into branch funds.

Mrs E. P. Hill

Honorary secretary of Gourrock guild since 1954.

Mrs Hill has been the mainstay of the Gourrock guild since 1954. The guild revenue has climbed annually in a most encouraging manner and, despite poor health, Mrs Hill continues to work as hard as ever for the Institution.

Mr J. Newman

Committee member of Hounslow branch since 1937; appeals secretary since 1967.

Mr Newman is a most loyal and hard working supporter of the lifeboat service, together with his wife, who was present to receive the honorary life governors' vellum. Their dedication to the lifeboat cause is well known.

Mr W. Penry Williams

Auditor of Caernarvon branch since 1939; honorary treasurer since 1940.

Mr Penry Williams has been auditor from the establishment of Caernarvon branch in 1939; the 'father' of this keen and energetic branch, he is a much loved and respected member. Although not a young man, he is still firmly in the saddle as honorary treasurer.

The late Mr W. C. Prethero

Committee member of Barry station branch since 1934.

Mr Prethero had been an 'honorary' member of Barry ladies' guild throughout its existence. He first started to collect for the Institution when he was 12, and later became a member of the crew of the pulling lifeboat *John Wesley*. Until his death he regularly attended the station branch committee meetings, also helping the guild at all its special efforts and flag days.

Mrs H. Slater

Honorary secretary of Ramsbottom branch since 1949.

Mrs Slater is a very hard working and enthusiastic honorary secretary, a position she has held for 25 years. She has devoted a considerable amount of time and energy in support of the lifeboat service.

Mr T. Taylor

Honorary secretary of Llandudno station branch since 1948.

Mr Taylor has been honorary secretary of this busy station branch for 26 years. Apart from carrying out these onerous duties he is very active in raising funds and it is mainly due to his enthusiasm that the revenue of the branch has steadily increased over the years.

Mr A. E. and Mrs M. Turner

New Romney and Romney Marsh Branch. Mrs M. Turner: honorary treasurer, 1953 to 1957; honorary secretary since 1957. Mr A. E. Turner: honorary treasurer since 1957.

The New Romney and Romney Marsh branch was formed in 1953 when Mrs Turner was appointed honorary treasurer. She held this position until 1957 when she handed over to Mr Turner. Since then this husband and wife team have given wonderful service to the lifeboat Institution. For the past 18 years Mrs Turner has undertaken many speaking engagements to further the Institution's cause. Mr Turner accompanies her at these functions in order to illustrate the talks with his lifeboat slides.

The Duke of Kent then presented six special honorary awards made by the Committee of Management. At the Festival Hall to receive the honorary life governors' vellum awarded to the late Major Osman Gabriel was his daughter, Mrs J. M. Crawshaw.

HONORARY LIFE GOVERNOR

Mr Jack Duvivier

For his valued assistance and advice during his service of 40 years with Messrs Lewis and Duvivier, the Institution's consulting engineers.

The late Major Osman Gabriel

For his generosity in donating the cost of two Rother class lifeboats stationed at Port Erin (Isle of Man) and Hoylake (Cheshire). His late wife, Mary Gabriel, also donated an Atlantic inshore lifeboat.

Sir Alec Rose, kt

For his valuable help in launching the Institution's membership scheme, his untiring efforts as chairman of the *Hampshire Rose* appeal and his many other activities in support of the RNLI.

Vice-Admiral Thomas R. Sargent III. USCG (Retd)

For his invaluable influence and assistance in developing and maintaining the excellent relationship that exists between the RNLI and the US Coast Guard.

THANKS OF THE INSTITUTION INSCRIBED ON VELLUM

Sir Hugh Wontner, GBE CVO

For his help and support during the 150th Anniversary Year (1974) while Lord Mayor of London.

GOLD BADGE

Mr R. L. Osborn, MBE

For his long and distinguished service with the Civil Service and Post Office Lifeboat Fund, organising the collections throughout the Civil Service in support of the RNLI.

STATUETTE

Sergeant Frank Elverson

For his considerable practical support as a collector on London flag days and also at the London International Boat Shows.

Next followed another of the many happy events of the day: the presentation to the President by Lieut. Commander J. A. Douglas, MBE RN, Chief Inspector of HM Coastguard, of an inscribed plaque from Her Majesty's Coastguard inscribed: '*Presented to the Royal National Life-boat Institution on the occasion of their 150th Anniversary as a tribute to their splendid record of saving life at sea 1824-1974*'.

Commander Swann then called upon the Right Honourable Peter Shore, Secretary of State for the Department of Trade, to propose the resolution. In doing so, Mr Shore spoke of the voluntary spirit of the RNLI:

'It is indeed a great pleasure and a privilege for me today to pay tribute to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution on behalf of Her Majesty's Government on completion of its 150th year of splendid service to humanity.

'It may seem superfluous at a gathering of this kind to refer to the maritime tradition of this country . . . For Britain, the sea has always been—and will continue to be—the great source of *national strength and security*. Nowadays it is more important to us than ever from a commercial and industrial standpoint and more of our people, of course, go to sea for pleasure; so that our need for an effective and dedicated search and rescue service is greater than ever before.

'It is well known that it is the obligation of all who are at sea to come to the aid, when required, of those in peril on the sea. It is only right that this brotherhood in adversity should extend to our shore-based rescue services whether these are voluntary, as with your Institution and the Auxiliary Coastguard, or whether they are publicly financed like the regular Coastguard and the armed services.

'The voluntary basis of the RNLI is sometimes questioned. But one has only to know our coastal towns and villages to realise how the voluntary spirit commands the loyalty of so many steadfast and courageous people who are members of the lifeboat crew. The red letters on the blue sweater are rightly looked upon as a sort of red badge of courage. And the lifeboatmen have the full support of all the many other voluntary workers all over the country who raise the funds which become ever more essential to support a modern lifeboat service.

'And it is increasingly a modern service: various new types of inshore and conventional boats are coming into operation, though more are needed. The desire to help our fellow men is something which it is surely right to harness to the cause of saving life at sea.'

Speaking of the need for good co-ordination between the RNLI, other ships and small craft, helicopters, long-range aircraft and the coast radio stations of the Post Office, which is the job of the Department of Trade, Mr Shore said:

'Although past performance is for the most part highly successful and praiseworthy, we have, over the past year, been reviewing the whole of our search and rescue services. And, of course, the representatives of your Institution have played a most valuable part in this new thinking.

'I am not yet in a position to announce the new developments which will follow this review but there is an emphasis on the need for even closer collaboration than in the past. A clearer definition has emerged of the nature of the co-ordinating role of the Coastguard and the obligations of all parties in the search and rescue services.

'In particular, we are now examining, in the closest collaboration and accord with your Committee and the officials of the Institution, ways in which the planning and operational functions of the Coastguard and this Institution can be brought more closely together. The object is to see that all our resources—and indeed those of other arms of the search and rescue services—are developed and used as effectively as possible.

'I would emphasize that, as envisaged, these developments would be fully consistent with the voluntary basis of your Institution. I believe that in this country we have a special talent for bringing together our voluntary and state-financed services in a smooth and fully cost-effective way.'

Mr Shore then said it was his pleasant duty to inform the Institution that congratulations had been expressed in both Houses of Parliament to the Institution on the attainment of its 150th Anniversary. Then, having moved the resolution:

'That this meeting fully recognising the important services of the Royal National Life-boat Institution in its national work of life-saving, desires to record its hearty appreciation of the gallantry of the coxswain and crews of the Institution's lifeboats, and its deep obligation to the

local committees, honorary secretaries and honorary treasurers of all station branches; to all other voluntary committees and supporters and to the honorary officers and thousands of voluntary members of the financial branches and the ladies' lifeboat guilds in the work of raising funds to maintain the service.'

... which was received with acclaim, Mr Shore presented to the Duke a magnificent silver salver inscribed: 'Presented by Her Majesty's Government to the Royal National Life-boat Institution on the occasion of its 150th anniversary in recognition of the many and valiant services rendered in saving life at sea, 1824-1974' ... with the comment:

'Of all the many awards which have been given over many years for gallantry at sea, I am sure there has been none so richly deserved.'

continued on page 21

1974 ACCOUNTS SUMMARY

Income

	£000's
General purpose legacies	1,721
Subscriptions and donations	2,176
Miscellaneous	266
Restricted funds	782
Total	4,945

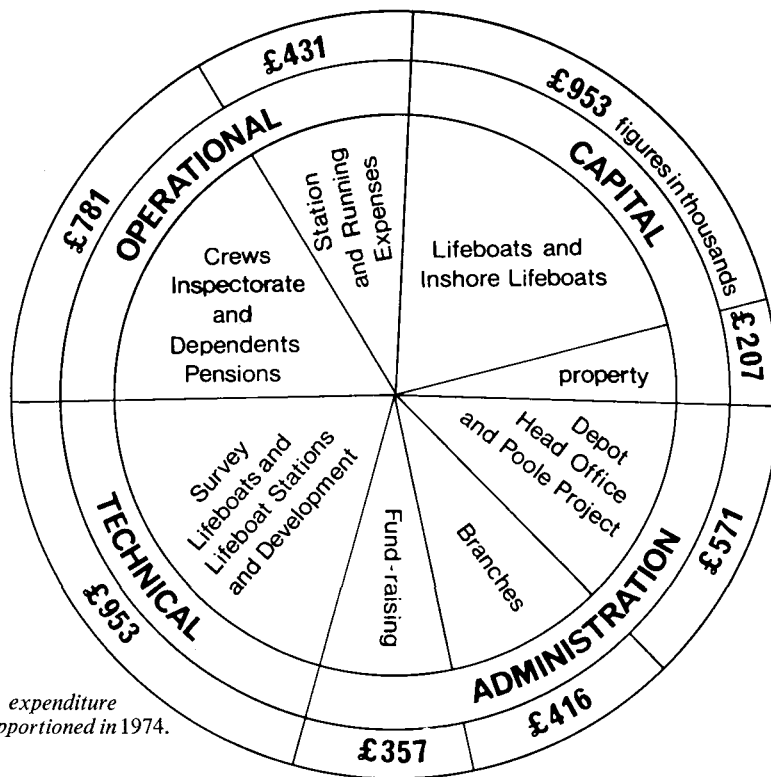
Expenditure

	£000's
Operational	1,212
Technical	953
Fund raising	773
Administration	571
Capital	1,160
Total	4,669
Balance transferred to reserve for capital expenditure	276

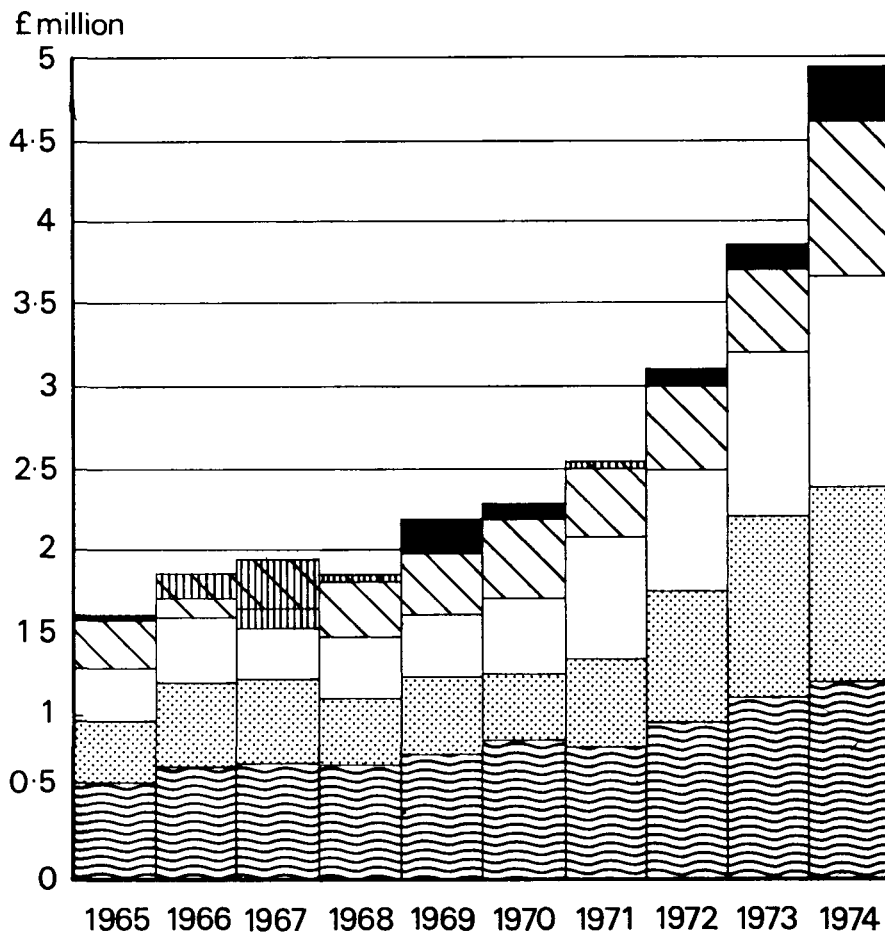
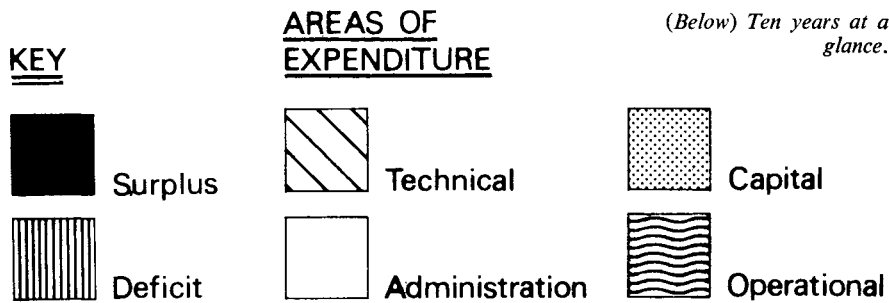
The Institution's expenditure for the year 1974 is displayed in the pie chart on the right. The diagram enables a comparison to be made of the volume of expenditure between the four main divisions of capital, operational, technical and administration items. Each of these main divisions has been further sub-divided where necessary to give a more detailed interpretation of expenditure.

The increasing cost of the lifeboat service over the past ten years is revealed in the histogram below. Each column is proportionately split up between the four main areas of expenditure and shows a surplus or deficit for each year as appropriate.

This year's operating surplus has been transferred to the Institution's reserves for capital expenditure, partially offsetting the realised and unrealised losses on investments caused by the general decline in the Stock Market in 1974.



How expenditure was apportioned in 1974.



Central Appeals Committee

THE CENTRAL APPEALS COMMITTEE met for its final meeting at the Royal Festival Hall on Thursday, May 8, following the annual general meeting. The CAC had been formed at a time when income was not balancing expenditure. From 1966 to 1968 the Institution incurred deficits totalling £550,000. The financial position was therefore serious and an immediate change in the financial trend was essential. All concerned rallied to give immediate help but the longer-term problem of recovering the deficit remained. This needed new money.

R. Norman Crumbie conceived the plan that this new money could be raised by mounting centrally organised appeals, preferably with the sponsorship of outside bodies but involving the

active support of branches, guilds and staff to the absolute minimum.

The Committee of Management approved that a central appeals committee be formed for the purpose of raising £550,000 of new money over a period of five years. The hope was expressed that, through its existing means, on average, the Institution's accounts could be kept in balance over this period so that, at the end of five years the financial position would be recovered.

At the same time, the Committee of Management also asked the CAC to assume a fund-raising advisory responsibility apart from the functional work and this responsibility continued until the formation of the fund raising committee as a sub-committee of the Committee of Management.

The CAC's area of working comprised England, Wales, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

Representatives of each fund raising district in England and Wales were nominated, generally by the District Office, to become members of the committee. Other people were invited for their special connections and skills. The Committee of Management was also represented and the Director became a member.

Circumstances of working were extremely difficult at the outset because the Institution's staff was also fully engaged in the immediate problem of raising additional funds and branches

and guilds were fully committed with their own events.

The CAC organised or helped to organise the following events:

1971	National sponsored walk, No. 1	£33,949.50
	National balloon race	2,587.81
	Robert Brothers Circus tour, collections	1,160.80
1972	National sponsored walk, No. 2	22,311.60
	Robert Brothers Circus tour, collections	520.47
	Tesco/Green Shield Stamps project, extending into 1973	4,126.60
	National sponsored swim, organised with the Amateur Swimming Association and Wales ASA	20,286.50
1973	Schools walks at the request of Jimmy Savile, extending into 1974	3,350.65
	Civic heads appeal	31,630.00
	Robert Brothers Circus tour, collections	388.10
1974	International swimmers project sponsored by ASA	596.41
	Sponsored knit-in 'Operation Lifeboat', Scout Association	1,956.00
	Guides project, the Guide Friendship Fund	25,326.00

Although the CAC did not raise the full amount of its target the Institution's financial position has, nevertheless, been restored.

Apart from the money raised, the CAC may be said to have also been responsible for pointing the way to raising new money through centrally organised appeals on a national or district basis; and encouraging branch and guild participation in certain events, particularly national sponsored walks, thus enabling them to raise larger sums of money, to which end co-ordination on a wider basis materially assisted.

The committee expressed its appreciation and thanks to the numerous organisations which either sponsored events or gave material help and advice; the many branches and guilds for their help, either directly, in organising events, or in giving support to local committees of national organisations running projects in aid of RNLI funds; the staff of the Institution and particularly to Mrs E. Magee, the secretary of the committee whose hours of working have far exceeded the part-time nature of her employment and whose enthusiasm and efficiency have done much towards the success of projects; and to the Committee of Management for being given the opportunity to be of service.

The CAC hopes that the achievements and the lessons learned may be of use in the future. It has been a privilege to its members to have played some small part in helping the Institution's work.

Augustine Courtauld: Poole



A force 6 to 7 wind was blowing when Poole's new 44' class lifeboat was named *Augustine Courtauld* after the well-known explorer by his sister Lady Rayner at Poole Harbour Y.C. Marina on Wednesday, May 7; caught up by wild gale force gusts, the words of prayers and hymns were carried away to seaward and true point was given to the firing of maroons at the start of the ceremony and the slipping of the lifeboat's moorings at the end. Augustine Courtauld's brother, W. P. Courtauld, a member of the Committee of Management, handed over the lifeboat to the RNLI; his son, the Rev. A. C. C. Courtauld, led the interdenominational service of dedication. Commander F. R. H. Swann, CBE RNVR, RNLI chairman, spoke of Augustine Courtauld as a man of quiet manner but great determination; he was a fine small boat sailor. Poole's new lifeboat is the gift of W. P. Courtauld, the Mayor of Poole's appeal and public subscription.

Operation Lifeboat

THE SCOUTS' GOOD TURN
FOR THE RNLI

ON MAY 8, 1975, at the RNLI annual meeting held in the Royal Festival Hall, London, a cheque for £91,363.72 was handed over by four young members of The Scout Association (see page 21) to cover funds raised for the lifeboat service during one of the largest national projects ever undertaken by Scouts. Money was still coming in and the figure has now passed £93,000.

Code-named 'Operation Lifeboat', this money-raising effort involved practically the whole of the United Kingdom's 200,000-strong Scout section.

The idea for a national Scout 'good turn' was first discussed in 1972 at the National Scout Board Conference. [It had by then been considered by the RNLI's 1974 Working Party at the suggestion of one of its members, Norman Crumbie.—Editor]. The following spring, at the Assistant County Commissioners' Conference held in Liverpool it was suggested that perhaps some form of activity could be undertaken to coincide with the RNLI's 150th Anniversary celebrations due to take place in 1974.

From the various proposals put forward at this meeting 'Operation Lifeboat' emerged: a weekend of fund-raising activities to be carried out by Scouts, the proceeds of which would enable the RNLI to purchase a new lifeboat to add to its fleet of rescue



First Cuffley Scout troop raised money by building a paper 'mountain'—15 tons of waste paper and card. Photograph by courtesy of Hertfordshire Mercury.

East Reading District Scout Council organised 'Operation Sealion', a sponsored paddle against the clock from Bristol to Reading, along the Kennet and Avon Canal. 120 Scouts, in relays, got their 12' aluminium boat along the 90 miles in 46½ hours.

Photograph by courtesy of Fotosparks, Reading.



craft. A date was set: October 5 and 6, 1974. The exact form that the activities should take was left to the discretion of individual Scout Counties, Districts and Groups.

Shortly after this, the Movement's own magazine, *Scouting*, carried news of the project and with the help of Assistant County and District Commissioners (Scouts) the story broke through to local level. Everywhere Scouts responded with tremendous zeal. Soon reports were filtering in of

youngsters who intended to take part in sponsored canoe races, litter clearances, sponsored swims, Scout variety shows... and even sponsored silences!

The weekend of October 5 and 6 saw Britain's Scouts out in force. Hundreds of Harrow Scouts organised a sponsored walk around Harrow Hill in Middlesex to raise money for the appeal (incidentally, a total of £2,500 was gained through their particular efforts); Scouts from the Blackpool District took part in sponsored conservation work in Beacon Fell country park, raising over £1,000 for the fund.

More than £600 was contributed by a group of Scottish Scouts from the Forres and Kinloss District in Moray who towed a salmon cobble from Findhorn to Forres, a journey of some 10 miles; Scouts in Blackburn released 5,500 balloons in a sponsored balloon race held in the town—one balloon soared 1,300 miles to Gibraltar winning first prize in the race for its owner; Scouts from a local Bangor Troop in North Wales took part in a sponsored hill walk, and while a group of Wiltshire Scouts were engaged in a sponsored cleaning session of the Devizes stretch of the Kennet and Avon Canal they recovered a haul of silver-plated cutlery thought to be the proceeds of a burglary—their 'good turn' for the RNLI resulted in an additional 'good turn' for local police!—MAUREEN WEST, *The Scout Association*.

The Duke of Kent, President of the RNLI, receives the 'large' cheque for £91,363.72 from four young Scouts representing Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England: it was one of the happiest moments at the 1975 Annual General Meeting.



Family Profile

THE TARTS AND OILLERS OF DUNGENESS

by Joan Davies



Doris and Ben Tart: the story of the Dungeness lifeboat station is not only the story of their boat—it is the story of their own people.
Photograph by courtesy of the Kent Messenger.

THEY CAME FROM FRANCE, the Tarts of Dungeness. They were Huguenots and it was in the days before religious toleration. So when persecution became too great they took to their boats, being fishing people, and sailed across the Channel to England. Some journeyed on, right inland, but some stayed to settle that little world of wind and shingle and fishing boats that is Dungeness. In those days their name was written Tarte, but the final 'e' had disappeared by the 1850s.

They had looked to the sea for refuge, and in their turn, from generation to generation, have made the safety of seafarers in peril on the waters of the English Channel their concern.

Side by side with the Tart family have stood the Oillers, who came from Cornwall to join the fishing community of Dungeness. The story of the two families and of the lifeboat is inextricably intermingled; both men and women have given long years of service either in the crew, or as launchers, or in the administration of the station.

1974, the Institution's 150th anniversary, was to be a climax to the story. It was, of course, a year of celebration for lifeboat people; it was the year of the silver medal service in hurricane force winds to *MV Merc Texco*; and it was the last year for the last Tart in the Dungeness boat—Tom Richard 'Ben' Tart. Ben had joined the crew in 1938, a young man in his early twenties; he subsequently served as bowman from 1946, as second coxswain from 1947 and as coxswain from 1965. When he retired on January 5, 1975, it was the end of an era.

Ben and his wife Doris (an Oiller by birth) can recall so much of the history of the Dungeness lifeboat station; it is not only the story of their boat, it is the story of their own people. Reaching retirement, they can look back down the years with peace and pride—and pleasure. 'We've done a service, of course we have', said Ben, 'but the RNLI has given us so much, too. We've been to

places we'd never have gone to, met people we'd never have met . . . and taken part in some wonderful occasions'. 'The service at St Paul's', added Doris, recalling the Year of the Lifeboat. 'And the Guildhall dinner . . . that was the best day of my life.' To meet Ben and Doris Tart is to come face to face with happiness and contentment.

At the latter end of the last century both families held positions of responsibility in the boat. One of Ben's great uncles, Robin Tart, was second coxswain, another, Alfred, was in the crew (he was to take over as second coxswain in 1897), and Ben's grandfather, William 'Uncle Bill' Tart, was head launcher. Doris's grandfather, Charles Oiller, was in the crew too. Those were the days when the fishermen took over the boat from the coastguards. 'They kind of ousted the coastguards', explained Ben, 'and there was actual fighting . . . you see, in those days the fishermen and the coastguards didn't hit it off. It's no secret. Everyone knows that years ago these old fishermen did a lot of smuggling . . . but these old people couldn't have made any money, because our family never had any money . . . when I was young, in the '20s, after the first world war, we had a job to get a loaf of bread . . .'

The Dungeness lifeboat still has a crew of fishermen and, needless to say, nowadays the relationship between them and the Coastguard is of the friendliest and co-operation couldn't be better!

Then, to return to the past, there was Doris's other grandfather, Isaac Bonguarde Tart (the echo of France still lingered . . .), one of the Dungeness lifeboat crew who received medals from the King of Sweden 'for extraordinary exertions in saving life on the occasion of the stranding of the Swedish barque *Aeolus*' on November 11, 1891. The medal is treasured with other awards made to the family.

Like the gold badge presented in 1953 for 50 years service as a launcher to Mrs. Ellen Tart, Ben's mother; and the gold

badge (1953) and bar for 60 years service (1963) presented to Miss Mabel Tart, Doris's aunt. It is traditional at Dungeness for the womenfolk to help with the arduous, and often hazardous, task of launching and recovery of this beach-launched lifeboat.

The lifeboat stands high up on the shingle headland of Dungeness. She starts on her way down a slipway, but the last part of her journey to the sea is made over heavy wooden skids so placed that they will be in her pathway even though she is deflected from her straight course by the wind. Experience, good judgment, teamwork and great exertion all play their part. If the boat cannot get away first time, she may have to be hauled back and start again—and someone will have to enter the breaking seas and connect the winch wire to the forefoot. On return from service she will have to be hauled up in the same way.

Ben remembers what it was like in the days of the sailing lifeboats (before 1933). 'There was no electric winch as there is today. It was all done by hand with an old windlass. It took 30 people, and it took you two hours to heave the boat up. I can remember many a time when I was a kid and could hardly reach the bars, walking round and round there for a couple of hours, getting the boat up, wind and rain. It was terrible . . . but we always used to get a full quota of helpers in those days, simply because nobody had got any money. The fishing was on the floor . . .'

From the early 1900s to 1965 the greater part of the crew was made up of Tarts and Oillers. The sailing boat needed a crew of 15. In the first motor lifeboat, which came into service in 1933, there was a crew of 10. Now there is a crew of seven. There were, of course, other men and other families: the father of Albert 'Honker' Haines, the present coxswain, joined the crew around 1920, for instance, and John Thomas was in the crew in the '50s and '60s—he is the father of Peter Thomas who was awarded

the bronze medal for gallantry on the *Merc Texco* service last year. But Tarts and Oillers predominated—at times they formed 90% of the crew. They appear as coxswains, second coxswains, bowmen, motor mechanics, signalmen... For the boys of the family their greatest ambition was to join their fathers and uncles in the crew. Members of the families also served as honorary secretaries, and who can say how many added their weight on shore?

Doris's father, Douglas Oiller, was coxswain for 31 years, from 1916 to 1947. He was awarded the bronze medal in 1929 for his share in the service to the barge *Marie May* of Rochester. Three years later he was accorded the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum when the No. 2 pulling and sailing boat went to the help of a London barge, *Shamrock*, in a full gale. The thanks of the Institution were also accorded to the women of Dungeness for their gallant services in helping to launch the lifeboat. Thirty-seven launchers, 14 of them women, pushed the 42' long boat, one of the largest and heaviest in the RNLI fleet, down the skids to the sea. Twelve other women, wives and sisters of the men launchers, helped too. At the first attempt, so violent was the wind, that a

sudden gust blew the lifeboat right off the skids, on to the beach. She was hauled up again by the windlass, the skids replaced, and at the second attempt, although wet to the skin and hardly able to keep their feet on the loose stones, the launchers succeeded in getting her away.

From 1947 to 1965, George Tart, Ben's cousin, was coxswain. Those were the years Ben Tart was second coxswain. Robert Tart, George's son, was in the crew during this period, and so was James Tart, and Arthur, John, Sydney and Alexander Oiller.

Arthur Oiller was to be one of the crew in the *Merc Texco* service in 1974; now he is the only one of the two families who is still in the boat.

George Tart was coxswain at the time of the great Channel gale of 1956, when, on the last weekend of July the fury of the wind rose to hurricane force. It was the height of the holiday season so that, as well as commercial shipping, many yachts and pleasure boats were caught out; on top of that, the Royal Ocean Racing Club fleet was at sea on the Channel Race. From late evening of Saturday, July 28, the RNLI experienced its busiest 24 hours on record: there were 52 launches from 38 stations:

107 lives were rescued and 12 other people were landed.

Dungeness lifeboat launched three times between noon and midnight on Sunday, July 29. The first launch, at 1255, was to motor vessel *Teeswood* of Middlesbrough, in distress 4 miles east of Dungeness. By the time the lifeboat arrived, at 1330, *Teeswood* had capsized. ss *BP Distributor* was standing by and had picked up six survivors; the lifeboat rescued a further nine. The height of the waves, together with flying spray and rain, made it extremely difficult to find the survivors in the water and rescuing the men, none of whom was capable of helping himself, was no easy task. At one stage, when the boat was in the middle of a group of survivors, the propeller became fouled by wreckage. Motor Mechanic Alexander Oiller immediately went down into the engine-room, uncoupled the shaft and, by turning it by hand in the reverse direction, cleared the obstruction.

For this service the bronze medal was awarded to Coxswain George Tart and the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to Motor Mechanic Alexander Oiller and Crew Member W. Thomas, who for 1½ hours had tried to revive one man with



Father and grandfathers . . . (seated, l. to r.) George 'Wener' Tart (George Tart's father), Jack Brignall, Alfred Tart, John Pope, Charles Williams, Douglas Oiller (Doris' father); (standing, front row, l. to r.) Charles Oiller (Doris' grandfather), William 'Beefier' Thomas (Peter Thomas' grandfather), Old Jackner Oiller, Jack 'Chokum' Oiller, Tom Richard Tart (Ben's father); (standing, back row, third from left) William 'Uncle Bill' Tart (Ben's grandfather); (fifth, sixth and seventh from left) Fred and Bill Tart (Isaac Tart's sons) and Peter Oiller.

Mothers and aunts . . . (seated, l. to r.) Miss Nellie Tart (Doris' mother), Miss Dorothy Tart, Miss Amelia Tart (Doris' aunt); (standing, l. to r.) Miss Lottie Tart, Mrs Deer, Miss Madge Tart (Doris' aunt) many years later to be awarded the gold badge and bar, Mrs Rebecca Tart (Mrs Serina Fair's mother), Mrs Welfare and Miss Annie Tart.



No comment!





At 1658 on February 11, 1973, Dungeness lifeboat, Mabel E. Holland, launched on service to Merc Texco in a 70 knot wind.



Swept round broadside on, twice, by the heavy seas . . .

artificial respiration while he and his patient were being washed about on deck by heavy seas. Also in the crew were Acting Second Coxswain Albert Haines, Acting Bowman Frederick Richardson, Assistant Mechanic Sydney Oiller and Crew Members John Thomas, Robert Tart and Arthur Oiller.

Ben Tart was appointed coxswain in 1965. It has been his experience that at Dungeness, standing out as it does into the increasingly busy shipping lanes of the approaches to the Straits of Dover, almost as many launches are to ships in collision as to those overtaken by storm. *Mabel E. Holland*, the station's 42' Beach boat, cannot be fitted with radar, so, in fog, navigation has to be by dead reckoning. Ben has his own method of searching for collision casualties in fog. He stations the crew on lookout, two forward, two amidships and two aft and tells them not only to use their eyes but their noses as well. Where there is a collision, oil will have been spilt and the smell of it will drift down to leeward. As soon as anyone smells oil, therefore, the lifeboat is headed straight up wind and will home in infallibly on the casualty. It is so obvious—when someone has pointed it out!

It is not possible for Dungeness lifeboat to launch in the hour or two around low water; the exact timing depends on the state of the shingle beach, the formation of which is continually changing with the movement of the sea. Every day of the ten years he was coxswain, Ben Tart kept in his mind the tide changes, and the state of the shifting shingle, so that, should a call come, he would know to the minute whether the boat could launch. There has never, however, been a serious call when the lifeboat hasn't been able to get away.

Thinking back to the evening of February 11, 1974, when *Mabel E. Holland* went out in hurricane force winds to take a badly injured man off *Merc Texco*, Ben said, 'Strange, isn't it? I've been in that lifeboat all these years, and yet I was in my last year before I came to these conditions. We've

had some rough old do's, of course we have, but never as severe as that. If you ask anyone down here they will tell you that it was the worst weather that the Dungeness lifeboat has ever launched in, in living memory. And I don't fancy it would have been done in an old sailing boat—you just couldn't have got away from the beach. So it was the roughest weather in which a lifeboat has ever gone out down here . . .

'It was uncanny to steer the boat', he continued. 'I would say that the top 3 feet of water were going along with the wind. It was very confused and there wasn't any weight on the wheel. You couldn't feel anything. It was strange. I think there was *air* in the water. You'd have to ask some scientist to tell you whether, when it blows hard, there is much air in the top 3 feet of the sea. Because you could actually turn the wheel over with your little finger . . .

'Going alongside—that was the dangerous part, because the ship was rolling down right on top of us. She was stopped, but she was blowing through

the water broadside at, I would say, about 2 to 3 knots, and of course rolling down on us. If you got under her stern when it was coming down it would smash your boat and kill half your crew, perhaps. Sometimes you are 8 or 9' from the vessel and then the next few seconds you are banging up against her again. When a big sea hits the ship, and you are on the lee side of her, she comes lurching towards you and has the greater speed on impact; this gives you a shove broadside. Then, of course, when she rolls back, she doesn't come to the lee so fast . . . you know, in between the troughs. This is where young Peter did such a marvellous job in jumping aboard. He had to watch his chance and when the ship rolled down on us he made a jump and grabbed on to the rails and our boys gave him a push and he was aboard. When the ship rolled right down, her deck came nearly down to ours; then, when she rolled back again, you got half the bottom up, her side right out . . .

'When it came to getting the injured

The naming of Mabel E. Holland, 1957: John Oiller, Fred Richardson, Tom Richard 'Ben' Tart, James Tart, Robert Tart, Jack 'Son' Oiller, Ernie Cawdron (RNLI District Engineer), John Thomas (Peter Thomas' father), George Tart (Coxswain), Arthur Oiller and Albert 'Honker' Haines (the present Coxswain).





... she had to reverse off the beach. Launchers stood by to re-connect winch wire, should it be necessary.



Lifeboat away! It was the roughest weather in which the Dungeness boat has ever been launched.

Photographs by courtesy of G. T. Paine.

man across, Alec, our mechanic, did what I asked him with the engines and I was concentrating on positioning the boat, keeping her as close as I could. The rest of our boys—very good seamen, all of them—watched their chance and said when to let the man come. As she rolled down they all put out their arms, and when he touched they shouted, “Right! We’ve got him!” Then Peter jumped aboard when he got a chance. And this was in the darkness, which made it more difficult. It was a lovely job. It went fine. We were lucky. On the way out, one of our crew said to me, “You aren’t half having some luck, Tart!” It’s not only judgement—you’ve got to have some luck when you do these jobs, or the Lord on your side.’

Doris was among the shore helpers: ‘When they first came back from there, I didn’t want them to come ashore. I thought it was too rough. The sea was tremendous...’

Ben took up the story again: ‘I said to Honker, our second coxswain, “What do you think about it? Think we can make it? What do you suggest?” “It’s up to you”, he says. “You do what you think.” So I says, “Right, if nobody don’t mind, then in we’re going!”’

All the threads of the story of the Tarts and the Oillers seemed to come together on the night of February 13, 1975, when the lifeboat people of Romney Marsh met in the town hall of Lydd for the presentation by the Mayor of vellum awards for the *Merc Texco* service. Commander F. R. H. Swann, chairman of the Committee of Management, was there, and Dr. Geoffrey Hale, another member of the Committee, Commander Bruce Cairns, chief of operations, Lieut. Alan Tate, divisional inspector south east, at that time, and other representatives of the RNLI as well as visitors from other stations.

The silver medal for gallantry had been awarded to Ben Tart and the bronze medal to young Peter Thomas. The thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were presented to Second Coxswain Albert Haines, Motor Mechanic Alec Clements and Crew

Members William Richardson, Colin Haines and Arthur Oiller. There was yet another presentation: the thanks of the Institution to the launchers and shore helpers for their efficiency and dedication to duty in the worst beach conditions ever experienced at Dungeness: Ronald Oiller (head launcher), Graham Hancock (winchman), T. Dominy (assistant winchman), Michael Steward (shore attendant), Ex-Coxswain George Tart (telephone messenger) and shore helpers Leonard Oiller, B. Isted, John Thomas Snr, John Thomas Jnr, Patrick Richardson, Ronald Haines, Tony Isted, Frederick Voller, Jeremy Oiller, Eric Oiller, Robert E. Oiller, William J. Oiller, A. Padgett, David Jones, Mrs Joan Bates, Mrs Doris Tart, Mrs Janet Hancock, Mrs Mai Steward, Miss Kim Bates, Mrs Dilys Oiller, Mrs Pauline Fair. Ex-lifeboatmen, wives, fathers, mothers, girls, boys . . . the old, the

young . . . the people of Dungeness. The vellum was received on behalf of the launchers by Mrs Serena Fair, who holds the gold badge for 50 years’ service.

It was a happy, family evening, the celebration after a job well done, with a table of home baked refreshments down the middle of the hall as soon as the presentations were made: and so much to talk about. There were a few impromptu speeches, too, the last one from Ben Tart:

‘When I go up to get my medal, I will not feel that it belongs to me more than to anyone else in the crew. As I see it, the RNLI has recognised the service we—the whole crew—did that day, by giving me a silver medal. And therefore, when I receive this medal, although it is mine and it will have my name engraved upon it, I shall consider it is for the whole crew for what they did that day.’

AGM

(from page 15)

At this point four Scouts, representing Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, walked down the centre aisle and up on to the platform to present the Duke with a very large cheque—large in every way, for it measured about 4’ x 3’ for a start! It was for £91,363.72, the greater part of the result of ‘Operation Lifeboat’, described on page 17; the money was, however, still coming in in a remarkable way, and the total has now topped £93,000. It represented the Scout Association’s contribution to ‘The Year of the Lifeboat’—almost 50p per Scout, and is to be used for the payment for a new offshore lifeboat. A wonderful effort.

To conclude the proceedings of the afternoon, Mr Alan Burn, a member of the Committee of Management, proposed a vote of thanks. In doing so, he pointed out that in ‘The Year of the Lifeboat’ the Lifeboat service had rendered services to no less than 29 other

countries and, in place of a more formal speech, he ended with a poem written by his brother, Michael Burn:

*You without enemies, remember the
sea’s enmity.
You who have minds, remember the
endless mindless
Dawn convulsion of waves. You who
want causes,
Remember the lee-shore, remember
coxswain and crew.*

*Close to your fires, remember the
flares in the fog;
In bed, the backwash, and under roofs
the rocks;
Safe in your homes, the shout the
frozen
Held up to hail the last, the life-boat
hope.*

*Remember the keels a hundred and
fifty years
Shire horse and tractor have drawn
down sand, down shingle
To haul from gales a hundred thousand
souls.
You who live safe, remember the ones
who saved them.*

Safety at Sea

JOHN ARCHER, Head of the Marine Division,
Department of Trade, reviews BRITAIN'S RECORD

SPEAKING AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, London, at a combined meeting with the Greenwich Forum on February 25, John Archer, head of the Department of Trade's Marine Division, said that despite the growth in the risks facing ships at sea today, the British merchant fleet's casualty record was very good by international standards. While the UK ranked third in world tonnage of merchant ships after Liberia and Japan, the average tonnage lost by Britain in relation to tonnage at risk from 1964 to 1973 was the lowest of the seven largest merchant fleets for which comparable figures were available and over three times better than the world average.

Accidental deaths of crews had fluctuated between 140 in 1966 and 49 in 1971 and showed a considerable improvement compared with pre-war years. It was necessary to strive constantly to maintain and improve upon this casualty record, and safeguard seafarers against old and new dangers. Britain was engaged in a great deal of rethinking on safety equipment for ships, on devices for alerting and locating missing ships, and on the updating of the training of officers and crews.

Accidental deaths among crews of

fishing vessels from 1964 to 1973 had been in the range of 22 to 44 a year, though 1968 was a bad year with the loss of three trawlers in northern waters and the death of 80 men. Tragically 1974 was a bad year, with the loss of *Gaul* and 36 lives. To improve fishing vessel safety, the Department was introducing new fishing vessel surveys on a compulsory basis this year. It would involve the survey of some 2,300 vessels, and would require a very big effort by the Department's surveyors. Mr Archer was confident, however, that taken together with the new radio rules for fishing vessels, there would be a very significant advance in fishing vessel safety.

Mr Archer also referred to the traffic separation scheme in the Dover Straits and the introduction of the Channel Navigation Information Service in 1972 and said there had been a dramatic decline in the number of collisions in fog—from ten in 1968 to two in 1974. However, there were still an average of three or four collisions a year in clear weather.

About 350 ships passed through the Dover Straits each day, and the number of 'rogue' vessels going the wrong way down the lanes had halved to about

five per day, though there had been less improvement with crossing traffic. He expected that when the new international collision rules came into force in 1976, requiring countries to make it compulsory for their ships to obey traffic separation schemes, these numbers would come down. In the meantime the Department prosecuted British ship owners who breached the rules, and did their best to follow up the 'rogue' vessels with their owners and overseas governments.

Oil spill incidents were showing a welcome downward trend; on the other hand HM Coastguard and the search and rescue services had had their busiest year ever in 1974 with the number of incidents up 16 per cent on 1973.

Recently there had been a major review of the organisation of search and rescue and the Coastguard itself, and the findings were still under examination. The emphasis was on defining the Coastguard's co-ordination role more clearly and making it work even more effectively by better integration of the services. He did not believe our casualty figures for small craft were any larger in percentage terms than in countries like the USA and France that had put more emphasis on regulation and enforcement.

In conclusion, Mr Archer claimed, without complacency, that the British marine safety record matched our great maritime tradition and that the organisation was geared to tackle new tasks effectively. Inevitably, it was the shipwreck that hit the headlines while the care and attention paid to good seamanship by our mariners and the highly-professional work of shore-based staff tended to go unnoticed.



LIFEBOAT PEOPLE

As a memorial to Motor Mechanic R. F. 'Bob' Appleby of Filey, who collapsed and died on June 23, 1974, just as the lifeboat was about to be launched on service, Filey lifeboatmen are adding a rest room, changing room and look-out to the boathouse. Donations which have come in, unasked, from all parts of the country provided finance for materials. The crew, who include a builder, bricklayer, plumber, electrician, two joiners, a publican and a schoolmaster, are doing the work themselves.

Photograph by courtesy of Paul Hines.

It is with deep regret that we announce the following deaths:

February: Mrs Annie Fitton who for 25 years was a member of Audenshaw branch, acting as treasurer for 18 years and then as assistant treasurer.

April: Cyril Perry, chairman of Clacton-on-Sea station branch since 1971. Mr Perry was assistant honorary secretary from 1953 to 1954 and honorary secretary from 1954 to 1961 and 1970 to 1971.

May: Fergus Dearden, FCA, honorary secretary of Lytham-St Anne's station branch for 13 years from 1938.

Mrs Mary Ann Hall, Lady Mayoress of Bradford, who has supported her husband, the Lord Mayor, so wholeheartedly in his lifeboat appeal.

A. W. Hawkes, who worked for the RNLI since 1947 and had just been awarded the gold badge (see page 13). He received his gold badge from the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, the Earl of Stradbroke, a few days before his death.

Rescued ?

My first survivor from the Sea

by A. G. L. Hardy

IT WAS THE YEAR I joined the lifeboat crew, and the second world war was nearly upon us. It was a bright early summer morning with a brisk breeze and I was sailing my dinghy through wavelets sparkling with the sun's jewels on their crests.

Such was the day I made my first rescue.

Half a mile to leeward, clear against the cloudless blue sky, a dozen herring gulls were wheeling, diving and effortlessly soaring to plunge again with triumphant cries. Summoned by their clamour and intrigued by their urgent endeavour, I put up my helm and bore down for the excitement. With my approach the gulls circled higher, their cries dying as they reluctantly abandoned their determined efforts, but they stayed to watch for a short time until

the more urgent business of the day was remembered.

A brownish shapeless bundle was there. I rounded into the wind, the way came off my boat, and I was alongside.

From the pathetic, bedraggled bundle glared a pair of fierce eyes, with a ferocious determination to ward off the new threat and daunting my first impulse to lift it on board.

Grabbing a spare jersey, I dropped it over the drowning bird, scooped her up and laid her on the floor boards, where she remained recovering while I trimmed the sails and set course back to the beach.

Having dried out a little she made a landlubberly scramble into the bow and dozed off. I recognised her as the hen of a pair of peregrine falcons which nested high on the sheer cliffs west of Anvil Point Lighthouse, and I was relieved to see that she was not badly

A. G. L. (Lew) Hardy is a member of the Dorset Hardy family which moved into the Purbecks in the 1750's and which has been concerned with the Swanage lifeboat station ever since its formation a hundred years ago, in 1875. His great, great, uncle, William Masters, was the first coxswain of Charlotte Mary, the first Swanage lifeboat. His great grandfather, William Masters Hardy, built the original lifeboat house and slipway and his grandfather, George Hardy, made the alterations to boathouse and slipway necessary for

injured and would survive her ordeal.

She was carried home and housed in a large meat safe, with a meal of raw meat and fresh water. The next day her dignity had returned, despite her dishevelled and bedraggled appearance. The day after, preened and with her pride restored, she haughtily demanded release.

The door opened—she was gone.

I saw the pair together before I joined the Royal Navy, to be away from the Isle of Purbeck for the war years. On my return I missed my peregrine falcons, and was saddened to learn that the Royal Air Force had found it necessary to shoot our native falcons to safeguard the messenger pigeons returning home with their vital messages.

I have not seen a pair of peregrine falcons since, and regret that fate was not kinder to my first rescued survivor from the sea.

the first motor lifeboat in 1928. Lew Hardy himself joined the Swanage crew in 1939. He was second coxswain from 1946 to 1952 and has been the deputy launching authority for about 20 years. His brother R. J. (Ron) Hardy took over from him as second coxswain and is now the present coxswain. Two uncles and a cousin were also members of the crew for many years. In the old pulling boat days (15 in the crew) his grandfather was heard to exclaim, 'Ah, begger it! The lifeboat guns! There goes all my firm!'

I give and bequeath . . .

READERS WILL FIND below suggested clauses covering bequests to the Royal National Life-boat Institution which may be of assistance to their solicitors in preparing their wills, should they decide to remember the Institution in this way.

The Institution is still very dependent upon such help in carrying out its work, and while we hope that any help given to us in this way will not materialise for many years, we shall be more than grateful to our friends for their intended generosity.

The most useful gift to us is a bequest to be used at the discretion of the RNLI, but you may also provide that your bequest be used for a new lifeboat (which may be named after you, if you wish) or be put towards the cost of a new lifeboat with other bequests if your bequest is not alone sufficient (in which case a commemorative plaque bearing your name will be mounted in the lifeboat). Such bequests are worded as follows:

General purposes

(i.e. this includes the maintenance of the lifeboat fleet and lifeboat stations, research and development, service awards to crew members, pensions to their widows and

other expenditure necessary to provide for the lifeboat service).

I give and bequeath to the Royal National Life-boat Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck, of West Quay Road, Poole Dorset, BH15 1HZ, Incorporated by Royal Charter, the sum of £ for the general purposes of the said Institution, and I declare that the said sum shall be paid free of duty and tax, and that the receipt of the Treasurer or other proper officer shall be a sufficient discharge therefor.

For a lifeboat

I give and bequeath to the Royal National Life-boat Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck, of West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ, Incorporated by Royal Charter, the sum of £ for the provision of a lifeboat to be known as and I declare that the said sum shall be paid free of duty and tax, and that the receipt of the Treasurer or other proper officer shall be a sufficient discharge therefor.

Towards a lifeboat

I give and bequeath to the Royal National Life-boat Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck, of West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ, Incorporated by Royal Charter, the sum of £ to-

wards the provision of a lifeboat and I declare that the said sum shall be paid free of duty and tax and that the receipt of the Treasurer or other proper officer shall be a sufficient discharge therefor.

Bequest of the residue of an estate

I give the whole of my estate not otherwise disposed of by this my Will (subject to and after payment of my funeral and testamentary expenses) to the Royal National Life-boat Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck, of West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ for the general purposes of the said Institution and I declare that the receipt of the Treasurer or other proper officer shall be a sufficient discharge therefor.

Note:

In case of difficulty and particularly if you wish to leave a part of your estate to the Institution or if you wish your bequest to be earmarked for a specific purpose we would recommend you to consult your own solicitor or write for further information to the Director, The Royal National Life-boat Institution, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ.

All in the day's work . . .

An advertisement for a fleet mechanic for the RNLI, as it appeared in a Dorset paper, stated that the duties include: 'maintenance of life-goats.'

Shoreline Section

SINCE THE VERY START of the lifeboat service, women have played an important part in its existence. If there was only one Grace Darling, there were dozens of women who helped to launch the lifeboats in early days—and there are still those who play this part today.

As wives, mothers or sisters to lifeboat crews, many know and have known the agony of waiting for their loved ones to return from a service in stormy seas. Hundreds more have helped to form branches and guilds consistently raising a large percentage of the funds needed to maintain the lifeboat service.

This year two lady members have been elected to the Committee of Management: Lady Norton and Mrs Georgina Keen. Both have worked for the Lifeboat service for many years.

And now over 20% of new Shoreline enrolments are from ladies wanting to ensure a steady, annual income to Institution funds.

We are happy to introduce here just four of our lady Shoreline members illustrating the very wide age range of our membership and the great variety of reasons for wanting to support our cause:

Mrs M. Moulin, Membership No. 57660.

Mrs Moulin's husband is a chief officer in the Merchant Navy serving on

the P and O line. Mrs Moulin herself has travelled with her husband on several occasions and knows what it is to be in heavy seas.

An active member of the New Milton and Barton branch, Hampshire, Mrs Moulin found after her son was born she had less time to help with branch events; so she decided instead to help by becoming a regular subscriber, through Shoreline.

Mrs D. Raymond, Membership No. 57135.

Mrs Raymond enrolled at Earls Court Boat Show some years ago. Her husband has always been interested in sailing and regularly competed in national dinghy sailing championships. For 17 years he organised a sailing club at Cheltenham College, where he lectured.

Sharing her husband's interest, Mrs Raymond felt a responsibility to become a regular subscriber to the RNLI, through Shoreline.

Now enjoying semi-retirement, Mr and Mrs Raymond have recently moved to a lovely cottage at Wareham, Dorset, from where they can look across to their Westerly Pageant, moored in the Wareham River. They are members of two local yacht clubs.

Miss Ann Marie Bridgetts, BA, Membership No. 62481

Ann, who lives at Didsbury, Lancashire, is 23 years old and engaged to be married. Since qualifying last year she has been teaching children with special problems.

As a student, Ann travelled extensively—but on a shoestring—and her trips through Europe and to the United States convinced her that our voluntary lifeboat service was something really outstanding, to be cherished.

So Ann filled in one of the Shoreline advertisement coupons in a daily paper and persuaded her fiancé to do the same.

They both enjoy sailing when the opportunity arises, and Ann is already teaching her pupils something of the work of the RNLI.

Mrs L. M. Griffin, Membership No. 56729

One day, Mrs Griffin stopped to ask a flag seller on lifeboat day how she could help the RNLI. This led to her introduction to Poole ladies' lifeboat guild and not only has she been an active and enthusiastic member of the guild ever since, but she also has a covenant as a Shoreline member. Even as a child in Scotland, Mrs Griffin remembers having a soft spot for the RNLI and can recall the Montrose lifeboat being pulled by a team of horses.

A far cry indeed from the flotilla of modern lifeboats from many countries with which Mrs Griffin became familiar during the month she spent at the Plymouth International Lifeboat Exhibition last summer, manning the information stand.

As a widow, Mrs Griffin could find life empty and lonely, but instead she devotes her time and energy to helping a favourite charity and has found a new interest in life.

* * *

In closing, we must pay tribute to the New Milton and Kensington branches and many others too numerous to mention who are doing such excellent work in recruiting new Shoreline members, and thus boosting their own funds, since, naturally, the subscription of any new Shoreline member introduced by a branch or guild will be credited to its account. The Salisbury office is always only too pleased to give any help needed by branches and guilds.

We wish all members a good summer season.—G. R. (BOB) WALTON, *Shoreline Organising Secretary (Membership), 29a Castle Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire (Tel: Salisbury 6966).*

To: SHORELINE, RNLI, WEST QUAY ROAD, POOLE, DORSET, BH15 1HZ.

I should like to be a part of such a worthwhile voluntary cause by becoming a SHORELINE member of the lifeboat service and joining the Institution as:

- A Life Member and Life Governor: minimum donation £60, including journal
- A Member and Governor: minimum annual subscription £10, including journal
- An Offshore Member: minimum annual subscription £3, including journal
- An Associate Member: minimum annual subscription £1.50

Below are the various items you are entitled to wear or fly as a member of SHORELINE:

Members' tie (Terylene)	£1.50
Lady's brooch	£0.50
Metal car badge	£1.55
Pair of cuff-links	£1.75
8" hoist flag	£1.25
12" hoist flag	£2.00
Dinghy burgee	£1.25

Total subscription

Insignia payment

Shoreline Giro number is 294 7056

NAME I enclose P.O./cheque/cash for £

ADDRESS Date

..... Signature

Some Ways of Raising Money

In December last, the Viscountess Hawarden was chairman of the Central London Women's Committee 150th anniversary Lifeboat and Mermaid Ball at the Dorchester Hotel. The event was graced by the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Kent and the evening was a tremendous success; not only was it a very happy occasion, but to date over £15,000 has been received with more monies yet to come. At the other end of the scale, the committee organised a children's party in a church hall during the Easter holidays, making a profit of over £50; more than 60 five-to-nine year olds were entertained by Smartie Artie the clown and partook of a hearty tea—all home baked by the committee and their friends.

Two small children at Horton in Gower carried their cat in a basket around the village inviting people to guess its weight—and they made £4.70 for the lifeboats.



Watched by Commander E. F. Pritchard, Jack Sims and George Mobbs at Twickenham lifeboat ball, the chairman of the branch, Robert Tough, receives donation cheques from representatives of the Scout Association (Mr Stevens, £850), the Small Boat Club (Mr Norris, £105) and the Independent Order of Foresters (Mr Carver, £1,500).

Photograph by courtesy of The Surrey Comet.



Ready for the start of Exmouth Carnival Procession last summer, old pulling lifeboat The Bedford, lent by Exeter Maritime Museum for the occasion. She was manned by members of Exmouth lifeboat crew.

Photograph by courtesy of L. W. Aplin.

Southampton Lifeboat Board raised no less than £8,293.53 in 1974 for headquarters' funds and the *Hampshire Rose* appeal. A tombola at the Polygon Hotel dinner dance in April raised £460; the star prize, a cruise for two in *Reinadel-Mar* given by Union Castle Mail Steamship Co., was won by Eric Pearman who elected to put it up for auction, thus raising an additional £230. A wine auction organised by Scrases Wines Ltd. at the Royal Southern Yacht Club raised £534; lifeboat week and flag day resulted in a record £1,292.71; £3,515 was taken at Southampton Boat Show in September; and £276.58 was raised by a raffle (first prize, an 150th anniversary Stuart Crystal chalice) at a new year's eve wine and cheese party in the Maritime Museum.

Exeter branch raised over £1,150 during 'The Year of the Lifeboat'. Of this amount, £339 came from a concert given in May in the Great Hall of Exeter University by the Devon and Cornwall Police Choir (Exeter District) and the band of HM Royal Marines; John Lawrenson was guest artist.

Huddersfield ladies' guild has been enjoying a very successful venture into the realms of small auctions, with which they are replacing bring and buy stalls at coffee mornings. 'Lots' ranging from frozen foods, household goods, bric-a-brac to as good as new clothes, are auctioned most successfully. At one recent function, attended by only 60 people, about £130 was raised.

A record-breaking contribution of £2,300 to headquarters' funds, equivalent to almost £1 per adult head of population, was achieved by Islay ladies' guild in 1974. The guild increased its membership substantially and ran a wide range of fund raising functions. The main effort, lifeboat week in June, began with an inter-village ladies' football 'mini world cup' followed by a beetle drive, fashion show and garden opening and ended with a lifeboat day at Port Askaig station.

Lymington branch held an auction sale on April 5, and raised £370, including donations of £26.50. Auctioneers Michael Henry and Christopher Carr, both of Hewitt and Co., Lymington, sold 176 lots in about two hours, including such nautical items as winches, rope, fenders, paint, compasses and a marine radio transmitter, as well as pictures, books, furniture, carpets, garden implements, pot plants, and even a toboggan. The top price of £39 was paid for a handsome silver plated tray, while the lowest was 5p for a lady's handbag and a plate rack.

Among the 240 guests at Twickenham and District branch's 15th annual lifeboat ball were BBC television personalities Robert Keegan ('Softly Softly'), Arthur Lowe ('Dad's Army'), Fulton Mackay ('Colditz') and Trevor Bannister ('Are You Getting Enough?'). Members of Littlehampton lifeboat



As an experiment, Redditch ladies' guild officers and committee recently took part in a knit-in. Having successfully raised £110, they plan to include all guild members next time.

Photograph by courtesy of Redditch Indicator and Alcester Chronicle

Inspired by winter gales and accounts of shipwrecks at sea, the children of Whittington Oval Junior School, Stechford, Birmingham, decided to help the RNLI and collected £281 entirely on their own initiative. Ideas included sponsored silences and the sale of eggcups. A triumph in which to rejoice indeed.

Photograph by courtesy of Birmingham Evening Mail



crew were there, too, and first prize for the raffle, a holiday for two at Torremolinos, Spain, was won by Crew Member Michael Coombes. Nearly 600 tombola prizes, given by local tradespeople and businessmen, vanished in half an hour. After an enjoyable evening, the branch profited by over £500.

Michael Bainton, landlord of the New Inn, Wilmslow, Cheshire, has taken out an insurance policy on his life and given it to the RNLI; it is his tribute to the Bridlington lifeboatmen who saved his life when, at the age of ten, he and a friend capsized a hired rowing boat a mile and a half off shore.

Hakin Point branch, Milford Haven, inaugurated only last September, had by mid December handed over £1,000 to the Pembrokeshire 1974 RNLI appeal. The new branch takes in a maritime community lying on the shores of Britain's busiest oil port and has close links with the harbour; its members include many seamen engaged in operating launches, tugs and trawlers. It reached its target with a series of events including a bazaar at which shellfish given by local lobster fishermen were on sale at a fish stall, and a gala French night for which prizes were donated by, among others, the French fisheries protection ship *L'Agile*.

Youngest model at a fashion show arranged by Newquay ladies guild at its local Woolworths was 3-months-old Claire Louise Bailey, daughter of Mr and Mrs Norman Bailey: her father is a crew member, her mother on the committee. £85 was raised for the funds. Other Newquay events last year included an Old Tyme Dance, picking and selling daffodils and a police choir concert.

Throughout the summer season the crew of Walton and Frinton lifeboat make a collection every Friday night at Martell Camp. Last year they gleaned more than ever before—over £290.

Haverfordwest County Secondary School raised £200 for their local branch with a variety concert which included music, verse, dancing and even fencing. Several months' hard work went into the raising of £120 for the RNLI by Pontllanfraith Grammar Technical School; one prefect, Greg Murrow, even raised £7 by swallowing raw eggs. Yet more help from schools: pupils of Talbot County Combined School presented £280, raised on a sponsored walk, to the Mayor of Poole for his lifeboat appeal fund.

Keeping up the good work: children of Engayne County School, Upminster, clubbed together and raised £48.38 at their harvest festivals; and Fareham County Primary School recently handed Sir Alec Rose £429 for the *Hampshire Rose Appeal*—it had been raised by a 'spell-in' for which each child had to learn 20 words.

Before Christmas members of Cambridge branch, headed by Mrs O. Peacock, worked a rota system to man the charity card shop in Cambridge, which holds the record in England for the highest proceeds: £12,000. £310.75, raised for RNLI cards, was handed over to the Cambridge branch.

H. Hayward of Portslade, Sussex, claims to have the only ladies RNLI uniform in the country. He first devised it for a fancy dress party at his local public house and since then, wearing it at lifeboat occasions, has collected over £100.

John Taylor, baths superintendent at Royton, Lancashire, raised £226 for his branch with a sponsored record-breaking motor cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats: 14 hours, 45 minutes. Next, in September, he organized a sponsored swim of children and guest celebrities, raising a further £300; the Scouts joined in too, and they made yet another £300 for the RNLI. Royton

branch ladies helped with the checking in and also sold souvenirs. During 1974 two second-hand stalls set up in Royton market each produced over £50, and £22 was made from the sale of waste paper.

Last summer, in Cornwall, there were two sponsored raft races and one sponsored paddle for the RNLI. At Bude, four local men paddled inflatable dinghies down the whole length of the River Tamar and raised £461 for the Bude branch. The raft race at Truro, organised by Carey Homes Ltd. with the Truro branch, raised over £76, and the Buccaneer Inn, Gunnislake, handed £361 to the Tavistock branch as a result of a sponsored raft race, again on the River Tamar.

On Easter weekend a four-man crew from Pewsey Zixex Club, Wiltshire, rowing a 23' skiff, completed the journey from Pewsey Wharf to Pill Ferry, Bristol, in 15 hours 11 minutes, thus breaking the existing record by 47 minutes. As a result of sponsorship over £260 was raised for RNLI funds, bringing the club's total contribution from five rows to £750.

Anxious to play their full part in raising the cost of a boathouse for the station's ILB, Tenby crew, together with the local Round Table, have organised a series of aquatic sporting fixtures and rounders matches to be played against invited teams in the town's harbour and on the near-by beach. The first rounders match was played on Easter Sunday, when over £30 was collected from enthusiastic spectators who thronged vantage points to watch an excellent game.

Four ladies in the Bristol area, all over 80, one of them aged 88, regularly play cards each evening between tea and supper for modest stakes. Instead of retaining their winnings they pool them and send them to the RNLI.

On March 15 ten Optimist dinghies provided by the Irish Yachting Association and crewed by IYA junior sailors of an average age of nine crossed the line at Heuston (Kingsbridge) in a race down the river Liffey to O'Connell Bridge. The race, won by Mark Lyttle of the National Y.C. Dun Laoghaire, was sponsored by 11 Irish firms and, as a result, the RNLI benefited by £1,000. Local sailing clubs and chandlers supplied rescue boats and other necessary equipment.

The ladies' guild of the small town of Borth made over £1,000 in 1974. One contribution, of £19, came from an ILB crew member, Peter Matthews; on the counter of his butcher's shop he keeps a lifeboat box for 'bones'.

Over £1,000 was collected for the RNLI by Folkstone Council with its 'Year of the Lifeboat' floral display: a magnificent bed had been planted with a full colour crest, lifeboat, crossed oars and an inscription.

A ship's captain who decided that he ought to reduce his weight at least to 16 stone persuaded his colleagues each to sponsor him for 10p per lb lost; he has now turned in to the Belfast branch the results of his last two trips, £23 and £17. Belfast branch has also received £25 from James Tedford and Co., who have started charging 2p for local tide tables, previously given away, in aid of the RNLI.

At a North Chingford wine and cheese party shove-halfpenny (using 10p pieces) was played for a bottle of whisky placed on the dance floor.

West Drayton and Uxbridge branch, formed on November 11, 1974, achieved £923.13 in its first lifeboat week. New members welcome: write to honorary secretary, Mrs. B. A. B. Sobey, 486 Sipson Road, Sipson, West Drayton, Middlesex.

Amanda and Polly Ann Ball and their friends won first prize in the fancy dress competition at the Greater London Horse Show last year. They sent £2 of their prize money to Great Yarmouth and Gorleston lifeboat.



Last December, North British Trust Hotels Ltd. presented a cheque for £5,000 to Lady Melgund (now the Countess of Minto), president of Hawick ladies' guild.

George Carpenter, whose pen name is George Windsor, is donating part of the income from his novel *Nelson Lord—One Of Our Agents* to King's Lynn ladies guild. The book is published by Arthur Stockwell and costs £2.50.

David Andrews of Stonehaven has made a lifeboat roundabout outside his house and, over the past three years, has collected £326 for his local ILB station.

After raising £146 with a sponsored knit-in, the ladies of Stanmore branch made up the strips (all of one colour) into a blanket 80" x 48" which was presented to Southwold ILB station.



Mrs Leeman was one of many helpers who between them collected £3,500 during Belfast lifeboat day on April 25, a remarkable increase of £1,000 on last year. It was Mrs Leeman's 85th birthday.

In two days' trading at their 'new and nearly new shop' in an old butcher's shop on the Parade, Sutton Coldfield ladies' guild made £400, including an anonymous donation of £100. Customers were queueing up and had to be let into the shop in relays.

Eddy and Son, Helston, give away their old wallpaper sample books in return for a donation to their lifeboat collecting box of 10p—20p, according to the size of book.

Hoylake branch have received £280 raised by the local Soroptomists Club by a fashion show in November, and £323 from the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company's Neptune Swimming Club; 30 people took part in a sponsored swim, each swimmer completing as many lengths as possible in 15 minutes.

Last summer Ely (Cambs) Sailing Club held a party to raise money for the RNLI. It coincided with the salvage of a Fenland barge by a group of industrial archaeologists from Cambridge Museum of Technology; their leader was John Wilson, a Merchant Navy officer. During the day members were taken out to see the barge, which was on an island in the middle of the lake which is their sailing water. £150 was raised.

During last September's gales, Poole lifeboat towed in auxiliary yacht *Rose*. Her owner, M. J. Pulsford of Scarborough gave her to the RNLI, and her sale resulted in £430.

Robert and Maris Dupe of Wenvoe, Cardiff, have raised well over £900 for the RNLI in the past four years. The last cheque they handed over to Barry lifeboat station came from a clay pigeon shoot followed by a woodchopping competition—a race to cut off the tops of standing tree trunks; each competitor, armed only with an axe, climbs his 'tree', fitting plank steps as he goes, until he is high enough to start chopping off the top.

NEW BRANCHES

A new branch was formed in Maidstone, Kent, during March (chairman B. Birchall and honorary secretary P. Clarke) and it has set itself a target of £1,000 for 1975. Anyone in the area who would like to help will be welcome. Mr Clarke's address is 4 Buckland Lane.

The first RNLI junior branch was formed at King Alfred's School, Wantage, in February, and it has already arranged one very successful evening's entertainment to raise funds. Officers: chairman, J. Mackinder (a member of the adult committee); vice-chairman, Peter Bellis; honorary treasurer, Mark Plyte; honorary secretary, Elizabeth Bower, King Alfred's School.

BOOK REVIEWS

● A new edition of *First Aid for Lifeboat Crews* has been compiled by the RNLI Medical and Survival Committee and will be issued this summer by authority of the Committee of Management to all lifeboat stations.

This book does not cover the whole field of first aid but only deals with subjects which, for lifeboat purposes, are not described in sufficient detail in the *St John First Aid Manual*. There are chapters on hypothermia, handling and transport of injured persons, and the use of morphia in the relief of pain. Because of the importance of resuscitation the whole chapter on this subject in the *St John Manual* has been reproduced and is followed by another chapter covering the special aspects of resuscitation on lifeboats.

A short chapter on personal health is also included in order to help crew members maintain their alertness and physical efficiency in the tough conditions sometimes encountered at sea.—G.H.

● In preparing *Life-boat Design and Development* (David and Charles, £5.50), Eric C. Fry has obviously spent a great deal of time on his researches. The result of this arduous task is a most absorbing account of a very complicated subject, excellently presented.

The accounts of the early efforts prior to the formation of the Institution, and during the first years of its life, are very informative and emphasize the amount of thought and effort that was expended in the endeavour to provide the lifeboat crews with the best craft available.

The illustrations show an excellent cross section of the many and varied types of craft which have formed the Institution's fleet throughout the 150 years of its life. Details are given of the early pulling boats and their development into the pulling and sailing boats of which the large fleet mainly consisted for so many years. Next comes the first application of power, with the introduction of steam lifeboats in the late 19th century, and thence to the early experiments with the internal combustion engine in the early part of this 20th century. The development of the full powered single screw to the twin screw boats of the various types is shown in detail, and continues through to the high

powered fast boats of today—a most comprehensive review of the design changes that have occurred in over 400 boats since the introduction of engines.

A comparison of the Rhyl tubular lifeboat entry for the Duke of Northumberland's prize in 1851 and the modern inshore lifeboat makes an interesting exercise.

On page 28 Mr Fry states that when J. R. Barnett retired in 1947 he was succeeded as consultant naval architect to the RNLI by me. In fact Mr. Barnett was succeeded in the post by his partner in G. L. Watson and Co., W. Smart, who continued in that capacity until he retired in 1962, followed for a few years by H. A. Lyndsay.

The description of the double diagonal system of planking is correct, with the exception that no glue was used between the skins, just calico and three coats of white lead. On one Rother class boat at present building the cold moulded system is being employed; three skins are being used, with the usual method of glue. The first three Arun class lifeboats are of three-skin cold moulded construction.

The drawings of the numerous types of boats, covering the 150 year period, have been prepared specifically for this publication. Much care has been taken to show the varying features of each design and the draughtmanship could not be of a higher standard.

A mass of information is given in a very readable form, and the author must be congratulated on producing such an excellent publication.—R. A. OAKLEY, *naval architect to RNLI until 1966 and subsequently consultant until 1968.*

● *Shipwrecks off the Yorkshire Coast* by Arthur Godfrey and Peter J. Lassey (Dalesman Books, £1.75 paperback) tells the long, bitter story of the incredible losses of ships and seamen on 110 miles of splendid but rocky shores and sandy beaches. Of the many lifeboats involved in rescue attempts and their hardy, courageous crews there can be nothing less than unstinted admiration. The need for the big concentration of rescue craft on the north-east coast is made abundantly clear. In a distance of little more than 50 miles between the Tees and Bridling-

ton there are eight lifeboat stations and with the many fishing communities working their craft in all weathers there can be no doubt about the need for their services.

The stories of so many disasters tend to numb the mind into a sense of unreality, but anyone familiar with the scenes of the wrecks will not question the stern reality of the events. Not all the episodes are tragic and sometimes the local inhabitants benefited from the misfortunes of others. As, for instance, when the steamer *Kaiser*, carrying strawberries and other fruit, ran ashore in Robin Hood's Bay. It is recorded that for days afterwards there was a fragrant aroma of jam-making for miles around.

Smugglers were as susceptible to the dangers of wind and weather as other seamen and usually had to depend on their own kind for rescue if they got into trouble. Contraband goods were removed from one cutter which went ashore off Redcar by another smuggler, to the intense indignation of the local newspaper which accused the revenue officers of inattention to duty.

Wartime casualties add to the melancholy but gripping tales of heroism and hardihood in the face of disaster and there are a number of excellent illustrations to make this little volume very good value.—E.W.M.

● The Manchester and Salford branch have produced an interesting booklet, well supported by advertisements, to mark 'The Year of the Lifeboat', which they are selling for 20p. It summarizes the history of Manchester's long association with the RNLI, pointing out that the first street collection in aid of the Institution was held in Manchester and Salford in 1891. It also lists the many lifeboats produced by Manchester and District. These include *William Gammon—Manchester and District XXX*, which replaced the lifeboat lost in the Mumbles disaster in 1947; she was given the name of the coxswain who gave his life on that occasion.—P.H.

● To the majority of seafarers the Eddystone is a friendly lighthouse; a fine mark for vessels proceeding up and down channel and a welcome signal for those bound for Plymouth. Perhaps all lighthouses should be considered friendly, for their wheeling beams not only warn but reassure the mariner and happily confirm his position.

The Red Rocks of Eddystone, by Fred Majdalany (White Lion Publishers, £2.50) tells the fascinating story of the four lighthouses which have been built by men of vision and determination on the dangerous reef which had long claimed many ships and lives.

The first was Winstanley's pagoda-like wooden structure, swept away in a gale of unprecedented violence in 1703,

carrying its designer and builder to his death. The fourth was the present structure, built by James Douglass and completed in 1882. Throughout the years the Eddystone saga tells movingly of the courage, skill and endurance of the men who fought to gain a foothold on the reef.

Neither Winstanley, who built the first tower, nor Rudyerd, who built the second, were engineers or architects, which makes their achievement all the more remarkable. Rudyerd built his lighthouse like a ship and almost entirely of wood. It lasted 47 years until destroyed by fire.

James Smeaton undertook the third Eddystone lighthouse and this splendid engineer built for the rest of time. But the sea does not give in easily and it slowly and relentlessly undermined part of the reef below the foundations, so a fourth tower was planned. This, the present structure, was built on another part of the reef by James Douglass, Engineer-in-Chief of Trinity House, who could count the Bishop Rock, Smalls and Wolf Rock lighthouses among his previous successes. The fourth Eddystone was brilliantly conceived and executed and set the seal on a distinguished career.

Here is a book for seamen and all those who constantly explore the love-hate relationship between man and the sea. It will almost certainly leave every reader with a renewed faith in the future of mankind.—E.W.M.

● **The Story of Lowestoft Lifeboats, Part 1 1801-1876**, by Jack Mitchley (Lowestoft Libraries, 40p) contains much fascinating information about the early Lowestoft lifeboats. There is, for instance, an account of the demonstration of the first Lowestoft lifeboat carried out under the supervision of an elder brother of Trinity House in 1801. The account reads: 'Twenty-four men jumped into her and when she first mounted the waves, the spectators with one voice expressed their astonishment.' Unfortunately the crew with one voice expressed their disapproval of the boat,

an opinion which was shared when she was moved to Gorleston.

The second Lowestoft lifeboat, *Frances Ann*, was by contrast a marked success. Mr Mitchley states that she was probably the first sailing lifeboat in the world, and it was largely because Lionel Lukin and his family decided to spend a holiday in Lowestoft that she came to be built.

It is to be hoped that the second part of Mr Mitchley's book will follow.—P.H.

● Fishing, whether it be in a quiet country stream or the cold, grey waters round Bear Island, seems to exercise some extraordinary fascination on many men. It cannot be just the money that induces men to work up to their waists in icy water or handle frozen gear on wildly heaving decks. The money helps, of course, but it is the great element of luck, the possibility of all or nothing and the elation of a good haul, together with the endless but uncomplicated struggle with the elements that binds the fisherman to his calling.

In his book **Yorkshire Fishing Fleets** (Dalesman Books, 65p paperback) Arthur Godfrey tells the story of Yorkshire's oldest and most dangerous industry from the earliest days to the present time. One learns that even in the 12th century the Icelanders complained that the English were spoiling their fishing!

The development of the various types of craft, from open boats through paddle steamers to the present day trawlers, emphasizes the conservative attitude of the fisherman. Slow to change he may have been, but once convinced of the capabilities of a new type of vessel he was not slow to make good use of it. The cost of some of the early boats seems absurdly low today, but then so was the price of fish. The cost in men's lives does not seem to have made much impact.

There are some interesting illustrations from splendid old photographs and a detailed index of fishing boat losses.—E.W.M.

SWANAGE CENTENARY

Swanage centenary celebrations will take place on Sunday, July 27, at 1530 at Stone Quay, Swanage. If wet the service will be held in the Parish Church at 1830.

NAMING CEREMONY

Walmer's new Rother class lifeboat will be named *Hampshire Rose* by Lady Rose at 1500 on Saturday, September 6.

ROYAL ALBERT HALL FASHION SHOW

A gala fashion show under the title 'The Rescue Operators' is to be staged at the Royal Albert Hall, London, on Wednesday, October 1, in aid of four societies: St John Ambulance, Royal Life Saving Society, RNLI and Peter Fry Rescue Trust. Fashions will be from Marks and Spencer, a Royal Marine Band will provide music and beat retreat and there will be other star entertainment. Price of tickets: £8, £5, £3.50, £2, £1 and 50p. Information and application for tickets: RNLI London office, 21 Ebury Street, SW1W 0LD.

CADABRA

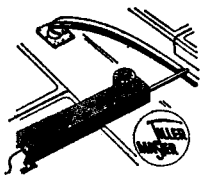
Motor yacht *Cadabra*, which tours the coasts of Great Britain on sales promotion for Sandhurst Marketing Ltd., a firm of stationers, has completed her fourth round-Britain trip, and Brian Hulme, Chairman of the company, has presented a cheque for £2,512.50 to Captain Nigel Dixon, RN, Director of the RNLI; it represents 2½% of the turnover on the trip.

FRANCE

The Société Nationale de Sauvetage en Mer helped 4,500 people during the summer of 1974 and saved from certain death 650.

The French lifeboat service is much occupied with the modernisation of its fleet. St Tropez lifeboat, *Le Baillie-de-Suffren*, for instance, was last summer equipped with radar and is having two new engines fitted which will give her a speed of 12 knots.

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Annual General Meeting

Thank you for the invitation to yesterday's presentation of awards and annual meeting at the Royal Festival Hall. I found it a most moving occasion. For years I have lived alongside a famous lifeboat and known her successive crews well, some of whom have gained RNLI awards of various kinds, including the gold medal for gallantry. I know that basically they are ordinary people who face incredible dangers and do tremendously brave things, often in appalling weather and other conditions.

The seemingly endless stream of just such men—and that girl, Jayne Edmunds, who had such presence of mind when it mattered most—reduced me, a case-hardened journalist, quite genuinely to tears, and at the end, having seen also Sir Alec Rose, after whom 'my' new boat is named, rewarded, I was too emotionally exhausted to cope with tea and small talk.

I wonder if people always feel like this at your annual event! But thank you for a most memorable afternoon.—
URSULA STUART MASON, *Public Relations Officer, National Maritime Museum, London SE10 9NF.*

Parents and children

Thank you for turning out on Easter Monday to help my daughter Jane when she had fallen on the cliff. We were lucky, she suffered little injury; but we were also lucky that so many people were able to help—the RNLI, the

Coastguard and the Police Force.

As yours is a voluntary service I enclose a cheque as a small token of my gratitude.—**NORMAN PILKINGTON, Borth, Dyfed.**

Please find enclosed a cheque which I have been asked to pass on to you. I organise male chorus entertainment for private parties, for which a sum is sometimes given to a charity. Such cheques will normally be passed to your society in future, as continued gratitude for the rescue of my son in June, 1974.—**KENNETH J. WILMOT, 130 Mount Road, Penn, Wolverhampton.**

Both these letters of thanks were sent to T. A. Morris, honorary secretary of Borth branch.—THE EDITOR.

End of a long association

For many years Appledore lifeboat and RAF Chivenor air station have worked in close co-operation, both on rescue operations and on exercise. The lifeboat has taken out pilots from Chivenor for survival training and, during the summer months, it has been possible to make use of these exercises for publicity purposes off Westward Ho and Saunton and Croyde beaches. Sadly, of course, Chivenor is now closed, apart from the helicopter which is to remain for rescue purposes, and the RAF exercise no longer takes place each week.

The photograph taken from Appledore lifeboat *Louisa Anne Hawker*



Final combined exercise between RAF Chivenor air station and Appledore lifeboat, off Croyde Beach, August 7, 1974: the last of the pilots is lifted from the sea.

is of the last of the pilots being lifted from the sea off Croyde Beach. The exercise was arranged to coincide with our lifeboat week and several members of our committee joined the lifeboat at 1300 on Wednesday, August 7, 1974. Conditions over the bar were extremely rough and grew steadily worse. Clovelly lifeboat, the 70' Clyde class *Charles H. Barrett (Civil Service No. 35)*, was waiting for us at Fairways Buoy and both lifeboats sailed to Croyde Beach together, where a large crowd of holiday-makers was gathered; we collected more than £70 on the beach that day. A very successful exercise with the RAF made a fitting end to a long association between the two services.—**A.J. GOODWIN, honorary secretary, Braunton, Croyde and District branch, 2 Cavie Crescent, Saunton, Braunton, Devon.**

Mutual tradition

Members of my staff and I have read with great interest the report of Divisional Inspector Pennell concerning the services rendered to mv *Biscaya* by the crew of the Great Yarmouth and Gorleston lifeboat station on December 13, 1974.

While boat design and construction features are important factors in the accomplishment of rescue missions such as described in this instance, our experience has shown that the key ingredients to success are the skill, judgement and determination of the coxswain and his crew.

Certainly Coxswain J. Bryan and his crew have demonstrated this point in the highest degree. Their performance is in keeping with the best mutual tradition of our services in the saving of life at sea.—**O. W. SILER, Admiral, US Coast Guard Commandant, Washington DC, USA.**

Admiral Siler's letter, received by Lieut.-Cdr. W. L. G. Dutton, OBE RD RNR MNI, refers to a service (reported on page 6) carried out by Khami, one of the first of the 44' Waveney class lifeboats developed from a US Coast Guard design.—THE EDITOR.

Cover Picture

Before I had even read the name on the stern of *Ernest Tom Nethercoat* on the cover of the spring issue of *THE LIFEBOAT*, I had already recognised the scene since I was the navigator of the boat towed in the previous evening. You can just see the blue stern of *Corsair* on the extreme right border of the picture. Perhaps your readers may be interested in the story behind the picture, told mainly by the extracts from the log of voyage No. 1 given below.

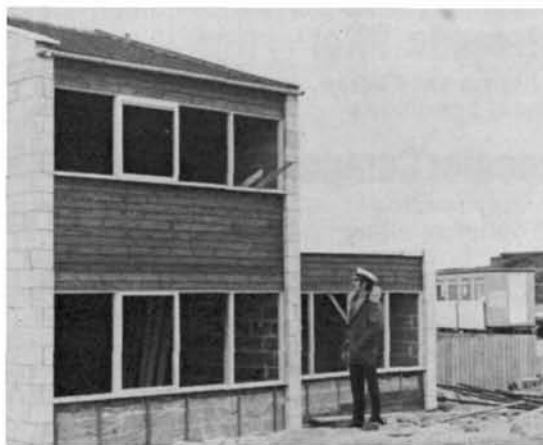
My nephew, who has taken inshore fishing as his career, had recently bought the 32' ex-naval craft which had been converted into a cabin cruiser; we had joined ship the previous weekend to spend the first five days preparing for

the voyage from the Thames Estuary to Wick in Caithness, where the boat was to be re-fitted for fishing. We were later to be rather glad that we had taken care to provide ourselves with a lot of emergency equipment 'just in case'! Since she had no name she was christened *Corsair* and we sailed on the morning of Friday, November 15, 1974. The weather, which had been bad till then, with winds of around force 9, was suitable for the passage, if not what one would like for pleasure sailing, and the forecast was reasonably favourable.

The first part of the voyage was uneventful, the boat behaved very well and we had settled into a nice rhythm of watchkeeping with one man at the wheel, one on lookout and the third off watch (but usually busy as well). Despite 28 years on the beach, the navigator had not lost the knack and by 0600 on Saturday, November 16, was using the RDF to get a fix off Bacton, there being nothing visible anywhere in the driving rain. The deck log goes on:

- 0605 2 miles off Bacton. Weather has turned foul, strong NE wind and confused sea. Vis. 1—2 miles; less in squalls. Course 364°T.
- 0830 Altered course to 264°T.
- 1200 Off E. Sheringham Buoy, 300°T.
- 1300 Taking water. Hands to bail. Set course 180°M for nearest land at Cley.
- 1400 approx Running along coast from Cley towards Blakeney to find suitable place to beach vessel.
- 1530 approx Cooling pump belt, affected by water and oil due to excess bilge water, failed. Engine overheated and stopped. Streamed sea anchor 2 cables off Blakeney Point.
- 1600 approx Discharged flares. Seen from beach. Continuous bailing needed to keep water level at top of keelson. Drifting east on tide.
- 1700 approx Wells lifeboat alongside. Taken in tow, all crew remaining on board. Bailing continuously.
- 1800 approx Beached in Wells Harbour near tide gauge. Reported to Coastguard and Harbour Master. Vessel left secured fore and aft.
Crew put up at Crown Hotel as guests of Shipwrecked Mariners' Association.

That is the recorded list of facts, rather sketchy as we seemed to have quite enough to do pumping and bailing out the major part of the North Sea (it even got into my deck watch, hence the 'approx' after the later times). It says nothing about the seamanlike way we were taken in tow and brought to Wells, or the fact that Second Coxswain A. T. Jordan did more than just come on board: he bailed continuously all the way to Wells so that the two who had borne the brunt of the task earlier in the day could have a rest, of which they were by then in some need.



DONATE A HOUSE?

Seven houses are being built at Spurn Head for the Humber lifeboat crews. This is a desolate spot of land and if the RNLI did not provide housing there would be no crew for the boat. The total cost is £100,000. Would any group of supporters like to name one of these houses by raising £14,000?

There is no mention there, or in THE LIFEBOAT, of the enormous assistance the crew gave us after we beached and next day when they returned to see what more they could do for us, but we shall never forget their kindness. I am sure I speak for all three of us when I say that our principal memory of the event is of the way the lifeboatmen, the harbour master and other people of Wells spared no effort to help us.

They, if they remember the incident at all, may like to know that *Corsair* recently completed her refit and, as I write, she is probably seeking the elusive lobsters off the coast of Caithness in region of latitude 58°15'N.—G. E. SMYTHE, 9 Camborne Road, Sutton, Surrey.

Not forgotten . . .

I am enclosing a cutting from *The Cornish Times* which may interest you, as the idea was inspired by the rescue of three members of Looe Sailing Club from a Hurley Tailwind by Poole lifeboat in the early morning of April 14, 1974.

I was one of those concerned, and I would just like to let you know that the good efforts of the lifeboat are not forgotten.

'Packed houses on both nights greeted the Music Hall staged at Looe Public Hall in aid of the RNLI

The show opened with a lively chorus from the Riversiders trained by Sheila Rigby. This was followed by "The Roaring Twenties", a mixture of comedy and music by members of Looe Social Club which brought back nostalgic memories for the older members of the audience.

Looe's answer to the Morris dancers, contributed by the Boscarn darts team trained by Audrey Coote, was an uproariously funny interpretation by six males and horse. A complete contrast was provided by four tiny tots, Susie Grimshaw, Lulu Symons, Claire Nichols and Lisa Rawe, who entranced the audience with their Spanish dancing. They were also trained by Audrey Coote.

Duets were sung by Jim and Betty Currah and Trevor Baker and Peter Soudy, and Tessa Marshall sang to her own guitar accompaniment. Ken Dingle played

the accordion, two of the numbers being of his own composition.

Members of Looe Players staged two short plays, which the audience enjoyed for their humour and local dialect.

Comedy was well represented by Dave Pengelly, who doubled his BBC news-reader act with that of stableman to the Morris dancers' horse while Beryl Clements and Sheila Rigby showed that this kind of variety is not a male prerogative.

Accompaniment was ably provided by Sheila Rigby, Alan and Jean Dingle, and the show was compered by Nick Nicholas who also gave a well-received comedy act of his own. The show ended with a "Black and White Minstrels" act by the Riversiders.

Work on the show was started by Valerie Tyndale-Biscoe When she had to go into hospital, Audrey Coote took over the preparations and put on the show. The highly successful production raised £95 for the RNLI.'

M. W. TYNDALE-BISCOE, Turnstones, Plaidy, Nr. Looe, Cornwall.

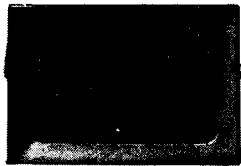
They say it may become an annual event, so good luck to future productions.
—THE EDITOR.

The Plenty Lifeboat

A letter relating to Plenty lifeboats appeared in the winter issue of THE LIFEBOAT and I thought that perhaps your readers would be interested to learn that in 1824 William Plenty built a new lifeboat for service at Newhaven station. Newhaven was, as I am sure you know, the third port in the country to have a lifeboat stationed there for the sole purpose of the saving of life from shipwreck, a fact of which we are justly very proud.

The boat was 18' × 6½' × 2½' and pulled only four oars. She came on station in 1825 and the cost was £90—what a change from today. In 1829 she was repainted and renovated at a total cost of £12. She was sent to Cowes in 1829 where she was, it seems, broken up.

If any of your readers are interested in early lifeboat history, particularly on the south coast, I should be very pleased to hear from them.—A. S. PAYNE, 36 Firlie Road, Peacehaven, Sussex.

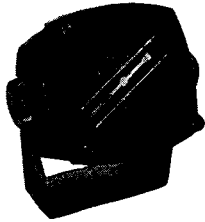


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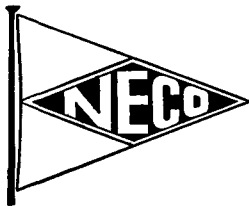


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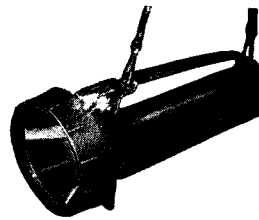
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Lifeboat Services

(from page 8)

At 2248, seeing the boat pass through the foul area, Coxswain Bowry took *Gertrude* on to the sand in breaking seas 7 cables from the casualty's position. The wind was now north east force 6 with rough seas and the weather remained overcast.

Warden Point Coastguard advised Coxswain Bowry by VHF radio that the casualty was too far from the beach for coast rescue equipment to be used and, as the seas lifted *Gertrude*, the coxswain drove the boat across the sand and mud to a position $4\frac{1}{2}$ cables from the shore and close against the lee side of the 32' MFV *Venture* on passage from Lowestoft to Gosport with a crew of two men.

Venture's rudder head had broken and her crew were hoping to find a safe anchorage. One of the men had managed to steer by bracing his foot against the rudder over the stern, but when the engines were put ahead, he could not exert enough force to steer off the lee shore.

By 2305 a towline had been passed and the two men taken aboard *Gertrude* for warmth. One of the lifeboat crew tended the towline aboard *Venture*. Coxswain Bowry then towed *Venture* into deeper water and set course for Sheerness where, at 2356, *Gertrude* arrived at her moorings and *Venture* was secured in the Great Basin.

For this service a framed letter of appreciation signed by the Chairman of the Institution, Commander F. R. H. Swann, CBE, RNVR, was sent to Coxswain Charles Bowry, who had accomplished the service with expert seamanship in a position five cables inside the drying line and in an area known to be foul with wreckage and boulders. Most services to which this lifeboat is called are executed in water of less than 10' depth.

Western Division

Girl caught in Dinghy rigging

TWO PEOPLE clinging to a capsized dinghy one mile off shore, south of Towyn, were reported to Aberdovey honorary secretary by the Coastguard at 1220 on Friday, April 4.

The ILB launched at 1225. There was a moderate north-easterly wind, a slight sea and an incoming tide. Visibility was good. On reaching the dinghy, a man was found trying to help his ten-year-old daughter who was caught in the rigging. He was pulled aboard the ILB and a member of the crew dived into the water to release the girl. Although unconscious at the time of rescue, she regained

consciousness periodically on the return journey. On landing, father and daughter were both admitted to Towyn Hospital where they later recovered.

The ILB returned to station at 1315.

Eastern Division

Jump from pier

SOUTHEND STATION MECHANIC, Robert Chalk, was walking with two friends, Frederick Robinson (ILB crew) and Bernard Barton, near the lifeboathouse on Southend Pier at 0900 on Monday, November 25, 1974, when, looking into the sea on the east side of the main pier, he saw a woman in the water. His immediate thought was to launch the ILB, but seeing the woman raise her arms, shout and sink beneath the surface, he slipped out of shoes and coat and jumped the 12 feet into the sea. He thought that if he could reach the woman he would be able to hold her against the pier tie-bars until more help came.

The weather was fine, wind west by north force 6 gusting gale 8, with heavy confused seas around the pier. High water Southend was predicted at 0847. The sea water temperature was 48°.

Frederick Robinson threw Robert Chalk a lifebelt and then ran to a nearby dinghy. He was not, however, able to get through the heavy seas to the casualty area, so made for the lifeboat slipway where he and Michael Ronan (station emergency mechanic and ILB crew) launched the ILB.

Meanwhile, Bernard Barton and another man, Michael Waterman, after raising the alarm, had climbed down the pier and approached Robert Chalk and the woman at sea level across the pier supports. Robert Chalk had reached the woman and towed her, struggling, against wind and tide, until he could reach the pier tie-bars with his legs while holding the woman with both arms.

The ILB reached the scene at the second attempt, but had considerable difficulty retaining its position while the woman was brought aboard. Frederick Robinson started mouth-to-mouth resuscitation while Robert Chalk remained in the water, holding the ILB. As the effects of the cold gradually overcame him, he lost his grip on the ILB and was washed beneath it. The men under the pier passed a rope to Michael Ronan in the ILB to secure Robert Chalk, who was hauled on to the pier deck, unconscious, at about 0920.

The ILB headed for the east slipway, where mouth-to-mouth resuscitation was continued on the woman until the police and first aid assistance arrived; she was then found to be already dead. Robert Chalk was taken to hospital and released later the same day; he had suffered considerable lacerations to both legs from the barnacle-encrusted pier supports.

The prompt action of Robert Chalk in entering the water in gale conditions showed a completely selfless courage; he remained in the water for some 20 minutes, despite considerable physical pain, to the point of exhaustion, and it is probably that but for his fitness and training as a diver he could well have lost his own life in this attempt.

Robert Leonard Chalk has been awarded a testimonial on vellum by the Royal Humane Society. A letter of appreciation signed by the Chairman of the Committee of Management, Commander F. R. H. Swann, has been sent to Mr Chalk and letters of appreciation signed by the Director, Captain Nigel Dixon, have been sent to Michael Waterman, Bernard Barton, Michael Ronan and Frederick Robinson.

Offshore lifeboat services during the months December, 1974, January and February, 1975

Aith, Shetland
December 10.
Amble, Northumberland
December 9, 19 and January 28.
Anstruther, Fife
December 13.
Arbroath, Angus
December 22.
Arklow, Co. Wicklow
December 4.
Arranmore, Co. Donegal
January 7 and 9.
Beaumaris, Gwynedd
December 8 (twice) and January 12.
Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland
December 15 and 27.
Bridlington, Humberside
December 11, January 25 and 28.
Calshot, Hampshire
February 20.
Campbeltown, Argyll
December 6.
Clacton-on-Sea, Essex
January 28, 31 and February 24.
Clovelly, North Devon
December 31, January 21, 27, February 4, 17 and 23.
Cromer, Norfolk
December 13.
Donaghadee, Co. Down
January 5.
Dover, Kent
December 9, 11, January 5, 17 (twice) and February 19.
Dunbar, East Lothian
December 1.
Dungeness, Kent
December 3, 10, 11 and February 2.
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
December 10.
Dunmore East, Co. Waterford
January 13, 28 and February 7.
Exmouth, South Devon
January 30.
Eyemouth, Berwickshire
December 27.
Falmouth, Cornwall
December 17 and 27.

Filey, North Yorkshire
December 17.
Fishguard, Dyfed
January 19 and February 25.
Flamborough, Humberside
January 25.
Fleetwood, Lancashire
February 16.
Great Yarmouth and Gorleston, Norfolk
December 13, January 11, 27, February 1 and 11.
Harwich, Essex
December 12, January 2 and February 24
Hastings, East Sussex
December 23 and January 17.
Howth, Co. Dublin
December 7 and January 12.
Hoylake, Merseyside
February 4.
Humber, Humberside
December 17, January 16, February 18 and 27.
Kirkwall, Orkney
December 19, 21 and 28 (twice).
Lerwick, Shetland
February 1.
Longhope, Orkney
December 21 and January 31.
Lowestoft, Suffolk
December 8, 13, 29 and January 28.
Moelfre, Gwynedd
February 17.
Newbiggin, Northumberland
January 31.
New Quay, Dyfed
January 19.
North Sunderland, Northumberland
January 9.
Padstow, Cornwall
January 31, February 9, 10, 20 and 23.
Penlee, Cornwall
December 15, January 25, February 4 and 23.
Plymouth, South Devon
January 15, February 13 and 24.
Poole, Dorset
February 1.
Porthdinllaen, Gwynedd
February 11.
Portrush, Co. Antrim
February 3.
Ramsey, Isle-of-Man
December 19 and February 7.
Ramsgate, Kent
December 1 and February 23.
Rhyl, Clwyd
February 4.
Rosslare Harbour, Co. Wexford
January 3 and 14.
Runswick, Cleveland
January 17.
St Davids, Dyfed
December 19.
St Helier, Jersey
February 12.

St Ives, Cornwall
February 25.
St Mary's, Scilly Islands
January 25.
St Peter Port, Guernsey
December 26, 27, January 17, 20 and 24.
Scarborough, North Yorkshire
January 25.
Sennen Cove, Cornwall
February 18.
Shoreham Harbour, West Sussex
January 6, 19, February 3 and 8.
Stornoway, Outer Hebrides
January 2, 21, 28 and 29.
Stromness, Orkney
December 20.
Sunderland, Tyne and Wear
December 12, January 2 and 3.
Swanage, Dorset
December 4, January 1, 3, February 1 and 4.
Teesmouth, Cleveland
December 15.
Tenby, Dyfed
December 28 and January 8.
Thurso, Caithness
December 12 and January 31.

Torbay, South Devon
January 20.
Troon, Ayrshire
December 23 and February 23.
Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear
December 15, 23, January 3, 12 and February 3.
Walmer, Kent
January 11.
Walton and Frinton, Essex
January 28.
Weymouth, Dorset
December 6 (twice), 7, 12, January 18 and 26.
Whitby, North Yorkshire
December 12, 21, 23, 25, 26 and January 12.
Wick, Caithness
December 4, January 7 and 31.
Wicklow, Co. Wicklow
December 10 and January 12.
Yarmouth, Isle-of-Wight
January 23.

Lifeboats on passage
ON 1025, February 27.
ON 1037, February 27.

ILB services during the months December, 1974, January and February, 1975

Aberystwyth, Dyfed
January 3.
Atlantic College, South Glamorgan
February 1 and 2.
Beaumaris, Gwynedd
December 8.
Broughty Ferry, Angus
December 2.
Eastney, Hampshire
December 15, 29 and February 9.
Flint, Clwyd
December 17.
Great Yarmouth and Gorleston, Norfolk
February 1 and 15.
Hartlepool, Cleveland
December 24.
Harwich, Essex
December 4 and January 16.
Hastings, East Sussex
January 19.
Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire
December 14.
Largs, Ayrshire
January 31.
Littlehampton, West Sussex
December 10, 12, January 10, February

2, 5 and 15.
Llandudno, Gwynedd
January 4 and February 28.
Lyme Regis, Dorset
December 15 and February 2.
Lymington, Hampshire
December 6, 8 and 16.
Margate, Kent
February 11.
Minehead, Somerset
February 28.
Mudford, Dorset
December 22, January 19 and February 1.
New Brighton, Merseyside
December 22.
Newquay, Cornwall
January 19 and February 23.
Poole, Dorset
January 19 (twice).
Queensferry, West Lothian
December 1, 8, 10, 13, January 20 and February 2.
Southend-on-Sea, Essex
December 1, 29, 31 and January 5.
Southwold, Suffolk
December 3, 8 and January 2.
Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear
December 15, 23, January 3 and 26.
West Kirby, Merseyside
February 1.
West Mersea, Essex
December 1, 15, 29, 31, January 18, 28 and February 16.
Whitstable, Kent
December 21 and January 11.

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January 1, 1975 to March 31, 1975: Services 231 lives saved 60

THE STATION FLEET (as at 31/3/75)

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122 inshore lifeboats operating in the summer

LIVES RESCUED 99,882

from the Institution's foundation in 1824 to March 31, 1975



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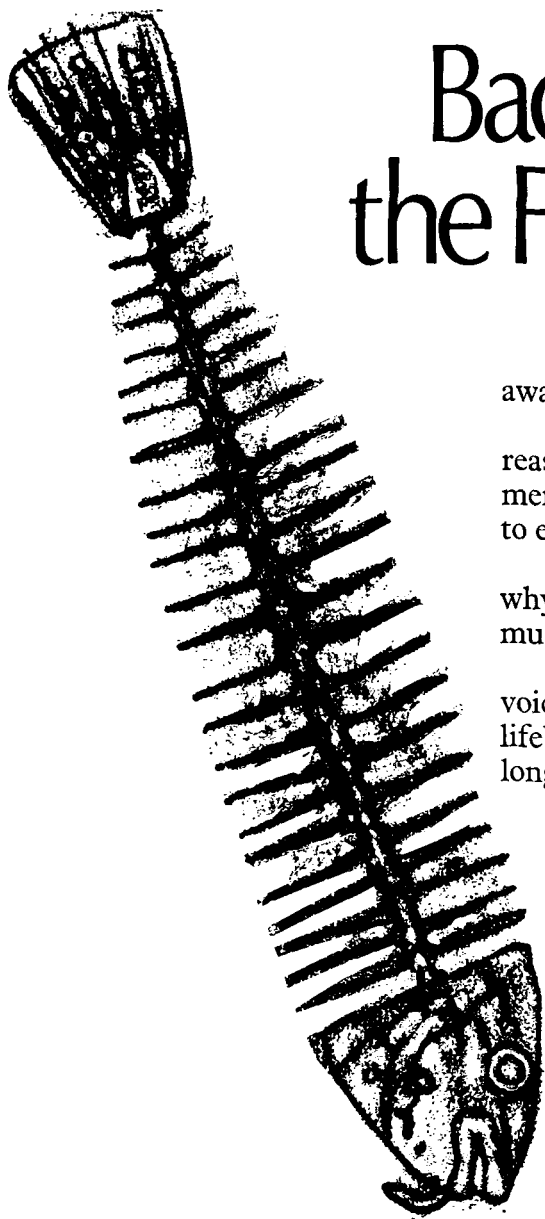
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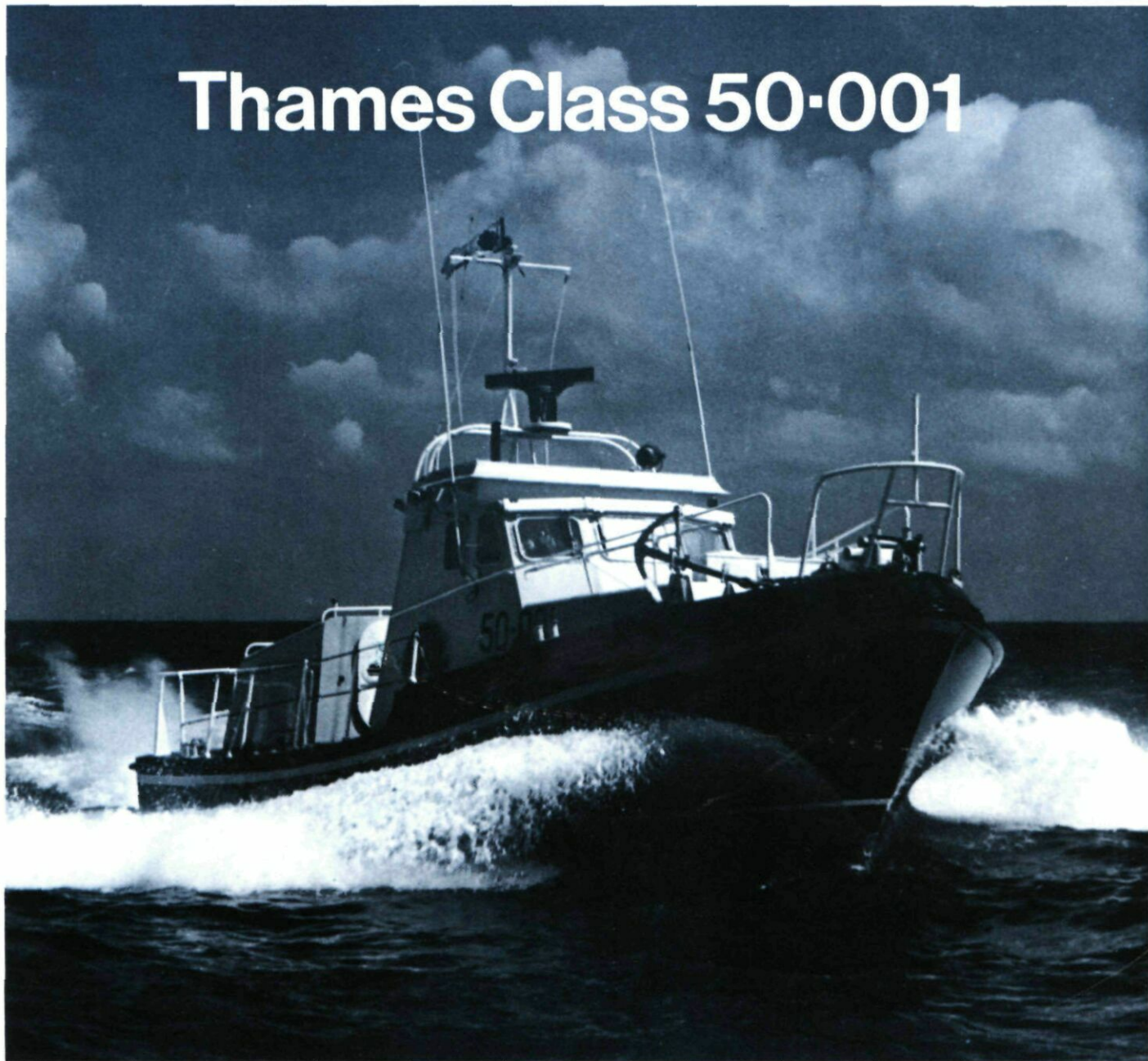


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