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THE LIFEBOAT

Spring 1981

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COVER PICTURE
Shoreham Harbour's D class inflatable lifeboat on exercise. Inflatable lifeboats have been stationed at Shoreham for the summer season, from April to October, since 1967. In that time they have launched 450 times and rescued 233 people. The photograph was taken by Peter Hadfield.

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The world's first lifeboat station?

Until recently it has been accepted that the world's first lifeboat station was at Bamburgh, Northumberland, where, in 1786, Dr John Sharp, the chief administrator of the Crewe Trust, persuaded Lionel Lukin to convert a small coble, making it 'unimmergible'. Reports of rescue boats stationed at the mouth of the Yangtse river in the mid-eighteenth century have never been substantiated, so Bamburgh's claim seemed safe. There is now convincing evidence that a lifeboat station existed at Formby, Lancashire, almost ten years before Lukin's boat was sent to Bamburgh. A minute in the Liverpool municipal records dated March 5, 1777, gave instructions for repairs to be carried out to 'the boat which was formerly ordered to be built and kept at Formby in readiness to fetch any shipwrecked persons from off the banks'.

Grahame Farr had included a note about the boat set aside for lifesaving at Formby in the 1770s in his Aids to Lifeboat History No. 2, British Lifeboat Stations, published in 1979, and now, after considerable research, an article has been written by Dr and Mrs Yorke on the full history of Formby lifeboat station; it appears on page 156. The evidence for the early lifeboat and a picture of the station is included in the new book Lifeboat—In Danger's Hour by Patrick Howarth (see pages 162 and 163).

Thanks to Admiral Hoare

The Committee of Management has resolved that the Institution's sincere thanks on vellum be accorded to Rear Admiral Desmond Hoare in recognition of his valuable co-operation and skill as a designer of the rigid-hulled inflatable lifeboat concept and for his services to the Institution as a member of the Committee of Management.

Admiral Hoare was Provost of the United College of the Atlantic at St Donat's, South Wales, when, with the support of the RNLI, he experimented with a boat design based on the combination of a rigid wooden hull with an inflatable sponson. After some seven years' work the early Atlantic 16 and 21 were adopted by the Institution, since which time considerable development work has been undertaken by the RNLI base at Cowes resulting in the highly effective Atlantic 21 we know today. Rigid inflatable boats are now also common in the commercial field as well as in that of sea rescue.

Since Admiral Hoare's experiments in the 1960s, hundreds of lives have been saved by Atlantic class lifeboats.

Indian Chief exhibition

The centenary of the Indian Chief rescue carried out by the Ramsgate lifeboat Bradford in 1881, and for which the gold medal was awarded to Coxswain Charles Fish, is being marked by an exhibition in Ramsgate Harbour's oldest building, the Clock House. The exhibition includes the ship's crest, salvaged from Indian Chief, photographs, paintings and medals awarded to the lifeboat crew. A series of six new paintings of the rescue were prepared in the display studio in Poole.

The exhibition is open at weekends until Easter and daily thereafter, from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm.

Helicopter rescues

During 1980, helicopters of the RAF flew over 1,000 rescue missions and...
rescued or evacuated some 600 people. A further 200 people were rescued by Royal Navy helicopters. Many of these missions were carried out jointly with RNLI lifeboats and the risks faced by both helicopter and lifeboat crews were enormous. It was with particular sadness that the news of the death of Master Aircrewman David Bullock of RAF Coltishall was received. He was lost last November when attempting to winch the pilot of a ditched aircraft from the sea and was the first man ever to be lost on an RAF helicopter mission. The RNLI extends its sympathy to his family and colleagues in a sister rescue service.

New design
The cover of this journal has been re-designed to fit in with new letterheads, posters and other RNLI material so that a coherent design policy is achieved. The new designs use the RNLI flag, which is already well known, and by constant application every piece of RNLI material will be instantly recognisable. The consistency of design will also save money.

Overnight repairs
The dedication of lifeboat crews at sea is well known, but less is heard of the back-up service on land which keeps the lifeboats in constant readiness.

Norwegian gift
At the request of HM King Olav V of Norway a cheque for £639 was given to Tynemouth lifeboat committee last year. King Olav visited Newcastle in September in connection with the city’s 900th anniversary celebrations and asked that the proceeds from a reception, where he met the Norwegian community, be used towards the cost of the new Tynemouth 52ft Arun class lifeboat George and Olive Turner as an expression of Newcastle’s seaward link with Norway. The cheque, which represents more than £4 per head from the Norwegians living in Newcastle, was handed over to Coxswain John Hogg in the presence of Tynemouth station branch officers and committee by the Norwegian Consul General, Mr H. J. Hostvedt last December. Mr Hostvedt already knew about lifeboat work as his daughter Elizabeth was the first woman helmsman of an Atlantic 21. While a student she served on the lifeboat crew at Atlantic College (see page 147).

For those Americans who were interested in supporting the lifeboat service in the United Kingdom an American branch was formed at a recent meeting in London. Information about the various boats.

Steam lifeboats
Grahame Farr, who over the years has done much detailed research into lifeboat history, has just published the fifth in his series of historical papers. Entitled The Steam Lifeboats, 1889-1928, it gives a broad outline of the history of RNLI steam lifeboats as well as notes on earlier projects and overseas examples with tabulated information about the various boats.

By constant application every piece of RNLI material will be instantly recognisable. The consistency of design will also save money.
Scotland North Division

Twenty-nine rescued

JUST AFTER MIDNIGHT on Monday September 29, 1980, the deputy launching authority of Stornoway lifeboat station was informed by HM Coastguard that the 1,615 gross ton motor fishing vessel Junella was aground off Eilean Trodday, Isle of Skye, about 27 miles south of the station; there were 29 men on board. The crew were alerted and at 0012 Stornoway’s 48ft 6in Solent class lifeboat, Hugh William Viscount Gough, slipped her moorings under the command of Coxswain/Mechanic Malcolm Macdonald.

A gale to strong gale, force 8 to 9, was blowing from the south and the seas were rough with a heavy swell. The sky was heavily overcast and in the frequent rain squalls visibility was reduced to less than a mile. The tide was in the first hour of the ebb.

A few minutes after the lifeboat had left her moorings the master of Junella, told Stornoway Coastguard that two inflatable life rafts had been made ready alongside, but he was instructed not to abandon ship. At 0143 the Coastguard informed the lifeboat that helicopter assistance had been requested and at 0238 that a Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth was airborne.

Although heading into wind and sea, with waves continuously breaking right over her, the lifeboat maintained full speed for the entire passage and arrived on scene at 0318. It was known that Northella, a sister ship to Junella, was standing by about three quarters of a mile east of the casualty and, unable to spot her in the heavy rain of this pitch black night, the lifeboat asked her to indicate her position by flashing her searchlight.

The lifeboat sighted Northella’s light at 0319 and a minute later made her first radio contact with Junella. She learned that Junella was aground on Sgeir nam Maol Rock, at the north end of the shool, with the unlit beacon marking the rock plainly visible on her port shoulder. The fishing vessel reported that she was lying west by north, hard and fast aground from amidships forward; her bow was dried out but there was about 10 metres of water below her stern.

Junella was completely blacked out but at 0330 Northella, sighting the lifeboat, illuminated the area of the casualty with her searchlights.

The situation was both difficult and dangerous as Coxswain Macdonald made a very cautious approach to the casualty. His intention was to bring the lifeboat port side to, alongside the pilot ladder which had been rigged on Junella’s starboard side, 30 feet from her stern, but heavy seas breaking around the casualty slewed the lifeboat’s stern around dangerously close to the rocks. So, ‘feeling’ the way that the lifeboat wanted to head, Coxswain Macdonald decided to turn the lifeboat short around and come alongside starboard side to.

Then, displaying superb seamanship, he maintained this position for about 40 minutes while the 29 survivors disembarked.

It was a hazardous operation, with the lifeboat rising and falling 9 to 12 feet in the swell and in the breaking seas around Junella’s stern. Assistant Mechanic George Smith, Emergency Mechanic John Maclennan and Crew Member Kenneth Macdonald were stationed forward while Crew Member Malcolm Maclean escorted the survivors to the cabins. Many of the survivors had to be pulled to safety from the pilot ladder and, with the rapid rise and fall, frequently both survivor and lifeboatmen were thrown bodily to the deck; fortunately no one was injured.

Just after the sixth man had been safely transferred to the lifeboat the Sea King helicopter arrived and gave Coxswain Macdonald and his crew great help by illuminating the area with her powerful floodlights. Up till then, with Junella herself blacked out and the glare from the lifeboat’s own searchlight, the visibility was hindered rather than helping, the only light relieving the pitch black had been from Northella, stationed three quarters of a mile away.

At 0410 the lifeboat informed Stornoway Coastguard that all 29 survivors were safely on board and that her expected time of arrival at Stornoway would be 0730. Junella’s crew, ten in the forward cabin, 15 in the aft cabin and four in the wheelhouse, were made as comfortable as possible.

Coxswain Macdonald remained at the wheel throughout the entire service. The return passage, which took about 3½ hours, was made before the southerly gale, which was still blowing up to force 9; maintaining course was both difficult and arduous in the rough following seas, heavy following swell and with the increased weight now aboard slowing down the lifeboat’s response to the helm. There was no lightening of the heavy overcast sky and frequent rain squalls continued to reduce visibility.

On arrival at Stornoway Junella’s crew were taken into the care of the Mission to Seamen. The lifeboat was refuelled and back on her mooring, ready for service, at 0825.

For this service the silver medal was awarded to Coxswain/Mechanic Malcolm Macdonald. The thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to Assistant Mechanic George F. Smith, Emergency Mechanic John I. Maclean and Crew Members Kenneth I. Macdonald and Malcolm Maclean.

Scotland South Division

Dutch dredger

THE DEPUTY LAUNCHING AUTHORITY of Troon lifeboat station was told by Clyde Coastguard at 1345 on Friday September 12, 1980, that the Dutch dredger Holland I working off Irvine Harbour was breaking her moorings in severe weather and in danger of being driven ashore. Realising how dangerous was her position, the master of the dredger had asked that the entire crew of five be taken off. He also reported that seas of up to 20 feet were sweeping across the dredger’s main deck and that he doubted whether a lifeboat could get alongside. Maroons were fired and at 1355 Troon’s 44ft Waveney lifeboat Connel Elisabeth Cargill slipped her moorings under the command of Coxswain Ian Johnson.

A force 8 gale was blowing from the west with gusts up to storm force 10 in
the frequent squalls. In continuous rain and with heavy spray, visibility was poor. The tide was in the last hour of flood and setting north at 0.2 knots.

Troon Harbour entrance, across which heavy breaking seas were running, was cleared with some difficulty at 1358. Once outside Coxswain John-son set a course of 300°M to clear the very confused seas being reflected by the west pier and shortly afterwards altered to 350°M to make directly for the reported position of the dredger. At this time, even though she was only 3½ miles away, the dredger could not be seen through the rain and spray. On his way to her Coxswain Johnson fre-quently had to alter course and speed in heavy beam seas of anything from 15 to 20 feet. The lifeboat was laid over on her beam ends several times and while crossing the shoal patch to the south west of Lappock Rock a particularly large sea broke aboard rolling the lifeboat so violently to starboard that the side of the wheelhouse was nearly in the water.

The lifeboat arrived on scene at 1420 and the dredger was found to be lying west by north a little less than a mile from the Troon Harbour Fairway Beacon. She was on the edge of the surf line some half mile from the shore in a depth of 40 feet of water. The dredger was anchored fore and aft, but the port cables and the main stern anchor cable were slack so that the full weight of the dredger was being taken by the remain-ing stern mooring on the starboard quarter.

The dredger was stern to the weather and ranging about 15 feet with the main deck frequently awash to a depth of four to five feet. The dredger crew could be seen sheltering in the control house which was raised above the main deck near the starboard bow.

The wind, now west to west north west, had risen to strong gale force 9 gusting to storm force 10; very rough seas, some of them higher than 20 feet, were being thrown up by the rapidly shelving seabed. Tidal effect was neg-ligible as it was nearly high water, but visibility, particularly on deck, was severely restricted by rain and the driving spray being taken overall.

Having quickly assessed the situation, Coxswain Johnson decided to approach the dredger's starboard side and take the crew off one at a time as near to the control house as possible to reduce the danger of their being washed off the main deck. His intentions were passed to the dredger's master by VHF.

Second Coxswain/Assistant Mech-anic Thomas Devenny and Emergency Mechanic David Seaward were instructed to go forward while Emergency Mechanic Peter McClure and Crew Member Robert Hannah were stationed amidships to help the survivors during the transfer. All crew members were secured by their lifelines with lifejackets partially inflated and all were wearing protective headgear.

During the first approach the lifeboat was thrown heavily against the dredger striking a large sampson post set well inboard of the deck edge; the Waveney's shell plating was slightly damaged on the starboard shoulder. Nevertheless, with well-timed instruc-tions from Second Coxswain Devenny, one man was successfully taken off.

Coxswain Johnson made four more approaches taking off one man each time. Because of the violent motion of the lifeboat alongside the dredger it was essential that the survivors should jump when instructed to do so by the second coxswain. On the final approach the last man 'froze' when told to jump and had to be pulled aboard.

The lifeboat was thrown against the dredger three times during the various approaches and the foredeck crew were constantly exposed to the full force of the wind and sea. If the casualty's stern mooring had parted while the lifeboat was going alongside the lifeboat's crew would have been in a very vulnerable position; the lifeboat could also have been trapped between the dredger and her bow mooring as she was blown ashore through the surf.

At 1445, as the last man was being taken off, a Sea King helicopter from HMS Gannet arrived on scene, and the coxswain told her that all the dredger's crew were now safe. Afterwards, the pilot of the Sea King said that had an airlift been necessary it would have been both difficult and hazardous in the prevailing conditions.

Because such rough seas had been experienced on the way to the casualty, for the return passage Coxswain John-son set a course of 195°M to clear the shallower water near Lappock Rock. When a position two miles west by north of Troon Harbour was reached, course was altered to 115°M and the lifeboat ran before the weather. The survivors were all in the forecabin with Crew Member Roy Trewern looking after them. One man had been slightly injured before the lifeboat's arrival when a large sea had swept him against a bulkhead on the dredger's main deck.

Full power was required to drive through the heavy confused seas off the harbour entrance and the lifeboat passed between the piers at 1520. The five survivors were landed at the lifeboat station and a waiting ambulance took the injured man to hospital for a check-up. The lifeboat was then refuel-led and was back on her moorings ready for service by 1545.

For this service the silver medal was awarded to Coxswain/ Mechanic Ian J. Johnson. Medal service certificates were awarded to Second Cox-swain/Assistant Mechanic Thomas L. Devenny, Emergency Mechanics Peter McC. McClure and David Seaward, and Crew Members Robert Hannah and Roy W. A. Trewern.
water with the help of the crew and shore party.

For this service the bronze medal was awarded to Helmsman Robert G. Reynolds and the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to Crew Members Vernon S. Evans and Charles T. Sharp.

North Eastern Division

Open fishing boats

FLAMBOROUGH COASTGUARD informed the honorary secretary of Bridlington lifeboat station at 0918 on Thursday January 31, 1980, that the coble Renown was in difficulties one mile east of Rolston and some 13 miles south of the lifeboat station; a net was fouling her propeller.

Bridlington’s 37ft Oakley lifeboat William Henry and Mary King, under the command of Coxswain Fred Walkington, launched through heavy surf and set course south. It was low water and a gale force 8 was blowing from the north east. In driving sleet visibility was poor.

On launching, the lifeboat established radio communications with the coble Betty A and was told she had managed to get a line aboard Renown, that she was holding the crippled coble off the lee shore and that she was trying to gain deeper water. The wind was backing and by the time the lifeboat arrived at the casualty the gale was from south east to east and snow was falling. In these conditions the difficulties for any cobles entering Bridlington Harbour would be increasing because, as the harbour mouth faces towards the south, in east to south east gales these open fishing boats have to turn broadside on to the heavy seas just before entry; and when the tide is low the heavy seas become surf.

A third coble was located on radar and she decided to return to harbour while the lifeboat remained to escort Betty A and her tow, now making good about 4 knots.

The wind was still backing and increasing and it had risen to strong gale force 9 by the time the lifeboat and the two cobles were approaching harbour at 1245. During the passage Renown had managed partially to free the net and was now able to re-start her engine, though still with minimum power. It was decided, therefore, that the tow should be slipped and Betty A was asked to enter harbour first and wait just inside the entrance, bow to sea, ready to help if needed. Although struck by two heavy breaking seas, she entered harbour safely and turned into position. The lifeboat then took up station on Renown’s port quarter and lines were made ready so that the lifeboat could close rapidly and pull the coble head to sea if her engine lost power.

Just at this time, 1255, the coble Three Fivers was seen, about 75 yards from the harbour entrance, steaming over the Canich, a notorious sandbank. The lifeboat had just told Betty A that Three Fivers was coming in when the approaching coble was struck by a sea, estimated at 12 to 13 feet high, which broke from astern and immediately filled the boat; two of her crew of three were washed over the side.

Coxswain Walkington told Renown to turn head to sea and ‘dodge’ and asked Betty A to leave harbour and stand by Renown while he took the lifeboat at full speed to the help of Three Fivers.

Two of the fishermen were in the water. The coble was either aground or just being kept afloat by the air trapped in her wheelhouse, on top of which was the third member of the crew. The first man was approached and pulled on board the lifeboat just as he was going under. The second man, separated by about 30 feet from his mate by the seas, was being kept afloat by fish boxes to which he was clinging; he also was pulled on board.

The third man was still on the wheelhouse top, just above water, but the area around the coble was littered with ropes and wreckage. Second Coxswain Denis Atkins was just signalling to him to get into the water when he was washed off and clear of the boat. A lifeboatman threw him a rope which he grabbed, but before he could be pulled alongside another heavy sea swept him under. He managed, nevertheless, to retain his grip on the rope when he surfaced and was immediately pulled on board. The lifeboat then returned to harbour to land the survivors.

As soon as the three fishermen had been handed into the care of an ambulance crew the lifeboat took up station in the harbour mouth as Betty A escorted Renown into harbour.

The lifeboat then sailed immediately to escort another coble, Sincerity, which was reported ten miles south of Bridlington returning through heavy seas. The strong gale had now backed to north east. While escorting Sincerity a number of seas broke into the lifeboat, one of which tore the fire extinguisher and its stowage from the bulkhead, and both boats had to turn and ‘stem’ many of the large seas.

Sincerity was safely escorted into harbour at 1532. By now, with the tide high, there was not enough beach to recarrige the lifeboat in the heavy surf, so the lifeboat remained in harbour to await the fall of the tide. After having a meal and changing into dry clothes the crew reassembled and sailed again to recarrige, still through heavy surf, at 2030.

For this service the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to Coxswain Fred Walkington and the thanks of the Institution were presented to Second Coxswain Denis Atkins, Motor Mechanic Roderick W. Stott and Crew Members Claud Clark, Anthony J. Ayre, Paul A. Staveley and Harry T. Wood. A letter of thanks was sent to Arthur Dick, Bridlington station honorary secretary, commending the efficiency of the shore helpers when launching and recovering the lifeboat in the very bad conditions which prevailed.

North Eastern Division

Three rescued

RED FLARES sighted off Saltfleet Haven were reported to the honorary secretary of Mablethorpe lifeboat station by Humber Coastguard at 1940 on Sunday August 24, 1980, and, with the assistance of shore helpers, the station’s D class inflatable lifeboat launched through heavy surf at 1953; she was manned by Helmsman Bernard Tulpin and Crew Member John Mayfield. A moderate breeze, force 4, was blowing from the north east and it was two hours after high water.

The casualty, six miles north of the station, was reached at 2150 and found to be a coble which had suffered engine failure after being swamped while trying to cross the bar; she had a crew of three. A fishing boat out of Saltfleet, Billy Witch, had managed to take off one man but, as by that time the 14ft open coble was inside the surf line, the state of the sea prevented Billy Witch from taking off the other two.

The inflatable lifeboat made two runs into the surf, taking off the two men on board and also a line from the coble to take her in tow. So heavy was the surf that, with no helpers on shore, it was impossible to land at Saltfleet. Outside the surf line there was only a medium swell, so it was decided to tow the coble back to Mablethorpe.

By the time the lifeboat and her tow arrived back at Mablethorpe it was dark. The shore was illuminated by parachute flares and a searchlight and, with the assistance of all spare crew and helpers, who worked almost high in very dangerous surf, the two boats were beached at 2215. The lifeboat was rehoused at 2230.

For this service a framed letter of thanks signed by the Duke of Atholl, chairman of the Institution, was sent to the crew and shore helpers of Mablethorpe lifeboat station.

Scotland North Division

Fishing boat aground

At 2319 on Saturday September 20, 1980, Shetland Coastguard informed Coxswain/Mechanic Hewitt Clark of Lerwick lifeboat station that the fishing vessel Maverick was aground on the east side of Fair Isle; she was listing badly and making water. The maroons were fired, the deputy launching authority authorised the launch and at 2326 Lerwick’s 52ft Arun lifeboat Soldrian slipped her moorings.
It was a fine evening, the wind variable force 2 to 3, the sea slight and visibility three miles under an overcast sky.

Course was set to pass to the east of Fair Isle and the 43-mile passage was made in 2½ hours. Arriving at the scene of the casualty at 0200, Maverick was found to be at the south end of the island at the entrance to South Harbour. She was aground about 200 yards south south west of The Keels, with her bows heading south south west; she was rolling heavily and bumping badly. A strong westerly tide of 4 to 5 knots and the easterly ground swell breaking over the dangerous rocks made the approach hazardous.

Before the arrival of the lifeboat, Marden Responsive and the inter-island ferry Good Shepherd had made several attempts to pass a towline to the stricken trawler, but, in the very strong tide, without success.

Judging the seven fishermen on board Maverick to be in danger, Coxswain Clark suggested by radio that they abandon the vessel. This was agreed. By this time the water had risen half way to the trawler's engine and her hold was completely flooded.

Coxswain Clark decided that the safest method of transferring the fishermen would be by the Arun's Y class inflatable dinghy, and so the lifeboat took up position about 200 yards east south east of the casualty and the inflatable dinghy, manned by Assistant Mechanic Andrew Leask and Emergency Mechanic Ian Newlands, was launched. Just as she was going alongside Maverick the dinghy's engine mounting bracket fractured making manoeuvring very difficult. She was recalled by the coxswain because it would have been too great a risk to take such a chance on troubled seas. An attempt was then made, by means of the inflatable dinghy, to run a veering line across to the casualty's own liferaft which had already been put in the water, but the strong tide took the bight of the line, making the manoeuvre very difficult. Eventually the propeller pin sheared and the dinghy was pulled back to the lifeboat and taken aboard.

Coxswain Clark asked the skipper of Maverick to have his men ready in the lifeboat. He then very cautiously steamed in close enough for a heaving line to be passed and the lifeboat with the seven men aboard was pulled to safety. The crew were helped on to the lifeboat and the lifeboat stowed on deck.

Course was set for Lerwick at about 0250. At 0450, however, Shetland Coastguard informed the lifeboat that Maverick was afloat and drifting half a mile off shore. Coxswain Clark turned back to investigate, but at 0540 another message came from the Coastguard to say that the trawler had sunk. Course was resumed for Lerwick and the lifeboat arrived at 0735. The survivors were disembarked. The lifeboat was refuelled and was back at her mooring, once again ready for service, at 0825.

For this service a letter of appreciation, signed by Rear Admiral W. J. Graham, director of the Institution, was sent to Coxswain P. Hewitt P. Clark and his crew.

South Eastern Division

Stranded in cave

THREE CLIFF CLIMBERS, missing west of Anvil Point, were reported to Swanage lifeboat station by HM Coastguard at 1733 on Saturday November 29, 1980; the station's 37ft 6in Rother lifeboat J. Reginald Corah, was launched at 1746 under the command of Coxswain/Mechanic Victor Marsh.

A fresh to strong breeze, force 5 to 6, was blowing from the north and, except in the shelter of the cliffs, the sea was choppy. High water had been at 1515. Visibility was good, but it was a freezing cold evening.

The lifeboat reached the search area at about 1800. She was three quarters of a mile west of Anvil Point when she had to stop her starboard engine to deal with overheating of the exhaust manifold. While she continued her search on her port engine, voices were heard and a man was seen on the rocks in the narrow Zawn Cave.

J. Reginald Corah was anchored at 1814 and two of her crew, Second Coxswain/Assistant Mechanic Philip Dorey and Crew Member Ian Marsh, went in with the lifeboat's inflatable dinghy. A second man was a few feet up in the cave, and the third about 12 feet down. Only the first man could be seen from the sea and none of them would have been visible from the air or the cliffs. If they had not been found, when the next flood tide had refilled the cave they would have been completely submerged.

By 1834 two of the climbers were on board the lifeboat, and a light was being shone in the cave so that the third man could climb down to the dinghy. The rescue trips were made through smooth water but in a strong tide. As it was more than three hours after high-water, rocks in the floor of the cave were showing above sea level and the dinghy could not be rowed, but only paddled among the rocks. All three men were safely on board the lifeboat by 1839 and, cold, wet and exhausted, they were wrapped in blankets. Ten minutes later J. Reginald Corah had recovered her dinghy and her anchor and set course for station.

The climbers were landed at the lifeboat slip at 1910 and all three were examined by the honorary medical adviser. After getting warm and dry in the boathouse and having a cup of hot tea they were taken into the care of friends.

The lifeboat was rehoused and once again ready for service at 1945.

For this service a letter signed by Rear Admiral W. J. Graham, director of the Institution, expressing the Institution's appreciation to Swannage lifeboat crew, and in particular to Second Coxswain/Assistant Mechanic Philip Dorey and Crew Member Ian Marsh, was sent to Captain D. A. N. Aldridge, station honorary secretary.

South Western Division

Escort

LAND'S END COASTGUARD informed the honorary secretary of Padstow lifeboat station at 0150 on Thursday October 16, 1980, that the fishing vessel Girl Christian was reported to be in difficulties four miles north of Tresove Head. Padstow's 48ft 6in Oakley lifeboat James and Catherine Macfarlane launched at 0218 under the command of Coxswain Trevor England.

It was an overcast night with steady rain and frequent heavy squalls. A fresh to strong breeze, force 5 to 6, was blowing from the north east and the sea was rough.

At 0240 it was learnt that Girl Christian, with two men on board, was in tow of another fishing vessel, Minehead Angler, with three on board. The two boats were heading south. The lifeboat came up with them at 0253 and a few minutes later reported that she would escort them to Newquay. The tow was making about three knots.

By 0330 the north-easterly wind was gusting to near gale, force 7, and just after 0400 there was a gale warning.

Half an hour later Girl Christian and Minehead Angler dropped anchor in the shelter of Porth Island to await the tide before entering Newquay. As both of the fishing boats were now suffering engine trouble and because of the deteriorating weather it was decided that the lifeboat should stand by until they had entered harbour; she, too, was anchored by 0500.

At 0717 the lifeboat weighed anchor and made for Newquay to see what conditions were like, but finding that seas were breaking heavily at the harbour entrance, she advised the fishing boats to remain at anchor. At 0808 the lifeboat entered Newquay and at 0840, with the sea quietening somewhat although there were still occasional breaking waves, it was agreed that the two fishing boats should weigh anchor and try to enter harbour. They would come in one at a time as Girl Christian had managed to get her engine going and Minehead Angler had engine trouble of her own; a shore crew would be standing by on the quay with ropes. If entry was not possible, the two fishing boats would make for the River Gannel.

Padstow lifeboat then left harbour and escorted in first Girl Christian and then Minehead Angler and by 0912 both were safely moored alongside the quay.

The lifeboat crew were given breakfast at Newquay and set out on the return passage to Padstow soon after
South Western Division

Car over cliff

In the early hours of Wednesday October 22, 1980, Paignton Police informed Brixham Coastguard that a car was over the cliff three miles from Torbay lifeboat station. The Police, Fire and Ambulance services were alerted and Torbay lifeboat, the 54ft Arun Edward Bridges (Civil Service No. 37), was launched at 0035 under the command of Coxswain Trevor England and his crew was sent to Lt Cdr J. W. Hamilton, Padstow station honorary secretary.

The car, badly damaged with a severely injured man inside, was found about 100 feet above the waterline. The cliff face was illuminated by searchlights from three fire engines and from the lifeboat and, while firemen, police and coastguard climbed down the cliff, the lifeboat’s inflatable dinghy was launched manned by Assistant Mechanic John Hunkin, Crew Member Derek Winning and Crew Member John Ashford, who is also an ambulance driver. A fresh to strong breeze, force 5 to 6, was blowing from the north west; although it was dark, visibility was good.

The searchlight picked up the man on a rock off St Catherine’s Island and he was taken aboard the lifeboat, but the other man was going out with the strong ebb tide. He was just about to sink below the surface when Crew Member Johnny John jumped overboard and held him up until the crew could get a line to him to pull the man in. He was hauled aboard and given artificial resuscitation.

Both men were landed at Tenby Harbour at midnight, just a quarter of an hour after the lifeboat had launched; they were taken to the Cottage Hospital for observation. The lifeboat was rehoused and once again ready for service at 0248.

For this service a letter signed by Lt Cdr Bruce Cairns, chief of operations, expressing appreciation to Coxswain Trevor England and his crew, and in particular to Coxswain Alan Thomas and Crew Member John John, was sent to Mr E. W. Bancroft, Tenby station honorary secretary.

Western Division

Capsized dinghy

Two men visiting Tenby by yacht on Sunday September 28, 1980, were returning by dinghy from shore to their yacht in the late evening when their dinghy capsized. One man managed to cling to a rock but the other, who could not swim, was swept out towards Caldy Sound. His cries were heard by Second Coxswain Alan Thomas who immediately ran down to the lifeboat-house and raised the alarm. He was joined straight away by the honorary secretary, a crew was assembled very quickly and at 2345 Tenby’s 46ft 9in Watson lifeboat Henry Comber Brown launched under the command of Coxswain Joshua Richards.

The weather was good with a gentle north-westerly breeze, force 3, and a slight sea; although it was dark, visibility was good.

The searchlight picked up the man on a rock off St Catherine’s Island and he was taken aboard the lifeboat, but the other man was going out with the strong ebb tide. He was just about to sink below the surface when Crew Member Johnny John jumped overboard and held him up until the crew could get a line to him to pull the man in. He was hauled aboard and given artificial resuscitation.

Both men were landed at Tenby Harbour at midnight, just a quarter of an hour after the lifeboat had launched; they were taken to the Cottage Hospital for observation. The lifeboat was rehoused and once again ready for service at 0100.

For this service a letter signed by Lt Cdr Bruce Cairns, chief of operations, expressing appreciation to Coxswain Joshua Richards and his crew, and in particular to Second Coxswain W. Alan Thomas and Crew Member John John, was sent to Mr E. W. Bancroft, Tenby station honorary secretary.

South Eastern Division

Propeller fouled

LENA B, a 32ft beam trawler, 2½ miles south east of Hastings with her propeller fouled by a fishing net, was reported to the honorary secretary of Hastings lifeboat station by HM Coastguard at 0700 on Sunday October 12, 1980. Only one man was on board.

At first it was thought that a shoreboat might be able to help Lena B, but because of the low state of the tide, no shoreboat was available. So, at 0755, Hastings’ 37ft Oakley lifeboat Fairlight was launched under the command of Coxswain John ‘Joe’ Martin. It was a difficult low water launch, made very awkward because a second high-water bank of shingle had built up overnight, but Tractor Driver John Hamilton dealt with all the problems quietly and efficiently and the lifeboat was launched safely.

A fresh breeze, force 5, rising to strong breeze, force 6, was blowing from the north east with a slight to moderate sea. The morning was hazy, but visibility was improving.

The lifeboat was rehoused and once again ready for service at 1430.

For this service a letter signed by Lt Cdr Bruce Cairns, chief of operations, expressing the Institution’s appreciation to the lifeboat crew, and in particular to Coxswain Alan Thomas and Crew Member John John, was sent to Mr E. W. Bancroft, Tenby station honorary secretary.

Lifeboat Services, September, October and November, 1980

Aberdeen, Aberdeen

Atlantic 21: September 28, November 12 and 17

Aberdovey, Gwynedd

Atlantic 21: September 10, October 5 and November 5

Aberystwyth, Dyfed

D class inflatable: October 8 and November 26

Aldborough, Suffolk

42ft Beach: September 10, 22 and 23

Angle, Dyfed

Relief 46ft 9in Watson: September 21 and November 3

Continued on page 177.
Building the Fast Slipway Lifeboat

PART III: PLATED UP

The steel hull of the fast slipway lifeboat is built upside down, so that the welder can look down on his work, both making the work easier and also making it possible for him to achieve the best results: the integrity and strength of the whole structure is dependent on the high quality of the welder's skill. Once all the exterior work is completed, however, the hull is released from its deck jig and, with a crane at each end, turned through 180 degrees until it is right way up. In Fig. 4 the fully plated hull of the first of the two prototypes being built at Fairey Marine (Cowes) can be seen turned right way up, while, in the background, the skeleton of the second prototype, still at the earlier stage, is inverted, awaiting plating.

Now the detail of the hull has taken shape: for instance, Fig. 1 shows the fine entry of the forefoot of the stem, and Fig. 2 the protective curve of the propeller tunnels; deep bilge keels will eventually give further protection.

Once the hull is turned upright, it is water tested. All compartments and tanks which must be watertight are filled with water and a check made to see that there are no seepages whatsoever through the welded joints. Once the watertightness has been proved of the water and fuel tanks, down in the bilges, their tops are fitted and a final compressed air test made to establish their complete tightness. All void spaces in the structure of the hull will eventually be enclosed and filled with foam to provide buoyancy and to prevent the entry of water should the hull at any time be damaged.

Meanwhile work goes ahead on welding into place all deck structure seatings and hull skin fittings. When this stage is complete, the next operation for a steel boat is shot blasting: the cleansing under pressure of the whole of the outside of the hull, the internal bulkheads, the tank tops and all the deck structure. A shower of grit forced at high velocity through a hose is directed at every inch of surface, removing all mill scale and rust from the steel and leaving a shining clean surface ready for protective coats of primer and undercoats of paint. All the steel surfaces to which the aluminium deck and superstructure will later be attached are included in the shot blasting; these surfaces will then be sprayed with zinc to prevent corrosion which would otherwise be caused by electrolytic action between the steel and aluminium, metal alloys of differing nobility.

All this basic testing, cleansing and protective work has to be done while the hull is clear, but while it is going on other major components are being prepared ready for fitting. The aluminium superstructure is being built in another part of the yard, and the engines (see Fig. 3), having passed their initial bench tests, have been delivered to Cowes. The engines are twin General Motors 8V-71 turbocharged intercooled marine diesel engines developing 425 shp at 2,300 rpm continuous rating, and they are fitted with Allison type M20 reverse reduction gear boxes with a reduction ratio of 2.04:1. Soon, they will be lifted into their places, to port and starboard in the engine room.

(to be continued)

**Fig. 3:** The twin General Motors 8V-71 marine diesel engines, having completed bench trials, are ready to be lifted into the lifeboat's engine room.

**Fig. 4 (below):** Plating of the first of the two prototype fast slipway lifeboats is complete and the hull has been turned through 180 degrees so that it is now right way up. A welder is at work attaching deck fittings to the deck stringer plate. The skeleton second prototype, awaiting plating, is in the background.

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**TABLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOA</th>
<th>47ft 0in (14.326m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LWL</td>
<td>42ft 7in (13.000m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beam</td>
<td>15ft 0in (4.572m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft</td>
<td>4ft 2in (1.270m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sht</td>
<td>13ft 0in (3.962m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>24 tons (24.385 tonnes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Fig. 1:** The forefoot of the stem has a fine entry. Ruffle holes are built into the skeg through which preventer chains are passed to hold the lifeboat, when at rest, on her slipway.

**Fig. 2:** Looking forward from the transom down the fast slipway lifeboat's starboard propeller tunnel. Further protection will be given to the propellers by deep bilge keels not yet fitted.

photographs by courtesy of David Parker
Until recent times the approaches to the Port of Liverpool were quite hazardous. The difficulties stemmed from the fact that seaward of the northern extremity of the Wirral peninsula the estuary suddenly opens out to become very shallow for the most part and fully exposed to the prevailing west or north-west winds. The sandbanks drying out at low water have always been subject to gradual change in position, leaving, before the New and later the Queen's Channel were dredged in the mid nineteenth century, two natural channels for shipping to enter or leave the port. These were:

- Formby Channel in direct line with the ebb from the river, hugging the Lancashire coast as far as Formby Point from whence it turned seawards.
- Rock Channel hugging the Cheshire coast as far as Hoylake from whence deeper water could be reached directly to the north west or a coastwise course followed across the mouth of the River Dee and down the Welsh coast.

Liverpool Town Council was extremely aware of these difficulties and from the beginning of the eighteenth century was anxious to improve the port facilities. The first enclosed dock was opened in 1715 and the Dock Trustees undertook the task of buoying the channels and erecting landmarks; lighthouses were at first resisted.

The middle of the eighteenth century also saw the recognition, at first on the Continent, of a remarkable fact: that given promptitude and application, many people brought out of the water apparently drowned could be revived using simple measures, including a technique, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, which was then well understood but later forgotten until rediscovered in the 1950s. Practical interest in these developments led to the foundation of the Royal Humane Society in London in 1774 and the Liverpool Institution for Recovering Drowned Persons in 1775. From the beginning there was close liaison between the originators of the London and the Liverpool Societies, Dr Thomas Cogan and William Hawes in London, and Dr Thomas Houlston in Liverpool. In both places a system of rewards, following the Continental pattern, was established for attempting the rescue of drowned persons, whether successful or not.

The 'Liverpool Scheme' in turn attracted the interest of the dock master and water bailiff, William Hutchinson. His post included the duties of harbour master with jurisdiction over the whole extent of the port from the south bank of the Ribble in the north to Hoylake in the south. Hutchinson was a truly remarkable man and it is significant that his book A Treatise on Practical Seamanship published in 1777 received national acclaim and went into several further editions. Bound in with the first edition of this book, recently reprinted in facsimile*, was a chart of the Harbour of Liverpool by P. P. Burdett, 1771, corrected 1776, and it is a footnote to this chart which provides the first documentary evidence of a boat and station for saving lives in existence at Formby Point by 1776:

‘N.B.: On the strand about a mile below Formby Lower Land Mark there is a boathouse, and a boat kept ready to save lives from vessels forced on shore on that coast, and a guinea, or more, reward is paid by the Corporation for every human life that is saved by means of this boat, etc.’

Hutchinson’s concern for the saving of human life from drowning is evident in the text of the book, particularly his ingenious suggestions in a section entitled On Saving Life from a Ship Lost on a Lee Shore. His pride in the ‘Liverpool Scheme’ is also evident as he states ‘Liverpool leads the way for this noble purpose’. It was clearly Hutchinson, supported by the Dock Trustees, who arranged for the boat and station to be established at Formby.

The exact date of the establishment of Formby station remains uncertain as the minute book of the Dock Trustees prior to 1793 has long since been destroyed (probably in the fire at the Town Hall in 1795) but was apparently between 1771 and 1776. Fortunately the full minutes of the Town Council have survived from the sixteenth century onwards and the Dock Trustees from 1793. A minute of the Liverpool Common Council dated March 5, 1777, indicates that the boat and boathouse had already been there long enough to need repair:

‘It is ordered that the boat and boathouse which was formerly ordered to be built and kept at Formby in readiness to fetch any shipwrecked persons from off the banks, be repaired and kept up for these purposes but that Mr Gerrard [the treasurer] do go over and agree with any persons for such purpose and what the same will have by the year to take care of the said house and boat and doing the same without humane and good service and report it to the Council.’

At the next meeting of Council on April 2 it was ordered that:

‘Richard Scarisbrick of Formby, sailor, be appointed to take care of the boat and boathouse erected and provided to be built and stationed at Formby to assist and save shipwrecked persons and goods on this coast. And that Mr Gerrard do pay him the sum of five guineas for the good services by him already done herein and that he have a salary of two guineas a year from henceforth for such service. And that he and the boat’s crew shall be handsomely rewarded hereafter for such good service done herein and not less than one guinea per head for every life or person they shall save and to be further rewarded as the Council shall on enquiring find he or they merit to be paid out of the dock duties.’

Burdett’s chart was updated and reprinted in 1781 (see Fig. 1). In addition to a similar footnote (see Fig. 2) the position of the boathouse and boat is clearly indicated at Formby Point. Although not much is known about this boat or her service, we may guess that she was probably of the type known as a Mersey Gig, a generally two or three masted, versatile, sprit-sail rigged craft only requiring a crew of three or four and capable of being pulled or sailed.

In 1799 the Dock Committee appointed William Brown to look after the boat in room of Robert Whistfield, deceased, with the like allowances as enjoyed by his predecessor, and then on April 9, 1800, Robert Neale, the riding officer at Formby, was appointed to take care of the boat and boathouse in the room of William Brown.

The original boathouse was rebuilt in 1793 on the same site at the end of what subsequently came to be known as Lifeboat Road. According to a survey of the bay, when built it was situated 100 yards inland well above the high tide line on land belonging to the Reverend Richard Formby, the lord of the manor. This reverend gentleman was incumbent of St John’s, Liverpool, from 1784 to 1792 and later of Trinity Church, Liverpool. He seems to have had a local beneficial influence and interest in lifesaving somewhat akin to Dr John Sharpe at Bamburgh, as in 1798 we find he was presented with the Freedom of the Borough of the Town of Liverpool ‘as a mark of respect for his unwearied and compassionate...
attention in a variety of instances to the unfortunate who have suffered shipwreck on the coast near Formby, both with regard to their person and property.

It is important to realise that the Formby lifeboat was the only one serving the harbour until 1803. Whether it was adopted in any special way for its purpose is not known. In 1801, however, the Dock Committee directed the marine surveyor 'to obtain the best information and particulars he can from North Shields respecting the property'.

The improved principle of the 'Boat house and boat' at Formby Point is marked. In the meantime a lifeboat was built in 1803 and placed to the northward of the Fort, near the North Shore Coffee House.

The Greathead boat when she arrived in 1803 seems to have been the first boat on the Hoylake station. The Greathead boat when she arrived in 1803 seems to have been the first boat on the Hoylake station.

In 1809 the Formby station was finally rebuilt and received the boat from Liverpool, under William Croft as captain who was allowed to reside in the cottage adjoining the boathouse. This building is that which survived with only slight modification up to the time of its final demolition in 1965.

The Greathead boat at Hoylake clearly impressed the Committee but from a minute of the Dock Committee dated April 5, 1809, it must be inferred that the performance of Formby station in the early years of the nineteenth century left much to be desired, its supervision perhaps having been neglected, following the death of Hutchinson in 1801, in favour of the two newer stations. In fact Formby station continued to cause concern for the first 25 years of the century. In September 1816 The Liverpool Underwriters Association subscribed £25 to a fund for a new boat which the Dock Committee allowed to be placed on station in 1818, but the underwriters and the Reverend Richard Formby continued to express their anxiety. Depredations by the sea and erosion of the adjacent sandhills were also causing problems.

Then in 1825 the whole subject of the 'Recovery of Persons Apparently Drowned' and the state of the lifeboats in Liverpool Bay was referred to a sub-committee 'with power for them to provide and establish such boats as they may deem best and with a request that they will report their opinion upon the most effectual means of rendering prompt assistance in the saving of life and property in case of shipwreck on these coasts'.

The ensuing report presented to the Council on November 1, 1825, laid the foundation for the future satisfactory operation, not only of the Formby boat but also boats at Point of Air, Hoylake and at the Magazines (Wallsay). New boats were built for each station and boathouses built for the new boats at Point of Air and Magazines.

Rules were drawn up explicitly dealing with the manning of the boats, the master's remuneration and housing, and pay of the crew. Also the need for constant look-out by telescope, which was provided, and the exercise of the boat once a month under the superintendence of the harbour master.

The next decade, 1830 to 1840, saw three of the most destructive gales in the history of the port. The first of these occurred on November 29, 1833, and resulted in the loss of the pilot boat Good Intent, together with 12 men, in the surf about three miles north of Formby station.

The storm surge swamped the boathouse and waves beat heavily against the door. It proved impossible to use the boat to reach the wreck in which the survivors had been left. Eventually Richard Summer, the village doctor, bravely swam out to the survivors. Good Intent's punt, which had blown ashore, was then refloated and used by two of the lifeboat crew to assist both Dr Sumner, who might otherwise have been drowned himself, and six of the survivors who were thus brought ashore.

The somewhat conflicting subsequent newspaper reports paid tribute to the lifeboat crew and to Dr Sumner, whose bravery was recognised by the award of gold medals by the National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck, the title at that time of the RNLI, and the Royal Humane Society and £100 from the Council. Two members of the lifeboat crew received £1 each.

In 1834 a prominent brick landmark erected in 1719 under the provisions of the first Liverpool Dock Act was converted to a lighthouse and from this time up to the taking over of the Liverpool Bay stations by the RNLI in 1894 the superintendence of Formby lifeboat was placed in the hands of the keeper of Formby Lighthouse. The first lighthouse keeper/lifeboat superintendent, Lt Joseph Walker, RN, was unfortunately drowned in the next major gale, in January 1836, along with four of the crew when the lifeboat capsized after going to the help of the merchantman Bryades aground on Mad Wharf. The boat had been launched from her carriage three miles north of the station. On returning to this spot she capsized in the surf. Two crew members, Edward Liversley and Henry Aindow, survived beneath the upturned boat in a pocket of air, with a third survivor clinging to the keel. Afterwards nine new cork lifejackets were found still tied to the thwarts.

This tragedy had an unfortunate sequel in 1839 when a further highly destructive gale hit the river. On Monday January 7, at 11 o'clock in the morning, Mr Christopherson, the lighthousekeeper, perceived through the haze a vessel with fore and main mast gone, about three to four miles south of the lighthouse, but could not persuade the crew to launch.

The next day, the gale still blowing, two further wrecks, occurred. The first, on Burbo Bank, was judged to be...
In 1874 Costain provided a new boat, length 32ft 3in, beam 9ft 4in, pulling 12 oars; her rig was as before and she cost £265. Henry Aindow, survivor of the 1836 disaster, retired as master in 1881 and was followed as master and keeper by his son John in 1885 (salary £7 10s a year). In 1888 it was noted that the Formby boat had not been launched for three years and was costing £200 a year to maintain. The keeper of Crosby lighthouse and superintendent of the boat was asked to give six months’ notice to the crew.

This raised considerable opposition in the township and an angry petition was signed by 237 inhabitants opposing the closure, but without effect, and the station was closed in 1889, the boat going to Point of Air. John Aindow was left in residence, his sole duty being to read the tide gauge and keep the necessary records for the Tidal Observatory at Bidston.

Unfortunately in 1891 ss Hawarden Castle went aground directly opposite the lifeboat house. Four lives were lost. The coroner subsequently criticised Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, which was still responsible for the Liverpool Bay lifeboats, for the closure of Formby station. After due consideration the Dock Board asked the RNLI for its advice and whether it could suggest a better arrangement. In reply the RNLI stated that, having looked at the area, Formby was still the best place and it offered to take over the station and boat.

At first the Dock Board was reluctant to agree to this and re-opened the station itself in 1891, with a telephone link to Crosby lighthouse. A new front was added to the boathouse, which increased the amount of space inside and provided a small lookout over the doorway—features which remained until the boathouse was finally demolished. The inspection book of this period still survives and makes very interesting reading. On one occasion the boat, after being launched in the teeth of a north-westerly gale, had difficulty in getting back to the station and so sailed up river to Liverpool Pierhead where the crew disembarked, left the boat and came home by train.

In 1894 the station was taken over with all other Liverpool Bay lifeboat stations by the RNLI and a new boat John and Henrietta was placed on station in 1896 with a ceremonial launch in front of a large crowd gathered on shore. Her length was 35ft, beam 9ft with 12 oars; she carried two standing lug sails and a jib and was fitted with two steel drop-keels; she was built at Cremyll in Cornwall. The coxswain/superintendent was again John Aindow.

This boat continued in service, with John Aindow’s son taking over as coxswain in 1910, until the First World War when, owing to difficulties in

Continued on page opposite
'BRING ME SUNSHINE' was the theme of the 27th London International Boat Show, set against a Caribbean background, at Earls Court from January 8 to 18, so who else could have opened it but Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise? Always good friends to the RNLI, Eric and Ernie exhorted everyone to 'support the lifeboats' in their opening speech and, adding practice to precept, then came to call at the RNLI stand. In the photograph (left) they can be seen preparing to 'launch the boat' under the guidance of 'head launcher' Raymond Baxter, chairman of the Institution's Public Relations Committee.

It was Raymond Baxter who, during the show, presented the Public Relations Awards 1980. One award was to representatives of Kodak Ltd (below, left) who mounted a spectacular exhibition of lifeboat photographs last year seen first in their offices in Holborn and later at other sites round the country. The other was to the production team of 'This is Your Life' television programme (below, right) which in recent years has featured four lifeboat coxswains including, in 1980, Coxswain Brian Bevan of Humber. The Kodak award was received by Bob Freeman Wright, legal director for Kodak, and the 'This is Your Life' award by Eamonn Andrews, seen to the left and right of Raymond Baxter in the left-hand photograph.

Exhibited on the RNLI stand was Portaferry's twin engined Zodiac Mk IV inflatable lifeboat, fitted with single tiller control for the outboard engines and water ballast tanks in the hull. The stand was manned throughout the show by voluntary branch and guild members from various districts and, with the sale of souvenirs and lottery tickets, with donations and with contributions from lifeboat boxes on the RNLI's own stand and those of other exhibitors, a grand total of £11,391.15 was raised. A volunteer Shoreline team enrolled 1,011 new members, 76.6 per cent of whom covenanted their subscriptions, and Shoreline insignia to the value of £3,618.50 was sold.

Eleventh RNLI national lottery winners

THE ELEVENTH RNLI national lottery was drawn at Poole HQ on January 30 by Mr P. H. Byrt, manager of Poole branch of Marks and Spencer, a company which has given considerable support to the lifeboat service in a number of ways. Poole lifeboat station received £1,000 towards its running costs from Marks and Spencer in 1979 as part of the company's gift to the Institution of £5,000 a year, for a period of three years, distributed to various lifeboat stations throughout the country where there is a neighbouring Marks and Spencer branch, and included in other help has been a generous donation to the Mountbatten of Burma appeal.

The draw was supervised by Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Compston, chairman of the Fund Raising Committee, John Atterton, deputy director, and Barry Bright, deputy appeals secretary. The prize winners were:

£1,000: Colonel L. Koenigsbert, Seaford, Sussex.
£500: T. Webb, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire.
£250: Mrs G. A. Lucas, Chelmsford, Essex.
£25: W. L. Ford, Chichester, West Sussex; D. Greenwood, Southampton; M. H. Hodgkinson, Derham, Norfolk; D. Stemp, Dorking, Surrey; Angela Keith, Caron Downs, Cornwall; Miss I. Hornsby, Eastbourne, Sussex; Miss M. A. Tall, Wickham, Hampshire; A. E. Dunster, Eltham, London; D. G. Goodwin, Penryn, Cornwall; W. T. Lewis, Blaina, Gwent.

Over a quarter of a million pounds has now been raised as a result of the lotteries, more than £34,500 being raised by this eleventh lottery. The draw for the twelfth lottery will be on April 30.

Formby from opposite page

'horsing' the boat, she continued for a time to be launched with the aid of a locally-based regiment. Before being taken out of commission in 1918 John and Henrietta had been launched 61 times and rescued 27 lives. The boat was finally sold for £8 3s. Fortunately one of the last army-assisted practice launches has been preserved on 35mm film which survived in the possession of an old Formby resident; this invaluable record has now been transferred to 16mm film for posterity.

In 1918 the RNLI Committee of Management, with the concurrence of the local committee and Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, decided to close the station. John Aindow, the last coxswain, continued to live on in Lifeboat Cottage, which was increasingly surrounded by encroaching sand dunes, representative of a family perhaps descended from Viking forebears which provided crew and coxswain for generations for this historic station.

All that remains today at Formby is the sandstone edging of the base of the boathouse, together with the last inspection book, the film and the memories of older inhabitants. In Liverpool, however, the original minute books are still preserved which tell of the foundation of this, the first marine life-saving establishment in the British Isles, preceding even Bamburgh by ten years.
Launching and Recovery

PART II: BEACH LAUNCH

by Edward Wake-Walker

RNLI Assistant Public Relations Officer (London)

ON A CLEAR DAY at Walmer the unac-
customed visitor can be forgiven for
doubting his own knowledge of geo-
graphy when he sees the bold outline of
France, seemingly only a pebble’s
throw across the curving surface of the
English Channel. Visible also from the
shingle beach is evidence of the notori-
ous Goodwin Sands; the mast of a
sunken ship juts out from the horizon
like the makeshift cross on a grave, one
of the thousands of wrecks that have
made the need for a lifeboat at Walmer
so essential over the years.

For centuries fishermen on this
stretch of coastline have kept their
boats hauled up at the top of the shingle
and have manhandled or launched
them down the steeply sloping beach
into the waves when setting out to earn
their living. To protect today’s fisher-
men, to be on call for the hectic com-
mercial traffic passing up and down the
Channel and the ever-growing numbers
of pleasure sailors in the vicinity, the
traditional beach launching method is
still the only practical way of keeping a
lifeboat strategically placed on this part
of Kent’s coastline. The Hampshire
Rose, a 37ft 6in Rother class lifeboat,
sits proudly on her turntable at the top
of the beach, plain for any passer-by to
see, tilting eagerly towards the sea in
readiness for a launch.

Les Coe is the head launcher; he has
been involved with the lifeboat station
for 25 years and has been in charge of
launching and recovery since 1968. His
job as a van driver for a local furniture
store is allowed by his employers to
take second place if ever there is a
‘shout’ and of the 148 calls the lifeboat
has received since his time as head
launcher, he has only missed three.

Preparation for a beach launch needs
considerable organisation; no other
launching method requires so many
shore helpers and what is remarkable at
Walmer is the readiness of local people
to turn out at whatever time to perform
their vital task. Many of Les Coe’s
helpers are young people, often aspir-

ing crew members on the inflatable
lifeboat which in turn is a step towards
being enlisted for crewing The Hamp-
shire Rose. In the days when the
Dungeness lifeboat was launched
directly down the shingle, many of the
launchers were lifeboat crew’s wives
and female relations; a careful study of
the photographs in this article will
show that to be a launcher at Walmer is
by no means an all male preserve.

Roughly 20 people are needed to
position and man the skids or ‘woods’
before a launch. These woods which
have a line at each end are placed in a
truck down to the water over which the
lifeboat must run with sufficient
impetus to get to sea. The role of the
launchers is to take a line each so that
every wood is manned. Once the crew
are aboard the lifeboat her retaining
chains are removed, both Coxswain
Bruce Brown and Les Coe have
checked that everyone is ready, then
the retaining pin in the slip chain which
runs from the boat to the concrete plat-
form below is hammered out and the
lifeboat begins to move.

This is a very tense moment for
everyone on the beach; launchers must
ensure that the lifeboat runs straight,
sometimes having to make small but
last minute adjustments to the position
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Les Coe, the head launcher, shovels an
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(above) Coxswain Bruce Brown aims the bows of his lifeboat between the outstretched arms of the head launcher.

Through the forward part of the keel beacon.

While the boat is at sea, is looped and led up over the bow and secured on the foredeck, and pass its end down to the shore helpers; they in turn make the bow strop fast to the winch cable which has been extended down the beach.

Shore helpers must ensure the lifeboat runs straight up the shingle often with more than gentle physical persuasion.

This winch is powered by a large capstan up by the old boathouse, behind the turnstile, and its operator stands on a high platform so that he can see down to the water's edge to receive every message from his head launcher. The actual wire runs round the capstan, through a pulley, down over the turntable, down the beach to another roving pulley then back up the slope over the turntable again to a point close to its starting point by the capstan where it is firmly secured. The roving pulley on the beach is in turn attached to a single short cable which will be fastened by the launchers to the lifeboat's bow strop.

In rough weather it is essential that the lifeboat is hauled clear of the water as soon as possible so that large waves breaking over her do not throw the stern round parallel to the beach. Slowly the lifeboat is dragged up the beach over skids. This is where to be young and fit as a launcher is important because once the boat has passed over a wood, it must be heaved away and up the beach to be placed once more in the lifeboat's path. You have to move fast and the woods are heavy. Launchers also have to ensure that the lifeboat runs straight as she moves up over the pebbles and often more than gentle physical persuasion is needed to keep her on course.

Eventually The Hampshire Rose reaches the short ramp and sloping turntable where, once the boat is in position, the turntable tilts to the horizontal and the preventer chains are made fast. Finally the lifeboat is pushed round on her turntable through 180 degrees so that her bow is once more towards the sea. Wooden blocks are then pushed under the stern end of the turntable to tilt the lifeboat to the angle of the ramp. The slip chain is secured and once more the lifeboat is in perfect readiness for a launch.

To witness a launch and recovery at Walmer is to understand why the whole community feels such allegiance to the local lifeboat because at Walmer many of the community are physically involved in every rescue mission. Sometimes their services are not only confined to the lifeboat's recovery; in December last year the lifeboat launched in a southerly gale after a local motorboat that was out net fishing had broken down with a fouled propeller and three men on board. The motorboat was taken in tow and at the request of Second Coxswain Cyril Williams, who was in command, a party of the lifeboat's launchers went along the beach to Deal to help with the beaching of the casualty in the heavy seas. As soon as this task was accomplished they returned to the lifeboat station to perform their normal recovery duties. The team work that exists between launchers and lifeboatmen is a theme that emerges throughout this series of articles and will be equally apparent when the tractor and carriage launch is studied in the next issue.

(to be continued)
Penzance lifeboat Dora saved the crew of Jeune Hortense, a brigantine wrecked off Eastern Green, Penzance, in 1888. Photograph by courtesy of F. E. Gibson.

A group of retired lifeboatmen from Lowestoft in the last century. When the picture was taken their combined ages totalled 312. (l. to r.) William Hook, 75, James Burwood, 76, Thomas Coleman, 80, and Matthew Coleman, 81.

Lifeboat—in Danger’s Hour

The RNLI’s photographic archives contain thousands of lifeboat pictures which not only document the progress in boats and equipment but also provide an insight to changing social conditions. The selection on these pages is taken from a new book Lifeboat—in Danger’s Hour, by Patrick Howarth, which was inspired by the Kodak Exhibition of lifeboat photographs.

The book contains over 150 photographs, some of which have never been published before. There are 16 pages in full colour, making the collection the most comprehensive set of lifeboat pictures ever printed.

The text traces the early history of lifesaving, the development of lifeboats from the eighteenth century to the present, lifeboat equipment, foreign lifeboat services and contains many stories of famous lifeboat rescues. It is written with authority as Patrick Howarth has drawn on over a quarter of a century of personal knowledge of the RNLI.

Lifeboat—in Danger’s Hour, has been chosen by the Booksellers Association as their first Book of the Season for 1981. It will be available only from booksellers from April to June and will be sold at a special offer price of £4.95. The price after June will be £6.95. The RNLI receives a royalty on every copy sold.—R.K.

Henry Blogg of Cromer was awarded more medals for gallantry than any other RNLI lifeboatmen: three gold and four silver. He served in Cromer crew from 1894 and was coxswain from 1909 to 1947, through two world wars. Photograph by courtesy of Olive Edis Galsworthy.

A launch by horses at Brooke, Isle of Wight. Pulling lifeboats were stationed at Brook from 1860 to 1937, when the station was closed.
The 54ft Arun lifeboat Tony Vandervell in Portland Race. Stationed at Weymouth since 1976, she was the first of her class to have the hull built in glass reinforced plastic. The Arun is a ‘fast afloat’ boat, her twin Caterpillar diesel engines giving her a maximum speed of 18½ knots. An inherent self-righting capability is provided by her watertight welded aluminium superstructure.

photograph by courtesy of HMS Osprey

(below) An Atlantic 21 lifeboat airborne in trials at the Shingle Bank off the Isle of Wight. The Atlantic 21 has enough speed, up to 30 knots, to run clear of unstable seas in shallow water or steer round breaking crests when going to windward. The first operational lifeboat of this class went on station at Hartlepool in 1972.

photograph by courtesy of ‘The Observer’

(below) Whitby pulling lifeboat Robert and Ellen Robson putting out to the help of a fishing boat. Robert and Ellen Robson remained on service at Whitby until 1957, and she is still housed in her old boathouse, which is now a museum. She is one of only two pulling boats formerly in the service of the RNLI which have been preserved in their original condition.

The Waveney class lifeboat, introduced from the US Coast Guard in 1964, was the first of the RNLI’s ‘fast afloat’ lifeboats and has a maximum speed of 15 knots. Her hull is steel, her superstructure aluminium and she has an inherent self-righting capability.

The lifeboat which now goes out to help fishing boats at Whitby is the 44ft Waveney The White Rose of Yorkshire. The Waveney class lifeboat, introduced from the US Coast Guard in 1964, was the first of the RNLI’s ‘fast afloat’ lifeboats and has a maximum speed of 15 knots. Her hull is steel, her superstructure aluminium and she has an inherent self-righting capability.
Furthest North...

AITH AND LERWICK LIFEBOAT STATIONS, SHETLAND

by Joan Davies

THULE? The most remote land sighted by the Romans? Was it Shetland? Perhaps. Certainly Shetland is the most northerly of the British Isles and Aith and Lerwick, both lying above latitude 66 degrees north, are the most northerly of the RNLI's lifeboat stations. But if the Romans were among the first distant travellers to see the islands, they have been followed by people from many different parts of the world, on passage, seeking new lands, fishing and trading.

Shetland, an archipelago of more than 100 islands, holms and rocks, 17 of them inhabited, lies between Norway and Scotland and across the northern approaches to the North Sea. For the Norsemen of the eighth to eleventh centuries, not only was it a land which they were to raid, to settle and to influence for all time, but it was a stepping stone on their voyages to other parts of the British Isles, to Iceland and to the unknown north-western Atlantic. In just the same way, in the last world war, it offered the first haven for the many little boats bringing people from Norway to freedom as well as a base for the Norwegian fishing boats which kept communications with their occupied homeland open by means of the famous 'Shetland Bus'.

With its seas and climate kept temperate by the Gulf Stream, Shetland's fishing grounds have always been among the finest in the world. Fish have been found both in abundance and in great variety: halibut, skate, haddock, cod, ling, herring, mackerel, shellfish, crab, lobster .... By the fourteenth century Hanseatic merchant vessels from Hamburg, Lübeck and Bremen had opened up a summer trade, bartering fishing gear, salt, fruit, corn and cloth for Shetland fish. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Dutch herring fishermen arrived in large numbers to be followed by others from such countries as Sweden and Denmark, and nowadays fishing boats from many different nations come to the waters around Shetland at one time or another.

The expansion of sea trade, first under sail, then power, brought many ships that were rounding Scotland on their way to or from Scandinavia, the Baltic and Northern Europe through Shetland waters. From the 1830s steam packets opened up regular communication between Lerwick, Leith and Aberdeen and now the mail ships are augmented by several flights a day in and out of the airfield at Sumburgh Head on the southernmost tip of Mainland. Nowadays, too, foreign yachts and passenger ships follow in the footsteps of the small fishing and merchant vessels of the past, cruising to Shetland in the summer, and, of course, the development of oil fields in the northern North Sea, with Sullom Voe growing into one of the largest oil terminals and tanker ports of the world, has added a completely new dimension both to the commerce of Shetland and to its age-old cosmopolitan tradition.

The world it would seem comes to Shetland; but it is equally true that the men of Shetland go out to the world. No one on the many islands lives far from the sea and for generations, to make a livelihood, the crofters combined fishing with their farming: inshore fishing in the short days of winter, and offshore, or 'haaf' fishing in summer. Before the days of power, fleets of small open boats would set out for the haaf fishing between May and August; they might go as far off shore as 30 or 40 miles to fish by line for cod and ling and they would be at sea for at least two or three days at a time.

From the early eighteenth to the mid nineteenth century the most common haaf fishing boat was the 'sixareen', a direct descendent of the Viking longships. An open double-ended clinker boat of about 30ft overall with the raked stern and stern and flaring beam characteristic of her Norse forebears, she was rowed with six oars and carried a dipping lug sail. She was swift, a good weight carrier and could be pulled up to a safe berth on shore—and her crew thought nothing of taking her such great distances out to sea.

Shetlanders were used to handling small boats from childhood. They grew up with daily experience of the sea and from the early part of the last century navigation was often included among other everyday subjects at school. No wonder that many men from Shetland went to sea in the Royal and Merchant Navies and in whalers, a trend intensified in times of economic troubles. No wonder, either, that a high proportion of them became captains of their ships.

The coast

The Admiralty North Coast of Scotland Pilot describes the Shetland Isles as:

'...for the most part fringed by bold cliffs and relatively high. The islands are separated by narrow Sounds, and towards the north end of the group there are two passages running north and south through the islands. The tidal streams run strongly round Shetland Isles and very strongly in the sounds between the islands. There are few outlying dangers and in clear weather Shetland Isles may be approached boldly. In poor visibility, however, the group should be approached with great caution on account of the strong tidal streams and also because the coastline as a whole lacks distinctive features and, when only a small portion of it can be seen, its identification is not easy.'

Once in the sounds and long narrow inlets, the voes, there is haven, but in an area where summer gales can arise with unexpected abruptness and winter storms blow with all the weight and ferocity of the bitter north, where snow

Lerwick's present lifeboat is the fast afloat 52ft Arun Soldian.
in winter and fog in summer can close down visibility on a coastline abounding in rocks and skerries, and entirely unlit until 1821, many seamen have been lost. On two occasions the haaf fishing fleet suffered heavy loss when caught out at sea in swiftly approaching storms: in 1832, when 31 boats were lost, and in 1881, when ten boats were lost. Over the centuries many seamen have been lost in disasters out of sight of land about which nothing could be known unless some debris was washed up. Closer inshore many seamen undoubtedly owed their lives to the individual gallantry of the Shetlanders, renowned for the care they took of shipwrecked mariners, but before the days of radio or telephone when the only propulsion for boats was sail and oar, organised lifesaving cover for so vast an area spread out round sparsely populated islands was an intractible problem.

A Board of Trade lifeboat was established on Fair Isle, 24 miles south of Sumburgh Head, in 1878 and did valiant local lifesaving work. Two pulling and sailing boats were followed in 1924 by a motor boat, which remained on station until after the last world war when, more powerful RNLI motor lifeboats with greater range being established on Mainland, the largest of Shetland’s islands, the Fair Isle boat was replaced with rocket lifesaving equipment.

It was at the beginning of the 1930s that RNLI lifeboats came to Mainland, when the development of marine engines and improved communications changed the whole situation, as can be understood from a report on new lifeboat stations published in the March 1930 issue of THE LIFEBOAT:

‘It was decided to establish a lifeboat station in the Shetland Islands, this being made possible by the system of coast communications which has recently been organised in the Shetlands by the Board of Trade. In view of the fact that only a boat of the latest and most powerful type would be suitable to safeguard an area made up of a widely scattered group of many islands, a motor lifeboat of the 51ft Barnett type, with two 60hp engines, has been laid down for it.’

This Barnett lifeboat was Lady Jane and Martha Ryland and she was stationed at Lerwick, the capital of Shetland, from 1930 to 1958. She was followed in 1958 by a 52ft Barnett, Claude Cecil Staniforth, and in 1978 by one of the Institution’s fast Q class boats, Solidian, (Soldian Rock, awash, lies off the northern entrance to Bressay Sound, and Solidian was the name of a yacht owned by the station’s first honorary secretary, G. Theodore Kay).

Lerwick is, of course, on the east of Mainland, and three years after her first lifeboat arrived, another station was established on the west coast, at the village of Aith scattered around the head of Aith Voe. Aith’s first lifeboat was KJIS, a 45ft 6in Cabin Watson (1933 to 1935), then The Rankin, a 51ft Barnett lifeboat, came on station to be superseded in 1961 by the present 52ft Barnett lifeboat, John and Frances Macfarlane. Lerwick and Aith lifeboats both lie afloat, the one moored in Lerwick’s South Harbour and the other at moorings.

Solidian was provided by the Lerwick lifeboat appeal, to which there were many generous contributions from local people, from members of the Brent and Ninian Pipeline Consortium and Chevron Petroleum (UK) Ltd (a reflection of the appreciation of the offshore oil industry for the work of Shetland’s lifeboats), from the Aberdeen Students Charities Campaign and from a number of bequests. John and Frances Macfarlane was the gift of Mr and Mrs John Ewing Macfarlane, who retained a close personal interest in the boat and her people, visiting the station whenever possible so that a warm friendship has grown up equally enjoyed and valued by the lifeboat people of Aith and by the donors of their boat.

But to return to 1930… A lifeboat committee had been established at Lerwick but its lifeboat had still to arrive when two wrecks following quickly one after the other underlined the need for Shetland lifeboats.

The first was the loss, in March, of the Aberdeen trawler Ben Doran with her crew of seven. She went ashore, storm-driven, on the centre of the Ve Skerries, a dreaded, unmarked square-mile plateau of low rocks and skerries off the west coast. Another Aberdeen trawler, Bracabush, sighted and reported the wrecked boat and then, unable to approach her, stood by; members of Lerwick Lifesaving Brigade, with line-throwing apparatus, were taken out in the Aberdeen trawler Arora; and Mr Kay, the recently appointed Lerwick lifeboat station honorary secretary, and other helpers with some knowledge of the reef, went out with the skipper and crew of the small motor haddock boat Smiling Morn, thinking that she could perhaps be brought nearer to the skerries than the trawlers. But all to no avail; the task was utterly impossible. Stromness lifeboat, a 51ft Barnett, made the round voyage of 260 miles through the gales
and very high seas from Orkney to Ve Skerries and back. She picked up a pilot at Scalloway on route to the scene of the wreck, but by the time she arrived no sign of life could be found, despite a thorough search; it had been the longest trip made by a motor lifeboat on service up to that time.

Among other awards to those who attempted the rescue, Mr Kay was presented with an inscribed pair of binoculars.

After the loss of Ben Doran a lighted buoy with a wave-operated whistle was established near the Ve Skerries and in 1979 a 50ft automatic lighthouse was built on the skerries themselves by the Northern Lighthouse Board.

Less than a fortnight after Ben Doran broke up on Ve Skerries, the mail ship St Sumbawa ran aground in thick fog on Mousa, on the east side of Shetland. Stromness lifeboat made the journey to Shetland once again but on arrival found that all the passengers and crew had got ashore safely in the ship’s own lifeboats.

Lerwick’s new lifeboat Lady Jane and Martha Ryland arrived in the early summer, and between then and the time she left the station in 1958 she rescued 80 people.

Lerwick

Lerwick is now the capital of a land where, with flourishing small industries, a fishing fleet of large seagoing motor vessels as well as inshore boats, and expanding back-up services to the offshore industry, there is work for everyone. No longer is it necessary, as it has been at times in the past, for young people to leave their own land. There is an air of buoyancy and good cheer which perhaps finds reflection in that Lerwick’s modern fast afloat Arun lifeboat has a mainly young, and a very enthusiastic, crew under her young coxswain/mechanic, Hewitt Clark.

By RNLI standards, the station may be fairly young, too, but nevertheless the lifeboat tradition of family bonds is already strong. At the inaugural ceremony of its first lifeboat in 1930 the vote of thanks was given by Colonel Magnus Shearer, Convener of Zetland. Later, his son, also named Magnus, was to become an officer of the branch committee; he was appointed honorary
Two years later the silver medal was awarded to Coxswain Sales for the rescue of three of the crew of the Russian trawler *Urk* which sank, on October 16, 1958, near the rocky islet of Holm of Skaw off the north-eastern corner of Unst. For the lifeboat it meant a 53-mile passage heading straight into a northerly gale; and it was a very dark, overcast night with frequent rain squalls. Approaching Unst, Coxswain Sales put in to Baltasound to embark Andrew Duncan Mouat who, knowing the area well, had volunteered to act as pilot. With about three miles still to go to Holm of Skaw, one of the lifeboat’s propellers was fouled by a net; nevertheless she was brought within 40 yards of the holm’s southern shore and anchored in the turbulent waters while the three Russians were successfully brought off by breeches buoy. Mr Mouat was awarded the bronze medal for his part in the rescue and the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to the other seven members of the lifeboat crew: Second Coxswain William Sales, Bowman George Leith, Motor Mechanic Robert Laurennson, Assistant Mechanic John Johnston, and Crew Members John Sinclair, Frederick Mullan and Raymond Leask.

In 1969 a framed letter of thanks signed by the chairman of the Institution was sent to each of the crew who took part in a long search on March 15 for three Norwegian fishing boats which were eventually found and escorted to safety: Coxswain John Sales, Second Coxswain William Sales, Acting Bowman Peter Leith, Motor Mechanic Hewitt Clark (now coxswain), Assistant Mechanic John Mouat and Crew Members H. A. Hughson, A. Fraser and J. Smith. They were out for 11 hours in south-easterly gales, phenomenal seas and continuous squalls of snow and sleet. The weather was described by observers as ‘the worst yet!’ It was in fact forerunner of the weather in which, a week later, the three Russians were eventually found and rescued by breeches buoy. The silver medal was also awarded to Coxswain George ‘Geordie’ Leith. It was for the rescue on December 13, 1972, of nine men from the trawler *Spearfish*, which had also gone aground on Bressay Island and was being pounded on the rocks by south-easterly gale force winds, Coxswain George Leith was accorded the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum. Each of his crew received vellum service certificates: Second Coxswain Peter Leith, Motor Mechanic Hewitt Clark, Assistant Mechanic John Mouat and Crew Members James Smith, Ian Fraser, Theo Nicolson and Andrew Leask.

For the rescue on January 12, 1974, of four men from the rig safety vessel *Spearfish*, which had also gone aground on Bressay Island and was being pounded on the rocks by south-easterly gale force winds, Coxswain George Leith was accorded the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum. Each of his crew received vellum service certificates: Second Coxswain Peter Leith, Motor Mechanic Hewitt Clark, Assistant Mechanic John Mouat and Crew Members James Smith, Ian Fraser, Theo Nicolson and Andrew Leask.

The services for which awards were made alone indicate the international nature of Lerwick lifeboat’s calls, and a glance down the service boards drives the point home. Take just one year at random, say 1977: the lifeboat launched to help an oil rig standby vessel; she was reported aground on Bressay Island; and was being pounded on the rocks by south-easterly gale force winds, Coxswain George Leith was accorded the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum. Each of his crew received vellum service certificates: Second Coxswain Peter Leith, Motor Mechanic Hewitt Clark, Assistant Mechanic John Mouat and Crew Members James Smith, Ian Fraser, Theo Nicolson and Andrew Leask.

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he has to do is 'put up the shutters' and make for the boarding jetty. And so it goes on. And, as at Lerwick, there are plenty of young men eager to join the crew.

Deeply involved in all aspects of the lifeboat station is a lady who only came to live in Shetland less than ten years ago: Dr Margaret Shimmin, GP for Bixter (a mile or two up the road) and a wide area of the surrounding countryside. It is the normal pattern that the doctor at Bixter should also be the honorary medical authority for Aith lifeboat station and Margaret Shimmin accepted the position, presiding over crew along with all other parts of the practice. She was not only warmly accepted by Coxswain Henry and his lifeboatmen as a full member of the crew, going out on service with them when a call comes from a merchant ship with an injured man on board, or at times when the lifeboat has to act as an auxiliary to the fishing fleet offlying islands, but before very long she had also been invited to become chairman of the branch. For some time she served as president of the ladies' guild as well. But above all she knows everyone and everyone knows her, appreciating her friendship and help. And in her work great efficiency goes hand in hand with deep concern; so accepted that duty from her predecessor and if one word had to be used to describe the very successful fund-raising activities of the ladies' guilds associated with the two branches 'happy' would be a good choice. Both go on. And, as at Lerwick, there are plenty of young men eager to join the crew, coming to join in the fun, well over 100 times, rescuing 91.

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Tremendous fun . . .

Lerwick guild has 100 members and, as Miss Robertson explains, they have 'tremendous fun' with their fund-raising, when Aith lifeboat was wrecked on this plateau of rocks in December gales of 1977. Aith lifeboat was called out but, unable to get close enough in to help because of the nature of these skerries, she stood by while the stranded crew were lifted to safety by a British Airways helicopter from Sumburgh Head; it was the first time in its history that this ancient hazard to seamen had given up its victims. A Nimrod aircraft had also helped, dropping flares to illuminate the area, and all the various crews who had taken part in this combined operation later met together at Sumburgh. The lifeboatmen of Shetland work closely with the helicopter crews concerned with search and rescue in the area. Aith working with British Airways and Lerwick with both BA and Bristow helicopters.

Fund Raising

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Lifeboat People

IN THE NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST the British Empire Medal was awarded to Alfred William Lacey, who has been the motor mechanic of Margate lifeboat since 1947; from 1940 to 1947 he served as assistant mechanic.

* * *

When, on January 15, M. Jacques de Folin, French Ambassador to Ireland, on behalf of the French Government made Mr. J. E. de Courcy Ireland a Chevalier of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques, the last part of the official citation mentioned the work done by Mr de Courcy Ireland as honorary secretary of Dun Laoghaire lifeboat station to foster links between the lifeboat services in Ireland and France. Dun Laoghaire has had regular contact with Boulougne Sur Mer and Ushant lifeboat stations for many years.

* * *

Mr Edward du Cann, MP for Taunton for 25 years and admiral of the House of Commons Sailing Club, has become president of Wellington branch.

* * *

Miss Hetty Hart, aged 101, and her brother emigrated with their family in 1920 from Walton-on-the-Naze to Santa Barbara, California, but never forgot the lifeboatmen they knew right back to the 1890s. Their uncle, Jim Spurgeon, was second mechanic of Western England and Wales, on behalf of the donors and the lifeboat was received on behalf of the station by the lady of the donors and the lifeboat was received on behalf of the station by the lady of the donors and the lifeboat was received on behalf of the station by the lady of the donors and the lifeboat was received on behalf of the station by the lady of the donors and the lifeboat was received on behalf of the station by the lady of the donors and the lifeboat was received on behalf of the station by the lady of

Lyme Regis

A new Atlantic 21 rigid inflatable lifeboat donated to the RNLI by the Independent Order of Foresters is now stationed at Lyme Regis. The presentation was made on September 21, 1980, by Mr R. Gates, High Chief Ranger of the Central London Committee, and Mrs Robin Ashton, chairman of the ball committee, are two of the ladies responsible for the organisation of the Central London annual Lifeboat and Mermaid Ball. One of the most eagerly awaited events in the RNLI calendar, it is always a splendid evening and it always achieves a magnificent result. Last winter, held at the Hilton Hotel on December 2, the ball raised about £20,000 for the lifeboats.

* * *

Mr Young intends to undertake the work without charge; his address is 10 Pen y Nef Road, Porthleven, Nr Helston, Cornwall.

A dram for the crew

Thanks to the generosity of a retired San Francisco lawyer, Mr J. P. Young, bottles of White Horse whisky were presented to 25 lifeboat stations in the south west of England last December so that crew members could enjoy a dram at Christmas. Mr Young intends his gesture, devised to show his appreciation of lifeboatmen in a tangible way, to continue year by year, and has even included a bequest in his will so that his gifts will go on into the future; each year the ‘Christmas dram’ will go to stations in a different area.
Shoreline Section

THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW is now over and once again the results are very encouraging: 1,011 new members were enrolled. Such a good result could not have been achieved, however, without the help and dedication of our voluntary Shoreline team and our grateful thanks go to Jim Mead, David Parker, Harold Appleton, Ewart Myer, Dinorah Galler, Richard Wilson, Ian Taylor and Jeff Needham who gave up their time to make sure the stand was fully manned for the whole eleven days of the show, from January 8 to 18. I would also like to thank all the Shoreline members who took time out to visit our stand and have a chat. It was very nice meeting you all.

As you probably all know, if a sum of money is given to a charity under a deed of covenant, the charity can recover from the Government the basic income tax which the donor has paid on that amount of money. The gift is thus enhanced without any extra cost to the donor. Until last year the period for which a covenant needed to run was ‘over six years’, but the Finance Act of 1980 reduced this period to ‘over three years’.

The Institution is looking for new revenue in these days of rising prices, and covenancing is one field in which the lifeboat service can benefit considerably. It is interesting to note that of all the new members who enrolled at the London Boat Show this year, 76.6 per cent were happy to sign a deed of covenant and the extra revenue derived from this source alone amounts to £2,000. Just think by how much the RNLI could benefit if every one of our Shoreline members—now more than 74,000—were to covenant his or her subscription.

May I, therefore, ask those members who do not at present covenant their Shoreline subscription if they would be kind enough to give serious consideration to signing a deed of covenant. Our staff at Poole are always happy to give any information or help where it is needed.

From April 6, 1981, the total covenanted payments to charity allowable for tax purposes has been increased to £3,000 in any one year of assessment. In addition, relief for higher tax is claimable by the taxpayer, making it possible for Shoreline members who pay higher rates of income tax to give the Institution even greater help when making a covenant. This is how it works:

If a donor who is liable to higher rates of income tax covenants a sum of money to a charity, the charity can recover from the Government the tax paid at the basic rate (30 per cent) on that amount. In addition the donor can then recover from the Government the tax paid at the highest rate to which he or she is liable. This new concession allows a donor to make a higher covenanted gift to the charity without any greater ultimate personal cost.

Thus, if a governor of the Institution liable to the basic rate of tax only, covenants his or her £15 Shoreline subscription, the RNLI, by recovering the 30 per cent tax paid by the donor, receives the gross sum of £21.46. If, however, a governor liable to the higher rate of income tax of, say, 75 per cent covenants £42 for his subscription to Shoreline, the RNLI can still recover the basic 30 per cent tax, receiving the gross amount of £60, but the donor himself or herself can also recover the amount paid in higher rate tax, so that the effective actual cost remains at £15.

The table below, based on the present governor’s annual subscription of £15, illustrates how the system works.

<table>
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<th>Highest rate of tax paid</th>
<th>Previous annual payment (net)</th>
<th>Previous gross value to RNLI (basic rate of 30%)</th>
<th>Annual payment (net) after 6/4/81</th>
<th>Additional benefit to RNLI</th>
<th>New gross value to RNLI</th>
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Following the success last year of the BMW car competition, which led to the enrolment of 2,578 new members, I am pleased to announce that the RNLI has been given a Renault 5TR for a similar competition. Our thanks go to Renault UK for this very generous gesture, and also to Mrs Aplin of Exmouth ladies’ guild and their local Renault garage, Burrows, by whose efforts this idea became a reality.

The competition will be run on similar lines to the one held last year. The name of every Shoreline member signing on a new member, using the special Renault competition application form, will automatically be included in a grand draw which will be made at the London Motor Fair, Earls Court, in October.

Your support last year was excellent and you set a high target. Now, can we beat it? I am certain that with the heartwarming enthusiasm we always find among our members, this year’s competition could be a bumper one.

Application forms will come to you with this journal, and if you would like further supplies please do not hesitate to write to us.

Shoreline clubs are well established at Portsmouth, Southampton and Southend-on-Sea, and now a fourth club has been founded at Milton Keynes; the inaugural meeting was held at Wavendon Tower on January 13 this year. It is very encouraging that a club should have been formed so far from the coast, and we wish Milton Keynes every success. Any Shoreline member living in that area who wishes to become associated with the club should write to the honorary secretary, Denis J. Horgan, Killala, Stoke Road, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire, or telephone Milton Keynes 75164.

Shoreline Club No. 2, Southampton, recently held its AGM, and very well attended it was, too. The new chairman is Michael McMorland.

Shoreline Club No. 3, Southend-on-Sea, now meets at the T.E.A.C., 111 Eastern Esplanade on the second Wednesday of each month at 1930.

Peggy Smart, the longest serving member of Shoreline office, retires at the end of May. As our correspondence clerk she has, over the years, made many friends and I know you will all join me in wishing her a very happy retirement.

And we all hope that, for you all, the summer will be a good one.—PETER HOLNESS, membership secretary, RNLI, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ.
The Castle Museum, York, has a section called "Kirkgate" which contains a reconstructed nineteenth century street complete with shops of that era. In November the museum kindly allowed local RNLI supporters to hold a fashion soiree and with the help of Debenhams, who presented the fashions, everyone attending had an interesting evening watching the models parade. £500 was raised.

At a small seaside town one always hopes to see retired seadogs sitting, contemplating their adventurous past; at Clovelly George Lamey, 85 and a former coxswain of Clovelly lifeboat, has been doing just that, day in, day out, for the past seven years. The only difference with him is that he happens always to be holding a collecting box, though not once has he asked anyone for money. Last year he managed to bring in £2,776.85½ in this way and, since he began, he has amassed £11,762 for the RNLI. Clovelly branch and guild raised a record £15,756 in 1979-80.

Church Stretton is a small, rural village in Shropshire but together with the adjacent All Stretton and Little Stretton the branch raises over £1,000 every year for the RNLI. The 1980 house-to-house collection and flag day made £324.63 and in the same year wine and cheese party was arranged which made a further £200.

The Reed family of New Romney and their friends organised a coffee morning at their home last October to raise money for Littlestone-on-Sea lifeboat. It was a happy morning and £173 was the final result.

For two decades Mrs Mona Cuthbert has been the honorary secretary of the thriving Huddersfield ladies' guild and luncheon club. More than that, when last November a presentation to mark her long service was made to her on behalf of 200 local lifeboat people, she was described as the kingpin and guardian angel of the club which, over the past five years alone, has raised an average of £1,300 a year.

Despite torrential rain and sheet lightning, six boys from Wilson's School, Wallington, Surrey, completed a relay swim across the English Channel. It took the boys—Stephen Crowley, Bradley Walter, Iain Pickering, Mark Shepherd, Ian Jones and Paul Bowler—11 hours and 21 minutes and £3,000 was raised in sponsorship for the RNLI with a further £2,000 for improvements to their own school.

Peter Newton of East Harling chose a quicker way to cross the Channel last August but was able to present Wroxham and District branch with £385.30 as a result. He water-skied the 33-mile distance with the help of Varne Ski Club, thus fulfilling a long ambition.

The 3rd Poole Sea Scouts covered a lot of water in their sponsored row in Poole Harbour; at the end of it they were able to hand over a cheque for £87 to the RNLI with a similar amount going towards their headquarters' funds.

It has taken only six years for the Chilterns branch to raise £25,000. Last June the Earl and Countess of Howe kindly lent their home for a summer ball attended by more than 300 people; music was supplied by Memphis Jazz Band and Sound of Profile. A raffle raised £553, the printed programme collected £625 and the net profit for the evening was £2,429.

Continuing his long and active support of the RNLI, Lawrence Bellhouse, owner of Nash's Tudor Restaurant, Leeds, organised a gala dinner and

Wandering minstrels Ruth Cowsey and Carolyn Doorbar, clarinetist and flautist respectively, spent their days before Christmas raising £600 for the RNLI. They moved from pub to pub playing Christmas music to delighted customers. Both girls are accomplished musicians, Ruth being a student at Cardiff College of Music and Carolyn a teacher of the flute at Sidcot School.
Not everyone who buys a special excursion train ticket to London from Liverpool costing £7 finds herself arriving at Euston station heralded by Royal Marine trumpeters and the winner of a two-week Mediterranean cruise for two people. It happened, though, to Charlotte Toms seen here getting off the train that carried 600 ladies from Liverpool on a shopping excursion organised by Heswall and Gayton ladies' guild. Through profits on the bargain price train tickets and on the draw for the cruise, generously donated by P and O Cruises Ltd, £2,200 was raised.

Young members of the Isle of Anglesey Swimming Club lining up after their successful sponsored swim which raised £478 for the RNLI. The three standing directly behind the children are (l.) Mr L. Coates, honorary secretary of the swimming club, Malcolm Burnett, honorary secretary of Holyhead lifeboat station, and Coxswain Will Jones.

Every year Calshot branch organises a bonfire party and last November £2,000 was raised. Jenni Murray of BBC South was among those who joined in the fun. In ten years Calshot branch has raised £28,500.

The Greenwich cheese and wine evening, held in the Painted Hall of the Royal Naval College was helped towards its £1,700 profit by a special draw for a gallon of brandy, kindly presented by Martell, which made £250. Here Michael Ashley, DOS (South London), presents the bottle to the lucky winner; between them is Mrs Rita Blood, chairman of Eltham branch, who organised a separate raffle for the occasion.

The ladies' guild of the small community of Hunmanby in North Yorkshire was holding a coffee morning and raffle for a bridal doll when the income for the event was suddenly boosted by a surprise donation of 152 dollars from the mess of BP tanker British Liberty. Over £550 was raised altogether.

The ladies' guild of the small community of Hunmanby in North Yorkshire was holding a coffee morning and raffle for a bridal doll when the income for the event was suddenly boosted by a surprise donation of 152 dollars from the mess of BP tanker British Liberty. Over £550 was raised altogether.

A crew change during a 12-hour sponsored sail lasting from midday to midnight at Denham Sailing Club last September. Ruislip and Woodlands Park clubs also took part, 11 dinghies in all, and on a sunny day with a steady force 2 breeze conditions were perfect both for enjoyment and for fund raising. In the hours of darkness marker buoys were lighted and all dinghies carried navigation lights. With every lap sponsored, and with profits from the endless sale of snacks added, £499.05 was raised for Gerrards Cross branch. A repeat of the event is planned for this September.

Raymond Baxter, chairman of the RNLI Public Relations Committee, flanked by (l.) Mrs B. Robertson, chairman of the Walton and Frinton ladies' guild and (r.) Mrs Wilberforce, president, when he was chief guest and speaker at a dinner which raised £186.50 for the local station. To boost the proceeds Raymond Baxter auctioned a copy of his latest book. Since the guild was formed in 1978 it has raised £3,700.

Not everyone who buys a special excursion train ticket to London from Liverpool costing £7 finds herself arriving at Euston station heralded by Royal Marine trumpeters and the winner of a two-week Mediterranean cruise for two people. It happened, though, to Charlotte Toms seen here getting off the train that carried 600 ladies from Liverpool on a shopping excursion organised by Heswall and Gayton ladies' guild. Through profits on the bargain price train tickets and on the draw for the cruise, generously donated by P and O Cruises Ltd, £2,200 was raised.
In Mevagissey, Cornwall, an award is made every year to the licensee of the hostelry that has made the largest collection for the RNLI. For the fourth year running this has been won by Mr and Mrs Frank Ellis of the Fountain Inn who brought in £140, but by all accounts the runners-up are providing hotter competition each year. Mevagissey branch also man a souvenir shop on the quay the gross takings from which in 1980 were more than £10,000.

Derek Griggs and Dave Earl of Lewisham branch have built a stand which is taken to events around the borough for selling souvenirs and raising money through lottery sales and competitions. It was first set up on GLC’s ‘Thamesday 1980’ last September when, with the help of donations from the Thames Water Authority and the British Sub-Aqua Club, about £400 was made. The stand will be used at many events this year, including ‘Thamesday 1981’.

Alton branch, formed in 1979, raised more than £800 last October with a cookery demonstration given by Simon and Nicola Cox of Brackley. Between the morning and afternoon sessions of the demonstration there was a ploughman’s lunch.

A ‘roaring twenties’ style party proved a roaring success for Mrs Olive Eades, who organised the event and who has been founder honorary secretary of Chorleywood and Rickmansworth branch for nine years. Two thirds of the amount raised, £855, went to the RNLI and one third to King George’s Fund for Sailors.

Bert Ryan, president of the Selsey Bill Lions Club, presented Coxswain Mike Grant with a 6ft cheque for £3,100 raised by the club to pay for a new inflatable lifeboat at Selsey. It only took three months to amass the money through a giant raffle with tickets sold in the village and during ‘Crabbers Race Day’.

Landlord of the Coach Station Hotel, Winchester, Mr J. D. Ellis, challenges his customers to beat him at pool. If they win he buys them a drink of their choice; if he wins his customer must pay the cost of a drink of his choice to the RNLI. Already Mr Ellis has given a cheque for £100 to the local branch.

The Dolphin in Cathcart Street, Birkenhead, is filling its second gallon whisky bottle with coins for the Douglas (Isle of Man) lifeboat station. The first one held £100 and its contents were received by Captain Tony Billington on behalf of New Brighton branch. The Dolphin is a regular haunt of the crew of the Isle of Man steam packet boats and the collection is made by publican George Goff as a friendly gesture to his seafaring customers.

For four months the girls of form IV St Rose, Holy Trinity Convent, Kidderminster, worked hard at raising money for Salcombe lifeboat. Through selling cakes, running raffles and organising an eight-hour sponsored swim, Lucy Osborne, their form captain, was able to send a cheque for £120 to Bill Budgett, Salcombe honorary secretary.

To show their appreciation of the services of the RNLI, though they have never had to call upon them, Oxford's Sea Angling Club, under the presidency of Don Chaundy, held a sponsored ‘fish-in’ at Poole last summer. The £154.73 raised was handed over to Cowley branch chairman, Stan Preston, at a recent branch committee meeting.

British Sub-Aqua Club members, some of them Shoreline members, went carol singing before Christmas, visiting ten pubs, and sent a splendid £77 they raised for the lifeboats to the RNLI North London Office.
When you have finished with your copy of THE LIFEBOAT
Please pass it on.

This very attractive doll's house was a prize in a raffle organised by the ladies' guild committee of Whickham, Tyne and Wear. An impressive £524 was raised in this way.

HTWVPAPF6LB is the peculiar message posted up behind the bar that has helped raise over £360 at the Haven House Inn, Mudeford. When asked by curious customers for its meaning, assistant manager Mrs Terry Goodison says, "If I tell you, will you pin up a pound for the lifeboats?" No one refuses but everyone is amazed and amused when she then triumphantly explains, "I've just told you what it stands for!"

A magnificent pineapple was just one of the prizes on the tombola at the annual Kingston branch dinner dance last October—and it was won by the Mayor of Kingston, Councillor Philip Naish. A very good evening brought in £400 for the RNLI.

Hemel Hempstead branch has raised £280 for Great Yarmouth and Gorleston lifeboat station with coffee evenings and a demonstration of flower arranging.

A cold winter walk along the north-east coast lasting five days and covering 110 miles between Helmsley in North Yorkshire to Flamborough made over £700 for Flamborough lifeboat appeal. The walkers were four members of the Lifeboat Enthusists Society, Leeds Group, Michael Bayliss, Tony O'Grady, Julian Dyson and Jim Walsh. They all work for Britvic-Minster Ltd and, unaffected by the distance covered, plan to do some more walking for the RNLI in 1981.

A hundred lengths of an open air swimming pool brought in £100 in sponsorship for Carol Stevenson, aged 14, who presented the money to Hastings branch.

Donald Walters, a 16-year-old at a special work school earns £1.50 a week, when the Rusthall Working Mens Club held a harvest festival in aid of Hastings lifeboat station, Donald decided to give a whole week's wages to the collection.

Like many boys just before November 5, Robert Ross and Michael Sibley were collecting 'pennies for the guys'; unlike most boys, however, they did not use the money for their own entertainment. Their takings of £6.88½ were sent to Brixham ladies' guild.

Worthing branch organised a wine tasting and social evening where £800 was raised. One of the events was a raffle for the ubiquitous gallon of Martell brandy, kindly presented by shippers Matthew Clark and Sons.

Jonas Oxley, 81-year-old ex-coxswain of Walton and Frinton lifeboat and the holder of two bronze medals and the Royal Humane Society resuscitation certificate, presents an angling trophy to Cecil Ellis for the heaviest catch at last year's Walton Pier Fishing Festival. From the proceeds of past competitions, organised by Nor-Systems, Dovercourt, nearly £500 has been donated to Harwich and Walton and Frinton lifeboats.

At Port St Mary each Tuesday throughout the summer The Strolling Players (l. to r.) Elizabeth Coombes, John Watterson and Alice Wilson, dressed in Maxe costume, meet outside Crowe's 'Examiner' shop to entertain tourists, playing popular songs. The Players raise considerable sums for charity and recently gave £400 to Port St Mary lifeboat branch and another £400 to Rushen Emergency Ambulance.

Every fortnight Mrs R. H. Close of Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, whose husband is a Shoreline member, has a meeting with her friends and neighbours for a chat and a charity bingo session. The money raised is always sent to a good cause and recently the RNLI was chosen and benefited by £50.

A huge cheque both in size (6ft 6in by 2ft 6in) and in amount was handed over to the RNLI after a sponsored tandem event held by Mrs Stokes of Woodland Farm, Lower Peover, brought in £1,400.30. The presentation took place during a dance, again organised by Mrs Stokes, and, as with the tandem event, it was a fancy dress occasion.
Awards

to Coxswains, Crews and Shore Helpers

The following coxswains, members of lifeboat crews and shore helpers were awarded certificates of service on their retirement and, in addition, those entitled to them by the Institution's regulations, were awarded an annuity, gratuity or pension.

Abersoch
E. L. Hookes
ILB Crew Member 15 years.

Aldeburgh
E. R. Smith
Shore Helper 12 years.
R. S. W. Smith
Shore Helper 60 years.

H. V. Smith
Assistant Mechanic 3 years
Crew Member 2 years
Shore Helper 15 years.

Anstruther
T. B. Small
Second Coxswain 6 years
Crew Member 15 years.

Beaumaris
W. Pritchard
Coxswain 8 years
Crew Member 16 years.

Borth
B. M. Taylor
(retired 1977)
ILB Crew Member 11½ years.
G. Evans
ILB Crew Member 13½ years.

Clogher Head
T. Tallon
Bowman 15 years
Crew Member 28 years.

Douglas
W. H. Sayle
(retired 1946)
Crew Member 27 years.

Dun Laoghaire
J. Brennan
Crew Member 44 years.

Eyemouth
J. Rosie
Crew Member 30 years.

Falmouth
A. C. West
Coxswain 5 years
Second Coxswain 3 years
Bowman 15 years
Crew Member 5 years

Bronze medal 1977.

R. F. Twydle
Assistant Mechanic 15 years
Crew Member 6 years.

Filey
T. C. Jenkinson
Coxswain 13 years
Second Coxswain 4 years
Bowman 4 years
Crew Member 12 years.

Fishguard
S. J. Thomas
(retired 1957)
Crew Member 11 years.
G. Bateman
(posthumous)
Coxswain 12 years
Crew Member 14 years.

Hastings
J. Bourdon-Pierre
ILB Crew Member 10 years.

Humbermouth
D. Edwards
ILB Crew Member 13 years.
R. Curtiss
(retired 1974)
ILB Crew Member 10 years.

Largs
R. Watson
(retired 1978)
ILB Crew Member 11½ years.

Lerwick
J. W. T. Smith
Crew Member 12 years.

Lizard-Cadgwith
G. Mitchell
(retired 1979)
Second Coxswain 2½ years
Crew Member 14 years
Shore Helper and Assistant Winchman 12 years.

Montrose
J. R. Paton, BEM
Coxswain 25 years
Second Coxswain 2½ years
Bowman 6½ years.

New Brighton
G. H. Cross
Second Coxswain 5 years
Crew Member 20 years.

Newcastle
G. Leneghan
Assistant Mechanic 3 years
Bowman 4 years
Crew Member 4 years.

Padstow
E. R. Bennett
Head Launcher 13 years.

Peterhead
A. D. Auld
Assistant Mechanic 5½ years
Motor Mechanic 6 months
Crew Member 5½ years.

Plymouth
D. Jago
Crew Member 12 years
including ILB Crew Member 10 years.
D. Biscombe
Assistant Mechanic 1½ years
Crew Member 17½ years
including ILB Crew Member 10 years.

Porthcawl
G. Thomas
ILB Crew Member 12 years.
J. Williams
(retired 1976)
ILB Crew Member 11 years.

P. Roberts
(retired 1977)
ILB Crew Member 12 years.

Porthdinllaen
J. E. Scott
Second Coxswain 6½ years
Crew Member 10 years.

Portpatrick
T. C. Smart
(posthumous)
Crew Member 15 years.

Port St Mary
H. A. Quillin
Second Coxswain 3 years
Bowman 8½ years
Crew Member 15 years
including ILB Crew Member 1 year.

Pwllheli
H. Roberts
Assistant Tractor Driver 8 years
Tractor Driver 15 years.

St Peter Port
E. C. Pattimore
Motor Mechanic 23 years
Crew Member 9 years.

L. De Mouilpied
Crew Member 17 years.

Scarborough
B. Wood
Head Launcher 20 years.

Selsey
M. Langford
(retired 1970)
Bowman 3½ years
Crew Member 16 years.

Sennen Cove
W. J. Pender
Crew Member 19 years.
C. H. Botterill
Crew Member 15 years.
F. L. White
Shore Helper 18 years.
**Letters...**

**Lifeboat car?**

In late September when driving from Newcastle upon Tyne to Carlisle, I passed a Triumph saloon car towing a caravan, the car bearing the registration RNLI 1 which was condensed to read RNLI. The car also bore an RNLI flag on the windscreen and a Shoreline car badge.

The driver of the car noticed my own RNLI flag on the screen and Shoreline car badge, but as I was in a line of traffic I was unable to stop.

The car obviously belongs to a loyal supporter of the Institution, and it would be interesting to learn whose car it is and how many other RNLI supporters have noticed this cherished number plate.—**DAVID J. HILL,** Station honorary secretary, Peel, Aeg Cronk, Peel, Isle of Man.

**HMS Captain**

My grandfather was a young sailor on **HMS Captain** when she was wrecked off Finisterre in the 1870s. He was one of the few saved out of the crew of 500. Only those of the watch just gone on deck made landfall. When I was a child my grandmother had a framed scroll depicting **Captain**, with photographs or etchings on it of her captain. Cowper Phipps Coles, and, I believe, Gunner May. Unfortunately this is not still in the family, and I would much like to trace a copy of it. It was not, I have ascertained, issued by the Royal Navy.

It occurred to me that as so many lifeboatmen have a tradition of seafaring, and service with the Royal Navy, that one of them might remember hearing in his own family about the tragedy, and might even have knowledge of this scroll. If so, I should welcome any information.—**EMMELINE HARDY,** Mrs, Pollards, 9 Durston Road, Swanage, Dorset.

**Dinghy capsized**

For the past three years while visiting the coast with my young family, it has become part of the outing to look in on the local lifeboat station.

On Saturday September 6 last year, while on such a trip, we arrived at Littlestone-on-Sea in time to witness the entire launch and return of the lifeboat rescue described in the winter issue of **THE LIFEBOAT**. I am an ex-

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- **Lifeboat enthusiast Jeff Morris has written and printed another of his excellent station histories, this latest about Thurso lifeboats. These histories require considerable research and it is interesting to compare the early work of the Thurso lifeboats, which were called to the aid of trawlers from other ports, with that of the Redcar lifeboats, told in David Philipsson's **Come Along Brave Boys** which were paid for, manned by and for the aid of local coble fishermen. Thurso's lifeboats have always been provided by the RNLI but Redcar's first, *Zetland*, was bought in 1802 by the fishermen and is the oldest surviving lifeboat in the world. The RNLI took over Redcar station in 1858, established Thurso station in 1860 and since then both have gained distinguished records.**

**The Story of the Thurso Lifeboats** is available, price 75p plus 25p p. and p., from Mr R. Cardosi, Central Hotel, Traill Street, Thurso, Caithness. **Come Along Brave Boys** is available, price £1.95 plus 40p p. and p., from David Philipsson, 43 Stanley Grove, Redcar, Cleveland TS10 3LN.—**R.K.**

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<tr>
<th>Sheringham</th>
<th>Torbay</th>
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<tr>
<td>E. Hedges</td>
<td>R. J. Bradford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Launcher 6 years</td>
<td>Crew Member 24 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Head Launcher 19 years</td>
<td>including ILB Crew Member 3½ years</td>
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<td>Shore Helper 5 years.</td>
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<td>Stornoway</td>
<td>M. Kingston</td>
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<td>W. Macdonald</td>
<td>K. Bower</td>
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<td>Second Coxswain 8 years</td>
<td>Crew Member 11 years</td>
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<td>Bowman 5½ years</td>
<td>Bronze medal 1976.</td>
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<td>Crew Member 6 years.</td>
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<td>Tenby</td>
<td>R. Brown</td>
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<td>R. Thomas</td>
<td>Crew Member 20 years.</td>
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<td>(retired 1970)</td>
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<tr>
<td>S. Richards</td>
<td>Crew Member 20 years.</td>
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<td>(retired 1972)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. Richards</td>
<td>Crew Member 26 years.</td>
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<td>(retired 1974)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Galvin</td>
<td>Crew Member 23 years.</td>
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<td>(retired 1975)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Bolton</td>
<td>Crew Member 15 years.</td>
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<td>(retired 1972)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Davies</td>
<td>Crew Member 15 years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(retired 1972)</td>
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**Lifeboat Services**

from page 154

Anstruther, Fife
37ft Oakley: November 12

Appleby, North Devon
Atlantic 21: September 2, 9, 12 and 18

Arran (Lamlash), Buteshire
D class inflatable: October 25

Arranmore, Co. Donegal
52ft Arun: September 4, October 20 and November 6

Atlantic College (St Donat’s Castle), South Glamorgan
Relief Atlantic 21: September 25 and October 25

Baltimore, Co. Cork
47ft Watson: October 11 and 25

Barnmouth, Gwynedd
52ft Barnett: September 24, October 5 and 6

Barra Island, Inverness-shire
52ft Barnett: September 19

Barrow, Cumbria
46ft 9in Watson: October 4, 23, November 3 and 5

Barry Dock, South Glamorgan
52ft Arun: September 2, 20, 21, 25 and October 10, November 6 and 30

Beaumaris, Gwynedd
46ft 9in Watson: September 15

Atlantic 21: September 13

Bembridge, Isle of Wight
48ft 6in Solent: September 3
D class inflatable: September 3 and 5

Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland
Relief Atlantic 21: October 4, 18 and November 22

Blackpool, Lancashire
D class inflatable: September 19 (twice), October 15 and 16

Blith, Northumberland
D class inflatable: September 8

Brigglington, Humberside
37ft Oakley: October 10 and November 12
D class inflatable: October 5 (twice)

Brighton, East Sussex
Atlantic 21: September 4 (twice), 13, 28, October 10, 24, 31, November 1, 2 and 30

Burry Port, Dyfed
D class inflatable: September 7 and 9

Calshot, Hampshire
40ft Keith Nelson: September 4, 23, October 10, 19, November 10 and 28

Campbeltown, Argyllshire
52ft Arun: November 7

Clacton-on-Sea, Essex
Relief 37ft Oakley: November 2
D class inflatable: September 27 and October 2

Clovelly, North Devon
Relief 71ft Clyde: October 4, November 6 and 23

Conwy, Gwynedd
D class inflatable: September 23, October 11 and 15
Relief D class inflatable: October 19, 24 and 26

Courtmacsherry, Co. Cork
47ft Watson: September 5

Criccieth, Gwynedd
D class inflatable: September 8

Cromer, Norfolk
D class inflatable: September 7 (five times)

Cullercoats, Tyne and Wear
D class inflatable: September 2 and 14

Douglas, Isle of Man
46ft 9in Watson: October 12, 26 and November 13

Dover, Kent
50ft Thames: September 7, 10, 28, October 11, 18 and November 28

Dunbar, East Lothian
47ft Watson: October 24
D class inflatable: September 28

Dunmore East, Co. Waterford
47ft Waveney: September 4, 7, 23 and 24
Relief 44ft Waveney: November 18

Eastbourne, East Sussex
37ft 6in Rother: September 13 and November 10
D class inflatable: October 19 and November 29

Exmouth, South Devon
D class inflatable: September 4, 16, October 5 and 26

Eyemouth, Berwickshire
47ft Waveney: October 8, November 12 and 25

Falmouth, Cornwall
52ft Arun: September 20, 27, October 13 and November 21
18ft 6in McLachlan: September 24, 27, 30, October 5, 8 and 15

Fife, North Yorkshire
37ft Oakley: November 19
D class inflatable: September 4 and 14

Fisgard, Dyfed
46ft 9in Watson: October 21

Flamborough, Humberside
35ft 6in Liverpool: September 20 and October 5

Fleetwood, Lancashire
47ft Waveney: September 10, 14, 21, 23, 30, October 25 and 28
D class inflatable: September 7, 14 and 21 (three times)
Relief D class inflatable: November 5

Flint, Clwyd
Relief D class inflatable: September 21
D class inflatable: October 20, 21 and November 13

Fowey, Cornwall
Relief 46ft Watson: September 5

Galway Bay, Co. Galway
Relief 52ft Barnett: September 1, 7, 28, October 13, 22, November 1, 2 and 24

Great Yarmouth and Gorleston, Norfolk
Atlantic 21: September 13 (twice), 15, 20 (twice), 28, October 6, 19 and November 25

Hartlepool, Cleveland
44ft Waveney: September 13, October 19 and November 16

Atlantic 21: October 19

Harwich, Essex
47ft Waveney: November 28

Atlantic 21: September 5, 12, 29, October 15, November 1 and 9

Hastings, East Sussex
37ft Oakley: October 12
D class inflatable: September 22 and October 5

Hayling Island, Hampshire
Relief Atlantic 21: September 5, 27 (three times) and October 5

Atlantic 21: October 24, 26, November 2 (twice), 15 and 22 (twice)

Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire
Atlantic 21: September 10, 15, 29, October 4, 13, 25 and November 27

Holyhead, Gwynedd
52ft Arun: September 2 and 26

Howth, Co. Dublin
47ft Watson: September 7
Relief 46ft 9in Watson: November 22
D class inflatable: September 21

Hoylake, Merseyside
37ft 6in Rother: September 14 and October 5

Humberside
54ft Arun: September 3, 4 (twice), 7, 10, 17, 22 and October 7, 8, 11 and 20

Relief 52ft Arun: October 24 (twice), 25 and 29

Ilfracombe, North Devon
37ft Oakley: November 2

Invergordon, Ross-shire
52ft Barnett: September 22

Islay, Argyllshire
50ft Thames: October 6 and November 1

Kinghorn, Fife
Relief D class inflatable: September 20 and 29

Kippford, Kirkcudbrightshire
D class inflatable: September 28

Largs, Ayrshire
Atlantic 21: September 6, 13, 21 (twice) and 22

Lerwick, Shetland
52ft Arun: September 12 and 20

Littlehampton, West Sussex
Atlantic 21: September 8, 13, 21, October 2, 5, November 7 (twice) and 9

Littlestone-on-Sea, Kent
Atlantic 21: September 6 (twice) and October 25

Lizard-Cadgwith, Cornwall
52ft Barnett: October 16 and 20

Llandudno, Gwynedd
37ft Oakley: November 21 and November 16

D class inflatable: September 18, 23, 27, October 19, November 16 and 17

Lochmaben, South Lanarkshire
52ft Barnett: September 17

Lowestoft, Suffolk
47ft Watson: September 10, 14 and October 19

Lyne Regis, Dorset
Atlantic 21: September 1, 28, October 29 and November 18

Lytham-St Anne’s, Lancashire
Relief 46ft 9in Watson: November 14

Macduff, Banffshire
48ft 6in Solent: November 20

Margate, Kent
37ft 6in Rother: September 6, 19 and October 4

Relief D class inflatable: September 7 and 15
D class inflatable: October 1, 4 and 5

Minehead, Somerset
Relief Atlantic 21: September 6

Maeve, Gwynedd
37ft 6in Rother: September 21, 22 and 24
D class inflatable: September 4, 15 and October 5 (twice)

Montrose, Angus
48ft 6in Solent: September 9 and November 7

Morecambe, Lancashire
Relief D class inflatable: September 17, 25, 26, 27 and October 30

Mudford, Dorset
D class inflatable: September 25

The Mumbles, West Glamorgan
D class inflatable: September 27, October 5 and 25

Newbiggin, Northumberland
37ft Oakley: September 8 and October 17

New Brighton, Merseyside
Atlantic 21: September 1, October 11, 31, November 1 and 2

Newcastle, Co. Down
37ft Oakley: November 25

Newhaven, East Sussex
44ft Waveney: September 4 (twice)
Relief 44ft Waveney: September 9, October 11, 23 and November 2

Newquay, Cornwall
D class inflatable: September 4, 5, 8, 23 and 24

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North Berwick, East Lothian
D class inflatable: September 2
Relief D class inflatable: September 29
North Sunderland, Northumberland
D class inflatable: September 24
Oban, Argyllshire
42ft Watson: September 12 and 13
Relief 42ft Watson: September 22
18ft 6in McLachlan: October 16
Paddow, Cornwall
48ft 6in Oakley: October 16, 17 and November 26
Pee, Isle of Man
Atlantic 21: November 21
Penarth, South Glamorgan
D class inflatable: September 8, 24, October 8 and 25
Penlee, Cornwall
Relief 46ft Watson: October 16, November 17 and 26
Peterhead, Aberdeenshire
48ft 6in Solent: September 17, November 1 and 9
Plymouth, South Devon
44ft Waveney: September 28, October 6 and 9
18ft 6in McLachlan: October 13
Polo, Dorset
44ft Waveney: October 14, 29, November 8 and 9
Dell Quay Dory: October 10, 11, 29 and November 9
Portishead, Co. Down
D class inflatable: September 13 and 26
Port Erin, Isle of Man
37ft 6in Rother: October 6
Portcawl, Mid Glamorgan
D class inflatable: September 7, 9, 23, October 14 and November 23
Porthdinllaen, Gwynedd
47ft Watson: November 3
Port Isaac, Cornwall
D class inflatable: September 6
Portpatrick, Wigtownshire
47ft Watson: September 22 and November 7
Portrush, Co. Antrim
46ft 6in Watson: September 2 and October 25
Port St Mary, Isle of Man
Relief 54ft Arun: October 12, November 10 and 11
D class inflatable: September 28
Portsmouth (Langstone Harbour), Hampshire
Atlantic 21: September 19, 28 (twice), October 10, November 2 (five times) and 9
Relief D class inflatable: November 2 and 9
Port Talbot, West Glamorgan
D class inflatable: October 12
Pwllheili, Gwynedd
D class inflatable: September 5 and 8
Quensferry,  West Lothian
Atlantic 21: September 28, October 20 and November 4
Ramsey, Isle of Man
37ft 6in Oakley: September 12, 23 and November 8
Ramsgate, Kent
44ft Waveney: September 9, 21, October 11, 17, 18, November 18, 20, 21 and 29
18ft 6in McLachlan: September 3, 4, 6 (twice), 14, 15 and October 24
Red Bay, Co. Antrim
D class inflatable: October 23
Redcar, Cleveland
37ft Oakley: September 2, 5, 20 and October 5
D class inflatable: September 2 and 24
Rhyl, Clwyd
D class inflatable: September 7 and October 26
Rye Harbour, East Sussex
D class inflatable: September 21 and October 26
St David’s, Dyfed
47ft Watson: November 23
St Helier, Jersey
44ft Waveney: September 26, October 6, 10 (twice), November 2 and 22
St Ives, Cornwall
37ft Oakley: October 17 and November 21
D class inflatable: September 4 and November 9
St Peter Port, Guernsey
52ft Arun: September 8, 13, 17 (twice), October 12, 22, November 9 and 10
Scarborough, North Yorkshire
D class inflatable: September 22, 8, 22, October 1 and 3
Selsey, West Sussex
46ft 9in Watson: September 5, 24, October 2 and 14 (twice)
Sennen Cove, Cornwall
37ft 6in Rother: October 14, 17 and 24
Shoreham Harbour, West Sussex
42ft Watson: November 12
D class inflatable: September 6, 14, (twice), 21 and October 22
Silloth, Cumbria
Atlantic 21: September 28, October 31 and November 24
Skegness, Lincolnshire
37ft Oakley: October 24
Relief D class inflatable: September 6, 7 (twice) and October 24
Southend-on-Sea, Essex
Atlantic 21: September 2, 7, 8 (twice), 21, 25, 28, October 11 (twice) and 27
D class inflatable: September 9, October 4 and 5
Relief D class inflatable: November 9
Southwold, Suffolk
Atlantic 21: September 7, 13, November 20 and 26
Staithes and Runswick, North Yorkshire
Relief Atlantic: September 21 and 20
Atlantic 21: November 19
Stornoway, Ross-shire
Relief 46ft 6in Solent: October 15 and 19
48ft 6in Solent: September 26, 29, October 21, November 8 and 21
Stranraer, Wigtownshire
Relief D class inflatable: October 4
Sunderland, Tyne and Wear
47ft Watson: November 9
Swanage, Dorset
37ft 6in Rother: September 7, 14 (twice), October 6, 10, 18, 25 (three times), November 1 and 29
Teesmouth, Cleveland
47ft Watson: September 20 and October 19
Tenby, Dyfed
46ft 9in Watson: September 4, 13 and 28
D class inflatable: September 4 and October 5
Thurso, Caithness
48ft 6in Solent: September 19
Tighnabruaich, Argyllshire
D class inflatable: October 8
Torbay, South Devon
54ft Arun: October 22, 24, November 7, 8 and 14 (twice)
18ft 6in McLachlan: September 4
Tramore, Co. Waterford
D class inflatable: September 10
Tweedmouth, Tyne and Wear
Atlantic 21: September 7 (twice) and 9
Valencia, Co. Kerry
52ft Burnett: September 3, 16, October 2 (twice) and November 5
Walter, Kent
37ft 6in Rother: September 15, 27, October 9 and 18
D class inflatable: September 6, October 6 and 9
Walton and Frinton, Essex
Relief 46ft 9in Watson: September 3 (twice), 22 and October 4
48ft 6in Oakley: November 1 and 2
Wells, Norfolk
37ft Oakley: September 14, November 2, 14 and 26
D class inflatable: September 15
West Kirby, Merseyside
D class inflatable: October 20 and 26
West Mersea, Essex
Atlantic 21: September 3, October 4, 11 and November 23
Weymouth-super-Mare, Avon
18ft 6in McLachlan: October 5 and November 3
D class inflatable: September 28 and October 5
Weymouth, Dorset
54ft Arun: October 5 and November 11
Whitby, North Yorkshire
44ft Waveney: September 20, 21, October 7, 19, November 1 and 25
Whitstable, Kent
Atlantic 21: September 10, October 18 and November 2
Wick, Caithness
48ft 6in Oakley: November 5
Withernsea, Humberside
Relief D class inflatable: September 22
Workington, Cumbria
48ft 9in Watson: September 9, October 21 and 31
Yarmouth, Isle of Wight
52ft Arun: September 3, 24, 25, October 6, November 9 (twice), 23 and 30

SERVICES AND LIVES RESCUED BY THE RNLI’S LIFEBOATS
January 1, 1980, to December 31, 1980: Services: 2,798; lives saved 1,210

THE STATION FLEET
(as at 31/12/80)

258 lifeboats, of which one Atlantic 21, four 18ft 6in McLachlan and 67 D class inflatable lifeboats operated in summer only

LIVES RESCUED 106,522

from the Institution’s foundation in 1824 to December 31, 1980, including shoreboat services

178
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Address

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Personal details
Name
Tel. No.
Address
Expedience
Occupation
Details of craft
Name
Class/Type
Construction
Year Built
Length
Beam
Engines
H.P.
Inboard/Outboard
Max. Designed Speed (Motor boats only)
knots
Values
Hull, Machinery, Equipment
£
Trailer
£
Dinghy/Boats
£
Outboard Motor
£
TOTAL
£

Use
In commission from
Moored at
Laid up from
Cruising Area

General
(a) Are you entitled to No Claim Discount? years
(b) Do you wish to bear the first £50 £50 £100 £250 of any claim? Tick as applicable.
(c) SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS. Racing Risks, Water-Skiing, etc.

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Foreword by Clare Francis