

# THE LIFEBOAT

THE JOURNAL OF THE RNLI



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**The Captain  
takes his hat off  
to the RNLI.**



# THE LIFEBOAT

Summer 1978

## Contents

### Volume XLVI Number 464

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Notes of the Quarter, by Patrick Howarth .....	3
Summary of Accounts for 1977 .....	4
Lifeboat Services .....	5
Inshore Lifeboats: dedication ceremonies at Abersoch, Port Isaac and St Ives .....	13
Matthew Lethbridge, Jnr, BEM: coxswain of St Mary's lifeboat, by Joan Davies .....	14
Across a Crowded Room: thoughts on the annual presentation of awards for gallantry, by Alan Neal .....	17
A Corner in Cumbria: Workington, Silloth and St Bees, three lifeboat stations on the Solway Firth and its southern approaches .....	20
Building a Rother Class Lifeboat: Part VIII—Ballast Keel .....	24
Shoreline .....	25
Some Ways of Raising Money .....	26
Letters .....	30
Lifeboat People .....	31
Offshore Lifeboat Services, December 1977, January and February 1978 .	34
Inshore Lifeboat Services, December 1977, January and February 1978 . .	34

#### COVER PICTURE

*The John Gellatly Hyndman, a 52ft Barnett relief lifeboat on temporary duty at St Peter Port, under the command of Coxswain John Petit, on service to the oil rig Orion which ran aground on the north-west shore of Guernsey when she parted from her tug in storm force winds on the night of February 1, 1978. Having taken off two men that night, the lifeboat returned on February 10, in continuing gales, to take off the salvage crew of six. Orion was eventually safely freed from the rocks and went on her way. A fine example of international co-operation: an American oil rig under tow of a German tug bound from Rotterdam to Brazil; the salvage company was Dutch, the rescue services British.*

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

**Next issue:** the autumn issue of THE LIFEBOAT will appear in October and news items should be sent by the end of July. News items for the winter issue should be sent in by the end of October.

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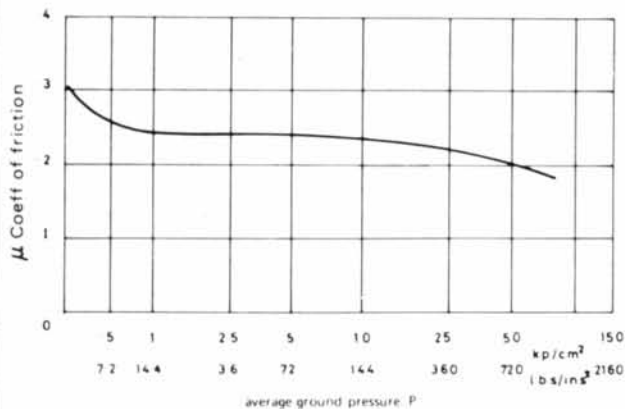
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## NOTES OF THE QUARTER

by Patrick Howarth

FOR THE FIRST TIME the RNLI has awarded a gallantry medal for a rescue from an oil rig. The rig involved, *Orion*, was on tow from Rotterdam to Brazil when she went aground on the Guernsey coast. The rescue operation was in some respects of a kind not experienced before. The rig, which was drifting at about 6 knots, had huge legs, mounted on a tanker hull, which towered some 250 feet above the water line. The approach presented a problem in manoeuvring which at one time seemed impossible to solve. Coxswain John Petit did manage to bring the St Peter Port lifeboat alongside but a huge wave lifted her into the overhanging helicopter platform. The lifeboat's mast was snapped and crashed on to the wheelhouse. The direction finding loop was carried away by the net, and the radio aerials jammed the radar scanner, which then filled with water. Nevertheless two men were successfully rescued by the lifeboat and the remaining men on board by Sea King helicopters from Culdrose and efforts of parties on the shore.

John Petit also had the distinction of being the first man to be voted two medals for gallantry for separate services at the same meeting of the Executive Committee of the RNLI. His other award was for the rescue of four people from a yacht in exceptionally severe conditions, which again made the task of bringing the lifeboat alongside a dangerous and difficult one. A great family tradition is being maintained in Guernsey, for the present coxswain's father, Hubert Petit, was one of only five men to win the RNLI's gold medal for gallantry since the end of World War II.

Some days after the rescue which led

to the award of John Petit's silver medal the St Peter Port lifeboat took off a number of men who had been put aboard the rig by a salvage company. Channel Television filmed virtually the whole of this rescue, and through the generosity of two Guernsey residents, Sir Charles and Lady Hayward, a film of the operation has been made available to the RNLI. Its first showing in London took place on May 30 at the BP cinema in Britannic House.

### Blue Peter Silver

The first award of the RNLI's silver medal for gallantry to a member of the crew of a Blue Peter inshore lifeboat, has also recently been made. The ILB was *Blue Peter IV*, which is stationed at St Agnes in Cornwall. This is one of the four stations whose inshore lifeboats were provided by viewers of the famous BBC programme, who collected paperback books to raise the funds. David Bliss at the helm of *Blue Peter IV* rescued a man from a narrow cove in conditions which onlookers described as 'impossible'. He controlled the boat with extraordinary skill based on experience of operating in surf. Choosing the right moment between waves and the right speed, he managed somehow to avoid all the rocks in his path along the 50 yard length of the cove which he had to enter. The boat filled with water and was seen from the cliffs above to be completely engulfed by the waves. Coming out of the surf the lifeboat became airborne.

Another first-ever award was that of a medal for a rescue carried out by one of the RNLI's two lifeboats of the Thames class. The casualty was a jack-up barge which was pitching so heavily that its legs were swinging through 30 degrees. Coxswain Arthur West of Falmouth performed a remarkable feat of seamanship and determination in taking off the crew of the barge. Accounts of these and other rescues for which awards were made appear in 'Lifeboat Services' starting on page 5.

### Healthier state of reserves

The governors of the Institution were told by the RNLI's chairman, Major-

*First silver medal for a Blue Peter ILB crew member was awarded to Helmsman David Bliss of St Agnes. After the award was announced, David Bliss and his crew were the guests of the BBC's Blue Peter television programme. (left to right) John Noakes, Helmsman David Bliss, Crew Members Roger Radcliffe and Barry Garland, and Lesley Judd.*

photography by courtesy of Blue Peter, BBC TV



General Farrant, at the annual general meeting held in the Royal Festival Hall on May 16 that a policy decision had been made to bring to an end the pause in the boat-building programme, which was introduced a few years ago, and to step up expenditure. This has been made possible by the extraordinary efforts of the RNLI's fund-raising branches and guilds, by the number of legacies received and through the economies practised. As a result of all these the free reserves of the Institution, which amounted to only 13 weeks' expenditure at the end of 1976, had risen to 19 weeks' expenditure at the end of last year.

The two main aims of the RNLI's present capital programme are ensuring that the whole offshore fleet has a self-righting capacity and that fast lifeboats, which can lie afloat, are placed at key stations. The cost of completing this programme will exceed £5 million, of which about a quarter will, it is expected, be spent this year.

A brief summary of the accounts for 1976 appears on page 4 and a full report of the annual general meeting and presentation of awards will be published in the autumn edition of *THE LIFEBOAT*.

### Fraserburgh reopened

A happy outcome of some eight years of discussion, anxiety and doubt has been the decision to reopen the Fraserburgh lifeboat station on the north-east coast of Scotland. In 1970 the Fraserburgh lifeboat capsized with the loss of five men. Seventeen years earlier another Fraserburgh lifeboat capsized, six men being lost on that occasion, and after the second tragic disaster the station became temporarily non-operational.

In January this year a public meeting was held at Fraserburgh attended by an RNLI delegation, which included the chairman of the Search and Rescue Committee, Vice-Admiral Sir Arthur Hezlet. At the meeting it was agreed that the station would man and operate a Solent lifeboat. The first boat to go on station is the 48ft 6in Solent relief lifeboat *The Royal British Legion Jubilee*. The training of a new crew under the supervision of the divisional

inspector for north Scotland, Captain R. M. Dabbs, has already begun.

**First RNLI branch in Belgium**

An historic meeting took place in Bruges on April 21, the first to be held by the Belgian branch of the RNLI. The central event was a film show, for which more than 150 people bought tickets. A number of the Belgian members had visited the RNLI's stand at the International Boat Show at the beginning of the year, and John Atterton, deputy director of the RNLI, who attended the meeting, reported evident enthusiasm among the Institution's new Belgian supporters. One speaker said that Great Britain had brought a number of good things to the European Economic Community, of which one of the very best was its highly efficient lifeboat service: he might also have mentioned Ireland because the RNLI administers the lifeboat service in two EEC countries.

*Humberside police's five-strong mounted section has been patrolling local beaches and inland waterways for the past three years as part of their general duties. Last summer an emergency lifeline was added to their equipment.*

photography by courtesy of Humberside police

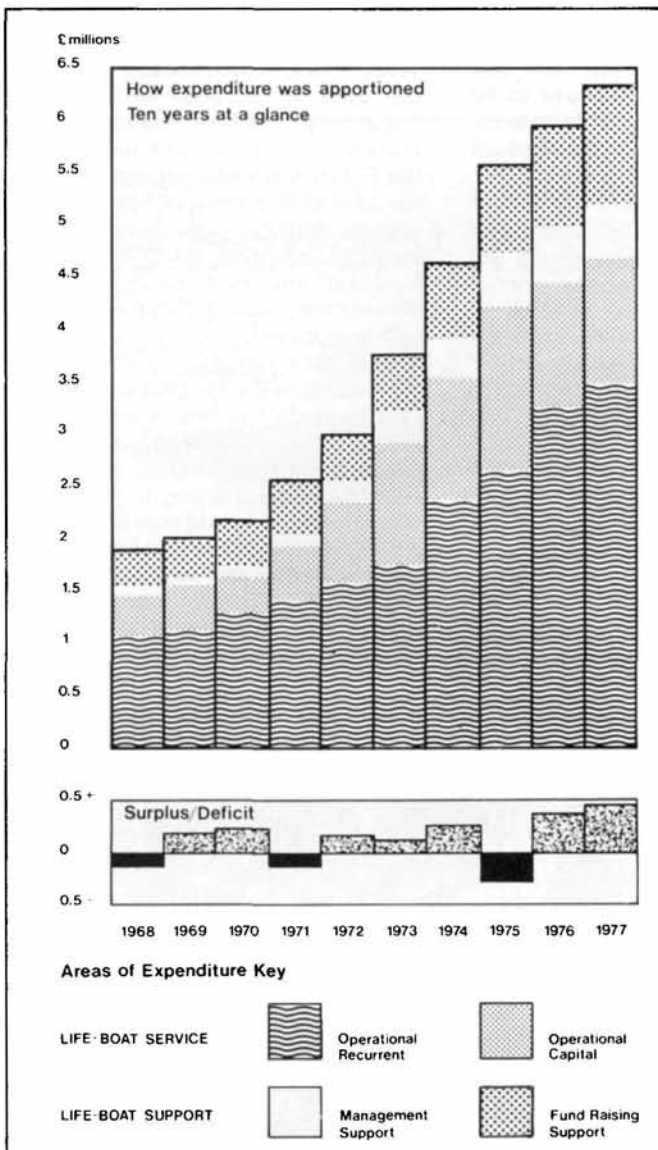


Plans for visits and for fund-raising events in Belgium on behalf of the RNLI were discussed. Any Belgians or Britons living in

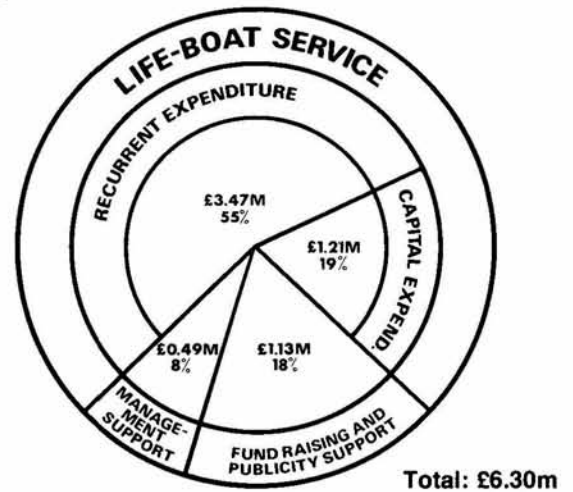
Belgium who wish to join the new branch are asked to communicate with: Monsieur Jan Corveleyn, Zantiende 13, 8320 Bruges 4, Belgium.

# Summary of Accounts for 1977

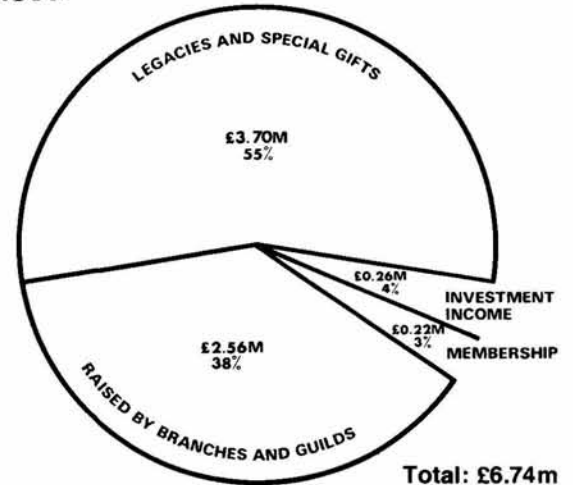
*Full accounts are available from Poole Headquarters.*



## What it cost in 1977



## How the money was raised



# LIFEBOAT SERVICES

## South Western Division

### Storm search

A PROLONGED SEARCH was made by Padstow, St Ives and Clovelly lifeboats in a south-westerly storm for the Danish coaster *Lady Kamilla*, which foundered off Trevoise Head on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1977, and for her crew of nine. In addition to the three lifeboats, HMS *Sherington*, Nimrod aircraft, Wessex and Sea King helicopters and various merchant vessels which were in the vicinity also took part. HM Coastguard rescue teams also carried out a shore search. *Lady Kamilla*, which had originally reported taking water in her hatches, foundered and sank before help arrived. The crew abandoned ship and two survivors were picked up from a liferaft by helicopter. No other survivors were found, although wreckage identified as coming from *Lady Kamilla* was sighted.

Padstow lifeboat, the 48ft 6in Oakley *James* and *Catherine Macfarlane*, was at sea searching for 14 hours 42 minutes; Clovelly lifeboat, the 71ft Clyde *City of Bristol*, for 14 hours 45 minutes; and St Ives lifeboat, the 37ft Oakley *Frank Penfold Marshall*, which suffered damage when hit by an exceptionally large sea, for 6 hours 16 minutes.

At 0003 the honorary secretary of Padstow lifeboat station was informed by Trevoise Head Coastguard that *Lady Kamilla*, 15 to 20 miles west of Trevoise Head, was taking water. Maroons were fired and at 0030 *James* and *Catherine Macfarlane* launched on service with eight crew aboard, Coxswain Antony Warnock taking an extra crew member because of the severe weather.

At 0010 the honorary secretary of St Ives lifeboat station heard a 'mayday' call from *Lady Kamilla* and telephoned to the Coastguard to discuss launching. Maroons were fired and at 0044 *Frank Penfold Marshall* launched on service.

The weather was very bad with winds south west strong gale to storm, force 9 to 10, poor visibility and a phenomenally high sea. Tide was 2 hours flood.

Padstow lifeboat headed for the position of the casualty and at 0215 Coxswain Warnock fired a parachute flare.

This was not seen by the casualty, but was reported by St Ives lifeboat and by HMS *Sherington*. *Lady Kamilla* was then asked to fire a red flare, but this was not seen by the lifeboat and *Lady Kamilla's* captain reported that it was not a good flare and that conditions aboard were now very bad. At 0218 he informed Trevoise Head Coastguard that he was having to abandon ship.

St Ives lifeboat had been heading north towards the reported position of the casualty. At 0225, when she was 14 miles north of St Ives Head, a message was received from the Coastguard that red flares had been reported off Portreath/Porthallow and the lifeboat was asked to investigate. Coxswain Thomas Cocking altered course to the south east. At 0255, the lifeboat was on a south east heading at full speed when Assistant Mechanic David Smith, standing on the coxswain's right, suddenly saw a 'wall of water' to starboard and shouted, 'Look out!'. Coxswain Cocking looked up through the top of the canopy and saw the wave breaking. He estimated its height at 30 to 35 feet. He shouted to the crew, 'Hold on!' and immediately put his arms through the spokes of the wheel and held on to the binnacle, in a semi-crouched position, to lock his hold on the wheel. His right leg was hooked between the legs of his stool.

The wave broke down on to the starboard side of the lifeboat, rolling her to port. Second Coxswain John Perkin, standing on the coxswain's left, remained jammed against the port side of the cockpit. Emergency Mechanic John Thomas, standing behind the coxswain, remained jammed between the coxswain's seat and the after end box. David Smith, was wrenched off the starboard guardrail, to which he was holding, and thrown to port. Motor Mechanic Philip Penberthy remained in the radar seat. Both Signalman Eric Ward, who had been standing behind John Perkin to port, and Assistant Mechanic Smith found themselves 'floating' and thought they had been thrown out of the lifeboat. David Smith felt John Thomas and the coxswain beneath him. Radio Operator Thomas Cocking, Jnr, on the starboard seat under the canopy, stood on the side of the battery box cover, jammed his head and shoulders under the starboard deckhead of the canopy and held on to the handrail. From this position he saw the entire cockpit fill with water except for a small air pocket, in which was his own head.

The boat seemed to hang in this position, which is thought to have been approaching a 90 degree roll. As Coxswain Cocking's eyes cleared he looked forward and realised the port navigation light was submerged. He left the throttles at full speed and the boat seemed to slide down the back of the wave in this attitude before righting herself. Both side-dodgers had been carried away inboard and the boat

quickly drained the top four feet of water. The remainder took a little longer.

The wind was estimated by Coxswain Cocking at west south west force 9 to 10, which corresponds with recorded anemometer readings at Isles of Scilly, Lands End and St Mawgan. It had been blowing steadily from the south west at force 5 to 8 since December 21 and had gradually increased throughout December 23. The tide at this point should have been running against the wind 230° at 0.8 knots. The depth of water would have been about 55 metres and there were no significant fluctuations in the bottom in that area, the shallowest patch being about 49 metres.

The radar and MF radio were swamped and put out of action but the VHF remained working and Coxswain Cocking continued searching off Porthallow until 0630, when the search in this area was called off and concentrated in the area of the original position given. In view of the damage she had sustained to her electronic equipment, St Ives lifeboat was recalled to station. *Frank Penfold Marshall* entered harbour at 0700 and was re-carried and placed on restricted service at 0800.

Meanwhile, Padstow lifeboat had arrived at the search area at 0320 and started a box search to the north and north east.

At 0610 the staff coxswain in command of Clovelly lifeboat, Michael Houchen, was requested by Hartland Coastguard to search three to five miles offshore from Hartland Point down to Pentire Point to look for survivors from *Lady Kamilla*. *City of Bristol* left her moorings five minutes later and searched the coast area until 1130 when she was directed to carry out a box search off Trevoise Head. At 1224 a Nimrod aircraft sighted wreckage 24 miles west north west of Trevoise Head and *City of Bristol* was diverted to investigate. At 1347 the coxswain sighted wreckage about four miles east of the position given and picked up a number of gas cylinders which were identified as belonging to the casualty.

Coxswain Warnock, in Padstow lifeboat, was continuing his search under very difficult conditions. At 1430 it was reported that two survivors had been picked up from a liferaft by a helicopter in a position about 20 miles to the north. As Padstow lifeboat could not arrive at this new search area before dark she was recalled by the Coastguard. She arrived back at station at 1512 and was rehoused and ready for service at 1600.

Clovelly lifeboat was diverted at 1530 to the position where the two survivors were found in the dinghy and continued to search this area, together with a helicopter, until 1715 when the search was called off because of darkness. *City of Bristol*, after sheltering for the night in Lundy Island Roads,

returned to her moorings at Clovelly the following morning at 0810.

For this service the silver medal for gallantry has been awarded to Coxswain Thomas Cocking of St Ives and the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum have been accorded to Second Coxswain John N. Perkin, Motor Mechanic Philip P. Penberthy, Assistant Mechanic David L. Smith, Emergency Mechanic John B. Thomas, Signalman Eric T. Ward and Radio Operator Thomas Cocking, Jnr. In the highest traditions of the RNLI, their devotion to duty was such that they refrained from advising either the Coastguard or the honorary secretary of the degree of roll they had experienced or of their subsequent discomfort and exhaustion, but had continued with the service. All that was really appreciated on shore was the damage to equipment. Letters of appreciation signed by the director, Captain Nigel Dixon, RN, have been sent to the honorary secretary Coxswain Antony Warnock and his crew of Padstow, and Staff Coxswain Michael Houchen of Clovelly lifeboat and his crew.

## South Western Division

### Union Crystal sinks

JUST BEFORE 1915 on Wednesday, November 16, 1977, the honorary secretaries of both **Sennen Cove** and **St Ives** lifeboat stations were informed by Lands End Coastguard that the 499-ton coaster *Union Crystal* was in trouble 12 miles north of Cape Cornwall. Her cargo of rock salt had shifted and she was listing. She carried a crew of six. The wind was onshore, from the north west, strong gale to storm force 9 to 10, with rain squalls, and the sea was very high; these conditions remained throughout the seven hours of the service.

At St Ives the tide was setting north east across the wind at about 1 knot. It slowly decreased and turned southwards, finally ebbing at about the same speed south west by the end of the service. St Ives lifeboat, the 37ft Oakley *Frank Penfold Marshall*, was launched off her carriage into the harbour at 1931 and set course 315°M from St Ives Head at 1937.

At Sennen Cove a heavy swell running in from the same direction as the wind, north west, was breaking across the area of rocks known as the Cowloes, which lie less than 200 yards north to north west of the slipway. The tide was in the fifth hour of flood and running in an easterly direction at about 4 knots through the narrow passage between the lifeboat slipway and the Cowloe rocks, The Tribbens. The honorary secretary was most concerned about the state of the sea off the slipway and had doubts about the ability of the lifeboat to launch safely.

However, after having heard from Lands End Coastguard that, at 1919, a final message from *Union Crystal* indicated that she was sinking, the honorary secretary, Captain Ewan Watson, and Coxswain/Mechanic Eric Pengilly fired the maroons and opened the boathouse doors to make a closer assessment of the conditions off the slipway.

To the east of the Cowloes lie more submerged rocks and the lifeboat has to follow an accurate course between these two hazards when going to sea, using leading marks astern which are illuminated at night. Even the small 14 ft local fishing boats take great care to follow the leading marks closely as the gap between the rocks is only about 150 yards. To bring these leading marks in line the lifeboat must turn to starboard after launching and thence to port on to her north west course seawards.

The scene from the top of the slipway was formidable at best. The heavy north west swell, breaking over the Cowloes and reinforced by the storm force winds, was falling heavily into the area across the lifeboat's launch path. It was here joined by the swell and tide running eastwards through the narrow neck of The Tribbens, and the result was a sea described as 'mad' and a 'maelstrom' by launchers and local residents. The general consensus of opinion was that the last time the sea was even comparable for launching the lifeboat was in 1953 for the service to *Liberty*, and those who witnessed both launches feel that, on November 16, 1977, conditions were worse.

Although the state of the sea in the harbour on the night of November 16 clearly exceeded that which has always been recognised in the past as the limit for launching. Nevertheless, by 1930, Coxswain Eric Pengilly had decided that they must try, and he climbed aboard. He was immediately followed by his crew, each man making a positive decision to go; it was a calculated risk which was undertaken purely out of a supreme sense of duty.

At 1933 the lifeboat, the 37ft 6in Rother *Diana White*, was lowered down the slipway, clear of the boathouse doors, where she was held to allow Coxswain Pengilly time to observe the behaviour of the sea and try to establish some sort of pattern wherein a relatively safe period could be predicted in which to launch. After ten minutes it became apparent that no such period was likely to occur, so, at 1943, the coxswain gave the order to slip and *Diana White* was launched.

Immediately on entering the water, the lifeboat was hit by short, steep waves as she began her turn to starboard. Her green light became fully open to onlookers on the slipway, so that it appeared that she must be thrown on to the rocky shore by the continuous pounding of seas which observers described as 'mountainous'.

Many of these people, who were standing at the top of the slipway, rushed up through the boathouse to the road and thence along to the beach because they were certain the boat would be driven ashore.

At this point Coxswain Pengilly was struggling hard to control his boat. More than one reliable eyewitness stated that during this time the lifeboat



*The late Coxswain Eric Pengilly of Sennen Cove, awarded the silver medal for gallantry for the service to Union Crystal.*

'stood on end'. Acting Second Coxswain Maurice Hutchens and Crew Member Phillip Shannon were standing on either side of the coxswain helping him to keep his position behind the wheel and to get the wheel over as rapidly as possible, while, as Captain Watson described it, the lifeboat 'reared, plunged and twisted', so that, at one moment she was actually heading for the Cowloe rocks. But the tide swept her eastwards and, with Crew Members John Chope and John Pender looking aft and reporting the leading marks, Emergency Mechanic Hedley Hutchings looking out ahead and the one non-regular volunteer crew member, Cedric Johnson, in the radar seat, the three men behind the wheel finally succeeded in bringing her head to sea and she gained her leading marks. From then on, as Captain Watson put it, she 'ploughed through the surf on the bar and then set off on her mission with nothing more than the comparative luxury of a force 10 to contend with'.

At 2000 St Ives lifeboat, *Frank Penfold Marshall*, on her way to the area of search encountered an exceptionally heavy sea which threw Motor Mechanic Philip Penberthy across the cockpit, striking his head and giving him considerable discomfort and headache for the rest of the service.

At about this time the Coastguard had asked the tanker *Texaco Great Britain* to co-ordinate the surface search. St Ives lifeboat made for the original position given and then searched westwards towards *Texaco Great Britain*. Both lifeboats then searched under her direction, together with other ships, illuminating the area from time to time with parachute flares,



searchlight, a new quartz-iodine hand-light and Aldis lamp.

HMS *Penelope* arrived at about 2130 and was designated 'on scene commander'. Six ships, St Ives and Sennen Cove lifeboats and two helicopters were now engaged. At 2200 they were joined by a Nimrod aircraft which began a creeping line ahead search south westwards from the north east, and at 2226 the lifeboats were requested to search downwind.

At 2234 the Nimrod sighted a liferaft containing one survivor, who was then picked up by helicopter. Thirteen minutes later a report from this helicopter stated that although six people had left the ship and all had been wearing lifejackets, only one liferaft had been launched.

A quarter of an hour later the fishing vessel *Pathfinder* found wreckage in position 50°22'N 05°31'W and the search area was moved north eastwards. Sennen Cove lifeboat was then recalled at 2317; from the information received, there was virtually no hope of finding more survivors and the area was now well saturated with search craft. *Diana White* could not, of course, be recovered at Sennen and so she made for Newlyn, arriving at 0120.

At midnight *Texaco Great Britain* was given permission to go on her way. HMS *Diomedé* joined at about that time, becoming 'on scene commander', and asking St Ives lifeboat to follow *Penelope* and work with her, picking up all possible wreckage. This the lifeboat did with great efficiency. Two men were stationed in the forward well deck with the hand light. Three were looking out on the main deck, port and starboard, using the searchlight and Aldis lamp, while Motor Mechanic Penberthy operated the radar and radio and stood beside Coxswain Thomas Cocking on the wheel. The lifeboat stationed herself a hundred yards astern of the naval ship, and while *Penelope* illuminated wreckage with her 20in searchlight, port and starboard, the lifeboat crossed her stern to retrieve it. To do this, the lifeboatmen had to lie on the deck, held by other crew members, and any who were not already thoroughly wet were soon made so.

Frank Penfold Marshall had recovered four lifepreservers plus wreckage by the time she was finally stood down, at 0200, and told to return to station. The merchant ships had been released an hour earlier.

The lifeboat was not rehoused until 0400, but she launched in response to another request for assistance from HMS *Diomedé* at 0900 to recover a body close inshore down the coast. The lifeboat suffered damage to both propellers and her port shaft by striking submerged wreckage in heavy swells on this occasion, necessitating immediate repairs. These, in turn, necessitated a further launch for engine

trials the following day, during which the lifeboat found and recovered another body. The sole survivor was, in fact, the master and he made a personal visit to both St Ives and Sennen Cove lifeboat stations to thank the coxswains concerned.

For this service the silver medal for gallantry was awarded to Eric Pengilly, Coxswain/Mechanic of Sennen Cove lifeboat, who sadly died in January, a few weeks after this service. The thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were accorded to Acting Second Coxswain Maurice Hutchens, Emergency Mechanic Hedley Hutchings and Crew Members Phillip Shannon, John Chope, John Pender and Cedric Johnson. The thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum were also accorded to Coxswain Thomas Cocking, Snr, of St Ives lifeboat and vellum service certificates have been presented to Acting Second Coxswain/Assistant Mechanic David L. Smith, Motor Mechanic Philip P. Penberthy, Acting Assistant Mechanic John B. Thomas, Signalman Eric T. Ward and Crew Members William Benney and William Cocking.

Among letters received following this service was one from Captain James Summerlee, British Airways (Helicopters), who wrote of the Sennen Cove launch:

*'May I, as a private individual, commend the integrity, skill and utmost bravery of those that took part . . . conditions for a Sennen launch could not have been more hazardous. Having crossed that particular piece of sea some 20,000 times in the last 13 years I can say I have never seen more violent weather and sea condition. To decide to launch in those conditions because of the peril of other mariners takes incredible courage. To step aboard a lifeboat and go into such a sea requires even greater courage.'*

And the officer commanding HMS *Penelope* wrote to Coxswain Cocking of St Ives expressing the admiration of himself and his ship's company for the coxswain's 'superb handling of the lifeboat and the devotion to duty' of the crew, adding ' . . . we watched you in detail for some considerable time and found your performance to be outstanding'.

## South Western Division Surf ski rider

HM COASTGUARD informed the deputy launching authority of St Agnes ILB station at 1626 on Sunday, July 17, 1977, that a surf ski rider was in difficulties off Porthtowan, about 3¼ miles south west from St Agnes. The DLA fired the maroons and, at 1630, the 16ft inflatable ILB *Blue Peter IV*

was launched with helmsman David Bliss in command; Barry Garland and Roger Radcliffe were his crew.

The wind was westerly fresh to strong, force 5 to 6, with mist and rain, and a heavy surf running. The tide was in the fourth hour of flood.

Because of the urgency of the situation the ILB was driven at maximum speed and, in spite of the prevailing sea conditions, averaged 13 knots over the ground against a strong stream. Radio contact was made *en route* with St Agnes Coastguard mobile who advised that the surfer had been located in Flat Rocks Cove, a quarter of a mile north of Porthtowan beach.

The stranded casualty was a surf life saver. There being no members of the public on Porthtowan beach that day due to the weather, he had gone into the sea in a wet suit on a wave-rider ski for practice exercise. After about 20 minutes in the water he had then been taken unawares by a sudden increase in surf height from 2 to 3 feet to 7 to 8 feet accompanied by a proportionate increase in the undertow and a fierce northwards current. This swept him helplessly up the coast until a particularly large wave washed him into Flat Rocks Cove. He bounced off rocks on the way in and landed on shingle at the head of the cove.

The cove was surrounded by sheer 150ft cliffs with an overhang at the top. The skier knew that the tide was only a little past half flood and the waves were already reaching the base of the cliffs where he stood. He therefore attempted to climb to safety, but a piece of rock came away in his hand and he fell 30 feet, breaking his wrist and landing in about a foot of water. He next tried to paddle the ski out and then tried swimming. Both proved impossible, however, and he then heard his colleagues shouting from the cliff top that the ILB was on her way.

The surf started at about the 10 fathom line over half a mile off shore. The ILB's shortest course was inside this line and soon after passing Chapel Porth observers on the cliff top saw an exceptionally large wave of about 9 to 10 feet begin to break on to the ILB. The helmsman immediately turned hard-a-starboard and the ILB dug into the bottom of the white water and emerged safely on the other side. One more similar wave had to be negotiated in the same way before the ILB could continue. On each occasion the two crew members, Barry Garland and Roger Radcliffe, moved as far forward as possible before entering the breaking waves, and then immediately moved aft again to help the boat to regain her planing attitude.

The ILB was directed to the cove by the casualty's colleagues on the cliff top and the helmsman stood off the entrance assessing the chances of a successful entry and exit by the ILB, as opposed to rescue by other means. He

knew that there were many rocks just below the surface inside the cove as well as those that were showing, and that the passage between them was as narrow as 9 or 10 feet. He also knew that the heavy surf would be much worse as it funnelled into the cove and there would be no turning back once approaching the entrance. He would also have to keep going fast if he was to keep enough control of his boat in the narrow channel, so use of anchor was going to be out of the question. Having capsized in surf in the past due to the engine having stalled at the wrong moment, he knew that everything depended upon the continued performance of the engine. If it failed for any reason inside the cove it was doubtful whether anyone would survive.

On the other hand, the casualty's position obviously did not allow enough time for the assembly of the cliff rescue team and their apparatus, while the overhang of the 150ft cliffs made the chances of rescue by helicopter highly unlikely. Helmsman Bliss decided that the ILB represented the casualty's best hope and he headed for the cove.

So skilful was his control of the boat and so extensive was his experience of operating in surf that he chose the right moment between two waves and the right speeds and avoided all the rocks in his path throughout the entire 50 yard length of the cove. He beached the ILB close to the injured man, who was standing at the base of the cliff against which the waves were already washing up to three feet deep.

The ILB crew immediately turned the boat head-to-sea again, put a survivor's lifejacket on the casualty, embarked him and re-launched into the waves.

David Bliss told Barry Garland and Roger Radcliffe to lie on the forward canopy, which they unhesitatingly did, and told the survivor to hold tight in the bottom of the boat. Then, using half to three-quarters throttle, he successfully picked his way once more between the rocks and through surf averaging 10 feet in height. It was a heavy, churning surf, with some tops reaching 14 feet as it was magnified by the narrowness of the cove. The maximum distance between crests in the cove was only 10 yards, for much of the time the intervals were only a few feet, and there were times when it was continuous. The boat filled with water, inevitably, and the helmsman says that, but for the self-bailers the engine would have been swamped.

Observers on the cliff saw the ILB completely engulfed by many 10 feet dumping waves, with the two crewmen prostrate on the forward canopy to prevent the boat from capsizing end-over-end. They also saw the boat become airborne on the far side of the waves, in spite of the very reduced throttle.

As soon as he was clear of the worst of the surf, Helmsman Bliss turned the ILB southwards and eventually rode the back of a wave on to Porthtowan Beach, where the casualty was safely disembarked and taken to hospital.

The ILB was re-launched at 1820 and as the weather had deteriorated still further, returned to St Agnes at much reduced throttle, arriving at 1845.

For this service the silver medal for gallantry has been awarded to Helmsman P. David Bliss. The thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum have been accorded to Crew Members Barry Garland and Roger Radcliffe.

## South Western Division

### Oil rig aground

ST PETER PORT SIGNALS STATION received an 'all ships' warning at about 1900 on Wednesday, February 1, 1978, saying that, at 1850, *Orion* had parted from the German tug *Seefalke* in position 49°39'N, 03°08'W, and was drifting. The honorary secretary of the lifeboat station was informed and he alerted the crew who assembled in the boathouse.

The St John Ambulance mobile radar was despatched to Pleinmont Point to plot bearings and positions. The honorary secretary and Coxswain John Petit went to the Port Signals Station to monitor the situation on VHF and plot the casualty.

Strong efforts were being made to reconnect the tow and it was expected for a long time that they would succeed. The rate of drift of the casualty, which was an oil rig being towed from Rotterdam to Brazil, had been given as 1½ knots, and it was not clear whether she would pass north or south of Guernsey. By about 2040, however, it had become apparent from Decca positions given by the tug that the rig had been drifting much faster, and VHF/DF bearings confirmed that she was in fact heading for the north west shore. Coxswain Petit therefore decided to intercept her by passing round the north end of the island, and he went to the boathouse.

At 2100 the 52ft Barnett relief lifeboat *The John Gellatly Hyndman*, on temporary duty at St Peter Port, slipped from her moorings in the harbour with Coxswain Petit in command.

The wind was west north west, strong gale to storm force 9 to 10, the night was dark, visibility was fair with rain showers, and the tide was at half flood.

The lifeboat steamed at her full speed of 9 knots and encountered high seas as soon as she was clear of the lee of the north end of the island. The numerous lights of the oil rig were sighted about 6½ miles ahead at about 2205.

The four legs and platform of *Orion* were mounted on a tanker hull, with the legs extending to about 250 feet

above the waterline. The wind was now gusting to violent storm, force 11, and driving the rig before it at 6 knots. The fore and aft line of the hull was in line with the wind, stern to the wind, and leaving such a wake that she appeared to be under way. At 2230 her skipper asked how long it would be before he was aground and, on being told 'half an hour' replied that he wished to evacuate the rig.

The lifeboat fell in astern of her at 2235 but it was ten minutes before she was able to make radio contact with the casualty to inform her that the lifeboat was now on her port quarter ready to take off survivors. Meanwhile Coxswain Petit feared that the rig would strike the rocks of the North West Grunes and capsize. She in fact just missed them but the tug *Seefalke*, only 200 yards on the lifeboat's port beam, did touch them. The coxswain took the lifeboat in for as close a look as possible at means of getting the crew off the rig and experienced loss of control at a critical moment when both engines stalled as he put them astern. Fortunately, Assistant Mechanic Robert Vowles restarted them immediately, which was in time to prevent the lifeboat from over-running the low stern of the tanker hull, over which seas were washing completely at times.

When the lifeboat was finally able to advise *Orion* of her presence on her quarter the skipper replied that he would lower a scrambling net from his helicopter landing platform, which projected about 50 feet clear of the port side of the hull. It was supported beneath by numerous struts, and, from its outboard end, about 30 feet above the waterline, the scrambling net was lowered. This net was designed for use from the platform when raised in its usual position up the legs of the rig. Now 60 feet of it trailed in the sea, beside the lifeboat, threatening her propellers.

Two men crawled out across the platform and began to descend on the inside of the scrambling net, presenting the lifeboat with a seemingly impossible manoeuvring problem to get at them. Coxswain Petit, with only a 3 knot advantage over the casualty but with very little time left to effect a rescue, closed the net as it fortuitously twisted sideways so that four lifeboatmen could drag one man aboard. As they did so, the net caught on the lifeboat's anchor fluke and guardrails just as the lifeboat dipped into a trough. The net snapped taut catapulting the other man into the sea. The fouled net swung the lifeboat in towards the tanker hull. Fortunately a lifeboatman managed to free the net and the coxswain was able to go full ahead and hard-a-port to avoid hitting the casualty's side. At the same moment, however, the lifeboat lifted on a wave, her mast hit the underside of the platform, breaking off at its base and crashing on top of the starboard side of the

wheelhouse, missing everyone on deck. The MF aerials stopped the radar scanner, breaking its belt drive and damaging its forward fairing so that it filled with water. The net tangled in the DF loop as it passed aft, carrying the loop away.

Coxswain Petit stopped the lifeboat as soon as she was clear, going astern while the crew threw a line to the man in the water and dragged him aboard with great difficulty. Fortunately he was not a big man. The rig had drifted on and the lifeboat now saw it bounce over an offshore rock and then run hard aground a minute later, remaining level. It was just after 2300.

There was no means of identifying the exact position at this time and the lifeboat crew in fact thought the rig was half a mile further south than it eventually proved to be. It was not until police car lights on shore illuminated some familiar landmarks that Coxswain Petit was able to establish the exact position among the rocks of this most hazardous lee shore. He could see, however, that with the casualty now apparently aground on a fairly even keel, the immediate danger to the crew was over. When, therefore, St Peter Port Signals Station reported that a Sea King helicopter was expecting to arrive at 2340, Coxswain Petit advised *Orion* not to attempt more evacuation by sea.

The lifeboat's VHF was still working and she used it to report the rig's exact location. She then received instructions to guide the helicopters in with parachute flares and this was duly done at about 2350.

It was impossible for the helicopters to land on the platform and the lifeboat stood by for three more hours while a most hazardous series of lifts was carried out by the Sea Kings. Their rotor blades were seemingly within a few feet of the rig's legs in the gusting winds, while the winchmen swung the width of the platform. The survivors could not stand but had to crawl out on to the platform, as the casualty had developed a 9 degree list before once more becoming steady.

At 0245, after they had taken 25 survivors off, the helicopters decided that lifting conditions had become so dangerous that, with *Orion* now safely jammed into the rocks, the evacuation of the remaining six men should be deferred until conditions improved. The lifeboat then departed for St Peter Port with her two survivors.

Her VHF now failed, so that she was without any radio communications or radar for the difficult passage out from shore and around the north coast. Communication with St Peter Port was faintly re-established at 0350, using a jury-rigged MF aerial, and hospital transport was requested on arrival for the man who had been in the water.

The lifeboat landed her survivors at about 0420 and returned to her moorings at 0430.

*Oil rig Orion went aground on the north west shore of Guernsey on February 1. On Friday February 10 it was thought she was adrift; in fact, she had parted from her barge, which had sunk, but was still held aground by her legs. Her salvage crew of six were at considerable risk as the rig might have become unstable, so The John Gellatly Hyndman, the 52ft relief Barnett lifeboat on temporary duty at St Peter Port, launched to take them off. The wind was east north east strong gale force 9 and the sea was very rough; it was one hour before high water, top of springs. The weather was overcast with snow flurries. The six men were safely taken off.*

photograph by courtesy of  
Brian Green



For this service the silver medal for gallantry has been awarded to Coxswain John H. Petit. The thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum have been accorded to Deputy Coxswain Lloyd de Mouilpied, Motor Mechanic Eric C. Pattimore, Assistant Mechanic Robert Womles and Crew Members Michael Scales, Robert Hamon, John Webster and John Robilliard.

## South Western Division

### Storm tow

TORBAY DEPUTY LAUNCHING AUTHORITY saw the 35ft pilot cutter *Leslie H* leaving Brixham Harbour at 1145 on Sunday, February 19, 1978. The weather was so bad that he immediately became concerned for her safety and alerted the Coastguard and the lifeboat coxswain, who summoned a crew by telephone to stand by in the boathouse.

The wind was east south east force 9 to 10. It had been blowing from an easterly direction at gale or severe gale force, gusting to storm force, for more than 30 hours. Visibility was poor, with rain, and the tide was in the third hour of flood.

At 1230 a 'mayday' was received from *Leslie H* saying her steering was jammed, she was drifting southwards 1¼ miles east of Berry Head and required the lifeboat. The Coastguard rang the boathouse.

Three minutes later the 54ft Arun lifeboat *Edward Bridges (Civil Service No. 37)* slipped from her moorings in Brixham Harbour with Coxswain George Dyer in command.

On clearing the breakwater, the seas were such that the lifeboat could aver-

age only 10 knots. Her tall orange superstructure became visible to the casualty long before the dark low profile of *Leslie H* could be seen from the lifeboat and the captain of the stricken vessel was able to con his rescuers towards himself.

Coxswain George Dyer brought the lifeboat alongside the pilot cutter at 1250 on the first attempt, in 30ft waves with breaking crests, and immediately her two crewmen were safely taken aboard over the lifeboat's port side, the captain preferring to remain and secure a tow line from the lifeboat. The pilot cutter's rudders were jammed hard-a-starboard and her position was now about one mile south east of Berry Head. Fifty-six fathoms of 3½in nylon tow rope was veered out and a slow tow was begun on a course of north by east to gain an offing around Berry Head.

The tow proved very difficult and erratic, with the casualty's jammed rudders constantly yawing her to starboard so that the lifeboat's throttles had frequently to be put into neutral to reduce the speed of tow.

It was necessary to control the lifeboat from the upper conning position (UCP) on the flying bridge while towing and, after the towing procedure had been established, Coxswain George Dyer handed the wheel to Second Coxswain Keith Bower with Deputy Coxswain Arthur Curnow on his starboard hand to attend to the throttles. Coxswain Dyer returned to the flying bridge two minutes later and stood on its port side, next to the second coxswain, to give a course alteration to north by west at 1302, as the tow was now clear of Berry Head. The intention was to make gradual alterations in a long sweeping arc to port in

order to coax the erratic tow slowly round for a southerly approach course into Brixham Harbour, using the deepest part of the bay in which to turn.

After about eight minutes on this course the lifeboat was approaching the 20 metre line. Apart from the three on the flying bridge, there were two other men on deck. Crew Member John Ashford was immediately aft of the flying bridge standing between the handrails of the walkway leading aft on top of the superstructure, while Crew Member Ron Bradford was on the after deck, to port of the watertight door to the radio cabin (which was shut) and holding the starboard handrail of the ladder leading to the upper walkway and UCP.

Acting Motor Mechanic John Hunkin and Acting Assistant Mechanic Brian Caunter were both inside the radio cabin with the two men already taken off the casualty. All crew members were wearing lifejackets and crash helmets.

At 1310 Coxswain Dyer ordered both engines into neutral as the pilot cutter sheered once more to starboard. The lifeboat lost way and the wind immediately veered her beam-on to the sea. A moment later, a freak wave of 30 to 35 feet with an additional 12 feet breaking to top, suddenly appeared on the starboard beam of the lifeboat. John Ashford saw it coming, turned to face it and ducked down with his arms locked under the handrail in front of him and his back braced against the handrail behind him.

All crew members say that the wave seemed to push the lifeboat slowly over to port and laterally through the water as it hit and broke on to her beam. The coxswain on the port side of the UCP, just abaft the helmsman's position, glimpsed the radar scanner turning in the water before he himself was completely submerged for two or three seconds. Second Coxswain Bower, behind the wheel, stood on the port bulkhead of the UCP and was partially in the water. He estimates that the water came within a foot of the centreline of the UCP. Deputy Coxswain Curnow on the starboard side looked down from a braced horizontal position.

Ron Bradford held hard on to the after ladder and met the sea a few inches from his face, while John Ashford found himself floating astern.

In the after cabin, Acting Motor Mechanic Hunkin remained in his seat and Acting Assistant Mechanic Caunter was thrown back against the port bulkhead with one of the survivors landing on top of him.

All agreed that the lifeboat seemed to stay in that position for a few seconds before coming up again. This impression was also confirmed by another crew member, who, having arrived at the boathouse as the lifeboat slipped, had gone to watch the operation from the top of Berry Head. He had in fact

seen from this vantage point the approach of the exceptional wave and had just remarked to a companion that it would do some damage to the lifeboat. He then saw the lifeboat's orange superstructure completely disappear and a column of spray rising 90 feet from where she had been. He estimates it was almost five seconds before the lifeboat's orange top reappeared. The captain of the casualty saw the entire keel of the lifeboat and both her screws.

As the lifeboat righted herself, Coxswain Dyer found that his glasses and one seaboot had been washed away. He heard the shout of 'man overboard!' and immediately dashed aft, kicking off his other seaboot as he went.

The tow rope had slackened and John Ashford had managed to grab it. Then it was wrenched from his grasp as the sea snapped it taught again. As soon as it again slackened, the coxswain seized it and flicked it back towards John Ashford, who this time was able to hold on. Then George Dyer, Ron Bradford and Arthur Curnow pulled him alongside and it took their combined strengths to hoist him on board, although he is only an average sized man.

Second Coxswain Bower, meanwhile, had been trying to move the lifeboat astern to assist in recovering John Ashford, but, unrealised by anyone, the mercury cut-out switches for the fuel pumps had been activated and the engines were reduced to idling speed and would not respond to any throttle movements. He shouted to the coxswain on the after deck who immediately opened the after door and informed John Hunkin, who, realising what had happened, went forward into the wheelhouse to operate the re-set switch for the mercury cut-outs on the fuel pumps.

As soon as full operation of the engines was restored Coxswain Dyer decided that the captain of the cutter must be transferred to the lifeboat. The lifeboat was therefore taken astern and the skipper taken off his bow on to the lifeboat's port quarter.

The tow was resumed but shortly afterwards, at 1320, it parted and Coxswain Dyer wisely decided the derelict should be abandoned. She later capsized and sank under the cliffs of Berry Head.

The lifeboat was now able to increase speed to 12 knots and landed the three survivors unharmed at Brixham at 1330. John Ashford was taken to hospital suffering from shock, exposure and strained arm muscles, but was allowed home five hours later.

A consensus of crew and outside observer opinions, combined with a consideration of the parts of the lifeboat's superstructure immersed in the sea on the port side, place the best estimate of the maximum roll at 110 degrees.

The pilot cutter had intended to try to take a Channel pilot off a west-bound container ship. The pilot was obliged to continue to New York, all other pilot stations being closed.

For this service the bronze medal has been awarded to Coxswain George Dyer and medal service certificates have been presented to Second Coxswain Keith Bower, Deputy Coxswain Arthur Curnow, Acting Motor Mechanic John Hunkin, Acting Assistant Mechanic Brian Caunter and Crew Members Ronald Bradford and John Ashford.

## South Western Division

### Jack-up barge

AN 'ADVISE LAUNCH' from HM Coastguard was received by the honorary secretary of Falmouth lifeboat station at 2128 on Monday, November 28, 1977, to take off the six-man crew of the jack-up barge *Mer d'Iroise*, in tow of the tug *Englishman* about 11 miles east of the Lizard. The tow was on passage from Le Havre to the Menai Strait and the tugmaster had become concerned for the stability of the oblong-shaped jack-up barge under the existing weather conditions; it had four legs extending 70 feet above deck level, one at each corner.

At 2145 the 50ft Thames class relief lifeboat *Rotary Service*, on temporary duty at Falmouth, slipped from her moorings with Coxswain Arthur West in command.

The wind was north east near gale to gale, force 7 to 8, visibility was good and the tide was at half ebb.

Lizard Coastguard could now see the lights of the casualty and Falmouth Coastguard gave the lifeboat an interception course of 170°M.

The lifeboat set course at her full speed of 17 knots and VHF communication on Channel 16 was established between the casualty and the lifeboat at about 2155. Lights and radar contacts were picked up soon afterwards, about nine miles ahead, and the tugmaster eventually reported that he could see the lifeboat's blue flashing light. There being more than two vessels ahead of the lifeboat, and Coxswain West not being certain of which heading the tow was now on, the tug was requested to identify herself by illumination, which she duly did. After being once misled by the lights of another vessel, the lifeboat was eventually able to home in on the tow and make rendezvous with the barge at 2230 about eight miles east of the Lizard.

The tow was making about 5 to 6 knots on a south west heading, the tugmaster being unwilling to expose the barge to a beam sea while her crew were still on board as it was feared she might then capsize.

The barge was roughly 110ft long by 70ft wide, and her four legs extended 40

feet below the surface as well as 70 feet above, although this fact was not known to the lifeboat at the time. The heavy following seas were breaking over the stern of the barge so that her decks were awash.

Coxswain West took the lifeboat around the stern of the tow and came in on her port side amidships. The barge was pitching quite heavily so that her legs were moving through an arc of about 30 degrees. She was also yawing considerably, and keeping the lifeboat held fast alongside was a difficult task of co-ordination complicated still further by the lifeboat's frequent tendency to surf in the following seas.

The casualty's crew were all wearing lifejackets and ready to abandon. The lifeboat crew waited for the appropriate moments and then told them when to jump. Each man was safely pulled aboard in turn by the lifeboat crew in an operation lasting a number of minutes without either damage to the lifeboat or injury to any of the six evacuees. In the prevailing wind and sea conditions, with the barge pitching, rolling and yawing quite dangerously, this was a considerable feat of seamanship and determination.

Transfer of the men to the tug was considered but it was decided that it

would be too hazardous to attempt. The lifeboat therefore returned with them to Falmouth and the tug with her tow waited off Falmouth to pick them up again next day.

The barge crew all were landed at Falmouth at midnight and one sick man was transferred to hospital. The lifeboat returned to her mooring at 0024.

For this service the bronze medal has been awarded to Coxswain Arthur C. West and medal service certificates have been presented to Assistant Mechanic Ronald F. Twyde and Crew Members J. H. Mitchell, R. Prynne, R. Andrew and A. Barnes.

## South Western Division

### Sails blown out

RED FLARES SIGHTED in the vicinity of Les Hanois Lighthouse were reported to the honorary secretary of **St Peter Port** lifeboat station at 2215 on Friday, November 11, 1977. A quarter of an hour later the 52ft Arun lifeboat *Sir William Arnold* slipped her moorings in St Peter Port Harbour.

The wind was west south west, strong gale force 9, gusting to violent

storm force 11, with heavy rain squalls. The spring tide was in the fourth hour of ebb.

*Sir William Arnold* maintained her full speed of 19 knots until she rounded St Martins Point. Then, with the tide ebbing directly against the wind at 5 knots, very rough seas were encountered, so that Coxswain John Petit found it frequently necessary to ease the throttles to about 9 knots when cresting the larger waves. Visibility became so restricted by driving spray that navigation was mainly dependent upon radar and the Decca Navigator.

The Port Signal Station told the lifeboat at 2244 that a police car at Pleinmont Point had reported red flares fairly close to that position. Coxswain Petit therefore kept as close to the shore as possible on his approach and the lifeboat had even heavier breaking seas to negotiate as she crossed the numerous shoals in the area. The police car then reported that they could see a small light about a mile south of Pleinmont Point, and a French naval vessel, *Detroyat*, said she had seen red flares and was going in their direction.

At 2317 the lifeboat saw a red flare ahead. Soon afterwards a small white light could be seen to the south and the lifeboat altered course towards it. It

Rotary Service, the 50ft Thames relief lifeboat on temporary duty at Falmouth, at sea in easterly storm force winds when, on February

19, she stood by the Indian cargo ship *State of Kerala* for nearly four hours awaiting the arrival of a salvage tug.

photograph by courtesy of Cornish Photonews



was visible only from time to time between the swells and, a few minutes later, the lifeboat found that it was the cabin light of the 25ft sloop-rigged yacht *Canopus*. Her position was immediately south east of Pleinmont Ledge, about half a mile offshore, and she was wallowing, bows south, without power. Her mainsail was gone and her jib was shortened to about three feet. Coxswain Petit went to the upper conning position and he noted that the wind had veered to west by south but its force was being maintained.

The lifeboat approached the yacht's port side and could then see that those on board were sheltering in the cabin. There were three men and one woman, who was the only one who could speak some English. They were asked to put their lifejackets on before an attempt was made to take them on board the lifeboat.

Deputy Coxswain Peter Bougourd and Crew Member Robert Hamon stationed themselves in the starboard waist to receive the survivors, while Assistant Mechanic Bob Vowles and Crew Member John Webster prepared to take them inboard and Motor Mechanic Eric Pattimore manned the radio and radar.

The sea condition here was even worse than elsewhere because of the proximity of Pleinmont Ledge over which the seas were lifting and breaking. The yacht was being tossed in all directions by the heavy breaking seas and by the wind, and it was a most exacting task to bring the two vessels safely together.

Nevertheless the casualty's occupants were successfully evacuated, one at a time, in four successive alongsides, each lasting only seconds before the yacht bounced clear 20 to 30 feet on each occasion. It took all the strength that Peter Bougourd and Robert Hamon could muster to pull the largest of the men aboard and the two lifeboatmen were themselves in danger of being pulled over the side during these operations.

All four survivors were taken below and given dry blankets in place of their wet clothes, while the lifeboatmen on deck threw a grapnel aboard the yacht in an attempt to tow her to St Peter Port. The grapnel soon pulled out, however, and Coxswain Petit wisely abandoned her and returned as fast as possible with the survivors, who were in complete agreement with his decision. They had been bound for St Peter Port from St Malo and had almost reached the lee of St Martins Point when the storm blew their sails out and the strong spring ebb carried them westwards.

On arrival at St Peter Port at 0037, the survivors were landed in care of the St John Ambulance and The Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, the lifeboat returning to her moorings by 0115.

For this service a second bar to the bronze medal has been awarded to Coxswain John H. Petit and the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum have been accorded to Deputy Coxswain Peter N. Bougourd and Crew Member Robert Hamon. Medal service certificates have been presented to Motor Mechanic Eric Pattimore, Assistant Mechanic Robert Vowles and Crew Member John Webster.

## Eastern Division

### Four calls

SHOEBURYNESS COASTGUARD sighted a fishing boat off West Shoebury Beacon exhibiting a distress signal at 1550 on Monday, June 6, 1977. The auto-klaxon to **Southend-on-Sea** ILB boathouse was sounded and the duty crew prepared to launch. Meanwhile the Coastguard telephoned the honorary secretary of the station, who agreed to the launch and made his way to the boathouse on the pier.

The wind was southerly, strong gale force 9, with a short, heavy sea. High water Southend was predicted at 1743. The afternoon was overcast with poor visibility in rain showers.

Southend's Atlantic 21, *Percy Garon*, launched at 1552 and headed eastward for Shoebury Beacon where a 19ft open boat, *Kelly*, was found at anchor at 1606. The three-mile passage was made in appalling conditions, with throttles having to be eased at nearly every sea. The three fishermen told the crew that their engine had broken down and that water was being taken over the gunwales, but they did not want to leave their boat.

The ILB was now in open waters in the full weight of the gale, recorded at the boathouse as gusting to 45 knots, and the crew agreed to attempt a tow into the shore. A line was passed and the tow began towards Shoebury east beach. Although the sea moderated in the shallower water, there was still a heavy ground swell. The boat was moored some half mile offshore and the three men transferred to the ILB. The HMCG mobile reported heavy onshore surf and Helmsman Robert Fossett asked that the beach area be cleared; he then beached the Atlantic 21 at half speed, landing the survivors safely at 1648. The ILB was turned and refloated with some difficulty, the crew being soaked through by this time, and course was set for station.

At 1700 the Coastguard requested that the ILB pick up the ex-lifeboat coxswain, Peter Gilson, and two fishermen, at the pier and take them to the Leigh Ray where the fishing boat *Anja* was seen to have parted one of her mooring warps in the gale. The men were aboard at 1730, after one ILB crew member had been changed at the pier.

The ILB intended to stand by the fishing boat but at 1753 the Coastguard reported red flares at Sea Reach No. 1 Buoy and the ILB immediately set course eastward, arriving on scene at 1809. Sheerness lifeboat, the 44ft Waveney *Helen Turnbull*, had also been launched to this casualty, a 28ft sloop which was undamaged but incapable of weathering the severe conditions. All six people on board were wet and exhausted and the Southend crew transferred four young boys to the ILB for safety. Sheerness lifeboat arrived at 1812 and took all survivors aboard; a tow was passed with the help of a Southend crew member placed aboard the yacht, and the tow began to Sheerness. The ILB retrieved her third crew member and stood by the tow until, at 1840, another yacht fired red flares near East Cant Buoy.

*Cogneto*, a 26ft yacht, had run out of fuel and, being single-handed, could not be successfully sailed in the gale force winds. One ILB crew member was put aboard to help the owner, who was very tired, a towline was made fast and the ILB stemmed wind and tide until Sheerness lifeboat returned at 1945 to take over the casualty.

At 2000 the ILB headed east again to take off the crew of *Anja* but was diverted to a cabin yacht in Leigh Ray which had split her storm jib and had no engine. She was anchored by the ILB crew and her three people were taken aboard the ILB at 2100.

The ILB returned to Southend boathouse at 2145 after being continuously at sea for six hours. Only then did Helmsman Fossett say that he had been having difficulty with engine controls. Although the crew had just returned from a long service they worked with the shore party to make sure that the defect was remedied before they left the boathouse: the ILB was reported ready for service at 2300. The radio handset had been continually wet and reception was poor, but after drying out, it was in full working order.

For this service the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum have been accorded to Helmsman Robert Fossett and vellum service certificates have been presented to Crew Members Paul Gilson, Stewart Green and Michael Green.

## North Western Division

### Saved yacht

BEAUMARIS HONORARY SECRETARY was informed by Penmon Coastguard at 0943 on Saturday, July 23, 1977, that the skipper of *Rossekop*, on passage from Glasson Dock to Amsterdam and now 20 miles north east of Point Lynas, was injured and that the remaining six crew members were suffering from seasickness. Maroons were fired and at

*continued on page 33*



During a two-day visit in April to Atlantic College, St Donat's, HRH Prince Charles, now president of the International Council of United World Colleges, went out in the station's Atlantic 21 ILB. He was shown the controls before going afloat and took over the helm for a 20-minute run in the Bristol Channel.

photograph by courtesy of 'Western Mail

(Below) Two Girl Guide brass trefoils, presented to Eastney ILB station by 29th Portsmouth Guide Company, have been chrome plated and fitted to the console of Atlantic 21 Guide Friendship II.



## Inshore Lifeboats

The Lions Club of St Ives successfully completed its most ambitious project yet when, during 1977, it raised the money to pay for a new D Class ILB. At a service of dedication on Easter Saturday led by The Reverend Douglas Freeman, Vicar of St Ives, the boat, Lion Cub I, was presented to St Ives ILB station by Geoffrey Kitchen, Lion Club president, and received on behalf of the Institution by Cdr Jeremy Tetley, a member of the Committee of Management.

photograph by courtesy of S. Bennetts



(Below) Port Isaac's new D Class ILB was dedicated on Easter Sunday by the Vicar of Port Isaac, The Reverend F. J. W. Maddock. She was the gift of Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Round Tables and was presented by their area chairman, John Girdlestone. Surgeon Captain Baskerville, branch chairman, a vice-president of the Institution and chairman of the Medical and Survival Committee, received the boat on behalf of the RNLI.

photograph by courtesy of Alice Dutton



Despite gale force winds and driving rain, about 1,000 people attended the service of dedication on April 30 of Abersoch's new Atlantic 21, Wolverhampton. The ILB, together with her tractor and boathouse, provided by Wolverhampton lifeboat appeal, was presented by Councillor Mrs Jessie Beddoes, Mayor of Wolverhampton, who unveiled a commemorative plaque. The ceremony was followed by tea at South Caernarfonshire Yacht Club, provided by South Caernarfonshire ladies' guild, during which guests watched Wolverhampton on exercise with a helicopter from RAF Valley.

photograph by courtesy of Peter Westley



# Matthew Lethbridge, Junior,

BEM

*Coxswain of St Mary's Lifeboat*

THE ONLY LIFEBOATMAN AT PRESENT SERVING TO HAVE BEEN AWARDED THREE SILVER MEDALS FOR GALLANTRY

by Joan Davies

'Grandfather . . . he was coxswain before Dad; and my Uncle Jim and Dad were both in the lifeboat with him. At one time, Dad was coxswain, my uncle was second coxswain, I was the bowman and my two brothers Harry and Richard, and my cousin, James, were in her as well. When my uncle finished—he was a bit older than Dad—I went second coxswain with my father . . . then, a few years after I became coxswain myself, my cousin, he went second coxswain with me for a spell. . . .'

The lifeboat tradition of family service at its best has flourished on the Isles of Scilly; a look at the family tree on this page makes that plain. For three generations, spanning 64 years, there has been a Lethbridge at the wheel of St Mary's lifeboat: first, the eldest James Thomas Lethbridge, from 1914 to 1925; then Matthew Lethbridge, Snr, BEM, 'Father Matt', from 1925 to 1956; now Matthew 'Matt' Lethbridge, Jnr, BEM, coxswain since 1956. Grandfather, father and son. Moreover, at no time since 1919 have there been fewer than two Lethbridges in the crew; for a little while there were six. Serving with Matt now are his two brothers: Harry, who has been assistant mechanic since 1965, and Richard, who has been bowman since 1952. And the awards for gallantry made during these years reflect the fine quality of the service given.

When the young Matt Lethbridge took over from his father in 1956 he had indeed been set a high standard to follow. He was, however, already a seaman of exceptional experience. For the whole of his life he had known, from open boats, the waters round the 48 islands which make up the Scillies together with 'the above water and sunken rocks', as the 'West Coast of England Pilot' sums them up, ' . . . too numerous to admit of description'. He had been out working in boats round the islands, fishing, crabbing, laying down lobster pots . . . During the war he had served in the high speed boats of the RAF Air Sea Rescue Service in stations as far apart as Stranraer, Invergordon, Bridlington (where he came to know Coxswain Tom Hutchinson well), Africa—and even, yes, the Scillies! The war over Matt returned home to St Mary's and, joining the lifeboat crew, served an 'apprenticeship', just

as his grandfather and father had done before him, as crew member, bowman and second coxswain.

It meant a great deal to Matt, that when he took command in his early thirties, not only the younger members of the crew, but the older men as well readily gave him their full confidence. He still sets great store by the fact that his father, who continued for many years as head launcher, came out in his crew on one service; and he still remembers a day, soon after he had taken over, when, as he was on his way down to the boathouse to go out on exercise, one of the older men, who had been in his father's crew, stopped him and said: 'If you're short-handed at any time, I'll go with 'ee, boy.'

Matthew Lethbridge prefers to keep more or less the same crew. As he explains:

*'There's a lot to be said for being the same crowd in the boat all the time. You learn to trust each other more, I think. With length of experience, perhaps a similar incident will turn up again and you have learned from the first time. If you have too many people on the crew list, some of them have got to be left behind on the slip—and that after they have perhaps turned out of bed and run down to the*

*boathouse in a gale of wind, when it's blowing and raining.'*

So, at St Mary's now there is one crew. The shore helpers know that they are second in line, in reserve, and there are plenty of other seamen on the islands who would be willing to go out if they were wanted.

Changes in the crew are few:

'I am quite pleased about that,' Matt has to admit. 'Proud in a way. Apart from one chap who joined the boat recently when one of the older members retired, I don't suppose there is anybody in the boat who hasn't been there for 12 years at least. Most of them have been there 20 or 30 years. I have always had a good experienced crew. They have all been at sea and earned their living by fishing or boating at some time. Some are permanent workers ashore now, but in a place like this there is always the sea and there are always the boats. . . .'

It is interesting to look at the crew lists for the three St Mary's services in recent years for which the silver medal for gallantry was awarded: the service to *Braemar*, in 1967; to *Nordanhav* in 1970; and to *Enfant de Bretagne* in 1977. Five names appear each time: Coxswain Matthew Lethbridge, Jnr, three silver medals; Second Coxswain Ernest Roy Guy and Motor Mechanic William Burrow, bronze medals in 1967 and 1970, vellums in 1977; Assistant Mechanic William Harry Lethbridge and Crew Member Rodney Terry, three vellums. Bowman Richard Lethbridge was in the crew in 1967 and 1970, and Crew Member George Symons in 1967 and 1977. The remaining places were taken by Frederick Woodcock (1967), Leslie Green (1970) and Roy Duncan (1977). For each service, all crew members, except those receiving medals, were accorded the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum.

## JAMES THOMAS LETHBRIDGE

coxswain 1914-1925  
second coxswain 1901-1914  
bowman 1897-1901  
vellum, 1927, service to SS *Concordia* of Genoa

## JAMES THOMAS LETHBRIDGE

second coxswain 1927-1949  
bowman 1925-1927  
bronze medal and Italian bronze medal, 1927, service to Italian SS *Isabo*  
vellum, 1945, service to American liberty ship *Jonas Lie*

## JAMES THOMAS LETHBRIDGE

second coxswain 1960-1963  
joined crew 1947

## MATTHEW LETHBRIDGE Senior, BEM

coxswain 1925-1956  
second coxswain 1920-1925  
bowman 1919-1920  
silver medal and Italian silver medal, 1927, service to Italian SS *Isabo*  
vellum, 1945, service to American liberty ship *Jonas Lie*  
bronze medal, 1955, service to Panamanian SS *Mando*

## MATTHEW LETHBRIDGE Junior, BEM

coxswain 1956-  
second coxswain 1950-1956  
bowman 1946-1949  
joined crew 1946  
medal service certificate, 1955, service to Panamanian SS *Mando*  
chairman's letter to coxswain and crew, 1967, service to *Torrey Canyon* of Monrovia  
silver medal, 1967, service to yacht *Braemar*  
bar to silver medal, 1970, service to Swedish MV *Nordanhav*  
vellum, 1972, service to yacht *Morone*  
second bar to silver medal, 1977, service to French MFV *Enfant de Bretagne*

## WILLIAM HARRY LETHBRIDGE

assistant mechanic 1965-  
joined crew 1947  
medal service certificate, 1955, service to Panamanian SS *Mando*  
vellum, 1967, service to yacht *Braemar*  
vellum, 1970, service to Swedish MV *Nordanhav*  
vellum, 1977, service to French MFV *Enfant de Bretagne*

## RICHARD LETHBRIDGE

bowman 1952-  
joined crew 1946  
medal service certificate, 1955, service to Panamanian SS *Mando*  
vellum, 1967, service to yacht *Braemar*  
vellum, 1970, service to Swedish MV *Nordanhav*



Second Coxswain Roy Guy, who was a crew member at the time of the service to ss *Mando* (1955) and received a medal service certificate, also comes from a lifeboat family; his father had served for a few years as bowman and then second coxswain in the 1920s; his grandfather was in the crew with Matt's grandfather—but that was in the days of pulling and sailing lifeboats.

Matthew Lethbridge Junior's years as coxswain coincide almost exactly with the time that *Guy and Clare Hunter*, a 46ft 9in housed slipway Watson class lifeboat, has been stationed at St Mary's. Matt, then second coxswain, was one of the delivery crew who brought her to her station just after she was built, in 1955; as she was not called



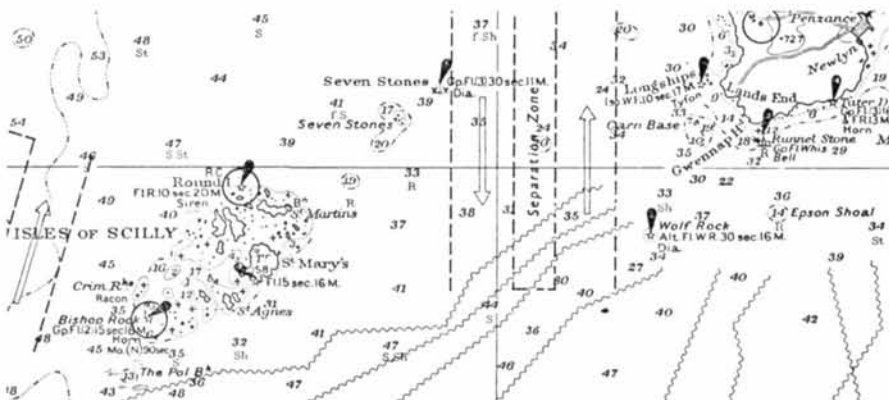
Guy and Clare Hunter, in gale force winds, standing by the yacht Braemar before taking her in tow, May 22, 1967.

photograph by courtesy of Bowman Richard Lethbridge



(Left) Coxswain Matthew Lethbridge, Jr., BEM, with his wife Pat.

The Isles of Scilly: produced from portion of BA Chart No.1123 with the sanction of the Controller HM Stationery Office and of the Hydrographer of the Navy.



out until after he had taken over from his father the following June, he was the first coxswain to take her out on service. Since then, she has launched on service 152 times and rescued 103 lives; there have, of course, also been other services in relief boats on temporary duty at the station.

As with all coxswains, the lifeboat is completely interwoven into Matt's life. *Guy and Clare Hunter* even finds her way into his house, for she is a favourite subject for the fine seascapes he paints as a hobby. He is striving after a perfect portrayal of his boat at sea for his wife, Pat, to have with her at home. As well as oils, Matt is now moving on to an even more exacting art—engraving ships on glass.

But, back to sea . . . Ships of all nationalities pass through the waters watched over from St Mary's, for the Scillies reach right out from the western tip of Cornwall into the Atlantic. French, German, Russian, American, British . . . everything you can think of.

Over the years, many a fine vessel bound north for the Bristol Channel or St George's Channel, looking for a landfall in fog, many a small boat misjudging her rounding of Land's End in winter storms, have foundered on the rocks. Vessels are recommended not to approach, in thick weather, within depths of 60 fathoms—a line which lies about 18 miles westward and 22 miles southward of Bishop Rock, at the south-western extremity of the archipelago—and there are shipping separation zones to the south, west and east. Radar, Decca Navigator and other modern navigational aids have reduced the hazard both for ships passing by, which can now stand further off, and for little boats feeling their way among the rocks, but the dangers are still there, lying in wait.

*'If anything is going to happen on a bad night, I would rather it were 20 miles away than two miles,'* is Matt Lethbridge's comment. *'It's as simple as that. We are always a lot better off when we are*

*four or five miles off the islands. Radar helps (I don't lie awake now worrying about fog!) but even that, on a really bad night, is far from a hundred per cent. We are not worried about hitting the rocks. It's the ground sea set up by the underwater ledges which is the trouble; in really bad weather it could swamp any boat—just turn her over. We can get a 20 or 30 fathom swell and it will actually break. Imagine what sort of breaking wave it is with 20 fathom of water under it. When there's a big ground sea it is worse getting from the lifeboat house to the Bishop Lighthouse than it would be going from here to Penzance—or to France, as far as that goes; in bad weather it would take us three quarters of an hour to get to the Bishop even going flat out. The keepers down at the lighthouse—their kitchen window is 95 feet high and there have been times, in bad storms, when they have had the swells up level with that kitchen window; the room has been turned green inside with the green water.'*

At St Mary's they never use a drogue because, until they get out into open sea, there is no single pattern of water. *'It's all bits and pieces around here—patches of shallow ground,'* is Matt's description. Of the tidal streams, the Admiralty 'Pilot' says: *'The rotary off-shore streams run towards the isles from a different direction at each hour of the day and, in passing round and between them, are much affected by the trend of the land and channels, and by shallow water. These effects vary with the direction of the approaching stream so that the streams near and between the islands are subject to great irregularities and inconsistencies. Though the streams round the isles are not of any great strength, their rates increase off salient points, and over and near rocks and shores, where overfalls and races may occur.'*

Whatever the weather, St Mary's lifeboat can get off the slip, though launching is a little restricted on a very big spring tide. In really rough weather, the most difficult part of any service is getting away from the islands, and of course, a casualty could be in any direction, through the full 360 degrees.

The first vital decision is which would be the best track to take out to sea? In bad weather some of the channels would not be safe, even in a lifeboat. It is always possible to get in and out of St Mary's Sound, between St Mary's and St Agnes Islands, but if the casualty is to the north or north west, that means going right round the islands.

*'Your instinct would be to go out by North Channel or Broad Sound,' says Matt. 'We have always been lucky enough to get out, but it's a bit of a job sometimes to decide whether you ought to go that way or whether you ought perhaps to go the longer way. After all, you aren't doing any good unless you get there.'*

Coming back to an unlit passage in fog or on a night when visibility has closed right in, the crew can tell when the boat enters a sound by the characteristic shape of the swell. To determine their position more closely, as well as keeping a lookout for familiar landmarks, they will note the colour of the water, or turn on the searchlight to see the nature of the bottom. Searching for a casualty among the rocks, perhaps the smell of oil, or debris on the water, will give a clue. Seagulls, disturbed and crying out, may lead the lifeboat in the right direction. The lifeboat engines will be stopped sometimes while the crew shout to see if anyone answers from the rocks. . . .

To listen to Matt describing some of his experiences at sea is almost like being given the privilege of being taken aboard his boat. There was the service in 1967 to *Torrey Canyon*, aground on the Seven Stones, when, in two spells, St Mary's lifeboat was at sea for 54 hours:

*'During the night we were just steaming around her, standing by, and even above the engines you could hear all her plates groaning and creaking. Her after part was afloat and she was pivoting and grinding on the rocks. Then, at about three o'clock in the morning there was a crash and all her lights went out. We just steamed straight in towards her . . . we thought she had broken in half. Some cables broke, I suppose . . . but then the emergency lights came on again. . . .*

*'Next morning the wind had freshened up from the north east. There were gale warnings, so the skipper agreed that we should take off the rest of the crew—we had already taken 14 off and put them aboard the Trinity House tender Stella. So we went in. There was a bit of lump alongside her and the lifeboat was ranging about a lot. Anyway, we got eight of them aboard. When the lifeboat came up, they had to jump from the rails and a couple of our blokes caught them and landed them on the rope box. This ninth one—it's terrible the things that happen—we told him to jump but he hesitated; he started to jump, changed his mind, and then decided to go. By this time it was too late and he went down between the boat and Torrey Canyon. We had just one rope forward and I shouted out, 'Let go.' The man on the bows hadn't made it fast because of the range. He was just tending it. So he let go quickly and I came full astern. That boat came in, bang, against*

*the side of Torrey Canyon. I thought 'My God, he's gone . . .' It's terrible. Anyway, as soon as we dropped back the crew said, 'He's all right! He's clear!' So we got him round the bows and aboard.'*

Then there was the Swedish ship, *Nordanhav*, in 1970, listing heavily north of the Scillies in a force 8 gale:

*'We took ten off her that morning. It was still dark; just before daylight. It just didn't seem possible. Nordanhav was ten or twelve feet above us one moment and then rolling her deck under the next. She had a list on and the iron rails were going under water and then coming up against our side while we were lying alongside her. The noise! You never heard anything like it. Her crew were having to run back from the rails as the deck went under, wait the right chance and then jump, and we grabbed them. And yet they all came off and there wasn't one hurt. . . .'*

*Braemar*, in 1967, had gone out to meet Sir Francis Chichester returning home after his circumnavigation. She had sprung a leak in her engine room and started filling up 28 miles from Bishop Rock in a near gale gusting to strong gale. *Guy and Clare Hunter* set out at 0625 on May 22 to join two ships, *Trader* and *British Fulmar*, searching for this large motor yacht:

*'It was a bad day, with rain squalls as well. Now, you can pick up rain squalls on radar, and eventually one of the ships got the idea of asking the yacht to transmit when the squalls were passing her. They traced her that way. . . .*

*'They sent for a salvage tug and we stood by . . . then we noticed she had a big coil of nylon warp on her deck, so we said if they would give us the end of that we would try to get them into Newlyn. . . .*

*'We parted different times. The snag was she kept sheering one way—as if her rudder was jammed over. Every now and then we would be right abreast of her. We would slack off everything and come back and try to get ahead of her again. We had a right day of it! The worrying part was, she was supposed to be sinking and we hadn't heard any more about the tug . . . We were towing for 13 hours or more. At one spell when the tide was coming back round the Lizard we were going so slowly that we only made half-a-mile's progress in two hours. It was about half past two the following morning before we got into Newlyn. . . .'*

When St Mary's lifeboat takes a vessel in tow, it is likely to be one with a fair displacement, so they now carry two lumps of chain on board. The chain, put in the middle to the tow rope, weighs it down; when the chain starts coming up through the water, the coxswain knows it is time to ease down on the engines.

At the annual presentation of awards at the Royal Festival Hall on May 16, Coxswain Matthew Lethbridge, Jnr, received a second bar to his silver medal, for the service to the French trawler *Enfant de Bretagne* which foundered on the South West Rocks on the night of February 13, 1977. It is, naturally, a great distress to Matt that, despite all their efforts, they were

unable to save her crew.

*'I think about it time and time again. You are always thinking if only this or if only that . . . but we had no time. From the moment the 'mayday' was picked up there was no waste of time at all. The Coastguard reported it immediately, and although we had no exact position, by luck we went straight to her . . . and we were going flat out. All we knew was that there was a trawler ashore near the Bishop, so we started going that way, and your own experience tends to knock out some things. You know she won't be on the Bishop, because if she were the keepers would know, wouldn't they? But she could be on rocks to the north or to the south of the lighthouse. So we thought our best chance was to make straight for the Bishop so that, if there were any lights or anything to give us a clue, we could see either side. Then the keepers told us they had seen steaming lights earlier down towards the South West Rocks, so we headed that way. . . .*

*'Before we got there we smelt oil and saw stuff floating on the water. We started searching, and eventually saw part of what we thought was a trawler among the white water . . . it was the worst place you could get, probably, at that particular state of the tide because the sea comes in from three different angles into a neck. We thought she was at the back of the rocks, so we tore round the back and put more flares up, but there was nothing there. We knew we had seen something but we didn't know quite what. We came back to the same spot . . . it was only a matter of two or three minutes . . . and saw it again. The trouble is, with a flare, you've only got a second or two and whatever is there is being smothered with breaking water as well . . .*

*'So then we went in among the rocks. We knew there was a passage—I've been through there hundreds of times in fine weather. We went in close and fired another flare, and there was just a little bit of the trawler's bow and the tip of her mast sticking up. While we were looking, in comes another boiling sea, what we call a rage. It was obvious we couldn't stay there. The only thing I could do was just hope to get through to the other side of the rocks and come up round again. So we went in and hard over the other way and out round the back . . . we certainly weren't more than three minutes . . . but by the time we got back there was absolutely nothing left—just part of the bow 25 feet up on the rock.*

*'When divers went down two or three days later all they could find was the engine and engine bed on the bottom; the boat herself, she had smashed to smithereens in no time. Sometime after, we found marks on another rock where she must have hit on the way in; there were marks where the gallows had struck along the rocks. We must have been right over her stern when we went in . . . we were as close as that.'*

Summing up lifeboat service, Matt maintains:

*'It is the women, waiting at home, that have the worst of it. Out on the water we have worries, of course we do, but we are on the spot and we can tackle them. We know what is happening. It's not nearly as bad as just having to wait. It's the women who have the worst of it.'*



*Backroom organisation*

*The author, Alan Neal, deputy secretary (Operations Division) runs through details of the final programme with his team (l. to r.) Norman Ford, station personnel supervisor, David Linklater of rescue records staff, and Norman Stripp, rescue records supervisor.*

## Across a Crowded Room

### THOUGHTS ON THE ANNUAL PRESENTATION OF AWARDS FOR GALLANTRY

by Alan Neal

Deputy Secretary (Operations Division)



*Morning . . .*

*A long, happy day for medallists and their families starts with a photographic session on the embankment outside the Royal Festival Hall . . . 1977: gold medallist Second Coxswain Keith Bower of Torbay arrives with his wife, Rosalin . . .*



*. . . 1975: silver medallists Coxswain Ben Tart of Dungeness (l.) and Coxswain Albert Bird of Aberdeen meet after nearly 20 years . . .*



*. . . 1974: bronze medallists Helmsman Donald Jones of Rhyl and Helmsman Benjamin Pearson of North Berwick 'kit up' ready to meet photographers and press.*

'AH! THERE'S THE RNLI,' exclaimed the coxswain of an East Anglian lifeboat who had travelled to London to receive a medal for gallantry at the Institution's annual presentation of awards at the Royal Festival Hall. The scene was the crowded lounge of the Rubens Hotel at which the Institution accommodates the medallists and their wives: the time, the evening before the presentations, when senior members of the RNLI staff come to welcome the lifeboat people arriving from the coast and to discuss with them the programme for the following day. It was back in 1975 that I caught those heart-warming words above the general conversation; and there was Tommy

Knott, coxswain at Lowestoft, whom I had known for many years—indeed we once crewed together in a reserve lifeboat on a special escort job from Dover to Calais. He had recognised me while I was on my way round, greeting arrivals. I suppose mine was the first familiar face he had spotted among the throng.

On average about 15 coxswains, crew members or 'shore boat' seamen travel to London every year to receive medals for gallantry at the Royal Festival Hall. Their wives, and sometimes their children, come with them as the guests of the Institution and it is the special responsibility, and pleasure, of my team—at present Norman Stripp, rescue records supervisor, Norman Ford, station personnel supervisor, David Linklater of rescue records staff, and myself, to ensure that all members of the party, which in a 'busy' year can number at least 50, enjoy their visit and take home happy memories with them. When there are a large number of guests, Keith Peters, who works in the RNLI London office, helps us to escort our guests.

It has been the tradition of the RNLI for very many years to entertain medallists and their families for the two days they spend in London and the occasion gives the Institution's staff the opportunity of meeting very brave men and making new friends among our lifeboat colleagues on the coast. During that first evening a number of RNLI people will call in, if only for a few minutes. I can hardly remember, for instance, a year in the past quarter of a century when Pat Howarth, public relations officer, or John Atterton, now deputy director, has not been there. Usually each medallist will be supported by the station honorary secretary and his wife. And so the party assembles, ready for what always proves to be one of the most memorable and happy days on the Institution's calendar.

Coincidences have occurred. In 1975 a Suffolk station honorary secretary met a Scottish station chairman. They knew each other well in the business world but neither was aware that the other would be in London for the presentations. That same year silver medals were to be presented to Coxswain Albert Bird from Aberdeen and to Coxswain Ben Tart from Dungeness. Now, one of the greatest rescues in the history of Dungeness station was the motor vessel *Teeswood*, in 1956, when Albert Bird had been one of *Teeswood's* crew; it was because of his experiences that day that he later volunteered for the lifeboat service. And then, after nearly 20 years, Albert and Ben met at the Festival Hall. What a reunion that was!

The sole aim of my team, indeed of the staff as a whole, is to ensure that our guests thoroughly enjoy themselves while they are with us. The day of the presentations can perhaps best be described as informally formal—at



... afternoon ...

*Presentation of awards ... 1964 at the Central Hall, Westminster: presentations were made by HRH Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, then president of the Institution. Alan Neal and Norman Stripp, acting as ushers for the medallists, can be seen in background ...*

*photograph by courtesy of Sport and General Press Agency*

*(Below) ... 1974: Coxswain Derek Scott, BEM, of The Mumbles, guest speaker, made a truly memorable speech. On his left, Cdr Ralph Swann, CBE RNR, at that time chairman of the Institution ...*



least we try to make it so. It begins with one of the most convivial breakfasts that any hotel can ever witness; and we are at hand to answer questions, deal with any problems, or just chat.

At 9.15 we give the party a run-down on the timetable of events for the day. It is a tight schedule beginning with press and television interviews and photographs on the Thames Embankment outside the Royal Festival Hall, followed by a sightseeing tour of central London and back to the hotel for lunch at noon. The Rubens Hotel is not far from Buckingham Palace and our return nearly always coincides with the Changing of the Guard, to the great delight of the younger members of our party and, I imagine, to some of the adults as well.

Lunch over, the medallists and their guests are driven to the Royal Festival Hall where, at three o'clock, the meeting begins, supported by eminent men and women from public life and witnessed by an audience of some 2,000. Unless other official engagements make it impossible, it is the normal practice for His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent, as president of the RNLI, to present the medals for gallantry following the reading of the citations by the director, Captain Nigel Dixon.

The speeches of the afternoon are both interesting and entertaining; the first is given by the chairman of the Committee of Management, the second by a guest speaker. At the AGM in 1974, the Institution's 150th anniversary year, Coxswain Derek Scott of The Mumbles gave a speech none of us who were there will ever forget, and how we laughed with our good friend, Raymond Baxter, in 1975. This year the principal guest speaker will have been Clare Francis, just back from the round-the-world yacht race. Presentations to voluntary workers and a vote of thanks brings the business of the day to an end, and soon after four o'clock



everyone adjourns for tea and biscuits in the foyer. During the refreshments His Royal Highness talks with the medallists and their wives but they are also in great demand by their Members of Parliament, Mayors, old friends and the press.

Tea over, the party is conducted back to the hotel for a short break and a light meal before going on to a theatre as guests of the Institution. After the show everyone comes back to the hotel for supper, which this year will have been a gift to the medallists and their families from Mrs. Anne Wall. The tensions of the day are forgotten and only pleasant memories remain. By now there has been time for everyone to get to know each other well and there is a fine party atmosphere. If there are Welshmen among the medallists we are sure to have some singing ...

It is difficult these days to choose what can be described as a 'family show' in London to suit the tastes of 50 or so people, but this year our guests will have seen the musical 'Oliver' at the Albery Theatre. If the reviews are anything to go by they will have had a most enjoyable evening. We were fortunate in the early post-war years to be able to book annual seats for the Crazy Gang show which featured Bud Flanagan and his henchmen. I recall that for at least ten years running the medallists and their families saw this show which, luckily for those men who

*... 1975: (left) end of the afternoon, tea in the Royal Festival Hall foyer. From Workington, bronze medallist Coxswain Albert Brown and his wife Margaret with Captain David Thomas (l.), station honorary secretary.*

made more than one trip to London to receive medals during those years, was updated from time to time.

Flanagan, who had great regard for the RNLI, used to stop the show and announce that RNLI medallists were in the audience; spotlights picked them out and the applause they were given did your heart good to hear.

Alas, the majority of shows nowadays do not allow for announcements to be made from the stage during the performance, but some theatre managements have arranged back stage parties and meetings with the cast in recent years. One memorable occasion was when we met Anna Neagle and the cast of 'Charlie Girl'; another was a party given by the management of the Vaudeville Theatre and the cast of 'Salad Days', which the entire cast attended and which lasted well into the small hours; and there was the time when the cast of 'There's a Girl in my Soup' came round to the front of the house to talk.

While the medallists are in their comfortable seats enjoying the show it seems a far cry from the gales, storms and cold in which they won their awards.

The backroom organisation of the annual presentation of awards falls to several different departments of the Institution but it is one of the Operation Division's jobs to ensure that travelling arrangements, accommodation, cater-

ing and entertainment for our guests are arranged down to the last detail.

The most important thing we have to do is to make sure that the medals themselves are ready on time and a few anxious moments have occurred when, because of manufacturing delays, medals have reached us only days before the meeting. Over years of sometimes nerve-racking experiences we have built up our own 'fail safe' measures; for instance, the medals are now removed from the office safe a day or two before the meeting because one year when we went to unlock the safe on the presentation morning the key broke in the lock! It was several hours before a locksmith could be found to retrieve the medals, which finally arrived at the hall with literally only minutes to spare. A few more grey hairs—but an important lesson had been learnt.

I have had the privilege of being a member of the organising team for upwards of 30 years and can look back on many outstanding occasions. Since 1947 five men have been awarded gold medals for gallantry; Coxswain Thomas King of Jersey, who sadly died earlier this year aged 92; Coxswain Richard Evans, BEM, of Moelfre, who has been awarded two gold medals; Coxswain Hubert Petit of St Peter Port, Guernsey; a former lifeboat inspector, Harold Harvey; and Second Coxswain Keith Bower of Torbay. When Keith Bower and his crew went up on to the platform last year to receive their medals they received a spontaneous standing ovation. There is no doubt that, year by year, audiences find the meetings uplifting. I can well remember, a few years ago, a lady coming up to me afterwards and telling me that she had felt inspired to collect more money than ever for the RNLI. I am quite sure that a great many of our fund raisers go away determined to redouble their efforts after watching the medallists going up on to the platform, one by one, and listening to the citations which sum up so much endeavour and endurance in so few, quiet words.

There was one occasion, in 1955, when the silver medal for gallantry was presented by Her Royal Highness Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent and at that time our president, to the pilot of a United States Air Force helicopter, Capt Curtis E. Parkins, for the rescue of a man from the South Goodwin Lightvessel; his crew were accorded

the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum. It was the first time for very many years that the RNLI had made awards for gallantry to foreign nationals and I remember how impressed the pilot and his wife were with the whole atmosphere of the meeting. I can also recall the time when the AGM, as the meeting was known in those days, coincided with St Patrick's Day and a coxswain from the Republic of Ireland gave Princess Marina a box of shamrock in return for his medal.

I am sure that our American friends took back with them to the USA happy memories of their visit, but our meeting was certainly not unheard of over three years before. In the old BBC Transatlantic Quiz days, in the immediate post-war years, on one programme the question was asked from London: 'On what annual occasion in England is the Sailors' Hornpipe danced?' Back came the quizzical reply: 'Would that be the annual meeting of the Royal National Life-boat Institution?' Alas, that is not so. The hornpipe was in fact danced by the boys of TS *Arctusa* at the Shaftesbury Homes annual prizegiving day. The boys' own brass band provided the music and they were trained by a chief yeoman of signals who had served in HMS *Sheffield* for the whole of the war. I must say that endless possibilities are conjured up by the thought that RNLI staff should dance the hornpipe at the annual presentation of awards but perhaps we had better leave it to the band of the Royal Marines to continue to set the scene before the presentations begin with their melodious nauti-

cal airs as they have done so well for the past ten years or more. This year, unfortunately, they will not have played for us because their own commitments made it impossible, but we shall look forward to having them with us again in 1979.

Up to 1972 medals for gallantry were presented at the annual general meeting of the governors of the Institution, but in 1973 it was decided to hold a separate business meeting for the governors in the morning (the AGM) and to follow it up by another meeting for the presentations in the afternoon. This procedure does, among other things, allow more time to be devoted to the actual medal presentations, citations and speeches. RNLI medals for gallantry have not always been presented at the Institution's annual meetings. It is recorded that in 1902 ex-Second Coxswain James Haylett of Caister was presented with the gold medal for gallantry by King Edward VII at Sandringham, when Haylett earnestly expressed his hope that His Majesty would live to be a hundred years old and then die and go to heaven.

There is no doubt that our visitors to London enjoy themselves as did a Scottish second coxswain, James Sim of Fraserburgh, who, on his return home nearly 50 years ago told the press: 'I cannot get words to express the fine way I was treated. Supposing I had been a lord I could not have been better looked after'. It will be our aim to maintain our high standards of hospitality in the years to come—that's the RNLI!

... and evening.

*The day over, a theatre party of medallists and their families ... 1966: the late Coxswain Gordon Elliott of Padstow (silver medal), Skipper Ian Innes of Helmsdale and Crew Member Donald Laker of Weymouth (bronze medals) and 12-year-old Ian Gillies of Gourcock (inscribed wrist watch), meet the cast of 'Charlie Girl', (l. to r.) Jane Murdoch, David Torguri, Stuart Damon, Anna Neagle, Lyn Ashley, Joe Brown, Christine Holmes, Derek Nimmo and Hy Hazel.*



## SERVICES AND LIVES SAVED BY OFFSHORE AND INSHORE LIFEBOATS

January 1, 1978 to April 30, 1978: Services 363; lives saved 146

### THE STATION FLEET

(as at 30/4/78)

134 offshore lifeboats

126 inshore lifeboats operating in the summer

50 inshore lifeboats operating in the winter

**LIVES RESCUED 103,405**

from the Institution's foundation in 1824 to April 30, 1978

# A Corner in Cumbria

## WORKINGTON, SILLOTH AND ST BEES: THREE LIFEBOAT STATIONS ON THE SOLWAY FIRTH AND ITS SOUTHERN APPROACHES

THREE CUMBRIAN STATIONS, St Bees, Workington and Silloth, complementing each other, are the guardians of the southern approaches to the Firth of Solway and of the firth itself, just as Kirkcudbright and Kippford guard the waters to the north.

*'Shipping bound for Whitehaven, Workington, Silloth or Annan in Firth of Solway',* advises the Admiralty 'West Coast of England Pilot', *'should make St Bees Head since the best, and only marked, navigable channel lies in the south east portion of the firth.'*

Approaching ships will first pass cliffs, backed by the rising ground of the Lake District, until, having rounded St Bees Head and steamed on towards Workington, they enter the English Channel, leaving to port the first of the sandbanks which make the firth such a treacherous waterway, and to starboard the beginning of a foreshore of rocky ledges and stones, outcrop and boulders.

*'The channels on the north side of the firth are unmarked and subject to constant change; they should not be attempted without local knowledge,'* says the 'Pilot'. And again, *'The upper part of the firth is encumbered with continually shifting drying sandbanks interspersed with channels; buoys are moved as necessary to meet the changes. Consequently this area is left blank on the charts, and . . .'* the repeated warning *' . . . navigation within it should not be attempted without a pilot . . . the rate and range of the tidal stream is considerable and the rise from low water very rapid, especially near springs when there may be a bore. It is said that as the tide rises the sea advances across the banks so rapidly that a horseman if caught by the tide at some distance offshore would have small chance of escape . . .'*

Sir Walter Scott knew all about that; he made these treacherous sands the scene for the meeting of Darsie Latimer with Redgauntlet and his mounted salmon fishers. After the riders began to make for the shore, Redgauntlet galloped back to warn Darsie, who was lingering on the sands looking towards the shores of England:

*' . . . Are you mad?—or have you a mind for the next world?'*

*'I am a stranger,'* I answered, *"and had no other purpose than looking on at the fishing—I am about to return to the side I came from."*

*'Best make haste then,'* said he. *"He that dreams on the bed of the Solway, may wake in the next world. The sky threatens a blast that will bring in the waves three feet a-breast."*

*'So saying, he turned his horse and rode off, while I began to walk back towards the Scottish shore, a little*

*alarmed at what I had heard; for the tide advances with such rapidity upon these fatal sands, that well-mounted horsemen lay aside hopes of safety, if they see its white surge advancing while they are yet at a distance from the bank.*

*'These recollections grew more agitating, and, instead of walking deliberately I began a race as fast as I could, feeling, or thinking I felt, each pool of salt water through which I splashed, grow deeper and deeper.'*

Well, it was Redgauntlet, on horseback, who, on that occasion, rescued the stranded lad from the sea: at low tide the sands still lure the unwary from safety, but nowadays an ILB would have done the job . . .

It is of passing interest that 'Redgauntlet' set in the eighteenth century in the twilight days of Bonnie Prince Charlie, was published in 1824, the year in which the RNLi was founded. Twenty years earlier, in 1804, a Greathead Original was stationed at Whitehaven—she was the Solway Firth's first lifeboat.

Since those days there have also been lifeboat stations at one time or another at Maryport (1865-1949, closed because of silting up in the harbour) and Seascale (1875-1895). Whitehaven station was closed in 1925. Before leaving these older stations perhaps we could pause for a timeless word from the late A. E. Jolly, who was the first motor mechanic at Maryport in the 1930s. Describing the service to ss *Plawsworth* in a south-westerly gale on January 17, 1934, he wrote:

*'Occasionally a wave would come along that was father of them all. There is time to look round on a wave like this. Over our stern is the last wave that we rode, already yards away, with the tops of others beyond it. I thank my lucky stars I can enjoy this majestic scenery . . .'*

Although set against the background of the high lands of the Lake District, the littoral of the Solway Firth is busy with everyday life: industry, commerce, fishing.

There is Whitehaven, exporting coal and detergents and importing grain, chemicals, phosphates, timber and fish. At one time three ships to carry phosphate rock from Casablanca were 'tailor made' to fit Whitehaven's tidal harbour: as tonnage increased they have been superseded by bulk carriers which have to anchor off, but the three smaller ships still ferry in the cargo. Workington, with a tidal harbour and a wet dock, ships in pig iron, liquid sulphur, oil, volcanic ash, pumice, bricks and coal, and ships out ingot moulds, rail track, pitch and tar. Maryport can

only accommodate small vessels and fishing boats these days. Silloth, higher up the firth, with a tidal basin and wet dock, is used for the import of grain, building materials and cattle, exporting scrap metal, while Annan, at the limit of navigation, can only be reached by vessels of light draught with local knowledge. With its swift tides, the Solway Firth is no place for pleasure boats, although wild-fowlers go out in the marshy upper reaches.

Offshore cover for the southern approaches to the firth is given by Workington. A station was first established in this port in 1886 following the wreck of the schooner *Margaret* of Ramsey with all hands. Closed in 1905, it was reopened again in 1948 to take the place of Maryport. Workington's first lifeboat had been *The Dodo*, a 34ft open self-righting boat rowing ten oars double banked: her present boat, moored in the dock, is the 46ft Watson *Sir Godfrey Baring*. Throughout the years, however, the threat of the sandbanks, particularly when the wind is south west through to west, has not changed:

January 1887: ss *Rheola* bound from Carthage for Maryport with a cargo of iron ore, grounded to the north of Workington pier in a strong south west breeze.

December 1889: ss *Lady Eglington* bound from Cardiff for Workington with a cargo of coke stranded on the north shore in a strong south-west breeze.

January 1950: ss *Turquoise* of Glasgow aground one mile north of Maryport in a westerly gale.

October 1952: ss *Baron Dunmore* of Ardrossan laden with iron ore aground on the south side of the channel.

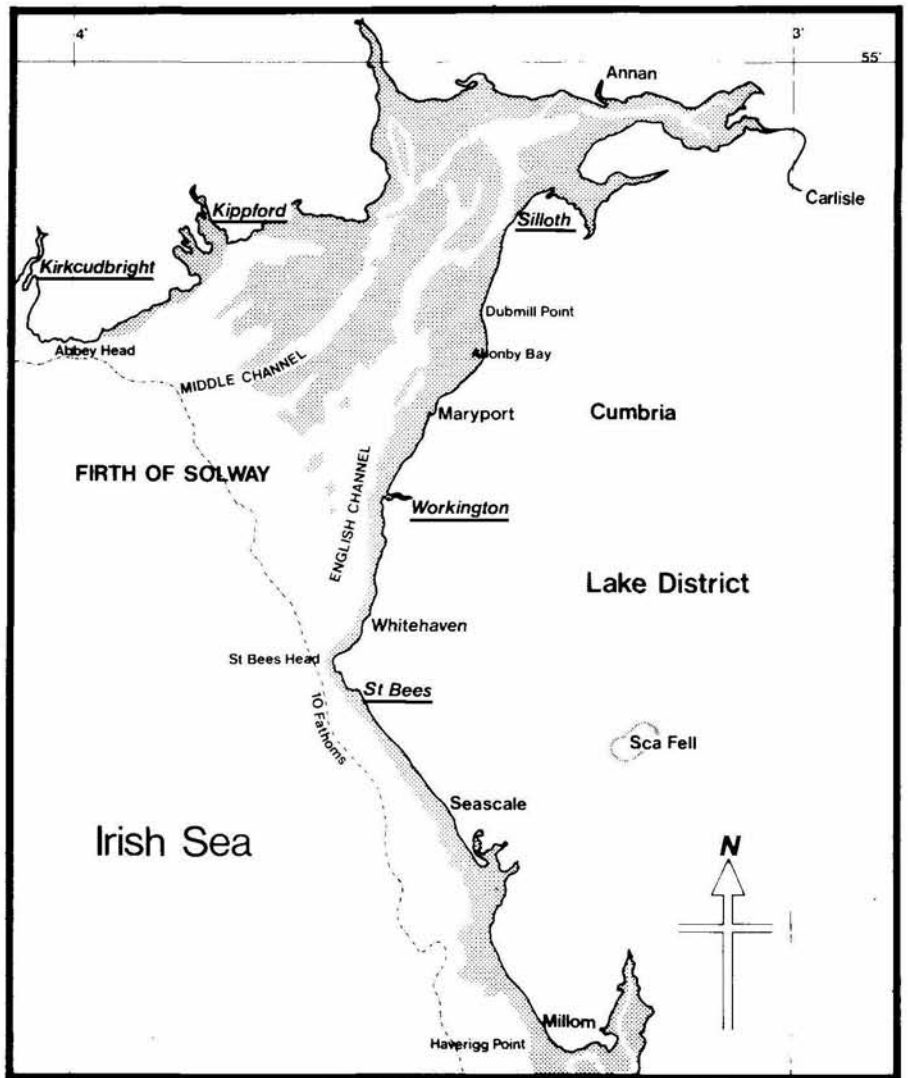
There have been times when ships, arriving from distant lands and unable to enter harbour in bad weather have had to ask the lifeboat to bring out provisions or take off sick or injured men as no other boat could get out to them.

The station honorary secretary is Captain David Thomas, harbour master and so right on the spot, and several of the crew are pilots or work in the docks—that number includes the twins Joe, second coxswain, and Bert Reay. Coxswain Albert Brown, who was a coxswain pilot, is now up at the steel works. When the maroons are fired he is on his way down immediately, picking up other members of the crew on his way. One January night in 1974, the lifeboat was called out to a fishing vessel *Kia-Ora*, dragging her anchor half a mile east of Hestan Island in storm force winds. Because of the very rough seas and the depth of water there would

be at that state of the tide (one hour after low water), the lifeboat had to take the outside course to the island. When she arrived at the casualty it took great seamanship and determination to manoeuvre her alongside, but a young boy and seven men were successfully taken off. For this service the bronze medal for gallantry was awarded to Coxswain Brown.

Co-operation between the station branch and the ladies' guild is strong at Workington, and both are well backed up by the local sailing fraternity: Harrington Fishing and Sailing Club, of which Albert Brown is a committee member, and Vanguard Sailing Club, several members of which sit on the lifeboat committee. There is no doubt that everyone enjoys their mutual lifeboating activities. Every year the guild holds a dance, well supported by both lifeboat and sailing people, as well as organising nearly new sales; in the 12 years since it was formed, the guild has raised more than £10,000. When Harrington Fishing and Sailing Club runs a wine buffet evening at Westlands, the lifeboat ladies are invited to put on a tombola and raffles; and on its bonfire night the club invites the ladies to go round with collecting boxes. Another way the club helps: when its members go out lobster potting and netting, they cook crabs and bring them down to the club for people to take what they want, putting money in one of the club's four or five lifeboat boxes.

The two Workington sailing clubs unite under a common banner to produce a joint racing programme and run two annual events in aid of the RNLI: a race to Ramsey, Isle of Man, and the Whitehaven RNLI gala race.



could be taken to the lakes as well. She is towed along the coast road to the launching point nearest to the casualty

and from there takes to the water. The local police are always ready to help keep the road open and ensure that the ILB's land passage is clear.

St Bees may be a young station but it already has a strong corporate spirit. Last year a new crew room was built and this winter a new boathouse, all at no cost to the Institution. None of the 12 crew members has ever claimed the small awards made for services or



Sir Godfrey Baring, Workington's 46ft Watson lifeboat, recovering from capsize in trials after she had been fitted with an air bag to give her a self-righting capability.

When the Duke of Atholl, a deputy chairman of the Institution, visited Workington last year he met members of the crew and also officers and members of both Workington and Maryport ladies' guilds. He presented the silver badge to the chairman of Workington guild, Mrs G. J. A. White, standing on his right.

To the south of Workington, round the headland, is the youngest of the Cumbrian stations, St Bees, where a D class inflatable ILB is 'on duty' during the summer months. She was the gift of Egremont and Whitehaven Round Table and her concern is, to a great extent, holidaymakers who get into difficulties in the sea or along the coast. Last summer, for instance, she was launched to help sailing dinghies, fishing boats, inflatable dinghies and people stranded on the cliffs. While her base is at St Bees, this inshore lifeboat, kept on a road trailer, can answer calls over a very wide area: from Workington in the north to Millom in the south, and, of course, were it necessary she



exercise, all the money being put straight into the building fund. Their wives, who have now formed a ladies' guild and sell souvenirs in the boat-house, helped to raise money for the project and various gifts of materials were received from local people. The building itself was done, at no charge, by Community Industries, the aim of which is to provide practical experience for young people having difficulty in finding work. A very fine enterprise, whatever way you look at it, and, at the end, a very fine shore establishment.

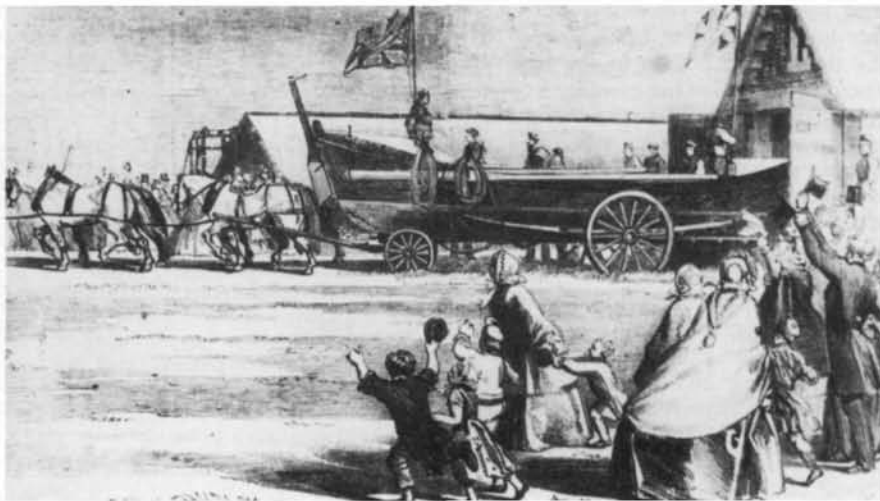
Leon Goldwater, honorary secretary of St Bees station branch, was himself once a member of Hartlepool ILB crew, and holds the distinction of being the first helmsman to take an Atlantic 21 out on a night service.

The crews of both St Bees and Silloth are certainly representative of the activities of the communities they serve: inshore fishing, teaching, engineering and electrical work, farming, accounting, driving (crane, fork lift, bus), shopkeeping and a number of other occupations.

Silloth, which has the longest history of any of the present Solway lifeboat stations, is situated well up the firth. Pulling and sailing lifeboats were placed here from 1860 until the station was closed in 1896, to be re-opened as an all-the-year-round ILB station in 1967. Despite this 70-year gap tradition has been handed down and the links between yesterday and today are still strong; for instance, the grandfather of Robert Bell, who is now a crew member, was in the crew of the 1890s.

Silloth's present boat is a 19ft Zodiac Mark V inflatable inshore lifeboat of the type illustrated on the front cover of the summer 1977 journal. The gift of the John Gilpin Trust, she is named *John Gilpin* and is unusual in that she has a standing steering position to give the helmsman better height of eye to read the sea and sandbanks; she is also

St Bees: (l. to r.) Leon Goldwater, honorary secretary, Stanley Kelly, DLA, Jim Baty, station administrative officer, Crew Members Ian McDowell, Russell Cranston, Jack Southam, Michael Goldwater and Bill Forbes, and Malcolm Reid, DLA. In background (l.) the new crew room nearing completion; a new boathouse has been built since this photograph was taken.



1860: The launching of Silloth's first lifeboat, *Angela and Hannah*, and . . .

1977: Some of the present ILB crew and branch members with their training board: (l. to r.) Jim Graham, DLA, Senior Helmsman Colin Akitt, Crew Members Derek Wilson, Robert Bell, Dick Jordan and George Ritchie, and George Egdell, honorary secretary.



fitted with water ballast tanks.

Good vision is of particular importance in an area of shallows and shifting sands where, indeed, the hazards and the passages that can be navigated, even by a shallow-draft boat, vary hour by hour with the ebb and flow of a very swift tide. A search may have to be made at night (navigation lights are carried on *John Gilpin's* steering console) and that search may be prolonged. On a frosty night in early May 1977 the ILB launched at 0055 to search for a Morecambe Bay prawner reported

missing. The fishing boat, her propeller fouled by nets, was eventually found at 0854 and the ILB then towed her towards Maryport until another fishing boat was able to take over. By the time she returned to station and was rehoused it was 1046, and she had been at sea just on ten hours. Although crew members had been changed during that time, Senior Helmsman Colin Akitt had remained in command throughout.

In such waters, for which there is no detailed chart, local knowledge is of the greatest importance, and so Silloth branch worked out an extensive instruction programme for its younger, less experienced crew members. It was Bill Irving, a professional fisherman and a deputy launching authority, who suggested the training board which is now a feature of the boathouse. He himself made the plywood board, on a wooden frame, 6 feet by 6 feet; then, together with George Egdell (station honorary secretary) he marked it off in two inch squares and drew in the high water coastline from an Ordnance Survey map. With the help of Bill Wilson (also a fisherman and a DLA) the low water line and sandbank outlines were marked in, the main channel being shown by pins of different colours indicating whether or not the buoys were lit. Landmarks and compass roses were added and the lights of towns and villages shown by yellow circles. Jim Graham (another DLA who is also the station's mechanic) surveyed the hazardous Dubmill Point area and Allonby Bay and reproduced them on



one corner of the training board.

With the aid of this board, Bill Irving planned a course of lectures on local navigation, with particular reference to tidal variations, the accessibility of areas according to tidal time and height, and deviations from courses necessary in different weather conditions; another point made was the relationship of moonlight to the tides. To make full use of the training board Bill Irving devised a game. Each crew member drew one card from two separate packs. On one card was given the date and time of the call and the duration of the service; on the other was given the area of search and visibility. The crew member then had to describe the courses he would take to the area of search and on his return passage to station, giving the navigational points he would use and drawing attention to any difficulties and advantages he might expect to find. To complete the training programme, Jim Graham spoke on the structure and mechanics of the ILB and on his study of the coastline from Silloth to Dubmill Point, and Dr Robert Yule (honorary medical adviser) gave a course of instruction on first aid.

Thus was knowledge and experience shared; a combined, thorough exercise, typical of Silloth's cheerful dedication. Once again, here is a station which in itself is a happy family with everyone, whether they belong to the crew, the branch or the ladies' committee, ready to give whatever help is needed, and which is well supported by the local community. Alterations to the boathouse? Crew and committee members all contributed their various skills and their hard work ('When I think of Colin Akitt it is through a spectrum beginning with seamanship and ending with a paint brush', is George Egdell's summing up). Fund raising? The souvenir stall in the boathouse is kept open at all times in the summer season, right up to 10 o'clock at night. Bill Shanks (branch honorary treasurer) is in charge and gives up endless time (not to mention space in his own sitting room which doubles up as a souvenir store); he is helped by George Egdell, Jim and Agnes Graham and many other crew and branch members who come in to give a hand. Last year the shop takings were over £3,500. The station has need of a particular item? There always seems to be someone ready to help—the crew themselves, the Friends of Silloth Lifeboat, Silloth Rotary Club, or sometimes support comes from further afield; when launchers waders were needed, they were given by Wigton Ladies' Circle.

A corner in Cumbria: three lifeboat stations, each with its different type of boat, contributing differing but complementary capabilities to a common, devoted service at sea; and each by the sheer joyous, wholehearted approach of its people contributing great strength to the Institution as a whole in the best lifeboat tradition.

J.D.



While Fred Williams (l.), appeals office supervisor, spins the drum, Tom O'Connor (centre) draws the winning tickets in the RNLI's second lottery at Poole HQ on March 31. With them are Joyce Pearce, who organises the lottery at HQ, and Cdr Ted Pritchard, appeals secretary. A splendid total of £35,000 was raised by this second lottery.

## Second lottery winners

COMEDIAN TOM O'CONNOR drew the winning tickets for the second RNLI national lottery at Poole on March 31 in the presence of Major-General Ralph Farrant, chairman of the Committee of Management, John Atterton, deputy director, Cdr Ted Pritchard, appeals secretary, and members of the RNLI headquarters staff. Mr O'Connor, who was accompanied by his wife, children and agent, Billy 'Uke' Scott, one of the *élite* Water Rats, kept everyone laughing as he drew the tickets and took great interest in all he was shown on a later tour of the RNLI building. The prizewinners were:

£1,000: P. F. Tee, Salisbury.



Brian King, a member of the Lifeboat Enthusiasts Society, with three non-working models he has made, two for the RNLI and one for himself, of Margate's new 37ft 6in Rother lifeboat Silver Jubilee (Civil Service No. 38). Built mainly of GRP, they took about 20 months to complete. William Osbornes, Jack Groves and LBES members helped with advice and photographs.

A diorama, depicting the launch of Arbroath lifeboat Robert Lindsay in the tremendous storms of October 26, 1953, made by the Army Apprentices College Model Club, Arborfield, Reading, was entered by Berkshire branch in the national championship of the International Plastic Modellers Society. It was outright winner of its class.



£50; Miss C. E. Dunmore, Redhill; P. Dowd, Newbury; G. Skinner, London; I. Whittaker, Chester; J. McFadden, Dunstable; Mr Pumpkin, London; B. Parkinson, Harrow; D. W. Smith, Preston; T. A. Jackson, Manchester.

With a sales limit of £40,000, this second lottery raised nearly £35,000. Some entries which arrived too late for the draw are being transferred to tickets in the third lottery. Additional tickets for the draw to be made on September 29 are available from the Appeals Department, RNLI, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ.

Winners of the third lottery will be announced in the winter 1978/79 issue of THE LIFEBOAT.

## Lloyd's choir record

A STEREO RECORD has been made by Lloyd's of London Male Voice Choir, conducted by David de Warrenne, in conjunction with the RNLI, all proceeds being given to the lifeboat service. On side A are four carols; on side B four folk songs.

Lloyd's, which began in a London coffee house in about 1688, was already established as a marine insurance market at the beginning of the nineteenth century and in 1802 its underwriters gave £2,000 to 'encourage the building of lifeboats'.

The record is available from the RNLI City Office, 40 St Mary Axe, London EC3, price £1.50 including postage and packing.

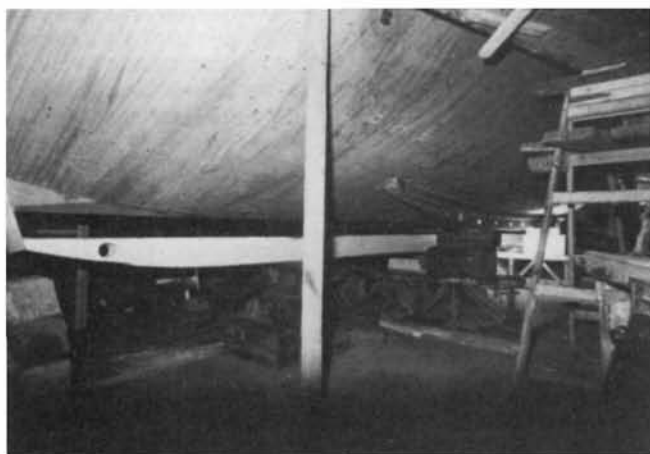


Fig. 1: Bilge keels, port and starboard, take weight of hull so that mild steel ballast keel can be slid into place.

Fig. 2: After end jacked up so that holes can be drilled through deadwood for keel bolts, the longest bolt being 3ft 6in.

## Building a Rother Class Lifeboat

### PART VIII: BALLAST KEEL

MORE THAN TWO TONS of mild steel are forged into the Rother's ballast keel. Together with such heavy members as the twin diesel engines, set low in the hull, the purpose of the ballast keel is to lower the centre of gravity of the boat and thus increase her stability. Acting like a pendulum, it helps counteract the effect of wind and waves on hull and superstructure; the greater the heel and the higher the keel is lifted up through the water, the greater will be the force of the righting lever bringing the boat back on to an even keel.

Before the ballast keel can be slid into position under the hull the blocks on which her centreline structure has been resting must be moved. So blocks are now built up under her bilge keels, port and starboard, which will carry the hull weight. These bilge keels are cut from 6in x 3 1/2in x 3/4in mild steel angle and bolted on with 1/2in galvanised aluminium bronze bolts; before finally

being bolted into place the bilge keels will be galvanised.

The ballast keel is fixed with 38 3mm bolts of varying length depending on the depth of the centreline structure through which each has to pass:

Fig 3: Looking up into the starboard propeller tunnel, lower end of rectangular propeller freeing scupper can be seen clearly and also, further forward, the hole which will take the stern tube for the propeller shaft. Outboard of the tunnel cant can be seen the four starboard cockpit relieving scupper openings.



Crew Member James Kevin Osborn of Littlehampton has been awarded the Royal Humane Society's certificate of commendation for the rescue last October of a man thrown into the water when a mast collapsed. The man, who

was injured badly, had been working at the mast top in a bosun's chair.

\* \* \*

R. A. Lister Power Plant Ltd presented a generator worth over £800 to

forefoot, hog or deadwood. Those going through the deadwood are the longest—the one furthest aft being no less than 3ft 6in long—and, to give room for their holes to be drilled and the bolts driven through, the stern of the boat has to be jacked up as shown in Fig. 2. Each bolt has a countersunk head with a protruding key which, driven up into a prepared groove, prevents the bolt from turning.

(To be continued)



Presentation of Lister generator: (l. to r.) Mike Pennell, executive assistant to director RNLI, John Atterton, deputy director RNLI; Cdr David Wilford, superintendent Poole depot; John Ball, production director R. A. Lister Power Plant; Cdr Ted Over, RNLI staff officer (technical); David Purkis, chief contracts engineer, Lister; Coxswain Frank Ide, Poole lifeboat; John Ward, an electrical wireman, Lister.

the RNLI at Poole depot on April 11. The gift results from a visit by HRH The Duke of Kent to the new Lister Power Plant works at Thrupp, near Stroud, which he opened last September. Asked by the company's directors to nominate a charity to receive a presentation generating set, the Duke, as president of the RNLI, nominated the Institution. The set will be available for any station needing emergency power.

#### RIGHT WAY UP

An exhibition telling the story of the self-righting lifeboat is being staged at the Science Museum, South Kensington, until September 3. It will be open to the public from 1000 to 1800 Mondays to Saturdays and from 1430 to 1800 on Sundays.

Admission free.

# Shoreline Section

TO MAKE A CHANGE from the usual Shoreline page, I have asked Linda Grainger, one of my assistants, to write about the work of herself and her colleagues. First of all, however, I am pleased to announce that RNLB *Shoreline* has been allocated to Blyth, a station on the north east coast of England established in 1826. We shall have a great deal to tell you about Blyth as time goes by.

And, before I hand over to Linda, 66 new members were signed on at Bristol Boat Show in April—well done!—PETER HOLNESS, *membership secretary, RNLI, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ (Tel. Poole 71133).*

\* \* \*

No doubt you remember that, in the spring 1978 journal, mention was made of the fact that Shoreline members are now enrolled straight on to computer from head office. Well, I am one of a merry band of six girls who are responsible for seeing that all new applications for membership are dealt with without delay and with the greatest ease. We also deal with membership renewals, insignia orders, our members' correspondence and a great many other aspects of the membership scheme.

You may ask yourself how six girls

and a supervisor are able to keep their heads above water with the membership figure currently standing at 47,000 and rising! Well, up to June 1977 all the work was dealt with manually on a monthly basis. Everything was written down and sent to a centre in Croydon, where it was processed on computers—and, believe me, the end of the monthly 'run', as it was called, left us all breathless. We would have a few days break in between the work going to Croydon and it being returned to be sorted and filed, during which we would deal with work which was considered less urgent—queries and insignia orders, for example—but which was nonetheless important. Inevitably delays occurred which often resulted in additional correspondence . . .

When in June the computer visual display units (VDU) were installed in the Shoreline office, we set about learning how to operate them and tried to find the best way to handle the work load in order to achieve the smoothest possible running of the office. We seemed to be everlastingly reorganising and reallocating the work and it was some months before we began to see any real change for the better.

We are now divided into sections. Two membership clerks, Christine and

Marianne, receive the paperwork from our accounts office. They sort it out into new members and renewals and pass it over to the VDU operators, another Linda and myself. The membership clerks also deal with all the correspondence regarding subscriptions which are paid through the bank. They are responsible, too, for sending out membership cards together with any insignia which may have been ordered.

The VDU operators process membership forms on the computer and make any necessary amendments for existing members; for example, changes of address or increased subscriptions.

The work is then passed to Peggy, our correspondence clerk who, besides being second to none at deciphering signatures, is happy to answer any of our members enquiries.

Lastly, but by no means least, we have Carol, our covenant clerk, who deals with no less than 16,000 covenanted subscriptions. Watching her at work I feel sure she would quite happily deal with 50,000 covenants, so it seems a great pity that more subscriptions are not covenanted as, besides the extra benefit this would bring into Shoreline, we all wonder

*continued on page 32*

*Linda Grainger operating one of the two visual display units linking Shoreline office directly to the CMG computer at Croydon in which membership details are recorded. The link represents a considerable saving for the RNLI in labour, postage and time. In background, Frank Dean, Shoreline supervisor, and Marianne Billings.*



## THE INCHCAPE HARD COURT TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS OF GREAT BRITAIN BOURNEMOUTH

**MONDAY SEPTEMBER 18 to SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 24, 1978**

Twenty per cent of the price of all tickets sold will be donated to the RNLI.

Special reduced prices for season tickets will be available through our branches and guilds.

Here is a first class opportunity to see championship tennis in delightful surroundings.

Further details from **Anthony Olver, RNLI, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset.**

# Some Ways of Raising Money

A total of 400 RNLI lottery tickets sold by one person is a record set by Stuart Maggs of Hythe branch. Well done Mr Maggs—but are there any challengers?

How about individual flag day collectors? Roger Cope, a member of Birmingham branch committee on leave from *Canadian Pacific*, collected £149.56 in about 7½ hours in Birmingham's main shopping street on April 22. A week earlier, in Wolverhampton, Bob Proudlock, the branch honorary secretary, collected over £92 on the street, with Malcolm Timmins, the chairman, running up at over £78.

Lying comfortably in a bend of the River Tavy, about a mile from its confluence with the Tamar, is the ancient

*Faced with the problem of transporting a 35ft mast ten miles from Venton to the yacht he is building at Oreston, Peter Compton turned the exercise into a fund-raising event. The sponsored marchers, who raised £125 for Plymouth lifeboat station, were met at Lyneham Inn by Coxswain John Dare and members of his crew.*

photography by courtesy of 'The Western Morning News'



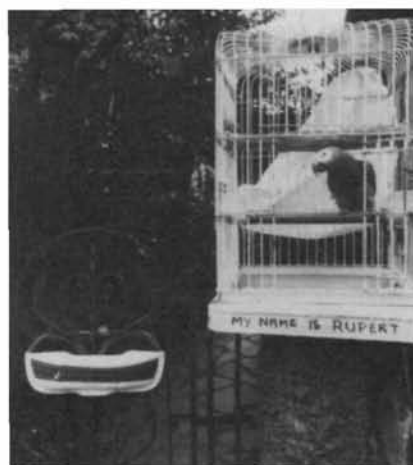
river port of Bere Ferrers. Its maritime traditions are old and strong. Recently 11 industrious ladies of the village organised a sponsored knit-in for the RNLI, raising £52.70 in two hours. A bring and buy stall, tea with homemade cakes and a raffle brought the result of the afternoon's activities to £77 for Tavistock branch. The multi-coloured knitted strips are being made into a blanket for another charity.

A sponsored swim undertaken in January by pupils of Barnard Castle School, Co. Durham, raised a staggering £1,463, of which £400 was raised by juniors in the preparatory school. The young daughter of the swimming instructor, Katherine White, achieved 24½ lengths and one boy, Nicholas Oliver, raised £42.

Mrs Mabel Thomas, one-time honorary secretary and still a stalwart member of St David's ladies' guild, raised £30 this year by selling paper leeks for St David's day in a local shop.

Despite weather that would have kept any sane person indoors by his own fireside, the 'Any Questions' evening held by Pangbourne branch at Pangbourne Nautical College on February 3 was very nearly a sell-out. The panel consisted of Sir Havelock Hudson, chairman of Lloyds, Tony Durant, MP for Reading North, Sheridan Morley, author, broadcaster and theatre critic, and Baroness Phillips, chairman of the Association for the Prevention of Theft in Shops; the chair was taken by Alastair Scott Johnston (doing penance for 18 years on the BBC's 'The Navy Lark'). College six-formers asked questions that led to an interesting and enjoyable evening, at the end of which the profit for the RNLI was £300.

1977 was a bumper year for Rustington and East Preston branch. A record amount of £1,650 was raised from their flag day, coffee morning and a sponsored walk.



*Rupert, lifeboat collector par excellence: Captain and Mrs F. Wilson's African grey parrot does his trick of duty at their front gate. Being a talkative bird, he is very persuasive and in just three weeks last August, collected more than £12 for Falmouth ladies' guild.*

Lymington branch and ladies guild raised £714.84 at Beaulieu Boat Jumble, held for the first time on Sunday April 16. Marine jumble collected by branch members brought in £475.19; £30.30 came from the sale of 10p tickets for the Southern District's competition for a Saab motor car, and the guild sold £94 worth of souvenirs. A final sum of £115.35 was raised by an auction held by the organisers of Beaulieu Boat Jumble at the end of the day; a loudspeaker request to stallholders to donate anything they did not want to take away to be auctioned off for the RNLI met with a generous response and Don Smith, of



*Pauline Morris, chairman of Newquay ladies' guild, Cornwall, and her husband, Mr M. H. Morris, station honorary secretary, run a dance club in aid of the RNLI which meets at the WI Hall every Saturday evening. A small charge is made for members and visitors and voluntary contributions for tea and biscuits are collected in a lifeboat box. The Toshiba amplifier was a gift to the branch. Between June 1975 and September 1977 a profit of £975 was achieved—and they are still dancing.*

Montagu Ventures who organised the Jumble, proved a fast and lively auctioneer.

The owner of the Regency hair-dressing salon in Otley, West Yorkshire, has thought of a new way of increasing the takings in her lifeboat collecting box: she has gathered a large collection of paperbacks and magazines which can be borrowed and read—providing 5p is placed in the box.

Bridgwater branch raised £270 for the RNLI with its autumn ball at Chilton Trinity School. The tombola was the most successful the branch has ever run, and during the evening two gallon bottles of whisky were raffled.

Milton Southsea branch, formed in February 1977, had a splendid first year, raising £3,223. This amount included £677 raised during their lifeboat week, which culminated at the time of the Jubilee Fleet Review at



Her Grace Lavinia, Duchess of Norfolk, patron of Littlehampton branch, presented a silver statuette to Mr R. J. C. Richards, a former treasurer of the branch, during Littlehampton's lifeboat ball last autumn. With them is Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Compston, chairman of the Fund Raising Committee. At the end of an evening very much enjoyed, £582 had been raised for lifeboats.

... While Brownies of the 13th Durham (below left) and 9th (below right) Packs are helping the RNLI by collecting foreign coins. The Brownies also took part in a poster competition and the three best entries were displayed at a coffee morning held for the RNLI in the spring at the Town Hall, Durham.



Five hundred people attending Gorleston lifeboat ball gave a big 'send off' to a mammoth fund-raising event by Great Yarmouth and District Round Table No. 41. The Tablers aim to raise £10,000 for the Institution with a sponsored voyage from Great Yarmouth to Glasgow by ILB. Montmorcency the dog was given to them as a mascot by Mrs Thelma Dowling, ladies' guild chairman. The ball itself resulted in a record profit of £1,212.

photograph by courtesy of 'Yarmouth Mercury'



Poole ladies' guild started its tenth year with an exhibition of crafts at which there were demonstrations ranging from the making of Dorset buttons (13-year-old David Johns), to enamel craft (Mrs Renate Wadham). Peter Fallon shows his macramé to (l. to r.) Mrs Margaret Adam, guild chairman, Mrs Molly Sedgewick, honorary treasurer, and Mrs Mary Verner, honorary secretary. During its ninth year, 1977, Poole guild raised £9,200.

photograph by courtesy of 'Poole and Dorset Herald'



Brownies of the 4th Bishopbriggs Pack, Glasgow, seen with Guider, Mrs Sheena Smith, give the income of their monthly tuck shop to the lifeboat service. Gradually their contribution has increased: 1973, £3.40; 1974, £6.50; 1975, £5.40; 1976, £11.45; and 1977, £14...

photograph by courtesy of Brian Swinburne





The Zixex Club, supporters of Pewsey branch, used the white horse they had made for Pewsey Carnival to raise money for the lifeboat service, towing it on wheels from Pewsey via Salisbury, Downton, Fordingbridge, Ringwood and Christchurch to Mudeford. £300 was raised by sponsorship and en route collections. Mudeford station welcomed the party, took over the horse and used it for a further fund-raising effort on Boxing Day before finally burning it in January.

For one day during London lifeboat week in both 1977 and 1978, Peter Elgar, a Shoreline member, set up a stand at British Airways Engineering West Base, Heathrow Airport, using his own boat as centrepiece. In 1977 he and his colleagues collected £57.28 for Staines and Ashford branch; in 1978 they collected £85.40, which was made up to £100 by the Joint Shop Stewards Committee. (l. to r.) John Denn, Peter Elgar and Geoff Andrews.



A gentle tap from Robert Morley on a Salமானazar champagne bottle releases £150.65 in pound notes, pennies and half-pennies collected for the RNLI by The White Hart public house at Wargrave between June last year and March. Ian Malim, the manager, looks on. A guess-the-amount competition brought in £60.70. photograph by courtesy of 'The Maidenhead Advertiser'



A sponsored 25-hour game of crib played by Brighton policemen, Sgt. Peter Gear, PCs Dave Rowland, Harold Green, Kim Wood, Roger Charles and WPC Sue Boughten, raised £1,058 for Brighton's new ILB station. The cheque was presented by Dame Vera Lynn to Charles Wilson, chairman of Brighton station branch. With them are (l.) Ian Wallington, DOS(SE) and (r.) WPC Boughten.

The ladies of Kirkburton guild, West Yorkshire, together with many friends, volunteered to be extras in a training film made recently for the National Biscuit Company at Hillards stores. After a very entertaining afternoon, the guild was presented with a cheque for £100 by Barry Lockwood, an executive of the company.



Spithead: also a generous donation of £335 from McMurdo Investments; and a film show and presentation in Portsmouth's Guildhall on the RNSEA/Whitbread Round the World Race given by Southern Television personality Barry Westwood and Robin Knox-Johnston, a member of the Committee of Management, and others, which raised £1,136.

A branch manager of Wavy Line Grocers organised a sponsored raft race which raised the staggering amount of £6,250. The cheque was received on behalf of Southend-on-Sea branch by Sir Alec Rose, several of whose books 'My Lively Lady' were also raffled; the resulting £100, given to Sir Alec for his local branch, has been apportioned between Havant branch and Walmer, where *The Hampshire Rose* is stationed.

Sore feet have figured prominently during the last few months as we hear of various sponsored walks. Walkers from Eastleigh and Chandler's Ford raised £315.95. Arthur Roberts of Gravesend needed all his determination when a misdirection sent him some miles further than the planned 38 miles; nevertheless he finished the walk and



Mrs Bill Bennett of the Dolau Inn, known to everyone as Maudie, comes from a seafaring family and has given so much help to the lifeboat service over many years that she has been made an honorary member of New Quay ladies' guild, Dyfed. Her annual collections have increased so much that her lifeboat box has had to be replaced with a specially topped collecting bottle. During 1977 her efforts realised £250.



Twickenham and District Branch held a 'Thank You Evening' for all their friends and helpers at the British Motor Yacht Club last November. After a cheese salad and wine supper came entertainment by international cabaret artists Joy and Jennifer. After many encores, they even tried to accompany the singing of (l. to r.) Jack Sims, Bob Tough, branch chairman, George Powell, then DOS (North London) and Richard Wilson.



(l. to r.) Adrian Moore, Richard Lane (aged 14) and Nigel Rankin (aged 16) of Newmarket are already confirmed lifeboat supporters. With school assemblies, a sponsored walk, a jumble sale and their flag day collections they have raised more than £500. Their ambition: to become crew members.



Litchfield ladies' guild organised their tenth annual fork luncheon in the spring, cooking, preparing and serving all the food themselves. Held, as usual, in the Guildhall it was a sell out, some 250 people attending; the profit was £340.



Having been given a monster potato by a customer, the landlord of The Sir Douglas Haig, Effingham, Rod Davis, and his wife, Jean, held a competition to guess how many bags of crisps could be made from it. At 10p a guess, £23.60 was soon raised for the RNLI. photograph by courtesy of 'The Surrey Daily Advertiser'

raised £55. In October Petersfield branch organised a 15-mile walk which included an 888 ft climb up Butser Hill, raising £528.

The Queens Head Inn, Cullercoats, is a strong supporter of the local ILB station. Earlier this year the licensee, Danny Goering, and bar manager, John Wedderburn, presented two cheques to Helmsman Ned Clark and other crew members; £70 for the crew fund and £60 for the RNLI. The money had been raised in a number of ways including raffles and domino cards, pool competitions and 10p bets on a racing car machine.

West Wight ladies' guild raised over £3,500 last year from the sale of souvenirs and Saab draw tickets, and £511 from a coffee morning and a boutique held in July at King's Manor, Freshwater, the home of Mr and Mrs A. J. Sheldon. A further £306 was raised at a Christmas Fair held in Yarmouth Town Hall in December.

A haircut raised £19.50 on Christmas Eve when Engineer Cadet Ciaron Callan, on board *British Ranger*, had his hair cut in public on the condition that crew members watching donated 50p each to RNLI funds. The 'Sweeney Todd' who did the cutting was Third Engineer Gerry Gwynn.

£65.79 was the total raised during the spring term by the children of All Saints Church of England (Controlled) Primary School in Wellingborough. A

variety of events were organised including a sponsored swim, a tuck shop, a lunch-time disco and a Frost Fair which, due to the temporary closure of the school, had, alas, to be held in balmy, spring-like weather.

Girls from Hastings High School visited their local lifeboat station in March to present a cheque for £600 to Hastings and St Leonards branch, the result of their 1977 charity project: it is twice as much as they have ever collected before. The project was launched in fine style by a film show and talk given by Coxswain Joe Martin (seen receiving the cheque from last year's head girl) and Motor Mechanic R. Shoemith. The girls then took over with great enthusiasm, organising all kinds of fund-raising events. Jack Cooke, chairman of the Board of Governors, and Mrs Spendlove, headmistress, are second and third on the left.

photograph by courtesy of 'Hastings Observer'



# Letters...

## The RNLI in Ireland

Having been for more than 21 years honorary secretary of one of the busiest lifeboat stations in Ireland, I was naturally much interested by the fine article in the spring issue of *THE LIFEBOAT* by my friend Brian Clark, as well as by the late Captain Hall's recollections of his stint as Irish district inspector. May I be permitted to add a few historical notes to these?

The barque wrecked at Seapoint, Co. Dublin, on Christmas Eve 1895 was not Norwegian but Finnish. Her crew and passengers were later rescued by the Irish Lights 'Commissioners' tender *Tearaght*. Relics of the rescue recording the skill and courage of the late Captain McCombie of the Irish Lights were unearthed by Brian Clark quite recently. Until last year there had always been relatives of one or other of the 15 victims of the 1895 disaster in the crew of the Dun Laoghaire boat. The last left us last year: our very popular motor mechanic, Charlie Blackmore, who in 30 years to his retirement, had taken part in 219 services, 26 of them in gale conditions and six in dense fog, resulting in all in the rescue of 178 people. He is now caretaker at the recently automated East Pier Lighthouse at Dun Laoghaire. Opposite the local lifeboat station is a granite plinth bearing the names of the 1895 victims.

Brian Clark briefly records that 'the Ballast Board', which was the popular title of the Corporation for the Preservation of the Port of Dublin, ancestor of the present Dublin Port and Docks Board, 'had disposed a number of lifeboats round Dublin Bay at the beginning of the (nineteenth) century'.

The Dun Laoghaire and Howth lifeboat stations are very proud of their pre-RNLI origin, which, I feel, deserves rather greater attention than Brian Clark affords it. A committee of the pre-Union Irish Parliament, abolished in 1800, had taken public evidence from master mariners and others of the notorious perils of Dublin Bay in those days, and in consequence the port authority had been asked and had agreed to set up stations with lifeboats round Dublin Bay. These first stations, at Howth, Sutton, Old Dunleary, Sandycove and Dalkey, make up, so far as fairly extensive researches lead me to believe, the first *co-ordinated lifeboat service* in European history, previously-established lifeboat stations in England and the Netherlands having been single, isolated local stations. (But one historian of the Netherlands lifeboat services

states that a co-ordinated lifeboat service existed round Canton as early as 1737.)

The Dublin Bay service was active in the lifesaving business from its inception. Not only are there references to its services in numbers of the influential 'Naval Chronicle' of the first decade of the last century, but, thanks to the care taken of its archives by Harry Gilligan, secretary of Dublin Port and Docks Board, and some of his predecessors, records have survived of a number of its rescues—crews' names, ships served, numbers rescued and so on. Dublin Port continued to control the Dublin Bay lifeboats (whose earliest boats, incidentally, cost just under £100), long after the RNLI entered the Irish scene with the establishment of the Arklow station in 1826. It was not indeed till the appalling gale of February 1861, in which a score of ships and many lives were lost in the Dublin area, showed up the defects of the boats provided by the port authority that the RNLI took over the three remaining Dublin Bay stations, Howth, Dun Laoghaire and Poolbeg.

In the early years of the Dublin Bay lifeboat service the outstanding figure was a Co. Kildare man, William Hutchison, former naval officer, then haven master at Bulloch, Dalkey, and later first harbour master at Dun Laoghaire. This remarkable man, an outstanding figure in Irish nineteenth century maritime history, was the first Irish lifeboatman to win the Shipwreck Institution (later RNLI) gold medal, for the rescue of the crew of the collier *Duke* aground in a gale at Sandycove Point in 1829. Last year Mr Gilligan, whose interest in William Hutchison had been aroused when our researches began to reveal what an exceptional man he was, obtained from Mrs Joan Blundell, resident in England, a great-granddaughter of the recipient, Hutchison's original gold medal for display at the newly-established Irish National Maritime Museum in the former Mariners' Church, Dun Laoghaire, where William Hutchison worshipped, and on one of whose walls there is a plaque to his memory.

After the RNLI took over Dun Laoghaire station, William Hutchison became its first honorary secretary. When, following the drowning of my predecessor Captain Kearon, I was appointed honorary secretary here I was, quite unknown to myself, living in the house where Hutchison had lived as RNLI honorary secretary, Dun Laoghaire.—JOHN DE COURCY

IRELAND, station honorary secretary, *Dun Laoghaire, Caprera, Grosvenor Terrace, Sorrento Road, Dalkey, Co. Dublin, Ireland.*

## Knock for knock?

As a close reader of the journal for many years, I have come to the conclusion that few of the ways of raising funds which are thought to be original are, in fact, unique; but I think that the one I am about to relate is probably unusual.

Last February I parked our family car by the kerb for a few minutes and returned just in time to see it receive a heavy blow on the front bumper from a much larger car. The bumper was pushed out of line and the offending driver, a company director, gave me the card of his company who subsequently agreed to meet the cost of repairs. It proved a simple matter to restore to the apparently normal appearance: but a bracket had been left a few millimetres out of shape. Having regard to the disturbance necessary to get it off for treatment, it was decided to let ill alone.

Telling the company that they would therefore have nothing to pay, I suggested that as a thank-offering they might like to make a donation to our local branch, and, lo and behold, they sent them £10.

This is not to be taken as suggesting that dedicated supporters might leave their cars in vulnerable positions in the hope of raising funds in a similar manner!—NORMAN CLARKE, *honorary information officer, 41 Victoria Road, Colchester, Essex.*

## Lifeboats at model regatta

Two years ago Crosby Model Club adopted a lifeboat and each year holds a model boat regatta at which we collect around the lakeside for our lifeboat. In the past we have given demonstrations using models to simulate rescues and staged mock battles with model warships. We have just had another idea.

With model lifeboats becoming so popular we thought it would be a good idea to give lifeboat modellers a chance to get together, to exchange ideas and at the same time help raise funds. If enough modellers would like to come to our regatta we will give them a display stand and models will be judged for authenticity and appearance on the water by representatives of the RNLI. A trophy, to be held for one year, would be given to the modeller whose boat received the highest marks, with a duplicate for the winner to keep.

I shall be happy to hear from anyone interested so that we can assess the possibility of this idea; for further information please send to me a stamped addressed envelope.—DES NEWTON, *press officer, Crosby Model Club, 29 Westminster Avenue, Bootle 10, Merseyside, L30 5QY.*





On his retirement after 30 years service as honorary treasurer, first at Exeter and then Exmouth, Leslie Aplin was presented with a clock from Exmouth branch by honorary secretary Len Smith (l.) and an inscribed shield by John Atterton (r.), deputy director RNLI. A silver badge was presented to Mrs Gladys Aplin, chairman of Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton ladies' guild.

photograph by courtesy of 'The Western Times'



Flashback: (above) Mrs E. A. Harris, chairman of Hawarden branch, and Mrs Reidford, a committee member, taking their part in flag day in 1977, just as they have done ever since (below) 1937.



## Lifeboat People

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

### January

Horace Eric Pengilly, coxswain of Sennen Cove lifeboat from 1967 to 1968 and then coxswain/mechanic until 1978. He had served as second coxswain from 1963 to 1967 and reserve mechanic from 1961 to 1963. The silver medal for gallantry was awarded to Coxswain Pengilly in 1977.

### February

Alastair R. T. Garrett, original secretary of the YLA, forerunner of Shoreline membership of the RNLI.

### March

Thomas James King, coxswain of St Helier lifeboat, Jersey, from 1945 to 1949. He had joined the crew in 1922 and served as bowman from 1929 to

1939 and second coxswain from 1939 to 1945. Coxswain King was awarded the gold medal for outstanding gallantry in 1949.

Honorary Alderman G. H. W. Griffith, Lord Mayor of Birmingham during Coronation Year and chairman of Birmingham branch from 1956 until 1974 when he became president. It was during his chairmanship that the City of Birmingham lifeboat appeal provided the funds for City of Birmingham now stationed at Exmouth. He was awarded a silver badge in 1969.

### April

E. G. E. Rayner, a member of the Committee of Management since 1972. Mr Rayner, vice-chairman of Cadbury Schweppes Ltd and chairman of Cantrell and Cochrane (GB) Ltd, served on the RNLI Executive and Public Relations Committees.

Percy G. Garon, MC GM, who had served Southend-on-Sea lifeboat station as chairman from 1945 to 1952, as honorary secretary from 1952 to 1975 and subsequently as vice-president, remaining an active committee member. He was awarded a gold badge in 1975 and was made an honorary life governor of the RNLI in 1977.

(Left) Coxswain James Turpin of Fowey lifeboat was presented with the BEM, awarded to him in the 1977 Birthday Honours, by the Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall, Viscount Falmouth, at Fowey Gallants Sailing Club on December 4.



(Below) David John Nelson, son of Assistant Mechanic John Buckland of Eastbourne lifeboat and his wife Joan, and born on Trafalgar Day 1977, was christened by Father Roy Cotton using the ship's bell of the former HMS Eastbourne as font. Coxswain Joe Martin of Hastings lifeboat (l.) is David's godfather.



A double baptism aboard Appledore lifeboat: On Sunday March 5 The Reverend Donald L. Peyton Jones, Vicar of Appledore and Priest-in-charge of Lundy Island, christened Faye, daughter of Clifford and Angela Edwards, and Matthew Roy, son of Roy and Elizabeth Harkness. Both fathers are crew members.



## Shoreline

from page 25

what it would take to get Carol into a flap! If you would like to start covenanting your subscriptions you may do so at any time by indicating this on your next correspondence. We shall then be happy to forward to you the necessary form.

A frequent opinion seems to be that once computers become involved the 'personal touch' is soon lost, but we, in the membership section, like to feel that this is not so and that we shall continue to feel personally involved with all our members. Perhaps after this brief insight into Shoreline office, you may feel a little more personally involved with us.

One of our members who has become very personally involved with Shoreline is Mrs Nora Neill. She has put a great deal of effort into collecting unwanted Green Shield stamps and turning them into cash. To date she has amassed £1,200 worth and is hoping to keep up the momentum. So, if you have any Green Shield stamps to spare—a few, half a book . . . a whole book full!—Mrs Neill would welcome them. Her address is 95 Fitzroy Avenue, Harborne, Birmingham, B17 8RG. To Mrs Neill, thank you; your efforts are sincerely appreciated.

The Independent Order of Foresters (IOF) has also become involved with

Shoreline in that it has adopted us for four years so that we may benefit from the many functions they are arranging throughout this period, the proceeds of which will bring welcome boosts to our funds. One of the events is a concert at the Colston Hall, Bristol, at 7.30 pm on Saturday, October 28, to be given by the Morrision Orpheus Male Voice Choir together with the Band of the Royal Corps of Signals. Tickets are £1.50, £1 and 75p, from J. Stringer, Home Lea, Crossview, Copleston, Devon, to whom all enquiries should be sent. The absolute deadline is September 16, when the remaining tickets will be returned to Colston Hall from where they will be available from September 23.

Another IOF event which is expected to be extremely popular is 'A Show Boat to Le Havre'. Leaving from Portsmouth at 1430 on Saturday November 18, afternoon tea will be served on the way. Arrival at Le Havre will be at 2000. Departure from Le Havre at 2230 to enjoy a smörgasbord dinner dance and breakfast on the way back to Southampton, to arrive at 0700 on November 19. There will be a duty free shop on board for your Christmas shopping! Tickets cost £12.50 and all bookings should be made through Bernard E. Bloom, PHCR, 27 Wilmington Close, Townhill Park, Southampton, SO2 2RD.

Yet another entry for your calendar is June 28 and 29, when the IOF will be

running a tombola stall at this year's Royal Norfolk Show, with the proceeds again coming to Shoreline.

The target set by the IOF for the four-year period is £50,000 with which they will purchase a boathouse and two inshore lifeboats. Already a cheque for £5,000 has been given to the Institution; it was presented at the London Boat Show by Nick Carter, assistant to the chief ranger of the Independent Order of Foresters, to John Atterton, deputy director RNLI. So, all power to their elbow!—LINDA GRAINGER.

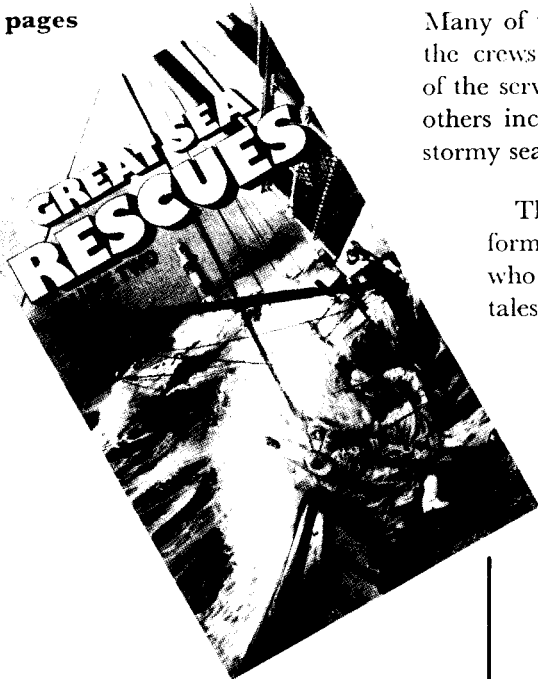
### 'A Century of Valour'

THE STORY OF CLACTON lifeboat station from 1878 to 1978 has been told in a booklet written by Jack Froom, honorary secretary of the Lifeboat Enthusiasts' Society Essex and Thames Estuary Research Group.

The reader is taken right into the heart of the work of the station with a vivid description of a present-day service over Jubilee weekend in 1977, starting well before the firing of the maroons: then back into the last century to trace the pattern from the beginning with a good selection of photographs, old and new.

All profits from the sale of this booklet, which is supported by local advertisers, are in aid of Clacton branch; it is available from the author at Burford Lodge, 164 Stock Road, Billericay, Essex, price 60p including post.

144 pages



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## Lifeboat Services

from page 12

1004 the Atlantic 21 ILB *Blue Peter II* launched on service with David Jones as helmsman and John Askew and Simon Dubberley as crew; the honorary medical adviser, Dr Jack Dubberley, also embarked.

The sky was overcast with a fresh to strong breeze, force 5 to 6, blowing from the south west. The sea was slight and visibility was good. It was about 40 minutes before low water and the last of the weak ebb stream was setting north eastwards. The tides were small on this day with the moon being in its first quarter.

*Blue Peter II* set off at full speed for Puffin Island. As she reached Puffin Sound at 1010 she received a radio message from Penmon Coastguard describing the casualty as being a 65ft white-hulled motor yacht in position 23 miles north of Penmon. The ILB was advised to steer north magnetic and maintain radio watch on VHF channel 16. Course was set to 000°M, but, leaving the shelter of land, the sea became so much rougher that Helmsman Jones found it necessary to reduce speed slightly. As the ILB continued northwards the wind, still from the south west, freshened while visibility deteriorated.

At 1030 an RAF helicopter was heard to make radio contact with *Rossekop* and at 1055 the helicopter was sighted one mile ahead, the limit of visibility, hovering over the casualty.

As the ILB approached, *Rossekop* was seen to be heading slowly south west, into the sea, and rolling very heavily. The wind had increased to strong to near gale, force 6 to 7, with a moderate to heavy swell and breaking seas. Radio contact was established with both the helicopter and *Rossekop*.

Helmsman Jones approached the casualty from ahead, passed down her port side and round her stern, stationing the ILB on *Rossekop's* starboard quarter to assess the effect of the sea. At 1100, with difficulty, he manoeuvred the ILB alongside *Rossekop* and Dr Dubberley and his son Simon managed to scramble on board over her starboard side. *Blue Peter II* then stood off on the starboard quarter.

It was found that *Rossekop* was being steered by a member of the helicopter crew, with her injured skipper in the wheelhouse. While Dr Dubberley was examining those on board, Helmsman Jones exchanged Crew Member John Askew for Simon Dubberley because John Askew had more experience with motor yachts and machinery. At 1110 it was decided that the skipper and six crew members should be winched off *Rossekop* and taken to hospital by helicopter. John

Askew would assume command of the casualty and, helped by Dr Dubberley, would take her into Beaumaris escorted by the ILB.

*Rossekop* was headed north east and, over a period of 40 minutes, her crew were transferred to the aircraft. Before leaving, her skipper had told John Askew that the sight glass on the main fuel tank was fractured and engine fuel would have to be pumped every 15 minutes up to a small emergency three-gallon header tank. The oil pressure and temperature gauges were not working.

By 1150 all seven members of *Rossekop's* crew were safely on board the helicopter and the pilot gave the two boats the course for Puffin Island. The wind was now gusting over force 7 and the sea was very rough. John Askew checked the engine room bilges and fuel state and set course on 195°M with the ILB in close attendance and in radio contact. Helmsman Jones in the ILB was having extreme difficulty in maintaining station with *Rossekop*, which was making about 7 knots. His fuel was down to 16 gallons.

At 1250 *Rossekop's* engine stopped, and on entering the engine room John Askew found steam and boiling water erupting from the cooling water tank. The cooling water pump had failed and the diesel engine had overheated and seized up. It took more than three quarters of an hour working in very difficult conditions, with *Rossekop* lying beam to the sea and rolling violently, for John Askew to rig a jury water cooling system and restart the engine.

Course was then resumed towards Beaumaris but *Rossekop's* engine was to stop twice more in the next half hour due to air in the fuel system. At 1352 John Askew estimated his position to be six or seven miles off Puffin Island, but by this time Beaumaris honorary secretary was becoming apprehensive about the position of both the casualty and the ILB. An auxiliary coastguard afloat vessel, *Cordelia II* four miles north of Penmon, which had reported sighting *Rossekop* at 1300, could no longer see her 23 minutes later. It was therefore decided to launch Beaumaris 46ft 9in Watson lifeboat *Greater London II* (Civil Service No. 30); she slipped at 1411.

The wind, still blowing hard from the south west, was now estimated to be gusting to gale force 8 and severe gale force 9 at times. *Rossekop* and *Blue Peter II* continued slowly southward on their course of 195°M into rough and breaking seas. At 1420 the ILB was down to eight gallons of fuel and Helmsman Jones decided that he must leave the casualty and make for Beaumaris. He told *Rossekop* what he was going to do by radio and set off. This was the last contact the ILB had with the casualty because *Rossekop's* VHF became detached from its housing in the wheelhouse and was damaged.

Still steering 195°M, *Blue Peter II* made a landfall at 1450 and 15 minutes later sighted West Constable Buoy to port; she had been set about seven miles east by the strong wind and three hours of flood tide. Helmsman Jones, very concerned about his fuel state, abandoned the idea of trying to reach Beaumaris and told Penmon Coastguard he would head for Conwy. **Llandudno** lifeboat, at sea on exercise, intercepted the radio message and advised the ILB to make for the shelter of Llandudno Bay and land on the beach where shore helpers would be waiting for her. *Blue Peter II* arrived alongside Llandudno public slipway at 1520 with only two gallons of fuel remaining, having been at sea for over five hours in gale force winds and rough seas. She remained at Llandudno overnight and returned to Beaumaris by sea the next day.

Meanwhile, it was now one hour since the last radio contact with *Rossekop* and Llandudno lifeboat, the 37ft Oakley Lilly Wainwright, was requested to join Beaumaris lifeboat in the search. At 1540 mv *Sea Valiant*, six miles north of Great Ormes Head, also started to search.

On board *Rossekop* John Askew was having difficulty keeping the engines going because of the air in the fuel system; they had stopped a further five times. Dr Jack Dubberley, despite persistent seasickness, nevertheless carried out all work assigned to him.

A little while after 1600 visibility lifted to about two miles and occasionally more. From *Rossekop* land was sighted ahead but could not be distinguished, and course was altered a little further westward. After a reported sighting by *Sea Valiant* at 1620 five miles north of Great Ormes Head, the two lifeboats made for the position and both were in company with *Rossekop* ten minutes later. She was escorted to Llandudno Bay, arriving in sheltered waters at 1740. By this time the wind had moderated to force 5 to 6 and visibility was good.

*Rossekop's* engine was examined by Llandudno motor mechanic, Bob Jones, and it was considered she could go on to Beaumaris escorted by Beaumaris lifeboat. Crew Members Roy Jones and Richard Zalot transferred to *Rossekop* to help John Askew and Dr Dubberley and the two boats left Llandudno at 1816. The passage to Menai Straits was made without incident at half speed and by 2135 *Rossekop* was safely secured alongside a concrete barge at Menai Bridge and the lifeboat had returned to her mooring off Beaumaris Pier ready for service.

For this service the thanks of the Institution inscribed on vellum have been accorded to Helmsman David W. Jones and vellum service certificates to Crew Members John C. Askew and Simon Dubberley and to Honorary Medical Adviser Dr Jack Dubberley.

## Services by Offshore Lifeboats, December, 1977, January and February, 1978

**Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire**  
December 11.  
**Aith, Shetland**  
December 9.  
**Aldeburgh, Suffolk**  
January 1.  
**Amble, Northumberland**  
December 12.  
**Appledore, North Devon**  
December 11 and January 21.  
**Arranmore, Co. Donegal**  
February 18.  
**Barra Island, Inverness-shire**  
December 2, January 5 and February 28.  
**Bembridge, Isle of Wight**  
December 3 and January 23.  
**Blyth, Northumberland**  
December 17.  
**Bridlington, Humberside**  
December 3, 5, January 3 (three times), 11, 23 and February 23  
**Calshot, Hampshire**  
December 4, 11, January 11, 25 and February 18.  
**Clacton-on-Sea, Essex**  
January 8 (twice).  
**Clogher Head, Co. Louth**  
December 22.  
**Clovelly, North Devon**  
December 11, 24 and 27.  
**Cromer, Norfolk**  
December 24.  
**Douglas, Isle of Man**  
January 27 and 29.  
**Dover, Kent**  
December 7.  
**Dunbar, East Lothian**  
January 7 and 14.  
**Dungeness, Kent**  
February 23.  
**Dunmore East, Co. Waterford**  
December 20, February 1 and 20.  
**Eastbourne, East Sussex**  
January 17.  
**Eyemouth, Berwickshire**  
February 14.  
**Falmouth, Cornwall**  
December 19, January 15, February 19 and 27.  
**Flamborough, Humberside**  
February 19 and 23.  
**Fleetwood, Lancashire**  
December 7 and January 1.  
**Fowey, Cornwall**  
December 1 and January 5.  
**Great Yarmouth and Gorleston, Norfolk**  
December 24, 31, January 11, 12 (twice), 13, 26, 28 and 29  
**Hartlepool, Cleveland**  
December 18 and January 18  
**Harwich, Essex**  
January 8, 22, February 1 and 17.  
**Holyhead, Gwynedd**  
December 2, 27, January 7, February 6 and 9.  
**Humber, Humberside**  
January 3, 10 and 28.  
**Invergordon, Highland**  
January 27.  
**Islay, Argyllshire**  
January 6, 11 and February 18.  
**Kilmore, Co. Wexford**  
December 5 and 24 (twice).  
**Longhope, Orkney**  
December 12 and January 31.

**Lowestoft, Suffolk**  
January 8.  
**Margate, Kent**  
January 8 and 11.  
**Moelfre, Gwynedd**  
February 27.  
**Montrose, Angus**  
January 23, 24, 25 and 26 (twice).  
**North Sunderland, Northumberland**  
December 8 and 15.  
**Padstow, Cornwall**  
December 10, 24, 27, January 23 and February 19.  
**Penlee, Cornwall**  
December 5, 27 (three times), 28 and February 18.  
**Peterhead, Aberdeenshire**  
December 7.  
**Plymouth, South Devon**  
January 5, 14 and February 15.  
**Poole, Dorset**  
December 4, 13, 18, January 8 and 18.  
**Port St Mary, Isle of Man**  
January 4.  
**Pwllheli, Gwynedd**  
December 24.  
**Ramsgate, Kent**  
December 11 and January 8.  
**Redcar, Cleveland**  
January 3, and February 23.  
**Rosslare Harbour, Co. Wexford**  
December 24, February 6 and 26.  
**Runswick, Cleveland**  
January 3 (twice), 11 and 18.  
**St David's, Dyfed**  
December 24.  
**St Helier, Jersey**  
February 1 and 3.  
**St Ives, Cornwall**  
December 5, 22, 23, 24, January 11 and February 28.  
**St Mary's, Isles of Scilly**  
January 12 and February 6.  
**St Peter Port, Guernsey**  
December 1, February 1, 10 and 15.  
**Scarborough, North Yorkshire**  
December 20.  
**Selsey, West Sussex**  
December 10.  
**Sennen Cove, Cornwall**  
December 5 and February 18.  
**Sheerness, Kent**  
January 1.  
**Shoreham Harbour, West Sussex**  
January 14 (twice).  
**Skegness, Lincolnshire**  
January 8, 11 and 13 (twice).  
**Stornoway, Ross-shire**  
December 31 and February 16.  
**Sunderland, Tyne and Wear**  
December 30.  
**Thurso, Caithness**  
January 31.  
**Torbay, South Devon**  
January 8 and February 19.  
**Troon, Ayrshire**  
December 30, January 3 and February 8.  
**Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear**  
February 3.  
**Walmer, Kent**  
December 10 and 11.  
**Walton and Frinton, Essex**  
January 8.  
**Wells, Norfolk**  
January 8.  
**Weymouth, Dorset**  
January 21.  
**Whitby, North Yorkshire**  
December 4, 6, January 11, 18 and 31.  
**Wick, Caithness**  
December 12.  
**Workington, Cumbria**  
December 20 and January 19.

**Yarmouth, Isle of Wight**  
December 8, 15 and February 15.  
**ON 1043 On trials**  
January 26.  
**ON 890 On passage**  
January 23.

## Services by Inshore Lifeboats, December, 1977, January and February, 1978

**Aberdovey, Gwynedd**  
January 10.  
**Arbroath, Angus**  
January 4.  
**Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland**  
December 10.  
**Blackpool, (D117), Lancashire**  
February 19.  
**Blackpool, (D528), Lancashire**  
January 18.  
**Broughty Ferry, Angus**  
February 5.  
**Eastney, (B530), Hampshire**  
December 11, 29 and February 25.  
**Eastney, (D184), Hampshire**  
December 11, 18 and January 12 (twice).  
**Hartlepool, Cleveland**  
January 18.  
**Harwich, Essex**  
January 22, February 4 and 14.  
**Hayling Island, Hampshire**  
December 23, 29, January 2 and 3.  
**Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire**  
December 19 and 25.  
**Largs, Ayrshire**  
January 28.  
**Littlehampton, West Sussex**  
January 16.  
**Llandudno, Gwynedd**  
December 3.  
**Lytham-St Anne's, Lancashire**  
January 20.  
**Margate, Kent**  
December 23.  
**Morecambe, Lancashire**  
February 25.  
**Mudford, Dorset**  
January 11 and February 25.  
**Newquay, Cornwall**  
December 10.  
**Poole, Dorset**  
December 3, 4 and January 1.  
**Queensferry, West Lothian**  
January 6 and 21.  
**Silloth, Cumbria**  
December 29 (twice).  
**Southwold, Suffolk**  
January 7, 8 and 9.  
**Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear**  
February 8 and 25.  
**West Kirby, Merseyside**  
January 1.  
**West Mersea, Essex**  
January 7 and February 8.

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Birds Eye Foods .....	Inside Front Cover
Cogswell & Harrison Limited .....	35
Leslie Creasey .....	35
Evetts Sailwear Limited .....	Inside back Cover
Heritage Publications .....	32
David Jolly (Tiller Master) .....	36
Maritime Book Society (Readers Union) .....	Outside Back Cover
Mermaid Marine Engines Limited .....	Inside Back Cover
Neco Marine Limited .....	Inside Back Cover
R. E. Prior & Co .....	35
RFD Mills Equipment Limited .....	35
Schlegel (U.K.) Engineering Limited .....	2
Varley Dry Accumulators Limited .....	2
V. Webster .....	36
C. P. Witter Limited .....	36

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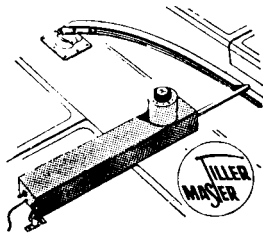
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