

# THE LIFEBOAT

THE JOURNAL OF THE RNLI



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# THE LIFEBOAT

Summer 1976

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### Volume XLIV Number 456

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#### COVER PICTURE

*Appledore Atlantic 21 inshore lifeboat breasts heavy surf in Bideford Bay. She was donated by RAF personnel and their families stationed at Wildenrath, Germany, who raised more than £6,000 for the RNLI in just one year. Since Atlantic 21 ILBs were first stationed at Appledore in the autumn of 1972 they have launched on service 50 times and saved 30 lives. This photograph was taken by Crew Member Clifford Edwards.*

**Editorial:** All 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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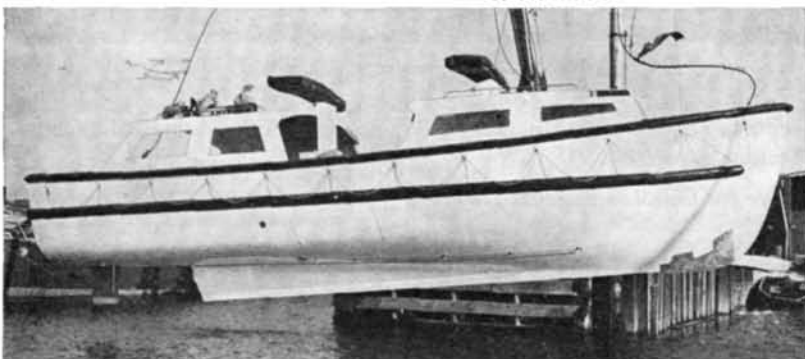
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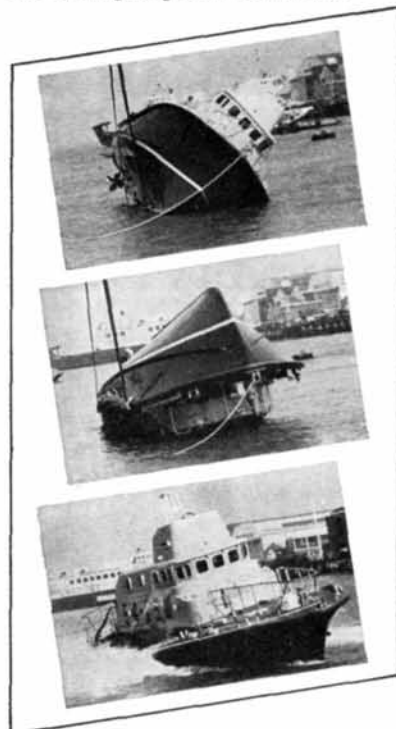


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## NOTES OF THE QUARTER

by the Editor

LIFEBOATS, IT IS OFTEN SAID, put out when other vessels are seeking the shelter of harbour. An example of how a lifeboat was able to carry out a mission while other well-found vessels were unable even to leave harbour occurred on the night of December 1/2, 1975. The Cypriot coaster *Primrose*, which was in serious trouble some three miles from Dover breakwater, asked for the help of a tug and later for that of a pilot vessel. Conditions were such that neither tug nor pilot vessel could put out and the decisions not to allow them to leave harbour were clearly correct. The master of a Townsend ferry said the conditions were the worst he had known in eighteen years' service in the Dover Straits. Wind speeds gusting up to 100 mph were recorded, and he commented that if Sir Francis Beaufort had lived 170 years later he might have had to revise his wind scale (given on the next page).

In spite of all this the Dover lifeboat put out, escorted the coaster and successfully piloted her into harbour. Details of the service, which led to the award of two medals for gallantry, are given on page 150. They are an incontestable tribute to the Waveney class of lifeboat, its designers and its builders.

### The voluntary spirit today

Two speakers at the RNLI's annual general meeting spoke of the importance of voluntary service, not only within the RNLI, but to the nation as a whole. Both were clearly speaking from the heart and from experience. One was Raymond Baxter, best known today for his television programme, 'Tomorrow's World'. The other was Lieut.-Colonel Richard Crawshaw, Labour MP for Toxteth and a member of the RNLI's Committee of Management.

Raymond Baxter spoke of the importance of the voluntary principle in promoting the efficiency of the lifeboat service and of how it enabled the RNLI to get the best value for money. If it were lost, he said, 'the country would certainly be the poorer in the moral and spiritual sense as well as in the purely financial sense'.

Colonel Crawshaw said that working in local and central government had caused him to feel depressed by 'the movement away from the voluntary spirit'. A few years ago, he pointed out, it had not been necessary to pay someone to come to a youth club to make a cup of tea. 'We could not', he said, 'administer the Life-boat Institution from a central source with the same enthusiasm and dedication as it is administered on a voluntary basis.'

### Newspapers in action

In the last number of *THE LIFEBOAT* it was reported that a series of small receptions had been held in Lintas House to enlist the help of influential groups for the work of the lifeboat service. One reception was for the press, television and radio. Following that evening *The Northern Echo*, which is published in Darlington and is widely read in the north of England, mounted a vigorous campaign entitled 'Lifeboat sos'.

Much ingenuity was shown by the newspaper staff in organising or promoting fund-raising efforts. These included a ball for 700, a greyhound meeting, fashion shows, cookery demonstrations, sports meetings and sponsored school projects.

Numerous letters came from readers with donations, some of them signed 'anonymous OAP'. Two sisters sent £5 'in memory of our mother whose birthday has just passed'. They added:

'We would rather help to save lives than place flowers on her grave.' At the time of going to press *The Northern Echo* campaign has produced over £4,000 in addition to arousing tremendous new interest in the lifeboat service in the north of England.

Similarly the *Birmingham Evening Mail* ran a special campaign with the object of increasing the branch's income and purchasing some piece of equipment for the Exmouth lifeboat *City of Birmingham*. Again readers' responses were strikingly generous, and as a result of the *Mail's* efforts £2,000 has been collected already towards a new boarding boat for Exmouth lifeboat.

### Isle of Wight Appeal

It was also stated in the last number that the RNLI's Committee of Management had decided, as a temporary measure, to slow down the boat building programme in 1976 and to order only two new offshore lifeboats. At the same time we made the point that the boat building programme would be stepped up as soon as finances permitted. In fact it has already been decided to order an Arun lifeboat this year in addition to the two Rother lifeboats already budgeted for.

The new Arun lifeboat will be stationed at Yarmouth in the Isle of Wight. £50,000 towards her cost has been provided by the Wade Foundation, and an appeal is being launched in the Isle of Wight by Major-General R. A. Pigot, a newly elected member of the Committee of Management and President of the Isle of Wight Lifeboat Board, to raise the necessary additional funds.

### New head office

In formally opening the new head office in Poole on May 6, His Royal

*Mrs Ann Ritchie, in company with Major-General Ralph Farrant, comes aboard Arun class lifeboat 54-06, The Gough Ritchie, for which she is providing the funds, to be welcomed by the builder, William Osborne (r). The Gough Ritchie, which will be stationed at Port St Mary, Isle of Man, was lying alongside 54-05, the new Aberdeen lifeboat BP Forties, at Littlehampton.*



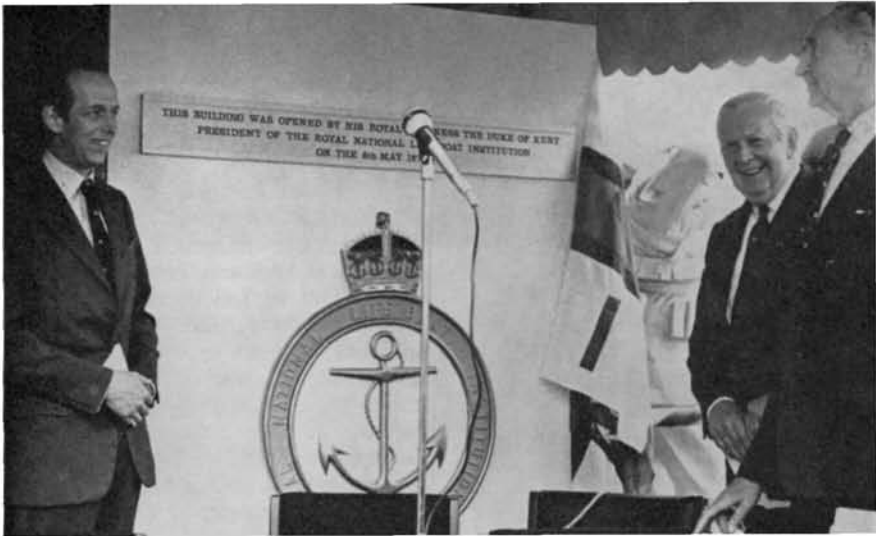
Highness The Duke of Kent, President of the RNLI, said:

'The decision to move to Poole can only be described as a bold and, I am quite confident, a wise one . . .

'There were a number of reasons for making the change. Perhaps the most important was that the offices in Grosvenor Gardens were on a long lease, which was in itself a diminishing asset. I think it is evidence of the wise financial management of the RNLI that after buying the land on which the new head office is built as a freehold property and completing the building it was able to report that the Institution's reserves stood somewhat higher than they had done a year earlier . . .'

The Duke also called attention to the importance of the change in that for a century and a half London had been the site of the RNLI's head office.

In its early years the RNLI was accommodated in the City of London, first in Austin Friars and later in Great Winchester Street. A move to the City of Westminster occurred in 1851. The head office was then off the Adelphi. Half a century later there was a move to Charing Cross Road, and in 1931 the RNLI acquired the buildings in Gros-



Opening of the new headquarters: The President, HRH The Duke of Kent, with (l. to r.) the Director, Captain Nigel Dixon, and the Chairman, Major-General Ralph Farrant.  
photograph by courtesy of Bournemouth News and Picture Service.

venor Gardens with which many of its supporters today are familiar. The main administration during the last war was carried on in the depot at Boreham Wood, but meetings continued to take place in Grosvenor Gardens.

Soon the move of the depot from Boreham Wood to Poole will be completed and for the first time in the history of the RNLI, headquarters and depot will be established on adjacent sites in the same town.

BEAUFORT WIND SCALE

Force	Limits of wind speed in knots (A knot is one nautical mile per hour)	Description	Sea	Wave height in metres, open sea	
				Probable	Probable maximum
0	Less than 1	Calm	Sea like a mirror.	—	—
1	1-3	Light air	Ripples with appearance of scales formed but without foam crests.	—	—
2	4-6	Light breeze	Small wavelets, still short but more pronounced. Crests have glassy appearance and do not break.	0.15	0.30
3	7-10	Gentle breeze	Large wavelets. Crests begin to break. Foam of glassy appearance. Perhaps scattered white horses.	0.60	1.0
4	11-16	Moderate breeze	Small waves, becoming longer: fairly frequent white horses.	1.0	1.50
5	17-21	Fresh breeze	Moderate waves, taking a more pronounced long form: many white horses (chance of some spray).	1.80	2.50
6	22-27	Strong breeze	Large waves begin to form: white foam crests more extensive everywhere. Probably some spray.	3.0	4.0
7	28-33	Near gale	Sea heaps up and white foam from breaking waves begins to be blown in streaks along direction of wind.	4.0	6.0
8	34-40	Gale	Moderately high waves of greater length; edges of crests begin to break into spindrift. Foam is blown in well-marked streaks along direction of wind.	5.50	7.50
9	41-47	Strong gale	High waves. Dense streaks of foam along direction of wind. Crests of waves begin to topple, tumble and roll over. Spray may affect visibility.	7.0	9.75
10	48-55	Storm	Very high waves with long overhanging crests; resulting foam in great patches is blown in dense white streaks along direction of wind; surface of sea takes a white appearance. Tumbling of sea becomes heavy and shocklike. Visibility affected.	9.0	12.50
11	56-63	Violent storm	Exceptionally high waves. (Small and medium-sized ships might be for a time lost to view behind the waves.) Sea completely covered with long white patches of foam lying along direction of wind. Everywhere edges of wave crests are blown into froth. Visibility affected.	11.30	16.0
12	64+	Hurricane	Air filled with foam and spray. Sea completely white with driving spray. Visibility very seriously affected.	13.70	—

# LIFEBOAT SERVICES

## Eastern Division

### 14½ hour service in severe gale

A MESSAGE FROM THE YACHT *Coronade* to the Sunk Pilot Cutter, saying that a red flare had been sighted southward, in the direction of the Long Sand, was intercepted by Walton Coastguard at 1621 on Sunday, September 14, 1975. Sightings followed from the radio ship *Mi Amigo* in position 51°42.5'N, 01°35'E, and at 1628 the deputy launching authority of Walton and Frinton station was requested to launch the lifeboat. The maroons were fired at 1630 and at 1642 the 46' 9" Watson lifeboat *Edian Courtauld* slipped her moorings off Walton Pier and set out on a south-easterly course.

The weather was overcast with rain, and the wind was north north east, force 7. High water Harwich was predicted at 1948.

HM Coastguard diverted the Manston RAF helicopter from another casualty to confirm the yacht's position, and at 1655 it was clarified that *Coronade*, to the east of the radio ship, was firing flares to attract attention to a second yacht in distress some 1½ miles to the north of *Mi Amigo*. The DLA and the Coastguard agreed that the lifeboat should be directed to the radio ship's position to assess the casualty's actual position in relation to Long Sand.

By 1719 the lifeboat had reached Wallet No. 2 Buoy and, with all shelter from the land now lost, was rolling heavily in a rough beam sea. Coxswain Frank Bloom had decided that despite the severity of the weather he would go directly across the top of Gunfleet Sand and thence to the westward side of Long Sand. Crossing Gunfleet Sand in confused breaking seas, he instructed Crew Members Jack Barrett, Brian Oxley and Owen Bloom to keep lookout on the foredeck; the lifeboat reached Black Deep No. 2 Buoy at 1810.

It was getting dark, but helped by directions from the helicopter overhead, lights from the casualty were soon seen two miles eastward; taking over the helm from Second Coxswain Dennis Finch, Coxswain Bloom ordered the lookouts to clear the foredeck and reduced speed

to three-quarter throttle before attempting to cross Long Sand on an easterly course; he was well aware of the risk of grounding, for although it was now high water the area was a mass of white water with heavy 12' waves breaking irregularly, but with deteriorating weather he decided that time was short if the crew were to be taken off the yacht.

When half a mile east of Black Deep No. 2 Buoy the lifeboat took a heavy roll to port, and through the wheelhouse skylight Coxswain Bloom saw a secondary wave rising above the boat; shouting a warning to all crew, he put the port engine half ahead and swung the wheel hard to starboard as the lifeboat rolled to starboard under the crest of the secondary wave. The three lookouts had moved aft and were abreast the starboard wheelhouse door as the lifeboat rolled to an estimated 70° to starboard. Motor Mechanic Bryan Ward, in his position to starboard of the coxswain, managed to brace himself against the door sill, taking the combined weights of the coxswain and second coxswain on his back as water filled the wheelhouse through the lee door and after wheelhouse opening.

For a few seconds the boat was completely covered as the wave broke over her and Jack Barrett and the two younger crew members on the lee rail were submerged in heavy water. Momentarily Coxswain Bloom felt that a capsizing was inevitable, '... as it went completely dark ...', but the boat swung downwind as intended and drained rapidly. No crew members had suffered more than bruising as they were thrown to starboard and, in an effort

to avert a similar situation, Coxswain Bloom ordered Bowman Robert Kemp and Jack Barrett to stream the drogue to 8 fathoms; this was no easy task in the violently moving boat, but was safely achieved. Course was then altered south-eastward to run on a quartering sea.

The weather remained overcast with heavy rain squalls and the wind had increased to north east by north force 9, with heavy seas accentuated by the beginning of the north-north-east ebb tide. Visibility varied, reducing to one mile in squalls.

Once clear of the heavy surf area the drogue was recovered and the lifeboat altered course northward, coming up on the casualty at 1852. The 30' yacht, *Tsunami*, was lying to anchor, flying a flag distress signal, under bare spars. The heavy seas were causing her to veer excessively but the lifeboat was taken to within hailing distance to ascertain that the crew would leave the yacht: the answer received was that they would do so.

Placing all fenders on the starboard side, Coxswain Bloom took the lifeboat upwind until abreast of the yacht at a distance of some 40 feet and met the yacht as she veered towards him. The crew were spaced along the lifeboat's side deck and although two of the yacht's crew were helped across without serious difficulty, the third man had to be grabbed quickly and hauled aboard as a sea lifted the lifeboat away from the yacht in a violent movement.

As Coxswain Bloom manoeuvred to re-position the lifeboat to take off the two remaining men, one of those already on board told him that the owner and



Walton and Frinton: *Tsunami* at anchor south of Long Sand as *Edian Courtauld* approached. The wind was north east by north force 9, with heavy seas, the weather overcast with heavy rain squalls. photograph by courtesy of the lifeboat crew.



one other would not leave the yacht. The coxswain quickly decided that the only course of action was to try to tow the yacht into deeper open water before the full ebb tide made conditions untenable.

The second approach was made in a similar manner and the end of a 2½" nylon towline passed from the bow to the yacht owner, being cleared along the lifeboat's side by all available crew members until, at 20 fathoms, it was made fast aft and secured around the yacht's mast, backed up to a cleat. The yacht's anchor cable was then cut.

Towing began towards North Knock Buoy. Coxswain Bloom's first intention, having been told again that the owner was determined to remain on board, was to attempt the 25-mile downwind passage to Ramsgate. However, one of the yacht's crew told him that *Tsunami's* rudder was jammed hard a'starboard and that the keel had apparently fractured upon grounding earlier; some water was reported to be entering the hull. With the yacht in that condition Coxswain Bloom rightly considered that a long downwind tow was too hazardous; there was a real danger of broaching, and if the yacht lost her keel and capsized it might be impossible to rescue the two yachtsmen should they be in the cabin.

At 1900, therefore, Coxswain Bloom turned lifeboat and tow on to a northerly course to clear Long Sand Head, maintaining the wind on the bow for as long as possible; the tow was lengthened to 60 fathoms and the owner and his crew member battened themselves into the yacht's cabin to man the pump.

At 2112 Long Sand Head Buoy was abeam and course eased to westward. At 2341, abeam of Sunk Lightvessel, course was again altered to port, with the tow passing Cork Spit Buoy at 0142 and Rolling Ground Buoy at 0210. From this point an increasing lee was afforded, although the shallow water effect still caused continual rolling. The helm was shared by the more experienced crew members during the homeward tow, which required continuous observation of the yacht and close attention to the towline. *Tsunami* was towed up the Walton River and secured on a mooring at 0400; the return tow had been made at a speed of just over 2 knots.

All five members of the yacht's crew were taken ashore and returned home in transport arranged by Coxswain Bloom. At 0425 *Edian Courtauld* left the river and returned to her moorings; she was reported refuelled and ready for service at 0710.

For this service the silver medal for gallantry was awarded to Coxswain Frank Bloom. The thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to Second Coxswain Dennis Finch, Motor Mechanic Bryan Ward, Bowman Robert Kemp, Assistant Mechanic Keith Richardson and Crew Members Jack Barrett, Brian Oxley and Owen Bloom.

## South Eastern Division Hurricane in Straits of Dover

DOVER STRAIT COASTGUARD received a Mayday call at 2204 on Monday, December 1, 1975, from the 1,199-ton phosphate loaded Cypriot coaster *Primrose* indicating loss of steering gear in a position some 3 miles east of Dover breakwater and that tug assistance was required immediately.

At 2205 Dover Strait Coastguard informed Dover Port Control that a tug was required forthwith for the stricken coaster, and in reply was advised that the tug was not considered suitable in the weather conditions prevailing. So the Coastguard informed the honorary secretary of Dover lifeboat station and it was agreed that the lifeboat would stand by to launch if required. Her crew were already assembled and waiting advice to launch to a ferry adrift in Dover Harbour with an injured person aboard.

At 2208 Townsend ferries *Free Enterprise VII* and *Free Enterprise VIII* both indicated a 15-minute ETA at the position of the coaster *Primrose* and the motor vessel *Cornish Wasa* reported her position to be some 30 minutes' steaming from that of the casualty. At 2226 North Foreland Radio broadcast the position of *Primrose* to be 4 miles east of Dover eastern breakwater.

At 2221 Dover honorary secretary was told that no tug assistance for *Primrose* was available and was asked to launch the Dover lifeboat. Accordingly, at 2237, the 44' Waveney lifeboat *Faithful Forester* slipped her moorings in the submarine pens and set out to sea.

Weather conditions recorded at Dover Strait Coastguard at the time of launching showed the wind direction to be from 200°T with the force as Beaufort Scale storm force 10 (wind speed 48-55 knots). Tide was just one hour after high water Dover.

The storm force winds and tide created appalling sea conditions at the eastern entrance to Dover Harbour; an enormous maelstrom of confused sea and spume confronted *Faithful Forester* as she tried to claw her way seaward through the breakwaters. Before clearing them she was laid over on her beam ends but righted herself and went on under the expert helmsmanship of Coxswain/Mechanic Arthur Liddon.

On clearing the eastern harbour entrance at 2242, *Faithful Forester* was told by *Free Enterprise VIII* that the course to steer for *Primrose* was 086°T and, after verifying this to be correct, the lifeboat accordingly set course 092°M. Wind speed at this time was recorded by instrument aboard *Free Enterprise VII* to be 70 knots—Beaufort Scale hurricane force 12. Direction was 190°T. Tide was setting 054°T at 2.5 knots.

At 2245 *Primrose* gave her position as 5 miles north east of Varne Light-

vessel and 5 miles east of Dover breakwater. At 2257 she reported that jury steering gear had been rigged and that a heading of 190°T was being maintained; she was in fact wind and tide rode and making up to the north east at a speed of 2.4 knots.

*Free Enterprise VII* reported at 2318 that from radar observation the casualty was 1½ miles off the Goodwin Sands and closing. At 2320 Dover lifeboat arrived at the casualty having been guided on to her by the deck and searchlights of *Free Enterprise VIII*. *Faithful Forester* had covered the 5 miles from Dover Harbour at an average speed of 7.69 knots despite mountainous quarter seas reliably reported by observers on both ferries to be in excess of 25 feet high. To have reached the casualty so promptly despite such conditions highlights the fine seamanship and dogged perseverance of Coxswain Liddon. Captain Robinson, master of *Free Enterprise VII*, said of that night:

'The weather at this time was the worst I have experienced in this area in some eighteen years service in the Dover Straits. The wind was just west of south and my anemometer was indicating 100 mph in regular gusts and then settling at 70 mph. Had Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort lived 170 years later he would certainly have had second thoughts on his wind scale.

'The seas were mountainous and it was obvious to all that the Dover lifeboat had no chance of navigating visually.'

Coxswain Liddon expertly conned the Dover lifeboat into a position some half a cable off the starboard quarter of the coaster, which was shipping heavy seas overall, and stood by, maintaining course and speed equivalent to the drift of the casualty. At 2355 navigation lights sighted indicated that an unidentified craft was fast bearing down on to and on collision course with *Primrose*. *Free Enterprise VII*, acting as on scene commander, broadcast a warning on VHF and ascertained that the craft was *Malcolm Miller*, approaching at 13 knots under bare poles, and that avoiding action was being taken.

At 0042, Dover Strait Coastguard reported by VHF that the weather front would pass through the casualty area in 30 minutes' time and at about 0049, with a wind speed reading of 100 mph recorded by *Free Enterprise VII*, the Dover lifeboat was for the second time on this service laid on to her beam ends by a combination of sea and wind pressure; it was about half a minute before the wind slackened and *Faithful Forester* righted herself; she then resumed station off the casualty. During this occurrence *Free Enterprise VII*, keeping careful watch on the lifeboat, realised something was amiss and checked by VHF radio that all was well.

Meanwhile a Dutch tug reported by VHF that she had sailed from Zeebrugge and gave her approximate ETA as 0930.

The tide was now slack and as the



*Bridlington: On the morning of November 27, 1975, Bridlington lifeboat, the 37' Oakley William Henry and Mary King stood by, with drogue streamed, while a coble and ten motor fishing vessels entered harbour. The wind was southerly strong gale force 9, the seas rough. Galatea was thrown almost into the harbour wall by the sea in this picture, but made a second successful run in.*

photograph by courtesy of Paul Berriff.

wind had veered to west and diminished in force to 60 knots—still hurricane force 12 though—Coxswain Liddon suggested to the master of *Primrose* that he should steer 270°T with a view to making some westing and gaining a lee from the land. By 0317 it was obvious that the coxswain's advice, which had been followed, was sound as the coaster had closed to just under six miles from Dover breakwater.

When some two miles off Dover Harbour eastern arm *Primrose* requested a pilot to take her into harbour. At 0346, however, *Free Enterprise VIII* relayed a reply to the effect that weather conditions were too severe for the pilot vessel to put out, so *Faithful Forester* offered to lead *Primrose* into the anchorage. Thus at 0350 Dover lifeboat took station ahead of the coaster, and by passing alterations of course and speed and also details of the tidal conditions, at 0412 safely piloted *Primrose* into Dover Harbour whence no other craft had dared to venture all night.

Once *Primrose* had anchored, *Faithful Forester* returned to her berth in the pens where she was again made ready for sea and placed on station at 0518.

In the final paragraph of his report Captain Robinson wrote:

'The whole incident from start to finish must be the finest piece of seamanship I have ever seen with such limited facilities in the worst possible conditions and I salute this small band of dedicated lifeboatmen who risked life and limb for some eight hours.'

For this service the silver medal for gallantry was awarded to Coxswain/Mechanic Arthur Liddon. The bronze medal was awarded to Second Coxswain/Assistant Mechanic Anthony G. Hawkins, who maintained a very high standard of navigation and communications in particularly bad weather conditions. The thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to Second Assistant Mechanic Richard J. Hawkins and Crew Members John J. Smith and Gordon Davis. Letters of thanks from Captain Nigel Dixon, RN, the Director of the Institution, were sent to L. C. White, district officer of HM Coastguard Dover Straits, and the masters of the Townsend car ferries *Free Enterprise VII* and *Free Enterprise VIII*, Captain B. Robinson and Captain J. Davenport.

## Western Division

### Night service for ILB

WATCHET COASTGUARD informed the honorary secretary of Minehead ILB station at 2325 on Saturday, September 13, 1975, that a flashing light, thought to be an SOS signal from a vessel in distress, had been sighted off Hurtstone Point. The ILB, a 19' Zodiac with twin engines and equipped for night operations, was launched at 2335 with Christopher Rundle in command and Peter McGregor and Albert Hartgen as crew.

The wind was north east force 7, and the sea rough and confused. It was two hours to high water and the flood stream was setting eastwards at about 2 knots. The night was dark with an overcast sky and driving rain reduced visibility to moderate.

The ILB headed westward towards Hurtstone Point at slow speed because of the rough sea which was aggravated by wind against tide. A message was received from the Watchet Coastguard mobile that the casualty, thought to be a white-hulled sailing yacht, was about 1½ miles east of Hurtstone Point and

half a mile off the land. In view of the weather conditions it was requested that situation reports be passed from the ILB every two minutes.

At 2359, when half a mile north of Minehead Bluff, an illuminating parachute flare was fired, but nothing was sighted. The ILB continued westward and at around 0005 a flashing light was sighted briefly about 30 degrees on the starboard bow some distance away. Course was altered towards the light and the Coastguard was informed that the weather was deteriorating and progress towards the last known position of the light was being made with difficulty. The honorary secretary instructed the ILB not to go west of Hurststone Point and Barry Dock No. 1 lifeboat was placed on alert.

At about 0018 a beam of light was sighted right ahead some half-a-mile away. A second parachute flare was fired but failed to illuminate the casualty, and the ILB headed on towards the light. Eventually, at 0029, a white-hulled 37' sloop-rigged yacht without sails was sighted lying beam on to the sea, bows south east, and rolling heavily.

The wind was still blowing from the north east force 7, but the sea was becoming more confused, making it difficult to manoeuvre the ILB.

Helmsman Rundle took the ILB close down the port side of the yacht, *Svea*, and shouted to a person standing in the cockpit that the yacht was too large to be taken in tow; he advised that she be anchored and the crew would be taken off and landed at Minehead.

The ILB, having stood off while the yacht anchored and became tide-rotted with bows west, manoeuvred, with difficulty, alongside her port side and managed to take off one man before having to stand off again. On the second attempt the remaining crew, a man and a woman, were taken off in a similar manner. All were safely on board the ILB by 0049.

*Svea* had sailed in from Lundy Island trying to find shelter, but had lost her sails and an anchor and had run out of fuel. In an effort to attract attention her crew had expended all their distress flares at dusk, and had only an electric torch with which to signal.

The ILB made her way slowly back to Minehead, where the survivors were

landed at 0136 into the care of the honorary medical adviser, Dr P. Leech (also a crew member), and the boat was rehoused and ready for service by 0210 with the crew standing by for an overdue local fishing boat. *Svea* was recovered later by a Minehead boat.

For this service the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to Helmsman Christopher J. Rundle, and vellum service certificates were presented to Crew Members Peter S. McGregor and Albert J. Hartgen.

## South Western Division

### Trawler taking water

A FRENCH TRAWLER, *Enfant de Bretagne*, broadcast a Mayday call on the afternoon of Tuesday, December 2, 1975, saying that she was taking water in heavy weather in position 320°M 18 miles from St Ives Head. This information was given to the deputy launching authority of St Ives at 1502, and at 1520 the 37' Oakley lifeboat *Jane Hay*, on temporary duty at St Ives, was launched.

The tide was in the last hour of flood and the wind was north north west force 7 gusting to force 9. The lifeboat therefore encountered heavy seas on her starboard bow from the moment of leaving harbour as Coxswain Thomas Cocking, Senior, set course for the casualty.

After only about half an hour on course the lifeboat received information that *Enfant de Bretagne* had cancelled her Mayday because the leak had been stopped and she was now under the tow of another French trawler. *Jane Hay* was consequently recalled to station. She had almost reached St Ives Head on the return passage when, at 1625, *Enfant de Bretagne* sent a further message reporting that her engine room was now flooding in very heavy seas. HM Coastguard suggested the lifeboat should return to the casualty and Coxswain Cocking immediately turned seawards again, this time setting course almost due west to allow for what he estimated must have been the progress of *Enfant de Bretagne* since her original Mayday. From the description of the seas which her master had given, and from his own estimate of her probable speed made

good southwards of about 5½ knots, Coxswain Cocking surmised, correctly as it subsequently proved, that the trawler was probably now approaching Cape Cornwall Bank.

Communications with *Enfant de Bretagne* were very poor because of her radio, and the Coastguard repeatedly tried unsuccessfully to obtain an updated position from the master. It appeared that such communication as could be established had to be via Land's End Radio.

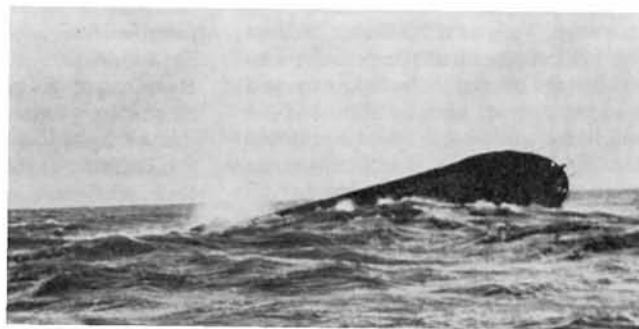
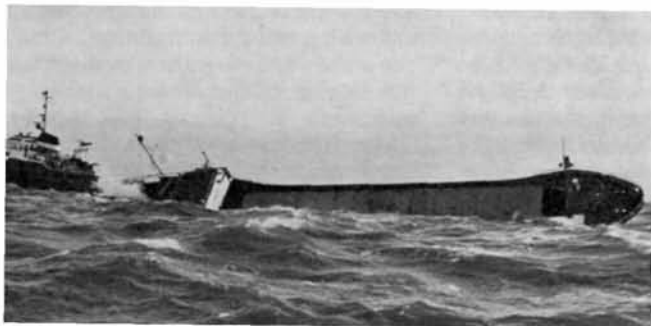
At about 1700 Coxswain Cocking made another calculation of his own and altered course to 250°M to intercept the trawler. Twenty-five minutes later the Coastguard suggested this same course and the coxswain replied that he was already steering that course and that his ETA at the casualty was 1805. At 1740 *Jane Hay's* crew saw lights on the starboard bow and asked Land's End Radio to request *Enfant de Bretagne* to fire a flare to identify herself. The casualty never did comply with this request but, about five minutes later, the lifeboat saw the lights of a towing vessel and so realised that *Enfant de Bretagne* was the next vessel astern of her.

By 1820 *Jane Hay* had closed to within a few yards of the trawler's starboard side where she took up station and remained in very close escort in case the trawler should founder. There was still no communication with the casualty but, despite the appalling weather conditions, the passage continued without further incident until the lee of Land's End was reached south of Runnel Stone Buoy. The Longships area had to be given a very wide berth to westward, as did Carn Base two miles southwards, because of the enormous seas.

The honorary secretary St Ives then asked Penlee lifeboat to launch and take over the escort back to Newlyn. This was done and the rendezvous was made at about 1945 when four miles east south east of the Runnel Stone. St Ives lifeboat then handed over the escort to Penlee and set course for home.

The Inspector HM Coastguard South West Division had by this time gone to the Coastguard lookout at St Ives and reported that spray was in fact being blown across the lookout, which is some 70' above sea level. He became concerned

*Great Yarmouth and Gorleston: The coaster Sea Rhine, her cargo shifted, founders. Her mate had been taken off by the 44' Waveney lifeboat Khani.*





for the safety of the lifeboat on her return passage and asked HMS *Tartar*, which was in the vicinity, to remain in the area until St Ives lifeboat had returned to her station.

The return passage found the lifeboat bucking headwinds of a steady force 9 from due north as she passed Longships. Conditions gradually worsened and, by the time she was abreast of the Brisons, the seas were reaching 35 feet and breaking and, for the first time in his experience of this lifeboat, Coxswain Cocking found himself obliged to reduce speed. In spite of this, the seas off Cape Cornwall were sufficient to tear the bow fender from its fixing. St Ives Harbour was eventually regained by 2310 and, with some difficulty, the boat was recovered on to her carriage.

This had been a most arduous service, and Motor Mechanic John Hosking sitting at the radio had found himself on more than one occasion in water up to his waist after exceptional seas had broken over the quarter and filled the cockpit. They were the worst conditions Coxswain Cocking and his crew had ever experienced in the lifeboat, and for the coxswain this spans a period of 25 years. Of the eight hours at sea, the last six had been in darkness and heavy rain.

For this service the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to Coxswain Thomas Cocking, Senior. Vellum service certificates were presented to Motor Mechanic John D. Hosking, Assistant Mechanic William Benney and Crew Members David L. Smith, John T. Lander and William H. Jenkyn.

## Eastern Division

### Sea Rhine founders

AT 0423 ON WEDNESDAY February 11, HM Coastguard informed the honorary secretary of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston lifeboat station that a Mayday call had been received from the coaster *Sea Rhine* whose cargo had shifted, causing her to list badly.

The 44' Waveney lifeboat *Khami* set out at 0439 in a strong breeze and a moderate sea. It was high water and visibility was good. She reached the coaster, whose position was some 20

## ANNUAL AWARDS

1975

**The Maud Smith Bequest** for the outstanding act of lifesaving in 1975 has been awarded to Coxswain/Mechanic David Kennett of Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, for the rescue on September 14 of the crew of five of the yacht *Chayka of Ardgour*. Coxswain Kennett was awarded the Institution's silver medal for this service.

**The Ralph Glister Award** for the most meritorious service by the crew of an

miles east south east of the lifeboat station, at 0620. A tug had already taken off the master of *Sea Rhine* and a seaman, but the mate had remained aboard. However, within minutes her list had increased sharply and the lifeboat went alongside on the port quarter and took the mate off. The other two survivors were then transferred from the tug to the lifeboat. At 0802 *Sea Rhine* sank and the lifeboat returned to her station arriving at 0915.

## North Eastern Division

### Cut off by tide

A LOCAL COBLE alerted Flamborough Coastguard on the afternoon of Saturday, August 23, 1975; two people were cut off by the tide on the cliff at West Scar. After viewing the site and ruling out any attempt at rescue over the cliff as too dangerous, the Coastguard telephoned the honorary secretary of the lifeboat station at 1600, maroons were fired and the 35' 6" Liverpool lifeboat *Friendly Forester* launched at 1615. It was two hours before high water, with wind north-easterly force 2, a slight sea and moderate swell.

The position of the trapped people was clearly visible from the launching site. They were on a ledge some 8 feet above the water. Both sides of North Landing have heavy outcrops of scar. The swell, though moderate at the entrance to the cove, built itself up,

ILB in 1975 has been awarded to Helmsman Michael Coates and Crew Member David Wharton of Whitby for the rescue on July 25 of a man cut off on a cliff by the tide. For this service Helmsman Coates was awarded the Institution's bronze medal and Crew Member Wharton the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum.

**The James Michael Bower Fund.** Monetary awards from this fund are being made to the three men who received the RNLI's silver medal for gallantry for services during 1975: Coxswain Frank Bloom of Walton and Frinton; Coxswain/Mechanic David Kennett of Yarmouth; and Coxswain/Mechanic Arthur Liddon of Dover.

becoming confused especially in the vicinity of the casualties.

Coxswain George Pockley had made up his mind before launching that any attempt to take the lifeboat to the casualties would seriously hazard his boat and crew and would prove unsuccessful. He therefore anchored at the entrance to the cove and veered down cable. The rocket line was then fired to the Coastguard on the cliff top, who pulled in one veering line attached to the breeches buoy. Unfortunately the rocket line fouled and chaffed through before the veering line had been hauled to the land, but the gear was recovered, another line fired and the veering line hauled to the cliff top successfully.

With the gear rigged in this way the breeches buoy could be guided directly to the two people on the cliff. As one of them had an injured leg, and to avoid further delay, Coxswain Pockley instructed Crew Member Alwyn Emmerson to go ashore in the buoy to help. Such was the smooth, practised co-operation between lifeboat crew and Coastguard that Alwyn Emmerson was landed just below the casualties.

By this time the swell was reaching the base of the ledge and the resultant confused water made it very difficult for the casualties to get into the breeches buoy. While Alwyn Emmerson was helping the first person, Auxiliary Coastguard John Powell was lowered down the cliff to help, and both people

*continued on page 177*

photographs by courtesy of H. E. Appleton.



# A Weekend in September

Saturday and Sunday, September 13 and 14, 1975:  
47 launches on service

## FOUR AWARDS FOR GALLANTRY

TWO SILVER MEDALS, a bronze medal, a vellum, 47 launches on service, 34 lives rescued, nine vessels saved, 172 hours at sea. Not a record by RNLI standards, but nevertheless quite a weekend. Many of the services ended in no positive achievement; lifeboat or ILB had stood by sometimes for as long as ten hours in gale force winds, willing to provide at least background confidence to crews working out their own problems, ready to move in when needed. 'Gave help' appears 10 times in the table of launches opposite. A total of ten hours was spent at sea by three lifeboats looking for the originators of flares and distress signals which could not be identified.

Several boats launched more than once during the weekend. Bembridge, Torbay and Clacton-on-Sea offshore lifeboats and Largs, Southend-on-Sea, Weston-

super-Mare, Minehead and Hayling Islands ILBs each went out twice; Eastney ILB three times.

The award-winning services roughly followed the pattern of the weather system as it moved from west to east: Weston-super-Mare and Minehead late Saturday evening; Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, very early Sunday morning; Walton and Frinton Sunday afternoon. The reports of the services by Weston-super-Mare, for which Helmsman Julian Morris was awarded the bronze medal, and by Yarmouth, for which Coxswain/Mechanic David Kennett was awarded the silver medal, appeared in the last issue of *THE LIFEBOAT*. The report of the service by Minehead for which Helmsman Christopher Rundle was accorded the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum appears on page 151 in this

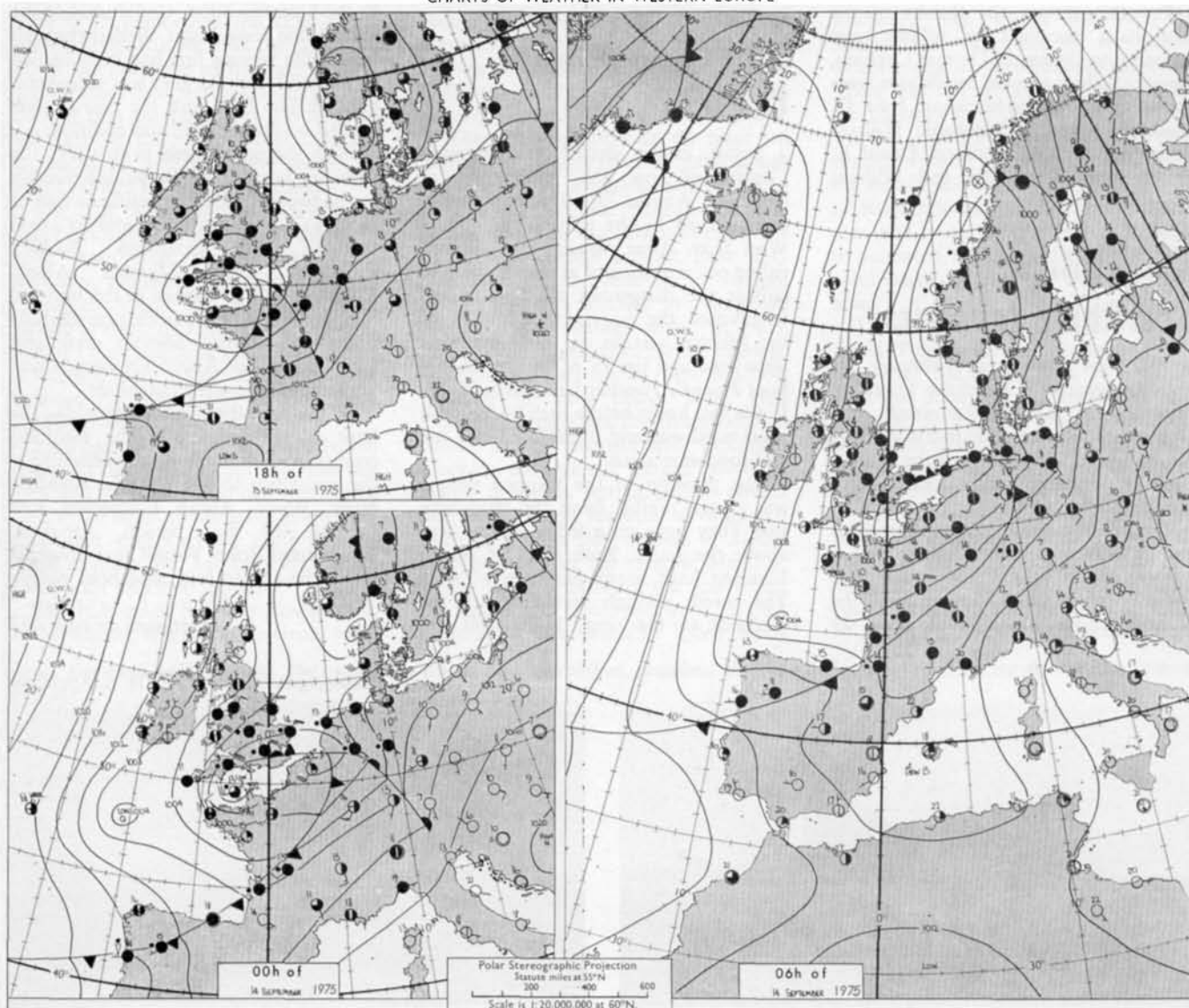
issue, and the report of the service by the Walton and Frinton lifeboat for which Coxswain Frank Bloom was awarded the silver medal appears on page 149.

Once again we are indebted to the Meteorological Office for allowing us to publish the weather charts below, and to Jack Armstrong of the Southampton Weather Centre for the following assessment of the weekend's weather:

The weather situation on September 13 and 14, 1975, can be described as 'typical' for the mid-September period, though it does sometimes seem rather remarkable how often the peak activity of a depression such as this occurs at a weekend.

The low pressure area came across the Atlantic very quickly as a fairly

CHARTS OF WEATHER IN WESTERN EUROPE



weak feature but it reached the South-west Approaches around mid-day on Saturday, found conditions which suited it and began to deepen rapidly pushing winds up to gale force in all quadrants. As it deepened it slowed down but finally cleared the southern North Sea on Sunday afternoon leaving a gale force northerly behind it.

It was in fact this northerly gale which caused most of the incidents, spreading as it did from the West Country on Saturday evening to the Thames Estuary by Sunday mid-day.

Frequent gusts of gale force 8 were recorded at land stations and severe gale force 9 was measured at Brighton and at Portland; one can deduce that

force 9 was frequently experienced in open waters.

The great danger of these storms must lie in the brief but violent nature of their lives. Mid-day Saturday, quiet and peaceful, Sunday night clearing skies and a fresh clear wind, but between the two an 18-hour period of rain and gales and perhaps even tragedy.

Date and time of launch	STATION	CASUALTY	hours at Sea	lives res-cued	per-sons landed	ves-sels saved	ves-sels helped	Services Rendered
<b>Offshore Lifeboats</b>								
13.9.75								
0549	Bembridge	fv <i>Jumbo</i> of Portsmouth	3					None
1246	St Helier	Yacht <i>Bannatyne</i>	2				1	Gave help
1425	Baltimore	MFV <i>Joslyne</i>	4	3		1		Saved boat & rescued 3
1718	Torbay	Dinghies	1					None
1920	Fishguard	Dinghy	2			1		Saved boat
1925	Clovelly	Yacht <i>Arundel Baron</i>	9					None
2200	Workington	Dinghy	5					None
2235	Dun Laoghaire	Yacht	3					None
2345	Eastbourne	Unidentified distress signal	2					None
14.9.75								
0001	Fleetwood	Flares	4					None
0035	New Quay (Dyfed)	Yacht	4					None
0122	Yarmouth Isle of Wight	Yacht <i>Chayka of Ardgour</i>	6	5				Rescued 5
0140	Torbay	Yacht <i>Amorel</i>	4	7		1		Saved boat & rescued 7
0222	Clacton-on-Sea	Flares	4					None
0608	Calshot	Yachts	3				4	Gave help
0850	Selsey	(1) Yachts <i>Valkyrie</i> and <i>Bonaventure</i> (2) Motor yacht <i>Honfleur</i> of Gosport	13				2	Gave help
0909	Harwich	Yacht <i>Tiamo</i>	4				1	Gave help
0958	Barry Dock	Yacht <i>Amanda K</i>	10				1	Gave help
1017	Bembridge	Yacht <i>Tessa</i>	12					None
1315	Humber	Yacht <i>Lady Nancy</i> of Grimsby	4			1		Landed a body
1453	Newhaven	Motor cruiser <i>Beryl</i> in tow of motor cruiser <i>Carisbrooke</i>	1				2	Saved boat
1642	Walton and Frinton	Yacht <i>Tsunami</i>	14	5		1		Escorted boats
1650	Clacton-on-Sea	Yacht <i>Cyma of Deben</i> in tow of cabin cruiser	5				2	Saved boat & rescued 5
1957	Lowestoft	Tug <i>Robin IV</i> of America	4					Escorted boats
			123	20		5	13	None
<b>Inshore Lifeboats</b>								
13.9.75								
1040	Largs	Yacht <i>Mystique</i>	2					None
1409	Port Isaac	Bather	5					None
1446	Holyhead	Person fallen from cliff	1	1				Rescued 1
1557	Lyme Regis	Dinghies	1				3	Gave help
1655	Southwold	Dinghy <i>Flap Jack</i>	1	2		1		Saved boat & rescued 2
1730	Southend-on-Sea	Bather	1					None
1749	Eastney	Yacht <i>Loren</i>	2		1	1		Saved boat & landed 1
1838	West Kirby	Persons cut off by tide	1					None
1954	Whitstable	Fishing boat	1					None
2231	Weston-super-Mare	Motorboat <i>4D</i>	2	5				Rescued 5
2335	Minehead	Yacht <i>Svea</i>	3	3				Rescued 3
14.9.75								
0030	Largs	Persons overboard from dinghy						
		<i>Tesang</i>	2					None
0949	Minehead	fv <i>Amanda Kay</i>	10					None
1205	The Mumbles	Dinghy	1				1	Gave help
1325	Harwich	Yacht <i>Sara</i>	2		2			Landed 2
1349	Eastney	Dinghy	1	2		1		Saved boat & rescued 2
1415	Weston-super-Mare	Motorboat	3					None
1530	Hayling Island	Yachts	3				2	Gave help
1650	Southend-on-Sea	Catamaran <i>Uyo</i>	2	1		1		Saved boat & rescued 1
1650	West Mersea	Yacht <i>Sea Badger</i>	2				1	Gave help
1900	Hayling Island	Yachts	2				2	Gave help
2010	Eastney	Persons stranded on island	1					None
			49	14	3	4	9	



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## and presentation of awards

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL, WEDNESDAY APRIL 14

THE TRUE MEASURE OF SUCCESS — 1,038 LIVES SAVED IN 1975

'THOSE MARVELLOUSLY UNDER-STATED CITATIONS . . .' Thus Raymond Baxter put into words the feelings of the crowded Royal Festival Hall on the afternoon of April 14 as he rose to move the traditional resolution immediately following the presentation of awards for gallantry. One after another twelve gallant men, coxswains, helmsmen and crew, together with Martin Ruddy, a 14-year-old Scout, had come up to receive their medals, silver or bronze, from the Chairman of the Institution, Major-General Ralph Farrant. *'The wind was north north east force 9 . . . heavy rain . . . while crossing the Long Sand the lifeboat was laid over 70 degrees to starboard and momentarily overwhelmed . . .'; ' . . . gale force 10 winds . . . seas over 25' swept the lifeboat, some filling the wheelhouse . . .'; ' . . . hurricane force winds . . . Dover . . . extremely confused seas in the harbour entrance from which no vessel, save the lifeboat, had been able to venture all night . . .'; ' . . . during the return passage the lifeboat encountered breaking seas of 40-50 feet in height . . .'; ' . . . gale . . . he rowed five exhausting times backwards and forwards through the heavy swell and rough seas . . .'*

This is both the most solemn and the most triumphant hour of the lifeboat year.

It was Raymond Baxter, guest speaker but nevertheless an old friend, who, as he ended his speech, also put into words the buoyant optimism of the day. Despite having raised more money in 1975 than ever before, the Institution's expenditure for the year had exceeded income by about a quarter of a million pounds. While accepting this as a reality which has to be faced, there was no doubt that lifeboat people were undeterred, looking ahead with renewed determination and faith:

Now this crisis has not been the fault of any of you for not trying hard enough. It is simply the product of inflation—the insidious rat in our national larder. It would be very foolish to pretend that the situation is not extremely serious, but the RNLI is used to serious situations. No one needs the lifeboat when it is all plain sailing. So be it. We have the men to put to sea when everything is against them. Some of them are with us this afternoon. It is up to all of us to prove that though we may not be of their mettle, we can at least emulate their example. By meeting the challenge all square, as a lifeboat herself will turn her bow to challenge and overcome a

thundering, breaking wave, we, too, shall redouble our efforts, ride out the storm and see our men safely home.'

\* \* \*

The day had begun with the morning annual general meeting at which Major-General Farrant had presented the annual report and accounts to the Governors:

'I should like to welcome everyone to this marvellous turn-out of Governors. Thank you all very much for coming . . .

'As you all know this is the first time that I have had the privilege of addressing the Governors of the RNLI as Chairman. I count myself fortunate in being in a position to report to you on a year of considerable success. Last year the lives of over 1,000 people were saved from death by drowning. This is the true measure of the success of our work, and it is most gratifying to be able to add that no member of a lifeboat crew lost his life on service or on exercise during the year. Another figure of some significance is that last year the RNLI recorded its 100,000th rescue of human life since we began to keep records around the middle of the last century.

'During 1975 the RNLI raised more money than ever before. In the same year we sent six new lifeboats to their stations, and when you consider that a modern lifeboat costs between £100,000 and £200,000 this gives you some idea of the constructional programme on which we have been engaged. During the year we completed the move of our head office to Poole . . .'

General Farrant went on to speak of the Institution's close co-operation with lifeboat services overseas and other organisations at home engaged in the work of saving life at sea. During the year an RNLI delegation had attended the twelfth International Lifeboat Conference in Finland, at which 19 countries had been represented. The first 54' Arun class lifeboat to have been built of GRP, launched that spring, had made the passage to Helsinki:

'When she was shown to the delegates . . . she aroused considerable interest and admiration because she looked as though she had been shipped under wraps straight from the builder's yard. She is now on station at Weymouth. We are already receiving enquiries from foreign countries interested in purchasing or building lifeboats of the Arun class.'

At the wish of an overwhelming majority of delegates to the conference the RNLI is to continue to provide a

central secretariat for lifeboat organisations throughout the world.

'I am sure you will agree that this is a high compliment and an indication of the international standing of the RNLI today.'

General Farrant then turned to the question of financial reserves. The move of the head office to Poole had been a successful venture both financially and administratively. The building and the freehold of the land on which it stands had been paid for almost entirely by disposing of the lease of 42-44 Grosvenor Gardens, which was, of course, a diminishing asset. With the new building, not only were the working and travelling conditions of the staff improved, but the Institution's funds were spared the burden of having to pay London allowances. Despite an operational deficit during the year the RNLI's financial reserves were, in fact, somewhat higher at the beginning of 1976 than they had been at the beginning of 1975, largely because of an improvement in the stock market.

'Nevertheless . . . we must continue to regard our reserves as dangerously low . . . Not so long ago reserves of £1 million meant that there was enough money to cover a year's operational costs even if no new money came in. Today £1 million in reserves would cover our running costs for only about two months.'

The erosion of working capital and the level of expenditure had been examined most carefully in the course of the year:

'As our first responsibility must be to endeavour to maintain our coastal cover at its present level, the conclusion reached was that we must introduce a temporary pause in the accelerated building programme on which we embarked a few years ago.

'I want to emphasize as strongly as I can that this is a pause and not a diminution of the programme.

'May I remind you of the background? In 1970 we decided to double the rate of boatbuilding with the intention of raising the average number of offshore boats completed in a year from five to ten. In announcing the policy, the late Admiral Sir Wilfrid Woods, who was then our Chairman, said openly that it was an act of faith and that we did not have the financial resources at the time to ensure that the programme would be completed. We had high hopes of our anniversary year to keep us going in this act of faith.

In fact, we have been building at this accelerated rate, and that is why there are now 11 new lifeboats under construction which are due to be completed this year. One of these, a 44' Waveney, just launched, is to be called *Ralph and Joy Swann* as a mark of our appreciation of the many years of devoted service to the Institution of my predecessor, Commander Ralph Swann.

'However, we are having to slow down on construction because of inflation. Whilst on this topic, I recently heard the chairman of one of our committees, who is a retired admiral—that does not pin him down too closely—comment that when he was a lieutenant the cost of a destroyer was about the same as the cost of a 70' lifeboat now. It was a very good illustration when he first used it last year; I am sorry to say that this year his destroyer would be only a 54-footer! The grim fact is that in the past five years the cost of building boats has trebled.

'Therefore, we are having a pause in the building and are ordering only three new boats this year, but by the end of the year we shall have completed 43 new offshore lifeboats since 1970, which is an average of seven new boats per year. When sufficient funds become available we shall order more new boats.'

General Farrant then spoke of the efforts being made to keep expenditure down wherever possible without compromising the efficiency of the service, and also of the efforts being made to increase contributions, particularly from the marine sector of industry.

'In presenting any picture of the RNLI's finances there is one primary consideration which must be taken into account, but which is not easily quantified. This is public goodwill, on which the whole success of the service depends. I can truthfully state that the RNLI in its long history has never enjoyed

greater goodwill among the public at large in this country than it does today. That this is so is principally due to the voluntary efforts of all those who work for the service, an appreciable number of whom are Governors of the Institution. It is because of the existence of this goodwill that the Committee of Management is reasonably confident of overcoming the serious financial problems which confront the RNLI today.'

Coming to the accounts, a summary of which appear on this page. Major-General Farrant pointed out that the net current assets had improved during the year by £0.36 million to a total of £3.74 million; much of the increase in freehold property, which stood in excess of £1.5 million, was in respect of the headquarters building at Poole. The net income for general purposes of slightly over £4.5 million showed an increase by some £363,000 which, with the amount released from restricted funds, brought available income for the year to over £5 million for the first time in the history of the Institution.

In a year when national inflation had been running at an average of at least 24 per cent, the Institution had been able to curtail its overall expenditure increase to 19 per cent, compared with 1974, varying from 39 per cent increase in the boat building programme to 5 per cent in the costs of fund raising and publicity. Administrative expenses had increased by 26 per cent, due mainly to salary and pensions costs and the rises in costs of travel and the telephone, but economies were already in hand, and it was hoped that the increased cost of these administrative items would be held to about 6 per cent in 1976.

In conclusion, General Farrant said that as the net funds available for capital expenditure at £1.35 million had

fallen short of capital requirements by about £0.27 million, that sum had been taken from reserve to fulfil the boat-building programme.

After some discussion on the presentation in the accounts of investments—their performance was agreed to have been extremely good—the report and accounts for 1975 were adopted.

Next, the President, His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, the Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer, the Duke of Northumberland, and Deputy Treasurer, David Acland, and other members of the Committee of Management were declared elected. Price Waterhouse were re-appointed as auditors and thanked for their valuable help and advice.

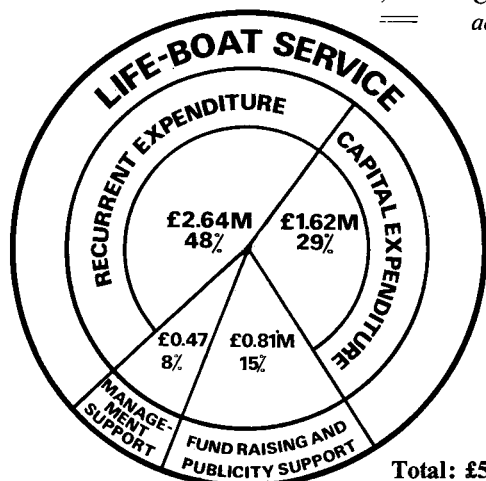
The question was raised by Major J. Showell-Rogers, RM (Poole) of the qualifications required for launching authorities. He said that, while he understood that it had been laid down that all station honorary secretaries and other launching authorities should be master mariners or naval officers with watch-keeping certificates, he felt that rather than such formal qualifications it was more important to find people, with, of course, knowledge of the sea, who were conscientious and reliable and who would not leave the telephone unattended. The Chairman replied that people chosen would be those who have the right experience at sea as well as the other qualifications. About 40 per cent of launching authorities 'do the job because they are excellent people who know what they are about and not because they have a master mariner's certificate or some naval qualification. We are extremely flexible.'

During discussion on flag days and house-to-house collections, Mr Booth

## 1975 ACCOUNTS SUMMARY

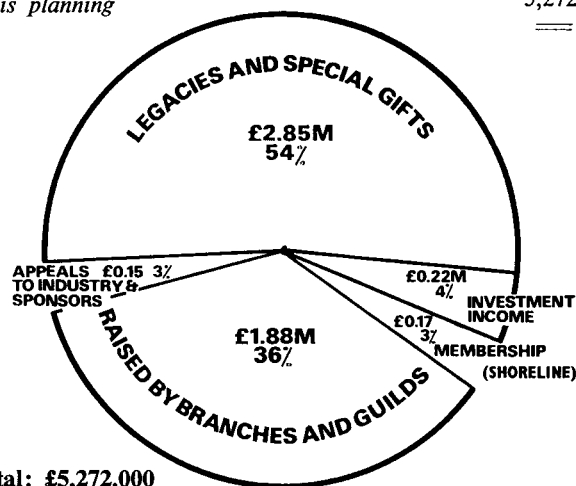
*Although the deficit for the year of £268,000 has been more than covered by the improvement in the value of investments during the year, with expenditure increasing, the need for adequate reserves becomes even more pressing, and the Committee of Management is planning accordingly.*

EXPENDITURE	£000's
Lifeboat service: recurrent...	2,640
capital ...	1,617
Lifeboat support: fund raising and publicity	811
management	472
	5,540



Total: £5,540,000

INCOME	£000's
General purpose legacies ...	2,082
Subscriptions and donations...	2,196
Miscellaneous ...	248
Restricted Funds ...	746
	5,272



Total: £5,272,000

of Wallington asked whether it might not be better to hold the London flag day on a Saturday rather than on a Tuesday; to which Captain Nigel Dixon, RN, Director, replied that in Central London, where a great deal of money is raised, and especially in the City, a week day was likely to be more successful than a Saturday. Tuesday was traditional and the RNLI enjoys the privilege, given to it by the Metropolitan Police, of having the first flag day of the season. Therefore, unless there were any other evidence to show that another day would be better, the situation would be left as at present.

\* \* \*

Major General Farrant, Chairman of the Institution, welcomed everyone to the afternoon meeting for the presentation of awards: 'I am delighted to see the hall so full. Congratulations!' He spoke of the question-marks which had been in many people's minds after the end of 1974, 'The Year of the Lifeboat'. Could we possibly do as well again? Would there be a feeling of anti-climax?

'We now know the answer to those questions. It can be given in a single sentence. In spite of the economic difficulties, of which everyone is aware, more money was raised for the RNLI last year than in 1974 or any other year in the RNLI's long history. This was a measure of the achievements of our fund-raising branches and guilds, and their efforts cannot be valued too highly. I think that you are entitled to give yourselves a clap.'

After the happy applause had died down, General Farrant went on to speak of the success of local and regional appeals, such as the Bradford and Bristol appeals and the Hampshire Rose appeal, which emphasises the importance and value to the RNLI of local pride in a local lifeboat and crew. He also thanked the Institution's many regular supporters, such as 'our friends in the Civil Service and Post Office Lifeboat Fund' and other organisations like Scouts and Guides, Rotarians and Round Tablers, Foresters, Oddfellows and Buffaloes . . . 'I know I shall be naming only some of the organisations to which the RNLI is indebted.'

General Farrant went on to talk of the new appeals being made to industrial enterprises and financial houses, to shipping, insurance and other concerns:

'As you may have read, we were delighted to receive a gift of £100,000 under deed of covenant from the board of British Petroleum to provide a new lifeboat to be stationed at Aberdeen. (Applause). We hope that other great companies will follow that example. It is, perhaps, indicative of the variety of support the RNLI receives that this gift is to be supplemented by one made by the Aberdeen students to provide the electronic equipment in the new lifeboat.' (Applause.)

General Farrant then spoke of the

financial situation; of the deficit for the year of £268,000; of the efforts being made to keep down expenditure without impairing the efficiency of the service; and of the decision to introduce a temporary pause in the boatbuilding programme.

'Therefore, we are ordering only three new boats this year compared with the 11 that are already on order and which will be launched. Nevertheless, we are still confident that by about 1980 all our offshore lifeboats, apart from the three boats of the 70' Clyde class, which are very stable, deep-draught craft, will have a self-righting capability. That was our target six years ago and in spite of the pause we are adhering to the policy which we adopted in 1970 . . .

'The RNLI has had some stormy years—years in which the hands of Commander Ralph Swann and the late Admiral Sir Wilfrid Woods were at the helm. We may well have stormy passages ahead—I expect more than one—but we can, I think, face the future with considerable confidence, principally because of the very great measure of goodwill which the RNLI enjoys today in Britain and Ireland. For this we are greatly indebted to our honorary workers, but I should also like to express our thanks to what is now fashionably called "the media"—that is to say, the press, television and radio—for the admirable way in which over the years they have reported and commented on the work of the lifeboat service . . . this may be an appropriate moment to introduce our guest speaker, although in a sense no introduction is necessary, for the name and voice and face of Raymond Baxter are known to us all.' (Applause.)

Concluding his remarks, General Farrant then presented the awards for gallantry:

**Coxswain Frank Bloom, Walton and Frinton: silver medal**

On September 14, 1975, the Walton and Frinton lifeboat *Edian Courtauld* went to the help of the yacht *Tsunami* in distress on the south side of the Long Sand. A strong gale, force 9, was blowing and there was heavy rain. Three men were taken off the yacht, then, as the owner and one other insisted on remaining on board, a tow line was passed and a long tow began at two knots in violent seas. This arduous service in dangerously shallow waters lasted 14½ hours.

**Coxswain/Mechanic David Kennett, Yarmouth, Isle of Wight: silver medal**

In the early hours of September 14, 1975, the Yarmouth lifeboat *The Earl and Countess Howe* was called to the aid of the 28' sloop *Chayka of Ardgour* disabled in storm force 10 winds and heavy confused seas seven miles south of the Needles Channel. With superb timing and expert seamanship Coxswain Kennett twice brought the lifeboat alongside to snatch first three and then the remaining two exhausted crew men on board.

**Coxswain/Mechanic Arthur Liddon, Dover: silver medal**

**Second Coxswain/Assistant Mechanic Anthony Hawkins, Dover: bronze medal:**

Late on the evening of December 1, 1975, the Dover lifeboat *Faithful Forester* launched to the aid of the coaster *Primrose* which had lost her steering gear. The wind was storm force 10 gusting up to 100 mph. The crew of *Primrose* eventually managed to rig temporary steering gear; Coxswain Liddon advised a course to be steered for Dover and by passing alterations of course, speed and tidal conditions piloted the coaster into harbour.

**Coxswain William Richards, Penlee: bronze medal**

Early on the morning of January 25, 1975, the Penlee lifeboat *Solomon Browne* launched in gale force winds gusting to hurricane force to answer a distress call broadcast by MV *Lovat*, the crew of which were abandoning ship. Two helicopters had been despatched to the casualty and were able to save two lives, but, sadly, 11 others were lost and the lifeboat had the arduous and unhappy task of recovering five bodies. During the return passage the lifeboat encountered breaking seas of 40-50 feet in height.

**Coxswain John Petit, St Peter Port: bar to his bronze medal**

**Emergency Mechanic John Robilliard, St Peter Port: bronze medal**

On completion of a service to a fishing vessel on the night of July 14, 1975, the St Peter Port lifeboat *Sir William Arnold* was called to the aid of the tanker *Point Law*, which was aground on Alderney. As there was no immediate danger to the tanker's crew, Coxswain Petit waited until first light when, in gale force conditions, he held the lifeboat just clear of the rocks, while Crew Member Robilliard brought off six of the crew (one in a stretcher) in the lifeboat's inflatable dinghy; he rowed five exhausting times backwards and forwards. As the tanker began to break up the six remaining crew members were taken off by helicopter.

**Helmsman William Shearer, Berwick-upon-Tweed: bronze medal**

On May 31, 1975, Berwick-upon-Tweed ILB went to the aid of a trimaran capsized in rough sea. An unconscious woman was first hauled from the water; two men clinging to the upturned hull reported that a second woman was trapped beneath it. Helmsman Shearer returned to harbour at full speed and, having landed the woman into medical care and embarked a Coastguard with an axe, the ILB returned to the casualty and freed the trapped woman.

**Helmsman Michael Coates, Whitby: bronze medal**

On Friday, July 25, 1975, Whitby



ILB was launched to the aid of a man hanging on to the crumbling rock face of a nearby cliff; he was in danger of losing his hold and of being swept away by the heavy breaking sea. The ILB was anchored off and, while Crew Member David Wharton remained on board, Helmsman Coates swam to the foot of the cliff attached to a line. He persuaded the man to slide down into the sea and they were both hauled back on board the ILB.

**Coxswain/Mechanic Charles Bowry, Sheerness: bronze medal**

In the early morning of August 16, 1975, the Sheerness lifeboat *Helen Turnbull* went to the aid of a 30' yacht *Eladnit* which had lost her rudder and gone aground in a near gale and heavy broken water. As there was danger that the lifeboat herself might be driven aground, Coxswain Bowry anchored and two crew members were veered down to the casualty in the inflatable dinghy. On learning that of the five people on board two were young children and two adults overcome by seasickness, the coxswain decided to tow the yacht off. This achieved, the yacht's crew, with first-class seamanship, were transferred to the lifeboat.

**Crew Member Brian Hodgson, Whitby: bronze medal**

On August 18, 1975, Whitby ILB was conducting a search after a report that a small boat had been swamped and her crew of two men washed overboard. While searching in rough seas one man was seen in the water outside the line of breaking surf and a second man, a non-swimmer, in obvious trouble on the edge of the surf. Crew Member Hodgson entered the water to help the first man, so that the ILB could go directly to pick up the other man. The ILB then recovered Brian Hodgson and the first man just as they were about to be swept into the surf.

**Helmsman Julian Morris, Weston-super-Mare: bronze medal**

Late on the night of September 13, 1975, the ILB was launched to the aid of five people. They had climbed on to a rocky ledge after their motorboat had been wrecked at the base of a cliff, and they were in danger of being drowned by the rising tide. After making one run in through the rough and confused seas, frequently grounding on submerged rocks, Helmsman Morris approached again, anchored and veered down near enough to heave a line ashore. Four men were then hauled out to the ILB by the line and the fifth waded out.

**Martin Ruddy: bronze medal**

During the afternoon of June 7, 1975, 14-year-old Martin Ruddy of the 1st Ilfracombe Scout Troop was rowing his new 9' inflatable dinghy close to the beach when he saw a speedboat half a mile to seaward, with her occupants



*Medallists of 1975: (l. to r., back row first) Coxswain Frank Bloom, Walton and Frinton; Helmsman Michael Coates, Whitby; Coxswain John Petit and Crew Member John Robilliard, St Peter Port; Second Coxswain/Assistant Mechanic Anthony Hawkins, Dover; Helmsman Julian Morris, Weston-super-Mare; Coxswain/Mechanic Arthur Liddon, Dover; Martin Ruddy; Helmsman William Shearer, Berwick-upon-Tweed; Coxswain/Mechanic David Kennett, Yarmouth; Coxswain/Mechanic Charles Bowry, Sheerness; Crew Member Brian Hodgson, Whitby; Coxswain William Richards, Penlee.*

signalling for help. Although he had been warned of the dangerous cross currents and rocks in this vicinity he immediately began to row out. After 20 minutes he reached the speedboat, now sinking, and succeeded in getting the four occupants and a dog aboard his inflatable before starting the arduous and dangerous row back to the shore.

Major-General Farrant next called upon Raymond Baxter to propose the resolution.

Beginning a speech, every minute of which was to delight his audience, Raymond Baxter listed his qualifications for '... participating in this distinguished occasion'. They were, he said, three in number:

'The first is that in my time I have actually been a customer of the RNLI. By that I do not mean that I bought a flag from one of your charming ladies—although I have actually been known to do that too from time to time—but that I have had occasion to summon assistance at sea from the colleagues of those gallant men whom we all honour today. I hasten to add that in this particular incident no one got a medal—least of all me—but it gave me the opportunity to see the work of the Institution at close quarters; well, as close as the rise and fall between my old Dunkirk veteran ... and the inflated rubber hot-water bottle for which two splendid chaps had abandoned the warmth and comfort of the local pub on a rather dark and blowy night in the lower estuary of the Thames. All that was a long time ago ...

'My second qualification is that many years even before that ... I went with my sister to my first dance. It was held in the lifeboat house at Sennen Cove ... little did I think that night that some 20 years and a world war later I would put to sea with the Dover lifeboat complete with a television crew ... We went out to

the South Goodwin Lightship, the one that was lost in the subsequent tragedy, and gave the crew their first television set ...

'My third qualification—and I have the Chairman nervously wondering where on earth this speech is going—is that I enjoy the privilege of appearing from time to time in some of your living rooms, and have done so on two occasions to make the television appeal on behalf of the RNLI ...

'Therefore ... I flatter myself that my wife and I are among colleagues and friends in your distinguished company this afternoon. The more I think about that, the more proud I am to be here at all.

'Whether or not there are such things as national characteristics, and the idea does not enjoy the support it did when I was a boy, it is demonstrable that the people of Britain have much in common with ducks. They don't half take to the water! Three weekends ago my daughter and I went to see the Head of the River Race here on the Thames, in which my son was rowing. That afternoon no less than 380 racing eights competed against each other over the tideway from Mortlake to Putney—the University Boat Race course in reverse, but that doesn't matter because, as you will have noticed, they all row backwards anyway. The point is that over 3,000 men and boys—and there were some heads even greyer than mine with not nearly as much hair—were prepared to travel great distances from literally all over the country to pull their guts out against each other in a blade-to-blade struggle over the most demanding course in the world. All that for a few pints of beer which they would have to pay for themselves anyway.

'That sort of behaviour is, I like to think, still typically British. Certainly there is no such race elsewhere in the world. No other people would be daft enough to attempt such a thing.

'I believe that the Royal National Life-Boat Institution is also typically



Raymond Baxter of 'Tomorrow's World' fame, and a member of the RNLI Public Relations Committee, moved the resolution.

British, or what many of us used to like to think of as such. Its only purpose is to go to the rescue of those in peril regardless of who they may be, where they come from, what their business is or how they managed to get into danger in the first place. In order to do that men such as those with us this afternoon are prepared to lay down their lives. We all remember with pride those who have done so. That may sound all very well—a fine, flowery couple of sentences—but those of us who have ever been in a bit of a dust-up at sea know that it is not just as simple as that. It has to do with being wet and cold for hours on end; with being brutally banged about, deafened, blinded and utterly tired, and with being frightened. One of the citations mentioned waves 40 or 50 feet high and breaking. I estimate that from the floor to the top shelf of the gallery is less than 50'. Just look, ladies and gentlemen, and think. Perhaps most of us could do that once or twice and be very pleased with ourselves. The lifeboatmen live with that reality every day and night of their serving lives.

'These men put to sea in weather which has every responsible skipper of vessels which are ten times the size of the lifeboat running for shelter. They know and their wives, mothers and families know that at any minute the call may come slashing through the closely woven fabric of everyday life like a cutlass through a cushion. It may rattle the china on the breakfast table, rupture the routine of a working day, break up a quiet evening with the "tele" or down at the local, rudely snatch from the warm comfort of sleep. Sometimes the reason may be trivial, the product of gross incompetence, ignorance or carelessness. The boat may be back in a matter of minutes or after only weary and anxious hours.

'Yet year after year individuals and whole families of men continue to accept that call and fight like tigers when someone has the unhappy task of telling them that enough is enough. They know full well that there is a queue behind them, waiting and eager to take their places. Is there anywhere in the world a tradition more noble?

'Then there are the secretaries. They are a curious breed. They come from all walks of life and are of all ages, persuasions and temperaments. They have the invidious task of "pressing the button". It is not for them to share the excitement of the seagoing. It is for them to wait and worry; to organise and co-ordinate; to commit the crew to the task and then to supply the back-up. Could all that be done by other than volunteers? I do not know; frankly, I doubt it.

'The RNLI, as we all know, is built on a highly localised, if you like parochial, basis. It is made up of small groups of people who, even if they may not all be close friends, at least all know each other well. The whole ethos is to do with the local community; from the coffee morning in the Midland vicarage and the sale of work in Manchester to the fact that the coxswain's grandfather taught him the shoals round the river mouth, and that everyone knows that Fred is worried about his daughter's baby. That is what it is all about.

'Industrialists as well as sociologists are now beginning to realise that big is not necessarily beautiful. Everyone here could have told them that years ago.

'To those who wonder why the organisation and financing of the RNLI should not be, particularly these days, a function of the State, my response, for what it is worth, is "God forbid". (Applause.) In the first place it is the consensus among those who know—permanent staff, honorary secretaries, coxswains and crews, fishermen, and many in the other rescue services including the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force—that quite simply it would not work, at any rate not with the same degree of efficiency at the operational end. That, ladies and gentlemen, is all that matters.

'Of course, if as taxpayers we were called upon to find the money, instead of having to listen to me you could all be getting stuck into the tea and buns, or better still be at home doing the gardening or the spring cleaning. You would not have to waste all that time at committee meetings, on draughty street corners on flag day, and dreaming up new ideas for the village fête. However, again I have two objections. First, all the evidence suggests that we get better value for money doing it our way; that is not just a bigoted opinion, it is the conclusion of hard-bitten experts who have analysed the finances and management of the Institution. Secondly, because if it were so the country would certainly be the poorer in the moral and spiritual sense, as well as in the purely financial sense. (Applause.)

'In both contexts this country is demonstrably less well off than it was. For many of us this is a matter of major concern and regret. However, the very presence of all of you here this afternoon is proof that though Great Britain may be poorer than she was, she is by no means bankrupt yet. Unfortunately this leads me to a cold fact which I am sure will come as a shock to many. Despite the triumphs of last year's 150th anniversary, despite the RNLI's impeccable and ever-mounting record of service, despite the magnificent efforts of the fund-raisers and the open-hearted generosity of the British people who support them, despite all this and more, the RNLI is,

as the Chairman said, in the red. As of this year our expenditure exceeds our income.

'As one would expect, the danger signals were spotted early by those those business men who give so generously of their time and expertise in guiding the affairs of the Institution. As the Chairman told us, the Committee of Management has curtailed the programme of new boat building in order to preserve the highest standards of day-to-day maintenance and equipment.'

Raymond Baxter, ending his speech with the paragraph quoted on page 156 at the beginning of this report, then 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 coxswains 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.*

Since the last annual general meeting the Committee of Management had awarded two honorary life governorships, one bar to the gold badge and twelve gold badges to honorary workers for long and distinguished service. Presentations were made at the Festival Hall by Major-General Ralph Farrant to all but Miss V. Hooper and Mrs Sayer, who were unable to be there.

## HONORARY LIFE GOVERNOR

**P. G. Garon, MC GM**

*Honorary Secretary of Southend-on-Sea station branch from 1952 to 1975.*

Mr Garon, a highly respected member of the Southend community, has been connected with the station since before 1930. In addition to being honorary secretary of this busy lifeboat station, he undertook talks and attended events on behalf of the RNLI, and has for many years been concerned not only with the crew but with the various sub-committees that run the operational and fund-raising organisation.

## Mrs P. Hamley-Rowan

*Honorary secretary of East Sheen and Barnes branch since 1939.*

Mrs Hamley-Rowan, although severely disabled and confined to a wheel-chair, increases the branch revenue each year. She is the longest serving supporter in the South London district and has dedicated her whole life to raising funds for the lifeboat service.

## BAR TO GOLD BADGE

**G. T. Paine, MBE**

*Chairman of Dungeness station branch since 1931.*

Mr Paine has a record of unbroken service with Dungeness station branch

since 1931. He has organised and supported most fund-raising events in the area and given considerable time to looking after the welfare of the lifeboat personnel, also ensuring that the station is operated in a highly efficient manner.

#### **GOLD BADGE**

##### **J. J. Adams**

*Honorary secretary of Hastings station branch since 1956.*

Mr Adams is considered to be an outstanding honorary secretary and runs a highly efficient lifeboat station. In addition he has devoted a considerable amount of time to fund raising on behalf of the RNLI.

##### **Mrs W. H. Almond**

*Chairman of Adlington guild since 1939.*

Mrs Almond has provided great leadership and inspiration to her committee for over 25 years. She is a tireless worker and promotes considerable enthusiasm for the RNLI in her area.

##### **N. P. Clarke**

*Honorary information officer of the RNLI and honorary treasurer of Colchester branch since 1968.*

Mr Clarke holds the only official appointment of honorary information officer of the RNLI. In this capacity he undertakes many talks and film shows. He also provides invaluable information to different organisations and associations. His branch support for the RNLI dates back to 1946 at Newport, then at Harwich, Southampton, and finally to Colchester where he holds the position of honorary treasurer.

##### **Mrs T. Dowding**

*Chairman of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston guild since 1965.*

During the years Mrs Dowding has been associated with the Great Yarmouth and Gorleston guild, of which she is now chairman, it has raised over £32,000, mainly due to her leadership and untiring work.

##### **T. Downing**

*Honorary secretary of Barrow station branch since 1949.*

Mr Downing has undertaken the responsibilities of honorary secretary of Barrow station branch since 1947. During this period he has looked after the operational affairs and has also been very active with fund raising.

##### **Miss V. Hooper**

*President of Barmouth guild since 1972.*

Miss Hooper as president of Barmouth guild plays a very active part, assisting at all fund-raising functions. She has been on the committee for many years and from 1955 until she retired from the position in 1968 she was a very able and energetic honorary secretary.

##### **J. Kennedy**

*Honorary secretary of Lytham station branch since 1951.*

Mr Kennedy has been a most efficient and active honorary secretary for nearly 25 years. In addition to looking after the operational duties of the station branch he has played a leading part in raising funds in the area.

##### **Dr J. Leiper, MBE**

*Honorary medical adviser of Aberdeen station branch since 1948.*

Dr Leiper has been a very active honorary medical adviser with Aberdeen station branch for almost 27 years. In December 1966 he was awarded a certificate in respect of his meritorious conduct when injured while helping on a lifeboat service to the trawler *Heikendorf*. He is always willing to undertake talks and help at fund-raising functions.

##### **I. Moar, BEM**

*Chairman of Longhope station branch since 1971.*

Mr Moar gave much invaluable help at the time of the Longhope disaster. He is very active in local RNLI committee affairs and has been an enthusiastic member of the branch for over 40 years.

##### **Mrs E. Pemberton, JP**

*Honorary treasurer of Wallasey guild since 1950.*

Mrs Pemberton has always been the main driving force of this excellent guild. Her considerable enthusiasm is warmly welcomed and she is always prepared to be of help.

##### **Mrs R. K. Sayer**

*Honorary treasurer of Newhaven guild since 1952.*

Mrs Sayer has looked after the financial affairs of the guild for 23 years. She has also been one of the leading organisers on the committee. As the wife of the station honorary secretary she gets deeply involved in all local lifeboat activities.

##### **Miss H. Weiste**

*Chairman of Orpington guild since 1964 and honorary organiser for Green Street Green.*

Miss Weiste was one of the original members of Orpington branch and is without question one of the most active members. She is probably the main inspiration behind most of their fund-raising projects. When the guild was formed in 1964 Miss Weiste was appointed its chairman.

The Committee of Management had also awarded the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum to Councillor T. E. Hall, HON. MA, and to the Royal Marines, Deal, for their outstanding help and service to the RNLI, and these presentations were made at the Festival Hall.

As Lord Mayor of Bradford 1974/5, Councillor Hall promoted the Bradford appeal set up in 1974 to raise money to fund a new lifeboat. It was largely

through his zeal and energy that over £80,000 was raised.

For a considerable number of years there has been a close association between the Royal Marines, Deal, and the Walmer lifeboat station. This practical help continues to the present time and was of immense value when the new Walmer lifeboat was recently named at her station. The vellum was received by Colonel Shallow, Commanding Officer, Royal Marines, Deal.

The last presentation by General Farrant was made to Lord Baden-Powell; it was a special certificate of thanks to the Scout Association for 'Operation Lifeboat', an appeal for Scouts throughout the country during 1974 to raise funds towards the cost of a 44' Waveney lifeboat. The target of £100,000 was exceeded by over £1,000. The lifeboat, at present being built at Bideford, is to be named *The Scout* and will be stationed at Hartlepool.

To conclude the proceedings of the afternoon the Chairman called upon Lieut.-Colonel R. Crawshaw, OBE TD DL MP, to move a vote of thanks to Raymond Baxter for his address. After speaking of Mr Baxter's distinguished war record in three fighter commands, and of all the help he gives not only to the RNLI, of which he is a member of the Public Relations Committee, but also to a number of other charities, Colonel Crawshaw continued:

'For a few minutes I should like to touch on some of the points which Mr Baxter made in his very interesting speech . . . He was doubtful, if the service ceased to be voluntary, whether it could exercise the same influence over the Life-boat Institution as it does at present. I have news for you: it could not. I am quite certain of that . . . We could not administer the Lifeboat Institution from a central source with the same enthusiasm and dedication as it is administered on a voluntary basis. I have come to the conclusion, in my short life, that the efficiency of an organisation which is taken over by a central authority deteriorates in direct proportion to the amount of money that is put into it. (Applause.)

'This organisation is unique in many ways. There are those who man the boats and who face the dangers. Yet they would be of no use if they were not backed up by all of you here who represent countless thousands who support them during the year. However, again, none of you would be any use if it were not for people such as Raymond Baxter who, behind the scenes, uses his expertise, good common sense and offers advice in order to help us to run the RNLI . . . While people such as Raymond Baxter continue to exist in our society, the "Tomorrow's World" of those who go down to the sea in ships will be secure in time of emergency by the dedication of those who serve the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.' (Applause.)

The business of the afternoon being concluded, lifeboat people retired to the foyer to meet their friends and take tea.



# Opening of new Headquarters at Poole

THURSDAY, MAY 6, the day on which HRH The Duke of Kent, President of the RNLI, came down to Dorset to open the new headquarters at Poole in the morning and name the new Swanage lifeboat in the afternoon, was both memorable and happy; a day of present celebration and future hope in which, to the great pleasure of lifeboat people, the head of the family had come to take part.

As the royal helicopter flew in over Poole, head office staff left their desks to assemble on the forecourt with their families, members of the Committee of Management, Poole lifeboat crew, a group of pensioners, representatives of the local branch and guild, of the County of Dorset and the town of Poole, and of the architects and builders of the new headquarters.

Before the Duke performed the opening ceremony, unveiling a commemorative plaque, the Chairman, Major-General Ralph Farrant, thanked him for the great encouragement of his continual help, and also thanked the people of Poole for the warm welcome they had given the Institution.

*The new headquarters building, designed by Leslie Jones and Partners and built by Brazier and Son of Southampton.*

*The Duke of Kent described the decision to establish the head office in Poole as bold, and also wise; he was pleased to see the familiar stone lifeboatman still at the door, now gazing out to sea. A service of dedication was conducted by The Lord Bishop of Salisbury, The Right Reverend George Reindorp, MA DD. Also on the platform was the Mayor and Admiral of the Port of Poole, Councillor D. Gooding, JP.*



*After the opening ceremony, honorary secretary M. Perrins presented Coxswain/Mechanic Frank Ide, Second Coxswain John Clark and other members of Poole crew to the Duke . . . who was then taken on an informal tour of the building by Major-General Farrant, starting (bottom, left) in the museum with (centre) curator Andrew Gould assistant P.R.O. (Poole).*

*(Right) His Royal Highness studied the medal book with Alan Neal, assistant secretary (operations division), and (below, right) was shown round the drawing office by Symington Macdonald, chief staff officer (technical).*



# Naming Ceremonies

MACDUFF and SWANAGE

DESPITE COLD NORTH-EAST WINDS straight off the sea, hundreds of people gathered at the Fishmarket, Macduff, on Saturday April 3, for the naming of the station's 48' 6" Solent lifeboat *Douglas Currie*. She was named by Miss Caroline Currie, grand-niece of one of the principal donors; other donations include a legacy from the estate of the late J. J. Davidson and a gift from the Glasgow Ladies Guild.

The lifeboat had been handed over to Sir Charles McGregor, convener of the Scottish Lifeboat Council and a member of the Committee of Management, by Sir Alastair Blair, senior trustee of the Douglas Currie Trust. She was accepted on behalf of the branch by George Mackay, honorary secretary and himself an ex-coxswain.

\* \* \*

Swanage, on May 6, was luckier in its weather. It was like a summer day, with sunshine, blue skies and a calm sea lapping the beach; just the day to welcome a royal visitor, and this was the first occasion on which a member of the royal family had ever come to the station. HRH The Duke of Kent, RNLI President, was to name the 37' 6" Rother class lifeboat *J. Reginald Corah*.



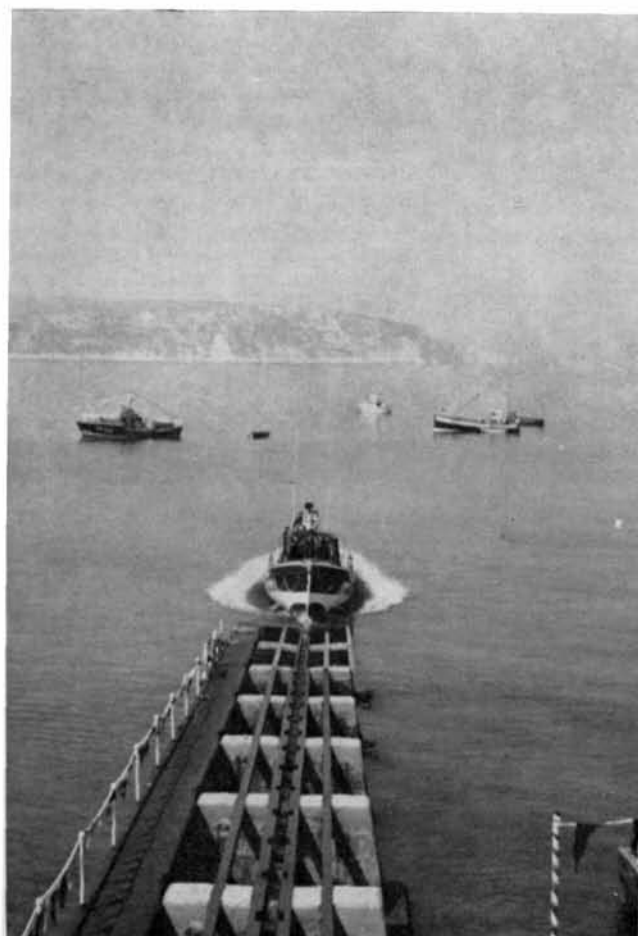
*Macduff, Grampian: Douglas Currie prepares for her naming ceremony.*  
photograph by courtesy of W. J. Heinrich.

A red helicopter of the Queen's Flight, bringing the Duke from Poole, flew in over the little grey town to land him on Peveril Point. Children lined the route of the short walk over the downs to the lifeboat station where the official enclosure, the foreshore and even the distant pier were crowded. At sea were Poole lifeboat and ex-lifeboat *Gill*, dressed overall, while on shore the band of the Royal Marines played music to set the heart dancing. One guest the branch was particularly pleased to have with them was the widow of the late J. Reginald Corah, after whom the

new Swanage lifeboat has been named.

R. L. Wessel took an unusual dual role in proceedings: as a trustee of the Corah Foundation he handed over the lifeboat to the RNLI, and then, as a member of the Committee of Management, delivered her to the care of Swanage branch. She was accepted by Captain D. A. N. Aldridge, honorary secretary.

In his speech, the Duke paid tribute to our 'incomparable crews', to the dedication of their wives and to the strong family traditions and the generosity of the town of Swanage.



*Swanage, Dorset: (left) Launch of J. Reginald Corah after her naming. The Duke of Kent then embarked to make a round of Swanage Bay.*

photograph by courtesy of A. G. L. Hardy.

*(Right) Rebecca Marsh, daughter of Victor Marsh, presents to the Duke a silver model of boat and boathouse mounted on a Purbeck marble base.*



*Coxswain Ronald Hardy presents members of Swanage crew to His Royal Highness: (l. to r.) Walter Bishop, John Bishop, Philip Dorey, Eric Dorey (shaking hands) and Second Coxswain/Mechanic Victor Marsh.*



# Inshore Lifeboats

## Handing-over ceremonies at Hartlepool, Crimdon Dene and Little and Broad Haven

SPRING, AND A NEW SEASON of inshore lifeboat service was given a fine start by the dedication of three boat generously given to the Institution by its friends: an Atlantic 21 for Hartlepool and D class ILBs for Crimdon Dene and Little and Broad Haven.

Hartlepool is, in fact, an 'all seasons' ILB station and the new Atlantic 21, *Guide Friendship III*, had already been launched on service a number of times before her dedication on April 24. She is the third of the class to have been provided from the £28,000 raised by the Guide Friendship Fund for the RNLI in 1974, 'The Year of the Lifeboat'.

It is not the first time that the Guides have helped the lifeboat service. In 1940 Guides of the British Empire raised £50,296 3s 4d to help the war effort, £5,000 of which was given to the RNLI to pay for a 35' 6" self-righting lifeboat. She was one of the little ships which went to Dunkirk and later, in 1941, she was stationed at Cadgwith in Cornwall. On June 14, 1947, she was named *Guide of Dunkirk*.

Back to 1976, *Guide Friendship III* was presented by Mrs R. H. Owthwaite, Girl Guide Commissioner for the North

*Standard bearer and ILB: The bonds between Guides and lifeboat service were drawn even closer by the dedication at Hartlepool, Cleveland, on April 24 of Guide Friendship III, the third Atlantic 21 given to the Institution by Guides, Rangers and Brownies. The other two boats, Guide Friendship I and II, are already stationed at Aberdovey and Eastney.*

photograph by courtesy of The Mail.



East of England, to Mrs G. M. Keen, a member of the RNLI Committee of Management. About 400 Guides, Rangers and Brownies were present and a number of them were taken afloat by Hartlepool crew after the ceremony.

Just a few miles away, on Saturday April 10, about 60 members of the

Ancient Order of Foresters, accompanied by their wives and families, visited Crimdon Dene for the handing over, dedication and blessing of a D class inshore lifeboat donated by the Order. She was presented by R. Kirkland, one of their executive committee members, and accepted by Councillor J. S. Cummings, chairman of Easingwold Council and a staunch supporter of Seaham lifeboat.

The third ceremony was on May 9, down at Little and Broad Haven in South Wales, when E. R. Mockett, honorary secretary of Coventry branch, handed over a D class ILB to Lieut.-Commander George Cooper, divisional inspector of lifeboats (west). The cost of the boat had been defrayed by the people of Coventry and in accepting her Jim Max, chairman of Little and Broad Haven branch, said that their generosity would be remembered every time the ILB was launched.

*Little and Broad Haven, May 9: Handing over and dedication of new ILB donated by the City of Coventry.*

photograph by courtesy of A. Williams.

*Turning back the clock; Guide of Dunkirk dressed overall after her naming at Cadgwith, Cornwall, on June 14, 1947. During her years of service she launched 15 times and saved 17 lives.*

photograph by courtesy of The Girl Guide Association.

*(Below, left) Crimdon Dene, April 10: R. Kirkland, an executive committee member of the Ancient Order of Foresters, and T. P. Reynolds, honorary secretary of the ILB station, at the handing-over ceremony.*





# Shoreline Section

THOSE OF OUR MEMBERS who are lucky enough to be boat owners will no doubt be enjoying the start of the season with, this year, its unusually warm and sunny spring weekends. We wish you good sailing.

Now that the membership office has moved to Poole we seem to have a closer liaison with many of our sea-going members and we are looking forward to seeing more and more of them. If you come to Poole on holiday this summer, or if ever you moor up at Poole Quay on passage, we hope you will come to see us.

Shoreline membership, now over 31,000, has grown to be a substantial and committed part of the RNLI and it makes a considerable contribution towards the Institution's day-to-day running costs. Shoreline members, moreover, give us tremendous support. We have much appreciated over the past few years the enthusiastic letters which we have received, the additional donations which have come with subscriptions, the offers of help and requests to be put in touch with branches or guilds.

All of which leads us to believe that some more tangible bond with the lifeboat service would be welcomed; that Shoreline members would like to come closer to crew members.

Well, what about a lifeboat?

What about it, Members? A lifeboat to be named *Shoreline* whose story



Diana White, a Rother lifeboat stationed at Sennen Cove. With your help a lifeboat of this class could be named Shoreline.

Length overall	.. ..	37' 6"	Engines	.. ..	Twin 52 h.p.
Beam	.. ..	11' 6"			Mermaid diesels
Draft	.. ..	3' 1"	Maximum speed	.. ..	over 8 knots
Displacement	.. ..	13 tons	Range at maximum speed		150
Crew	.. ..	7			nautical miles

Launched down slipway or from beach or carriage, or lies at moorings

could be followed on these pages from the day of her keel being laid down in the boatyard, through building, trials and delivery to station, to the day of her naming ceremony, to which members would be invited. Then would begin the record of her service . . .

Bearing in mind the generous, willing support we already receive, we should not wish to ask our members for further monetary aid for this project—although, naturally, donations would be most welcome. With our membership now standing at over 31,000, *if each and every member enrolled one new member*, the resulting increase in subscriptions would be enough to pay for a Shoreline lifeboat. It is as simple as that.

The RNLI has been forced to introduce a temporary pause in its boat building programme because of escalating costs in this time of inflation.

Shoreline could put a boat on the stocks.

With the enclosed form and self-explanatory letter, therefore, we are asking our members to make a concerted effort to help the RNLI by providing a new, modern lifeboat for the coast; and by forging a direct link between lifeboat crews and Shoreline members.

A few people may not be in a position to recruit a new member; some, on the other hand, may be able to recruit many more than one. There is no limit to the number and we will gladly provide extra forms and any help needed. We will back you up as much as we can, but the success of this effort rests firmly with *you*.

Let us all look forward to the day when *our* boat, RNLB *Shoreline*, makes her first rescue and saves somebody from the sea.—G. R. 'BOB' WALTON, membership secretary, RNLI, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ (Tel. Poole 71133).

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

## SHORELINE LIFEBOAT

Total subscription

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

Insignia payment

Shoreline Giro number is 294 7056

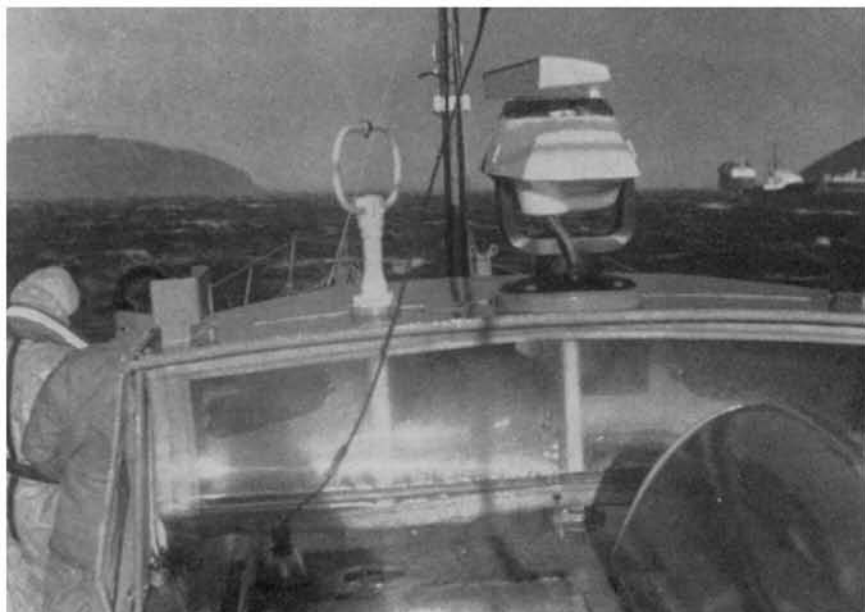
I enclose P.O./cheque/cash for £.....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

Date .....

Signature .....



## INVERGORDON

*A new offshore lifeboat station in an area of development*

by Dag Pike

THE CHANGING PATTERN of casualties around the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland has led to the replacement of many traditional lifeboats by the faster inshore lifeboats; they are more suited to the type of casualty involved. In the northern North Sea a different change is taking place with the development of North Sea oil and this has led to the establishment of an offshore lifeboat station to improve the coverage in the area.

The site chosen was Invergordon which may evoke memories to ex-naval people. Invergordon is situated on Cromarty Firth, one of the finest natural harbours in the country. The Royal Navy recognised this many years ago and established a base there, and the firth was under naval control until 1958, when the base was closed.

Oil has brought changes to the area. The Navy is moving out and in its place the newly formed Cromarty Firth Ports

*(Below) 52' Barnett The James and Margaret Boyd leaves her berth at Invergordon and (above) heads eastwards towards the entrance to Cromarty Firth. On left, site of new refinery.*



Authority has been formed to control and manage the development of this fine harbour which is ideally located for oil related development.

The new lifeboat is closely tied up with the new Ports Authority. The organisation is typical of the close liaison which is being developed between harbour authorities and lifeboat stations. The newly appointed port manager, Captain Alistair Black, is also the honorary secretary of the new RNLI committee and comes to this area with a great deal of experience.

After years with the Nigerian Port Authority, Captain Black came home to a post as assistant harbour master at Harwich; while he was there, a new lifeboat station was established at that port.

Establishing a new lifeboat station is never easy. Tom Nutman, the divisional inspector of lifeboats for the area, has worked closely with the committee which is headed by Vice-Admiral Sir John Hayes, KCB OBE. In his dual role as chairman of the Port Authority and chairman of the lifeboat committee, Admiral Hayes is further evidence of the close connections between the two authorities.

These close links are maintained in the crew. Coxswain Angus McDonald is an executive with a tug company operating in the Cromarty Firth. A master mariner with extensive experience of craft large and small, he has also served a spell with the Nigerian Ports Authority. At 40 he provides the experience to match the enthusiasm of his young crew.

Second Coxswain David Lipp teaches at the Invergordon High School. In his mid-20's, David teaches seamanship and navigation among other subjects. Several of the crew work at the British Aluminium works at Invergordon. One of them is Assistant Mechanic Mike Webb, now an executive with BA but previously a chief engineer in the Merchant Navy.

Mike Webb's experience matches the practical experience of the only full-time man in the crew, Mechanic Ron Coggan. He is no stranger to rescue work, having spent many years as a sergeant fitter in the RAF marine branch. The high standard of maintenance of the lifeboat lying afloat at her berth alongside the old naval jetty is testimony to his devotion.

And what of the boat herself? ON 913 has seen plenty of rough seas during her earlier service at Stornoway. *The James and Margaret Boyd* is a 52' Barnett which has been modified to incorporate self-righting gear with an inflatable bag.

Cromarty Firth may offer shelter to large ships, but even inside the harbour the conditions can be severe for small craft. During our visit the wind was blowing straight down the firth from the south west and, being against the tide, it was whipping up a nasty sea. The mountains to the westward are the

*continued on page 172*



John Noakes and Peter Purves, aboard *Blue Peter II*, with Lieut.-Colonel V. J. C. Cooper, honorary secretary Beaumaris (second from left), Coxswain William Pritchard, crew and helpers.

## Blue Peter goes to sea at Beaumaris by Ray Kipling

THE COAST OF NORTH WALES is quiet at the beginning of April with the storms of winter mainly over and the summer still to come. The weather can change in a few moments from bright sunshine to strong hail storms which bombard the magnificent castles like miniature cannon balls. It is only a few weeks before the first holidaymakers arrive and therefore an ideal time to train the crews of inshore lifeboats, whose main concern is the visitors.

Beaumaris lifeboat station has guarded the Menai Straits from the Anglesey side since its foundation in 1891. In 1967 one of the four *Blue Peter* ILBs was sent there to increase the coverage and this year the inflatable ILB has been replaced with a new *Blue Peter II*, an Atlantic 21, so that the station's ILB can be operational at night as well as during the day.

The BBC's *Blue Peter* television team, good friends of the RNLI for many years, were naturally interested in seeing how their new ILB was settling in. Their visit to Beaumaris to film the new *Blue Peter II* was during 'working up', that is the familiarisation period when the crew and launchers train with their new equipment before it becomes fully operational. This is the time when procedures are learnt and mistakes can be corrected, because when a call for help comes there is no margin for error.

When John Noakes and Peter Purves arrived at Beaumaris the crew had already been at the boathouse for most of the week, taking time off work or working night shifts to be free during the day. That first day was sunny and

calm and, having seen *Blue Peter II* put through her paces, director Ian Oliver knew just what he wanted to film.

The day of filming dawned dull and rainy although there was an air of excitement around the boathouse. Everybody had been allocated a job but the real trial was patience as much of the day was spent standing around waiting for a particular sequence to be completed.

John Bubb, the divisional inspector of lifeboats, showed John Noakes and Peter Purves the old and new ILBs and their boathouses and the morning's filming was under way. Each shot was set up with careful positioning of sound, lighting and camera crews and many of the sequences were repeated. The liveliness of John and Peter kept everyone in good humour.

Halfway through the morning a horde of schoolchildren suddenly appeared across the green, like a tribe of Indians pouring over the ridge in a western film. Fortunately the children were friendly and had come to see *Blue Peter* in action. John and Peter both spent much of their spare moments signing autographs and, when the children had gone away, John relaxed his wrists by learning some knots, splicing and rope tricks from former coxswain Harold Jones.

The morning's events ended with the recovery of the ILB into a net rigged across the launching trolley. All went well, in spite of the fears of one crew member that the boat would end up in the town hall. After all, 10 to zero knots in a few feet needs careful rigging of the net to catch the bows of the boat.

Lunch was curtailed by the arrival of a helicopter from RAF Valley which exercised with *Blue Peter II*, winching up the divisional inspector. With the helicopter's departure came hail storms which were to play havoc with the cameras. John Noakes donned a wet suit and put out on an air bed while Peter Purves summoned the ILB crew with a maroon and joined them in the 'rescue' of his colleague. Although the rescue was performed by the new ILB, the old *Blue Peter II* stood by to make sure that John did not encounter any of the dangers of air beds which he was pointing out.

The filming day ended with lifeboat coxswain Bill Pritchard hoisting the RNLI flag outside the new boathouse, but the ILB crew still had a night exercise on their schedule. There is no doubt that whoever chose the expression 'working up' knew what they were describing because the Beaumaris ILB had certainly been working hard all the week.

After one day's filming the crew and launchers of *Blue Peter II* had won the admiration of the *Blue Peter* team—and then, the summer season being started, like ILB crews all over the country they turned their attention to the more serious business of saving lives.



Atlantic 21 *Blue Peter II*, with Peter Purves on board, launches into the Menai Straits.

Exercising with a helicopter from RAF Valley, the mountains of North Wales in the background.





# Here and There

## Round Table 50th anniversary appeal

At their National Conference held at Blackpool in May, Round Table delegates from all over Britain and Ireland voted to raise funds for a Waveney lifeboat. The appeal is to mark the 50th anniversary of the Round Table in 1977 and was proposed by tablers from Northern Ireland who realised that Round Table Britain and Ireland covered exactly the same areas the RNLI.

## Village cricketers defeat Surrey

One of the best cricket matches, possibly the best ever, in aid of the RNLI was staged at Charterhouse School, Godalming, on May 16. A full Surrey team was opposed by a team drawn from the 815 village sides which compete in the Haig Village Championship. Seven of the Surrey team had played in test matches, four for England, two for Pakistan and one for New Zealand. Nevertheless, helped by some spectacular catches, the Haig National Village Representative XI got them all out for 150 and won with 152 for four in the 39th of the 40 permitted overs.

The setting was a green and attractive one; Charterhouse School band played excerpts from 'My Fair Lady'; and the whole occasion seem typically English until it was realised that one of the Surrey opening batsmen, Geoffrey Howarth, came from New Zealand, and one of the Village's opening bowlers, Byron James, from Ynysygerwn.

There were two beneficiaries of the match, Geoff Arnold, the Surrey and England cricketer, whose benefit year it is, and the RNLI. It was a generous gesture of Geoff Arnold's to share the proceeds of the match with the RNLI.

The chairman of the RNLI organising committee was Mrs Richard Saunders, and there were stalls and sideshows under the trees, run by the Central London Committee.

## Thank you . . .

So often the RNLI is both touched and heartened by generous, unexpected gestures made perhaps anonymously, perhaps by old age pensioners. Two such instances occurred at the London office in Ebury Street after reports of the AGM and the deficit for 1975 had appeared in the press. A man, his shirt sleeves rolled up, came in from a near-by work site with two £10 notes in his hand: he said that he and his mates had read that the lifeboat service needed money, so they had had a whip-round and made it up to £20. A letter arrived on the same day from Miss Margaret Dent, sending her 'OAP's mite'—£3: 'If I were a wealthy lady', she wrote, 'I'd love to buy a nice new boat for the

wonderful chaps who go out on the seas to rescue folk in trouble.'

## Lotteries Act 1975

The Secretary of State has made a Commencement Order under the Lotteries Act 1975, by making amendments to Sections 45 and 43B of the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963. The following changes are now in effect: *Section 45: small lotteries by registered societies, associations or branches:* The price of a lottery ticket shall not be more than 25p (previously 5p); the value of a single prize shall not be more than £1,000 (previously £100); the total value of tickets sold shall not exceed £5,000 (previously £750); the amount of proceeds appropriated for expenses shall not exceed 25% of the whole proceeds (previously 10%).

*Section 43: lotteries incidental to entertainment:* The expenses incurred in purchasing prizes shall not exceed £50 (previously £10).

## New Deputy Master, Trinity House

Captain Sir David Tibbits, DSC RN, retired as Deputy Master of Trinity House in April. Captain Miles Buckley Wingate was elected as his successor.

## Obituary

It is with deep regret that we announce the deaths in April of:

Mrs R. M. Lloyd of Conwy, an honorary life governor of the Institution. Mrs Lloyd has been concerned with the RNLI for close on 70 years and, although 91 last year, was still an active supporter; she was one of Conwy's principal collectors on flag day in 1975.

R. M. Harris, honorary secretary of Port Isaac from the time the station was re-established with an inshore lifeboat in May 1967, until December 1975.

## Twenty-one years

Among those celebrating Flamborough ladies guild's 21st anniversary on January 12 were Mrs C. Murray-Wells, president for the full 21 years; two founder committee members, Mrs J. Pockley and Mrs R. Leng; and the present chairman, Mrs M. Burns, and treasurer, Mrs R. T. Hardy, who have both been guild members since its formation.

## Two ways of looking at it . . .

In the spring issue of THE LIFEBOAT we published a photograph of Ernie Mangold, a man in his mid seventies who, in two years, collected more than £900 for the RNLI. Now he has written to tell us something of the philosophy behind his work. He says that many people would like to help, but cannot bring themselves to launch out and make the effort that meeting strangers involves. When he goes out, however, he is not just collecting money; he hopes that he will perhaps find his way to lonely people who long for a chat and a smile whether or not they are able to put something in his box; that he will be

able to dispel a little gloom, bring a spark of optimism. 'Many people who have never tried', he says, 'would be surprised how one can be a help—and be received.'

## Scottish radio appeal

The amount raised from the radio appeal made by Coxswain/Mechanic George Davidson, DSM, BEM, of Kirkcudbright, on 'The Week's Good Cause' programme transmitted on BBC Scotland on Sunday, February 22, was £1,316.50.

## Selsey Birdman Rally

Selsey Birdman Rally, an annual event in aid of RAFA and RNLI funds, will take place on August 15. Competitors attempt to fly 50 metres for a prize of £3,000. They usually land in the water well short of the finish line to be 'rescued' by the crew of the inshore lifeboat.

## Likely Lads

Rodney Bewes, one of those likeable 'Likely Lads', is among the RNLI's most stalwart supporters, as viewers of the BBC's popular series know well. Thanks to Rodney, lifeboat collecting boxes have always featured prominently in episodes of each series, and now that the film 'Likely Lads' is on general release, audiences again have the opportunity to 'spot the lifeboat collecting box'!

The crew of the Lizard-Cadgwith lifeboat is used to frequent visits from Rodney when he is at home in Cornwall and find his keen interest and support a great encouragement.

## Thames barges, Essex smacks

An illustrated talk on Thames barges and Essex fishing smacks is to be given by Mrs Molly Kennell, owner of the smack *Hyacinth*, at the University of Essex lecture theatre at 8 pm on Thursday, October 28. Tickets, price 50p in aid of the RNLI, from G. Delafontaine, RYA Coach, c/o Essex University, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex CO4 3SQ. Please send stamped addressed envelope and cheque made out to RNLI.

## Change of address

The new address of the Welsh District Office is now: Royal National Lifeboat Institution, The Exchange, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF1 6ED. The telephone number remains the same, Cardiff 31831.

## Pass it on . . .

Many libraries, as a means of economising, are reducing the number of journals they stock. Perhaps your local library would like to have your copy of THE LIFEBOAT when you have read it; or it might be useful in a waiting room, at a school or in a club. So, please, do pass it on—if it reaches more people, it may bring us new friends and helpers.

# Percy Garon, MC, GM

HONORARY SECRETARY, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, 1952-1975

THE LIFEBOAT SERVICE, fire brigade, his family, Southend, the Thames . . . they are all as much a part of Percy Garon as he is of them; nor would he have it otherwise. Ask him about his life, and he will tell you about the people of Southend; he will tell you about his brothers and sisters; about the volunteers of the fire brigade, ' . . . an amazing body of men . . .'; about the lifeboat crews, ' . . . with whom I have been privileged to serve . . .'; about the two coxswains who have between them spanned his 30 years service with the RNLI, Sid Page and Peter Gilson, ' . . . two of the best in the world . . .'. Ask him about his achievements and he will soon make it clear that his pride has always been to be one of a good team. Suggest that he has made outstanding personal contributions and his reply will be, 'I've been lucky.'

Perhaps this approach to life is natural for a member of a large, united family. Percy Garon, born in Southend in 1890, was the third of four brothers and three sisters. Their father, Harry, had established in the town a family business with many facets and, on his early death in 1911, his children took over his responsibilities and carried on where he had left off. Harry Garon had also set an example of service to the community which his family was to build into a tradition.

All Percy Garon's full, contented 85 years have been spent in Southend, except for the years of the first world war. A member of the Army Service Corps Motor Transport Section, he first served as a driver for the Army Council and was then drafted to East Africa. There he joined in the overcoming of what would seem insurmountable obstacles on a slow advance from the area between Mombasa and Kilimanjaro into enemy territory; drought and deep dust roads, shortage of petrol, isolation when the rains came . . . there was even a time when the lorries advanced by rail, railway wheels being substituted for conventional road wheels. Thus to Dar es Salaam. Down the coast by boat, and then came, for Percy Garon, the most testing period. It began with a summons to his commanding officer, Major Dwyer: 'Garon, to the best of my recollection you know a little bit about the sea. You were a member of the Alexandra Yacht Club at Southend? Well, we're beat again by the rains—no vehicle can move—but we've got an idea . . .'

A ship's boat was converted to power by fitting a lorry chassis on board, the

tyres on the back wheels being replaced with plates to make paddles:

*'So, with the engine, gear box and back axle of the lorry fitted into the ship's boat, I was placed on the Matandu River in charge of the transport. Rather a near experience because up to then that river had been enemy preserve—and it was absolutely loaded with hippopotami and crocodiles. And there I was, on a small ship's boat with just enough horsepower to push her with the tide. If I had to go against the tide, well, it was a question of whether the petrol would last. Anyhow, I was able to convey more than 25 tons of goods up to a forward base by going up and back on the tide. The river had a wide estuary, not unlike the Thames, but it soon shallowed and was much overgrown.'*

It was malaria which beat him. He suffered from all kinds, but when he contracted cerebral malaria he was invalided home. He had received his commission in the field, and was later awarded the Military Cross for his work on the Matandu.

Peace meant a return to his own river, the Thames, where, over the years, Percy Garon has watched the traffic change from sailing barge to commercial steam ship to a vast and varied fleet of pleasure boats. He returned in 1919 to take his place once again in the family business and to resume what was to be a lifetime of voluntary service. His father, Harry Garon, had been chief officer of Southend Fire Brigade from the time of Percy's birth until 1905, when he had been followed by a brother. The moment Percy Garon got home he once again became a voluntary fireman (this was before the days of a national service). On the death of his uncle in 1934, he was appointed chief officer, a position he held until the end of the second world war, in 1945. So this responsibility had been undertaken by the Garon family for 55 years.

Percy Garon was also to become the

fire force commander for the whole of Essex during the war years:

*'I was very proud to hold that position because I had an amazing body of men with me and I think we had as much of the punishment as any area, particularly with the oil fires which were very numerous and very persistent on the Thames side.'*

To control the spread of burning oil he used a method he had worked out himself and practised with the fire brigade before the war: directing a fine spray of water on to the oil so that it is gently dowsed without being further dispersed. It meant walking into the sea of oil directing the hoses on the fire ahead, with the ever-present danger that the flames could outflank and surround the advancing men. For his work he was awarded the George Medal. His comment? 'I got the credit, but the men did the job.' Nevertheless, you cannot get away from the fact that, after fighting the fires, he, like they, arrived home covered in oil from head to foot.

It was now 1945, and Percy Garon had given up his job as fireman and returned to his business. His elder brother, Frank, meantime had been a great supporter of the RNLI, first as chairman of the Southend branch and then as honorary secretary. One day in the Alexandra Yacht Club he turned to Percy and said, 'I haven't got long to go. I want you to promise me you will look after my lifeboat.'

Percy Garon kept that promise. 'I looked after his lifeboat. I have had the privilege of doing so, in one way or another, for over 30 years.'

At first he helped his brother by taking on the post of chairman of the branch. After Frank had to give up in 1947 there were two other secretaries, Commander R. G. Jackson and J. H. Perry, but both died in office, so, in 1952, Percy Garon became honorary secretary. He retired last December after 23 years and has since been awarded honorary life governorship of the Institution for his services.

His connection with the lifeboat was, however, much longer than his years of office. There had been considerable liaison between the fire brigade and the RNLI in the 1930s. He had seen a great deal of Sidney Page, who had

*Peter Gilson presents Percy Garon (l.) with the launching hammer he has wielded so many times. Also there, second from right, Michael Pennell, divisional inspector of lifeboats, east, representing all the coast staff who, over the years, have had the pleasure of working with Mr Garon—and it has been a pleasure.*



been in the crew since 1911 and coxswain since 1934, making plans for ways and means of giving immediate protection to shipping in the river, should war be declared and they be attacked.

Fire at sea was not only a hazard of war. On December 8, 1962, the lifeboat under the command of Coxswain Peter Gilson went to the aid of the Dutch coaster *Temar*, on fire near Sea Reach No. 2 Buoy, in near gale force winds. A tanker, *Mobil Enterprise*, was already helping the coaster, but as the lifeboat circled *Temar* a man's head was seen in the porthole of a blazing cabin. While three of the crew of *Mobil Enterprise* worked from the deck to free the man, two of the lifeboat crew boarded *Temar* to try to hold his head clear of smoke and the man was able to snatch gasps of oxygen from a mask held up to him by the lifeboat as she rose and fell alongside.

There were floods, too. During the gales of January 31 and February 1, 1953, which caused disastrous floods on

the East Coast, the Southend lifeboat launched seven times and was at sea 26½ hours: towing in first a motor barge, next a Cornish ketch, then a fishing bawley; standing by a grounded tanker; standing by off Canvey Island; evacuating residents of Foulness Island to Burnham.

During Percy Garon's term of office the Southend lifeboat launched getting on for 300 times. And always he was down at the pierhead to see the boat off; to call out, 'All right, Peter. Good luck!'; to knock out the launching pin.

Getting on for 300 times he had used that hammer, and at the branch's annual dinner which coincided with his retirement Coxswain Peter Gilson presented it to him, burnished and mounted on a stand (the work of Assistant Mechanic Tommy Thornton, junior)

*'I was very proud. It is one of the most treasured gifts I have ever received in my life.'*

Looking back over that long life,

during which he has met with serenity battle, storm, fire and flood, as well as the unremitting demands of day-by-day responsibility, Percy Garon only remembers with pride and affection the men who have walked with him. 'I've been lucky', he says.—J.D.

## Sponsored Sail

A sponsored sail at Roundhay Park is planned in October by the Post Office Sailing Club in support of Leeds Lifeboat Appeal. Dinghies will sail for six hours on Waterloo Lake, minimum sponsorship for each round 50p (minimum £5 per boat). It will be an open handicap event and prizes will include awards for the boat raising the most money and the boat completing the most rounds of the course. Enquiries from North of England clubs or individual sailors welcomed. Write to Paul Shillito, 15 Meynell Walk, Holbeck, Leeds 11 (enclosing a stamp) or telephone Leeds 452270.

## An eye for detail in lifeboat design

FREE PASSAGE OF AIR into engine room and cabins of a motor boat under way is essential to both machinery and man. Without it, engines cannot run and the well-being and efficiency of the crew would soon be impaired. It follows that the ventilation system of a lifeboat for which a watertight wheelhouse is an integral part of her self-righting capability is of first importance. There must be vents and a trunking system; but where air can pass, so can water. What will happen should the boat capsize?

To meet this eventuality the design office of the RNLI has produced a gravity air intake valve with minimum mechanical action which, with all the virtues of simplicity, ensures not only that the sea is excluded as the boat goes over, but also that ventilation is interrupted for as short a time as possible.

To deal with the last point first, the valves are sited to port and starboard at the highest possible point in the boat's structure (fig. 1). Should the boat be rolled to starboard, while the starboard

valve closes, the port valve, still clear of the water, remains open and continues to supply air to the engines. It is not until the angle of heel approaches 100° that both valves close, and it is then only a matter of seconds before, as the boat rights herself, the water drains away and the valves open once again.

The air intake valve (see fig. 2) is an ante-chamber to the ventilation trunking system (A), the upper and lower compartments being separated by a hinged flap (C). Beneath the hinged flap is a perforated control box (B) through which air and water can pass but which is designed as a runway for the gunmetal ball (D) which closes the flap.

In normal conditions the ball lies quiescent at the base of the control box, the flap is open and air passes freely through the perforated box to the trunking system (fig. 2). If the boat should capsize, as she heels over the ball responds to the pull of gravity and rolls outboard to close the flap (fig. 3). By the time she is on her beam ends and

the compartment is filled with water the flap is fully closed by the ball (fig. 4), and it is held even more firmly shut by the head of water which fills the lower compartment (fig. 5). As the boat rights herself, the water drains away, the ball rolls back into its resting place, the flap opens and fresh air passes freely once again.

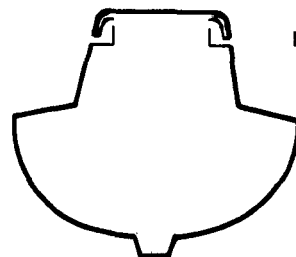


Fig. 1

Fig. 1: Air intake valves sited in turn of wheelhouse roof, port and starboard.

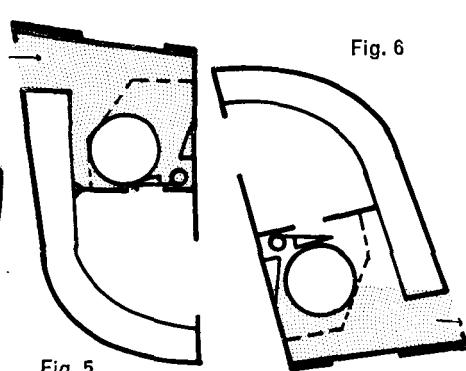
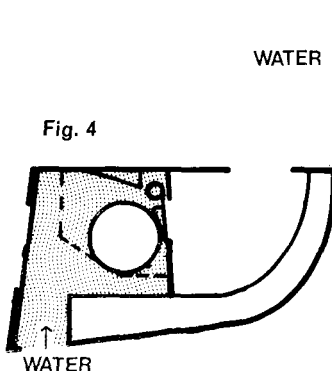
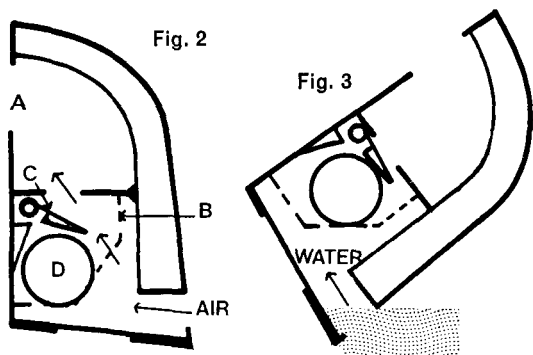
Fig. 2: Boat upright; air enters freely. A, ventilation trunking into boat; B, perforated box through which air (and water) can pass; C, valve flap; D, 3½" gunmetal ball.

Fig. 3: Heeling, 60°: force of gravity rolls ball outboard closing valve flap.

Fig. 4: On her beam ends, 90°: valve closed before water can enter ventilation trunking.

Fig. 5: Capsized, 180°: head of water adds strength to valve seal.

Fig. 6: Righting: water drains away and valve opens.





# BOOK REVIEWS

● Dr Robert Haworth, the author of *First Aid for Yachtsmen* (Adlard Coles, £3.95), is not only the honorary medical adviser to the RNLI's station at Barmouth, but he is also an active member of the ILB crew, and in that capacity was awarded the Institution's silver medal for gallantry in 1971.

He is therefore fully aware of the limitations that small boats impose upon first-aiders, and in this book he has pruned the subject hard and cut away theory, details of the structure and function of the body, and even the descriptions of the signs and symptoms that may lead to accurate diagnosis. The equipment recommended is very simple so it is perhaps a pity that the photograph on the cover does not bear out the simplicity of the text.

With this original book on board any yachtsman can give instant first aid which, in the waters around these islands, should be quite adequate until the advice given in the special chapters on how to move casualties and how to communicate in emergency with other ships or the shore brings more expert help.

However, any yachtsman cruising further should be better instructed and better equipped.—G.H.

● Grahame Farr's *Paper on Life-Boat History, No. 2*, tells the story of George Palmer's life-boats from 1828 to 1847. Palmer was an Essex man, who at the age of 16 was in a boat which capsized in Macao Roads. He and other members of the crew remained for three days on the bottom of the boat before being picked up by a Chinese vessel. In 1796 he got his first command and five years later came ashore to become a partner in his family's East India trading house. He was MP for South Essex from 1836 to 1847 and joined the Committee of Management of the RNLI two years after its foundation. In the same year he was appointed Deputy Chairman.

The first lifeboats ordered by the RNLI were built by William Plenty at Newbury, but because he was unable to obtain enough skilled labour he delivered only three out of twelve boats ordered. The RNLI adopted a policy of persuading local committees to have local boats suitably modified, but the Vicar of Llanfairynyghornwy in Anglesey, the Reverend James Williams, pointed

out that there were no suitable boats to be found in this area, where many shipwrecks occurred. For some time work had been continuing on the production of a standard lifeboat. A prototype was altered according to George Palmer's proposals, and the first two built-to-order Palmer boats went to North Wales, one being stationed at Cemlyn and the other at Barmouth.

Grahame Farr's admirable booklet gives constructional details and the history of all Palmer lifeboats and accounts of the services which they are known to have performed. Available from Grahame Farr, 98 Combe Avenue, Portishead, Bristol BS20 9JX, price 50p including postage.—P.H.

● *Exercises for the Ocean Yacht Navigator* by Kenneth Wilkes (Nautical Publishing Co., £3.95) provides useful exercises in astronomical navigation, chronometer work and the computation of ocean passages for the yachtsman. Examples are given for all types of observation in both hemispheres.

If the reader holds a copy of *Ocean Yacht Navigator* by the same author he will be able to solve the problems in the first three chapters by reference to extracts from the 1975 Almanac printed in that book. We hope that he will already have copies of the sight reduction tables and Norie's or Inman's Tables in the shelf above his chart table, but if he has thrown away last year's Almanac, he must hurry to scrounge a copy from one of his fellow navigators before it is too late, otherwise the usefulness of the last three chapters of the book will fade away.

As earnest of a thorough review of the book, I promised myself that I would find a spelling or printing mistake and an error in computation. I found the first, the only one I could find, on page 16 where a new star called 'Mirkaf' is to be found. I was equally hard put to it to find a computing error, but found it at last on page 75 where an azimuth has been incorrectly extracted from AP 3270 which makes a nonsense out of a three-star fix.

If there is anything missing from this excellent book, I would suggest that there should be more examples in star identification. It is good practice to pre-plan at the chart table the observations you intend to make at twilight but I

know, and I am sure Kenneth Wilkes knows, that 'life ain't like that' and when you arrive on deck with the sextant, you are lucky to be able to pick any three or more stars out of holes in the clouds without the foggiest notion what they are. Few yachts enjoy the luxury of a star-globe and it is useful to know how to use the sight reduction tables backwards. Starting with altitude and azimuth and knowing your DR position, you can pick from the tables the declination and SHA of the body observed.

There is a lot of enjoyment to be had by the winter-bound ocean navigator from working through other people's logs. I was delighted to see that I had visited almost the exact spot indicated in one of the examples at twilight returning from Fastnet and, referring to my own sight book, to find that in a four-star fix I had used two of the same stars used in the example.—K.M.

● The north-east coast of England is synonymous with lifeboats. Quite apart from the famed Grace Darling rescue—and more important than it—it was this part of the coast that saw the first coherent efforts to reduce the appalling loss of life through shipwreck. The first purpose-built lifeboat, the 'Original', was built by Henry Greathead at South Shields and saved hundreds of lives between 1790 and 1830. Another Greathead lifeboat was stationed at Spurn Point in 1800, but transferred to Redcar in 1802 and was named *Zetland*. She had a remarkable career, performing her last service in 1880, and is now the main exhibit in a museum near the new Redcar lifeboat house and 37' Oakley lifeboat.

The intervening period of time, in which Redcar had eight lifeboats, is chronicled in *A History of the Redcar Lifeboats* by David Phillipson, a member of Redcar crew for 12 years and now head launcher. This 15-page illustrated booklet costs 50p (a percentage of the profits goes to lifeboat funds) and is available from Mr Phillipson at 43 Stanley Grove, Redcar, Cleveland TS10 3LN.—A.H.G.

● It must be recorded with some sadness that Jack Froom's *The Story of the Southend Lifeboat* (30p plus 9p postage, proceeds to the RNLI, from the author, 164 Stock Road, Billericay, Essex CM12 0RS) appears just as the offshore lifeboat has been withdrawn from the station. Nonetheless, Southend lifeboatmen and townspeople can look back with pride on nearly a century of lifesaving in the Thames Estuary; a tradition which is being carried into the future by her inshore lifeboats.

Mr Froom, who is secretary of the Thames Estuary Lifeboat Research Group, records many of the remarkable services, such as the eight launches in a gale that lasted two days in December 1940. A silver and five bronze medals rewarded arduous service by a crew whose average age was 45.—A.H.G.



*Practical help: (above) Scouts repaint Poole's old lifeboat house, now a museum, with paint supplied by ICI as part of the Brighter Britain Campaign (photo, Jeff Morris), and (below) members of 206 air navigation course, RAF Finningly, as a charity project, paint Clovelly lifeboat house (photo, Western Morning News).*

## Around the coast

*(Above) Southend's lifeboat Greater London II (Civil Service No. 30) launched for the last time on Sunday, March 28, before leaving station. She has been replaced by an Atlantic 21.*

photograph by courtesy of Evening Echo.

*(Below left) Getting down to detail: Devon Scouts who visited Bideford Shipyard on March 6 were shown over Waveney 44-018 by Roger Sullivan, RNLI overseer steel. This lifeboat, to the funding of which Scouts have contributed more than £101,000 and which will be named The Scout, will be stationed at Hartlepool.*

photograph by courtesy of The Scout Association.

*(Below right) Coxswain Harry Jones welcomes the Chairman, Major-General Ralph Farrant, to Hoylake lifeboat station on April 25. Committee and crew were present in strength to meet him and show him their 37' 6" Rother lifeboat Mary Gabriel.*

photograph by courtesy of Bob Bird.



## Invergordon

*(continued from page 166)*

breeding ground of many severe squalls and walls of white squalls were whistling across the firth, bringing snow and stinging spray in their path.

Outside the firth, in the open sea, the south west wind is off the land. Here, it is the easterly wind which is feared, blowing in from the sea and

funnelled into ferocious seas by the twin arms of the land running out to Fraserburgh to the south and Wick to the north. It is in these conditions that the search for North Sea oil goes on and in which casualties may occur.

The oil industry came to Cromarty Firth in the early days when a site was sought for building the huge production platform. The dry dock at Nigg, just inside the entrance to the firth, is one of the largest in the world. Now planning permission has been given for an oil refinery close to the Nigg construction

site and the development of the firth is under way.

It is this development which might well produce the first casualties. Around the corner there is Inverness Firth where there is similar oil work as well as yachts and fishing boats. Since the lifeboat arrived at Invergordon eighteen months ago there have been no casualties. This has given the crew time to work up to a high standard of efficiency; all the hard work in training will be justified when the first call comes off Cromarty Firth.

# Some Ways of Raising Money

The Province of Northern Ireland improved its fund-raising in 1975 by 21 per cent; a sterling achievement in difficult times. The voluntary workers of Belfast raised no less than £11,000.

London flag day, Tuesday March, 16, resulted in £83,864, which is £8,135 more than the 1975 total: it was the largest advance so far achieved in any year.

In 1975 Redcar guild worked extremely hard to increase their high annual income to £3,500, and had already raised £1,250 towards their 1976 total by February. Opening the boat-house at Easter to sell souvenirs, despite bitter north east winds, several ladies donned specially prepared Easter bonnets. So attractive was the presentation that they were invited to tour the hotels and public houses with collecting boxes, and this is now to be a feature in the town. The treasurer is always alert for a telephone call from one of the four ships that have adopted the guild, and at a moment's notice dashes off to the docks to receive money accumulated during a voyage.

A long beat for Police Constables John Myhill and Arthur Sykes of the Humberside Force: 152 miles from Fleetwood to Flamborough and it took them from September 16 to 20. Fleetwood branch, Rotherham, Driffield, Bridlington and Flamborough guilds and Flamborough supporters club all helped with the sponsorship and a splendid £1,260.37 was raised. At the end of the walk there was a civic welcome at Flamborough and the lifeboat was launched for a trip afloat.



*At Tenby branch's AGM the crew presented a cheque for £1,000 towards the cost of an ILB boathouse. The money was raised with football matches, a dance and a sponsored tow of the ILB on her launching trolley to Pembroke Dock and back, more than 21 miles. The crew have also built by their own labour a fully equipped loft in the offshore boathouse; the money needed came from the pooling of exercise and practice payments.*



*Sue Punch at work.*  
photograph by courtesy of London Express.

Sue Punch, who works as a part-time barmaid at the Amsterdam Restaurant, Shoreham, claiming she could do any job a man could do, accepted a challenge from Robert Denis that she could not complete a week's training on one of his construction sites. The stake was £50. Digging a sewer, laying bricks, driving a

JCB digger and using a pneumatic drill were involved; and that was only a start! Sue won her bet, and, with additional sponsorships and collection, earned £160 for the RNLI.

Crystal Palace Football and Athletic Club raised £92 for the RNLI at a St Valentine's disco dance on February 14.

Bury St Edmunds branch, re-formed two years ago, has already raised over £2,000, by organising a flag day, two barbecues, two dances and a children's sponsored cycle ride. Until his recent death, the branch had the support as chairman of Air Vice-Marshal Stanley Vincent, who had been one of the oldest pilots in the Battle of Britain.

Stan Timerick of Kingswinford has assembled a magnificent model railway in his loft. Visitors have to buy a platform ticket, and the proceeds all go to the RNLI.

Over 1,000 people were present in the Assembly Hall of Walthamstow Civic Centre one April evening to hear a three-hour concert of jazz and Glenn Miller style music played by Kenny

*Tamworth guild have held two 'knit-ins' at the home of their chairman, Mrs Marion Appleby Matthews. More than £200 was raised on each occasion.*

photograph by courtesy of J. Walker.







*The Lord Mayor of Manchester, Dame Kathleen Ollerenshaw, JP, who opened Manchester Boat Show, meets David Jones, divisional organiser north west, at the RNLI stand. With them are area organisers James Murray and Brian Stevenson. £530 was raised at the show and a number of new Shoreline members signed on.*

Ball and his Jazzmen and Syd Lawrence and his Band. The concert, sponsored by the International Lloyds Insurance broking firm J. H. Minet and Co., raised £750 for the RNLI. Among the guests were the Mayor of Waltham Forest and three members of Hastings lifeboat crew with their wives.

Hythe branch luncheon club raised over £150 for the RNLI during its winter season from October to March. There were 86 members at the last lunch on March 24, when the guest speaker was Colin Cowdrey, CBE. Also in March, the branch arranged a Gaelic coffee evening jointly with Cancer Research; 150 people were at the Town Hall to watch Robert Spicer's dog Sandy present cheques for £215 each to the RNLI and Cancer Research, being the proceeds of Spicer's of Hythe's golden jubilee celebrations.

Havering branch of the Independent Order of Foresters adopted the RNLI as their charity for 1975 and raised £650, most of it by a 24-hour sponsored bowl at Dagenham Bowling Alley.

Membership of West Wight guild is increasing and in 1975 £2,200 was raised. Activities included a cheese and wine party at the Royal Solent Yacht Club, coffee mornings, a ploughman's lunch party at Marsh Farm, Newtown, and the sale of souvenirs at Easter and during summer weekends as well as the flag day collection.



*Leslie French, seen here (l.) with Mrs Charles Hunting Simpson, chairman of Fulmer and Iwer branch, gave a presentation of excerpts from Shakespeare at Eton College on Sunday, January 18. £400 was raised for the RNLI.*

Appledore branch was given £4 by four local girls who gave up sweets for Lent but fined themselves 1p for any sweet eaten.

A 15" Easter egg given by Mr and Mrs David Larcombe, owners of the White Rose Hotel, Sway, was raffled during a dinner dance at the hotel on Saturday, April 17, and the £54.20 raised given to Lymington branch. The egg was won by a Merchant Navy officer and his wife, Mr and Mrs Michael Farrow.

Chanonry and District Guild had a record season in 1974/75, raising over £1,200 with coffee mornings, a sale, house-to-house collections and a sponsored walk.

An exhibition by the Ladies Flower Club at Wythall, near Birmingham, held at Kings Norton Golf Club early last November, raised £100 which, at the request of E. W. Turner, a Shoreline member and the husband of the secretary of the club, was kindly donated to the RNLI. The theme of this excellent exhibition was 'Winter Cruise'.

J. D. Lewis of Bury, Lancashire, another Shoreline member, has since Christmas been making a slight detour on the way to the school at which he teaches to pick up another member of staff. She wished to make a contribution, but Mr Lewis suggested that, instead, she should work out how much she had saved in fares and make out a cheque to the RNLI. He has sent in a first instalment of £10.

Tytherington County Secondary School, Cheshire, organised a sponsored knit for the RNLI and achieved a fine total of £138.



*Maldon Little Ship Club's New Year's Day sponsored yacht tender rowing race was won by Brian Watkins (l.) and Malcolm Holland. Twenty-six boats took part and £203 was raised for the lifeboat service.*

photograph by courtesy of Maldon and Burnham Standard.

A costume Wreckers' Ball organised by Bodmin and District branch at Lanhydrock House, a National Trust property, last autumn raised £721 for the RNLI. The ball has become an annual event and the next will be held on November 19.

*continued on page 176*

This badge was found in the archives of our Glasgow Office. It is thought to date back to the turn of the century. We think he was saying then:

'Please remember the Life-boatmen, Sir'.

How do you think he would phrase this today. Send your suggestion with 25p to:

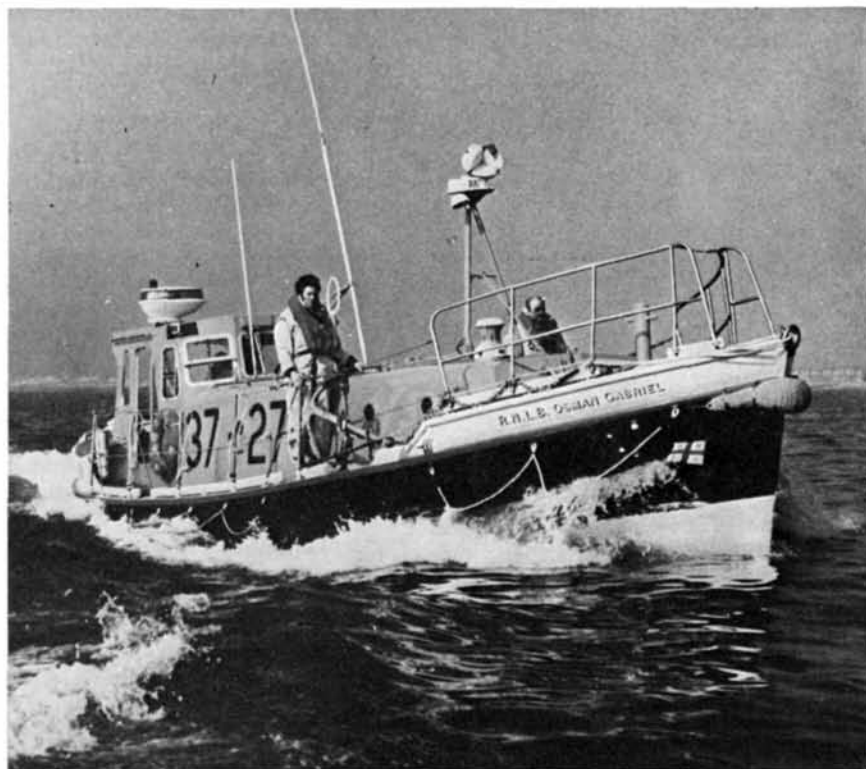
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# Letters...

## Sea Rhine founders

I would like to thank you and the crew of the Great Yarmouth and Gorleston lifeboat for your help when you came to the assistance of *Sea Rhine* off Lowestoft on Wednesday morning, February 11.

It was a great disappointment to me personally that we were unable to save the little ship, but nevertheless it was most reassuring to see that 'blue flasher' when you arrived on the scene, and to see some cheerful faces when I eventually transferred to the lifeboat. I must admit the last hour or so on board *Sea Rhine* was somewhat lonely!

Once again, many thanks to you and your crew, and I hope that when we next meet it will be under less tedious circumstances.—DOUGLAS SENNETT, *relief mate*, MV *Sea Rhine*, 19a Arlington Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex.

*This letter, much appreciated by the crew of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston lifeboat, was written to Staff Coxswain William Dent.—THE EDITOR.*

## Bernard F. Gribble

I am researching the life and work of Bernard F. Gribble, marine artist 1873-1962, who painted many lifeboat scenes. I would be most grateful if

anyone having knowledge of the artist or his works would contact me.—DAN M. REES, 74560 Monnetier-Mornex, France.

## Rescue on Redwood Creek

As a Britisher, yachtsman and current resident of San Francisco I must register an objection to the remarks of R. W. V. Jessett in his letter published in the winter issue of THE LIFEBOAT.

He described his stirring account of '... probably the first rescue in these parts (San Francisco Bay) under the flag of the RNLI; I do not expect it to be the last.' He spoke of those rescued as 'typical of SF Bay trailer boat operating; they had no lifejackets, no flares, no bailer, no seamanship...'

Typical you say, Mr Jessett? Horsefeathers!

After years of sailing these waters I have been more than impressed with the extent of safety equipment used by the average weekend sailor. Anyone who knows the United States cannot help but admire the splendid job done by the US Coast Guard, its civilian arm the USCG Auxiliary and other organisations such as the US Power Boat Squadron in the name of 'water safety'. The very latest safety equipment

is given prominence by yacht brokers and chandlers. Most boats sport the USCG Auxiliary 'Courtesy Checked' sticker on windshields, and indeed everywhere one goes, be it marina, boat show or boatowners' meeting, the topic of safety is constantly being taught, discussed and practised.

In the summer one of the local radio stations runs a cabin cruiser broadcasting fishing and weather conditions on the bay itself, and safety tips are all part of the regular format.

While I am sure that Mr Jessett sailing about the bay in his mv *Red Duster* flying the RNLI flag is a welcomed addition, perhaps a word of warning is in order. This being a bicentennial year he should take care in boarding the boat of any super-patriot who may misunderstand his undoubtedly good intentions!—PETER SCOTT-PADGET, San Francisco, California, USA.

## All on a summer day...

You might be interested to hear of a brief incident which took place at Goring Lock, on the Thames, last summer. We were waiting in the lock for the water level to fall when a lady who was helping the lock-keeper said, 'I see you are flying an RNLI flag. Could you tell me where I can get one?' So here was the perfect opportunity for me to explain about Shoreline. By that time the lock gates were open and away we went.

I don't know if she joined, but she certainly gave the impression that she intended to do so.—FRANK HARPER, 6 Highbury Terrace, Bath.

## Some ways of raising money

(continued from page 174)

Instead of buying birthday and Christmas cards for each other, the ladies who work on the BPF Section of Thorn Lighting, Leicester, saved the money and sent a cheque for £26 to

Wells-next-the-Sea guild for Wells lifeboat.

In a sponsored sailing regatta on a lake at Margam, Port Talbot, last autumn, 160 West Glamorgan children raised £662 for the lifeboat service. For those who raised the highest amounts there was a trip to sea in The Mumbles lifeboat.

Every New Year's Eve Monkstone Cruising and Sailing Club hold a fancy

dress party. Anyone not wearing fancy dress is fined and the money so collected is usually donated to Neath branch. This year's collection amounted to £25.50.

The day staff at Plymouth Telephone Exchange chose Plymouth lifeboat for their special charity gift in 1975. There was a sponsored walk, a bring and buy sale, raffles and a number of individual efforts, and two blankets were knitted. The result: £250 for the lifeboat.



## TOWING BRACKETS

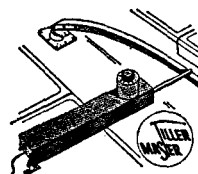
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# Lifeboat Services

(continued from page 153)

(and their dog) were in turn taken by breeches buoy to the lifeboat. John Powell and Alwyn Emmerson were then recovered in the same way.

The operation was completed by 1720 and Coxswain Pockley recovered the gear, weighed anchor and was on the beach by 1725. *Friendly Forester* was re-housed and ready for service at 1800.

For this service the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to Crew Member Alwyn Emmerson. A framed letter of thanks signed by Major-General Ralph Farrant, Chairman of the Institution, was awarded to Coxswain George Pockley and vellum service certificates were presented to Acting Second Coxswain James Major, Motor Mechanic Robert Major, Assistant Mechanic John Crossland and Crew Members George Emmerson, Roy Leng, Robert Emmerson, Malcolm Smales, Dennis Woodhouse, John Major and James Cross. A letter of thanks signed by Captain Nigel Dixon, the Director, was sent to the Flamborough Coastguard mentioning the particular action of Auxiliary Coastguard John Powell.

## Scotland South Division

### Tow in strong gale

A VESSEL DRIFTING DANGEROUSLY close to land at Caldrine Bay was reported to HM Coastguard on the afternoon of



*Barry Dock No. 2 lifeboat launched on September 27, 1975, to help Storm Eagle, a yacht being driven ashore by a strong south-westerly gale. She got a line aboard just as the yacht's anchor rope parted and towed her, with her three crew, back to Barry Harbour.*

photograph by courtesy of C. Geach, aboard pilot cutter *George Ray*.

January 10. The Coastguard informed the honorary secretary of Campbeltown lifeboat station at 1300. Of the several vessels in the vicinity, one was attempting to tow the casualty to safety.

At 1315 it was reported that the tow line had parted and that the lifeboat was required, so, at 1327, the 52' Barnett *City of Glasgow II* set out in a west north west strong gale with a high sea and poor visibility. It was two hours after low water.

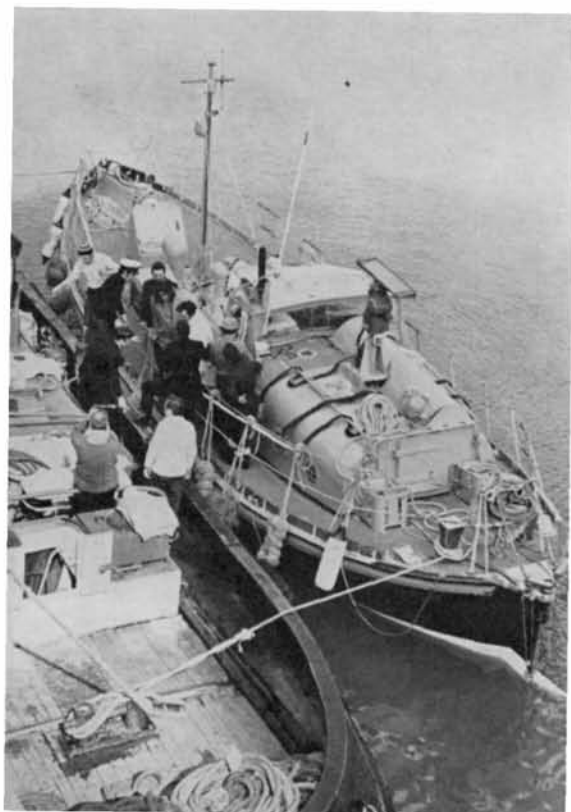
*City of Glasgow II* reached the casualty, cargo vessel *Gold* of Rochester, at 1600 and put a tow line on her. Because of the prevailing sea conditions, however, the tow was very slow and difficult. Consequently it was decided to

take *Gold* to the nearest safe anchorage and hand over the tow to a suitable vessel. The coaster was taken to Dunaverty Bay, anchored and her crew of five taken on board the lifeboat.

*City of Glasgow II* arrived back in Campbeltown with the five survivors at 2120.

## Services by Offshore Lifeboats, December 1975, January and February 1976

Aberdeen, Grampian  
December 30 and January 29.  
Aith, Highland  
February 6.  
Amble, Northumberland  
December 14.  
Angle, Dyfed  
January 1, 3 and 6.  
Arbroath, Tayside  
December 1.  
Baltimore, Co. Cork  
January 31.  
Barra Island, Western Isles  
December 23, 30, January 14 and 20.  
Barry Dock, South Glamorgan  
December 3, 22, January 1, 25 and February 21.  
Beaumaris, Gwynedd  
January 3.  
Bridlington, Humberside  
December 1, 13 and January 2.  
Clovelly, Devon  
January 2 and 27.  
Calshot, Hampshire  
December 9, January 17, 19 and 29.  
Campbeltown, Strathclyde  
January 10.  
Clacton-on-Sea, Essex  
January 4 and 16.  
Cloughie-Portavogie, Co. Down  
February 2 and 7.  
Cromer, Norfolk  
December 12, 14 and February 7.  
Douglas, Isle of Man  
January 3 and 4.  
Dover, Kent  
December 1, January 13, February 1 and 24.



*Humber: A tug and a Grimsby fishing vessel were in collision near Bull Light on the morning of April 1. Being informed that there were people in the sea, Humber lifeboat, the 46' 9" Watson City of Bradford III, launched in a westerly breeze with a slight sea and good visibility. She found that the tug had picked up all five people from the sea; they were transferred to the lifeboat, given first aid for exposure and shock and landed at Grimsby.*

photograph by courtesy of T. J. M. Wood.

**Dungeness, Kent**  
February 24.  
**Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin**  
December 12 and January 20.  
**Dunmore East, Co. Waterford**  
January 2.  
**Eastbourne, Sussex**  
December 13, February 9 and 24.  
**Falmouth, Cornwall**  
December 7.  
**Flamborough, Humberside**  
December 1, 2 and 10.  
**Fleetwood, Lancashire**  
December 26, January 25 and February 10.  
**Fowey, Cornwall**  
December 1 and 4.  
**Great Yarmouth and Gorleston, Norfolk**  
December 1, 12, 13, 18, 31 and February 11.  
**Harwich, Essex**  
December 1 (twice).  
**Hastings, East Sussex**  
December 15, January 1, 2, 20 and February 24.  
**Holyhead, Gwynedd**  
December 24 and February 5.  
**Howth, Co. Dublin**  
December 24 and February 14.  
**Hoylake, Merseyside**  
January 1.  
**Humber, Humberside**  
December 2, 3, 13, 14, January 4, 19 and 22.  
**Ilfracombe, Devon**  
December 11.  
**Islay, Strathclyde**  
January 10 and 21.  
**Kirkcudbright, Dumfries and Galloway**  
December 17 and February 15.  
**Kirkwall, Highland**  
January 5 and 20.  
**Lerwick, Highland**  
January 18.  
**The Lizard-Cadgwith, Cornwall**  
January 2 and February 1.  
**Llandudno, Gwynedd**  
December 12.  
**Longhope, Highland**  
December 18.  
**Lowestoft, Suffolk**  
February 17 and 29.  
**Mallaig, Grampian**  
December 19, January 6 and 28.  
**Margate, Kent**  
January 1 and February 9.  
**Moelfre, Gwynedd**  
January 18.  
**The Mumbles, West Glamorgan**  
January 2.  
**North Sunderland, Northumberland**  
January 13 and February 5.  
**Padstow, Cornwall**  
December 13, January 3 and 14.  
**Penlee, Cornwall**  
December 2, 9 and January 28.  
**Plymouth, Devon**  
January 11 and February 3.  
**Poole, Dorset**  
December 7, 9, 15 and January 21.  
**Port Erin, Isle of Man**  
December 5.

**Portpatrick, Dumfries and Galloway**  
January 18.  
**Ramsey, Isle of Man**  
January 4.  
**Ramsgate, Kent**  
December 11, 17, 27 and 31.  
**Redcar, Cleveland**  
December 7.  
**Rhyl, Clwyd**  
December 12.  
**Rosslare Harbour, Co. Wexford**  
January 29.  
**St David's, Dyfed**  
December 12.  
**St Helier, Jersey**  
December 13.  
**St Ives, Cornwall**  
January 19, February 1 and 19.  
**St Mary's, Isles of Scilly**  
December 21 and January 31.  
**St Peter Port, Guernsey**  
December 13 and February 11.  
**Salcombe, Devon**  
January 27 and February 17.  
**Selsey, West Sussex**  
December 12 and February 21.  
**Sheerness, Kent**  
December 16, January 2, 24, 25 (twice),  
February 1, 5, 17 and 21.  
**Sheringham, Norfolk**  
January 1.  
**Shoreham Harbour, West Sussex**  
February 20 and 22.  
**Skegness, Lincolnshire**  
January 11.  
**Southend-on-Sea, Essex**  
December 1.  
**Stornoway, Western Isles**  
February 26.  
**Swanage, Dorset**  
January 24, February 15, 21 and 22.  
**Teesmouth, Cleveland**  
December 12, 26, February 5 and 27.  
**Tenby, Dyfed**  
December 15.  
**Thurso, Highland**  
January 21.  
**Torbay, Devon**  
December 27, January 4, 10 and 28.  
**Troon, Strathclyde**  
January 2 and 31.  
**Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear**  
January 10.  
**Valentia, Co. Kerry**  
December 15 and February 29.  
**Walmer, Kent**  
December 1 (twice).  
**Wells, Norfolk**  
December 8.  
**Weymouth, Dorset**  
December 1.  
**Whitby, North Yorkshire**  
December 18, January 20 and February 5.  
**Wicklow, Co. Wicklow**  
February 29.  
**Yarmouth, Isle of Wight**  
February 10.  
**Youghal, Co. Cork**  
January 23.

## Services by Inshore Lifeboats, December 1975, January and February 1976

**Aberystwyth, Dyfed**  
February 14.  
**Beaumaris, Gwynedd**  
January 3 and February 15.  
**Conwy, Gwynedd**  
February 7.  
**Eastney, Hampshire**  
December 6, 30, January 7, 25 and February 27.  
**Eastney (A.508), Hampshire**  
January 18, February 7 and 27.  
**Flint, Clwyd**  
January 10 and 18.  
**Great Yarmouth and Gorleston, Norfolk**  
December 1, 14 and January 28.  
**Hartlepool, Cleveland**  
December 14, February 7 and 29.  
**Harwich, Essex**  
December 1.  
**Hastings, East Sussex**  
January 14 and 18.  
**Littlehampton, West Sussex**  
December 17, January 17 and 18.  
**Llandudno, Gwynedd**  
December 18 and January 18.  
**Lyme Regis, Dorset**  
December 2, 18, January 3 and 5.  
**Lymington, Hampshire**  
January 25.  
**Lytham-St Anne's, Lancashire**  
January 10.  
**Margate, Kent**  
December 30.  
**Minehead, Somerset**  
January 8.  
**Morecambe, Lancashire**  
February 1.  
**New Brighton, Merseyside**  
December 21, 30, January 3 and 11.  
**Poole, Dorset**  
December 4, 9, 15 and January 12.  
**Queensferry, Forth**  
December 21, 27 and February 3.  
**Silloth, Cumbria**  
February 15.  
**Southend-on-Sea, Essex**  
December 1.  
**Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear**  
December 26, January 10, 18 and February 18.  
**West Mersea, Essex**  
December 7, January 9 and 11.  
**Weston-super-Mare, Avon**  
January 1.  
**Whitstable, Kent**  
December 3, 6, 14, 30 and February 29.

### SERVICES AND LIVES SAVED BY OFFSHORE AND INSHORE LIFEBOATS

January 1, 1976 to April 30, 1976: Services 262; lives saved 109

#### THE STATION FLEET

(as at 30/4/76)

133 offshore lifeboats

123 inshore lifeboats operating in the summer

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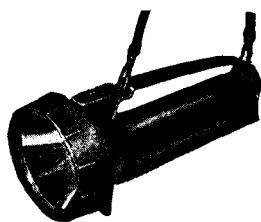
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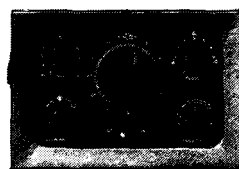
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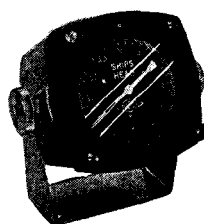


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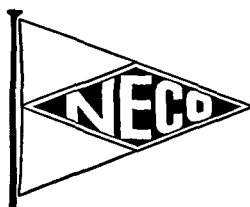
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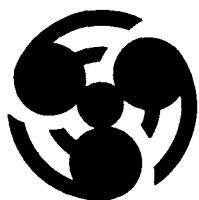
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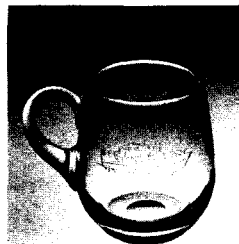
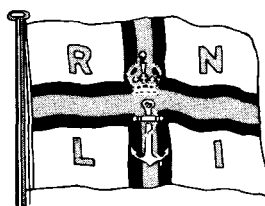
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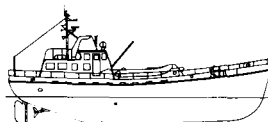
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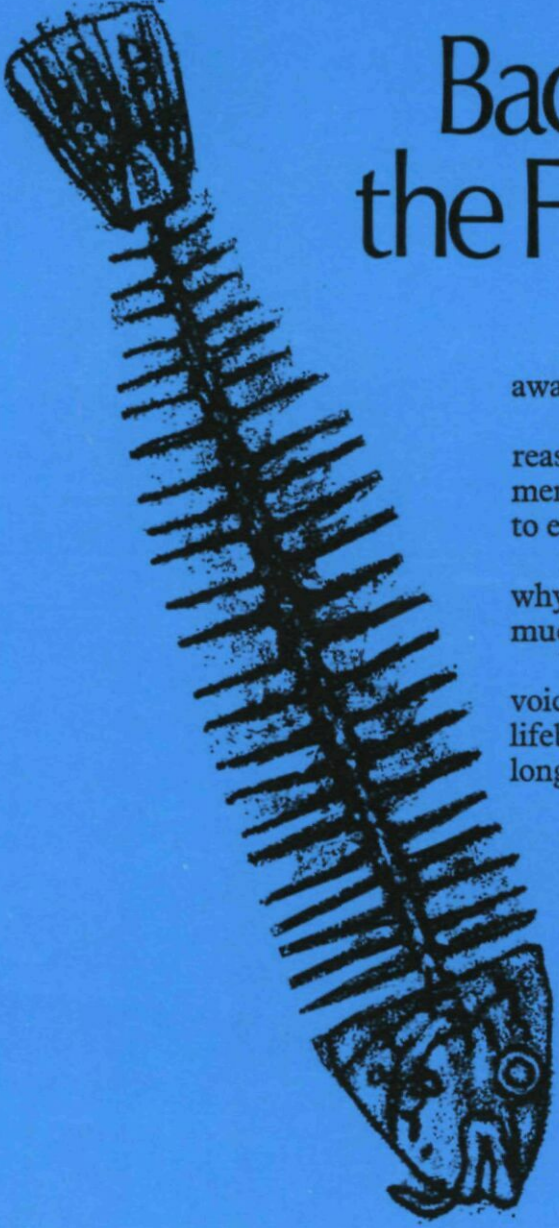
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