



Lifeboats

the Lifeboat

For everyone who helps save lives at sea

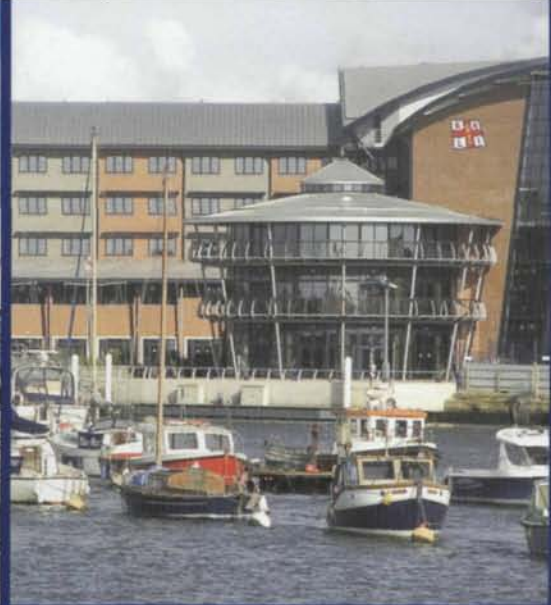
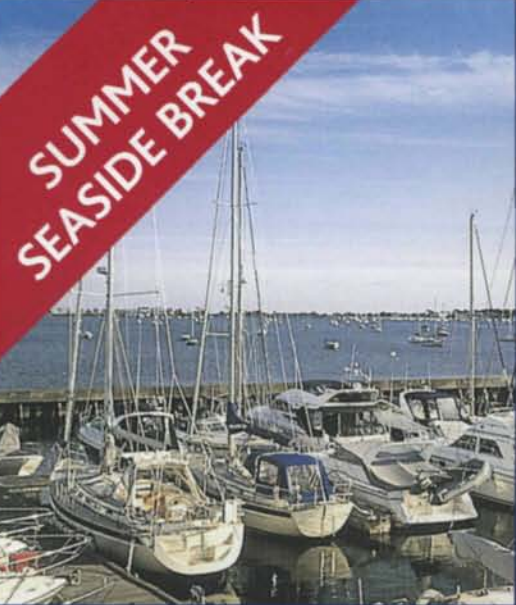
Summer
2006

SAP code: INF001-576



Are you beachwise? See pages 2 and 32

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SEASIDE BREAK



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Please quote the special Summer Seaside Break code LBMSSB when booking

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The Royal National Lifeboat Institution
West Quay Road
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BH15 1HZ
www.rnli.org.uk
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The *Lifeboat* is published four times a year
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will be autumn 2006 and will appear in
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For advertising and full details of whom
to contact about the *Lifeboat*,
membership and any other RNLI
matters, see page 21.

Front cover: To be safe on the beach
this summer, always swim between
the red and yellow flags on a
lifeguarded beach



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The RNLI's busiest station moves to an historic new home



Train one, save many

News

Dear Reader

Welcome to the summer 2006 issue of *the Lifeboat*. Do let us know what you think of it.

Have a look at the 'News' and 'Dispatches' sections to get up to date with the RNLI family then linger awhile in the more in-depth features; take that often-surprising 'Peep into the past' and read the next instalment in the Train one, *save many* story.

But the heart of this publication, and of course of the RNLI itself, is the lifesaving work of the lifeboat crew members and lifeguards (see page 24).

Occasionally a particularly notable service warrants special mention. Three such were celebrated at the RNLI's AGM and Annual Presentation of Awards in May this year, alongside the work of the charity's fundraisers (see page 38).

At the AGM, the RNLI's Chairman Admiral Sir Jock Slater reported on the RNLI year that was 2005 and highlighted the growing demands on the RNLI's services and how its income has not kept pace. (For a bottom-line summary, see page 21 or, for the detail, look at the RNLI's *Annual Review 2005* and *Annual Report and Accounts 2005* on the RNLI website or request a printed copy.)

Many thanks indeed for your valuable support – and I hope you enjoy reading about what it's achieved.

Liz Cook

Editor



Are you beachwise?

Building sandcastles; peering in rock pools and swimming in the sea – all commonplace activities for the millions of people visiting the seaside this summer. Most visits are uneventful, happy occasions. But for some, tragedy strikes

Brothers Jason and Wayne Adams were playing in the sea at St Bees beach, Cumbria, when a strong rip current combined with increasingly large waves got them into serious difficulties. Two members of the public saw what was happening and dived into the water to try and help. Someone else called 999 and the lifeboat crew leapt into action. The boys were plucked from the sea and taken to shore where Lifeboat Operations Manager Ian McDowell and Helmsman Paul McDowell successfully resuscitated Jason, saving his life. Despite the desperate attempts of Crew Members David Barker and Richard Beddows to revive Wayne, he died.

The part played by the four RNLI volunteers and two passers by in what was a particularly distressing and demanding service was recently recognised by the Chief Constable of Cumbria Police at a special ceremony. Afterwards Ian commented: 'None of us will forget the terrible events of that day. But it was wonderful for us all to meet Jason again today and to see how well he has progressed.'

Shocking statistics

This story is not unusual. **The RNLI rescues an average of four children every day.**

Consistently in the top three of these rescues are those to children on inflatables, blown out to sea. Research shows that two thirds of children don't see any risk in using an inflatable on the water and half don't understand the safety signs they may find on a beach. Only 10% know the meaning of a lifeguard's red and yellow flags. This is all in the context of three quarters of young people nationally visiting the beach at least two or three times a year.

The frontline in protecting children on the beach is the adults in their families – but what if they have little 'sea sense' themselves? The RNLI is solving this problem in several ways.

Prevention is better than cure

The RNLI's Education, Beach Safety and Lifeguard teams work together to reach young people in a multitude of ways. School visits are supported by curriculum-matched materials and child-friendly

resources to help make it all fun; intensive workshops such as 'Hit the surf' (featured in the autumn 2005 issue of *the Lifeboat*) make for experiential learning; and a roadshow tours beaches and events to catch the young audience when they need it most.

August 2006 will see a surge in such activity as the RNLI holds its first Beachwise awareness month. You can enter two special competitions as part of Beachwise. First, look out for the holiday challenge leaflet at RNLI shops and other venues and events attended by the RNLI. Fill in and return the form for the chance to win a family Mediterranean cruise kindly donated by Travelscope Holidays Ltd. Second, go to rnli.org.uk/sandcastle and enter the virtual sandcastle competition!

It's a shorething!

Whether you live by the sea or not, you can still take part in the RNLI's safety work, through the new RNLI Education website. With a section for young people themselves

Emergency!

RNLI lifeguards are now amongst the best in the world at saving lives at sea from the beach. There are many beaches where even the swift response of a lifeboat and crew is not enough. Trouble strikes when someone is already in the water and there needs to be an immediate reaction. This is where a lifeguard comes in: a strong swimmer equipped with rescue board, watercraft or boat, first aid training and back up onshore.

Better still, though, is the work a lifeguard can do on the beach preventing trouble before it occurs. The saying goes that a good lifeguard doesn't even get wet. Instead they maintain a constant vigilance, patrolling the beach, monitoring the state of the sea, talking to beach goers and giving advice. In this way, thousands of incidents are avoided and dozens of lives saved.

Value for money

It is of course impossible to put a value on the life of just one person whose life is

saved at sea but the RNLI's lifeguarding service gives particular value for money. It now covers 62 beaches in the south and south west of England and provides training and equipment to other lifeguarding organisations around the country, yet its total annual running costs are about that of one all weather lifeboat purchase. Funding is now

increasing number of local authorities, i-2-i fundraising on beaches, and corporate donations. For example, Unilever, in the form of Wall's ice cream, are funding the beach safety roadshow and the 'Hit the surf' programme for the second year running, to the tune of £50,000.



Learn these messages and put them into practice and you'll be very beachwise!

1. Choose a lifeguarded beach to make your visit safer – check goodbeachguide.co.uk, produced by the Marine Conservation Society in partnership with the RNLI.

2. On any beach, be SAFE

Spot the dangers
Always go with a friend
Find and read the safety signs and flags
Emergency? Stick up your hand and shout, or ring 999

3. On a lifeguarded beach, remember FLAGS

Find the red and yellow flags and swim between them
Look at the safety signs
Ask a lifeguard for advice
Get a friend to swim with you
Stick your hand up and shout for help if in difficulty



and another for adults who work with them, the site is both stylish and practical. It's crammed with information and activities (linked into the National Curriculum), games, interviews and downloadable accessories. Visit rnli.org.uk/shorething or for further information email education@rnli.org.uk.

A capital pier

The RNLI's busiest lifeboat station, Tower on the River Thames, has relocated to an historic new location – Lifeboat Pier. A former police station, the entire structure was towed away, rebuilt and returned to its mooring on the Embankment in time for a grand opening on 8 May during London Lifeboat Week. To read more, see page 42.



Tamars safely home

The first of the RNLI's new Tamar class all weather lifeboats to be placed on operational service have safely arrived at Tenby, Pembrokeshire (below), and Peterhead, Grampian, and the third is completing her trials for service at Padstow. Read more on page 18.



Teesmouth's Tyne class *Phil Mead* (seen here in the 1990s) has been withdrawn after 21 years' service

Reconfiguring the fleet

As part of its rolling programme of operational coast reviews, the RNLI has closed Teesmouth lifeboat station, Teeside.

This inevitably controversial action follows a two-year study of RNLI search and rescue provision in the Tees Bay area. The pattern of cover here dates back to a time when lifeboats were only capable of 8 knots and every small port had a fishing fleet. Today's lifeboats are much faster, improving their range and response time, and the demands on the service have changed, with more than two-thirds of rescues now being carried out in inshore waters. With two all weather lifeboats just four miles apart (Teesmouth and Hartlepool) and a total of eight lifeboats along a 25-mile stretch of coast (see page 25), it was concluded that there was an over-provision of lifeboats in the area.

The RNLI exists to save lives at sea and this will always be the driving force behind

any decisions relating to lifeboat cover. RNLI Operations Director Michael Vlasto says: 'A decision of this magnitude can only be justified if we are certain of the facts and if past, present and predicted future lifeboat activity in the Tees Bay has been examined in minute detail. We have done just that and also consulted extensively with the lifeboat stations in the area and other interested parties. Teesmouth lifeboat station has a long and distinguished tradition and we recognise that this closure will arouse strong feelings among its committed crew and loyal supporters. We thank them whole-heartedly for all they have done and very much hope that they will remain involved with the RNLI.'

Teesmouth lifeboat, the Tyne class *Phil Mead*, is 21 years old and will now enter the relief fleet, which is used to provide cover when station lifeboats are off service for repair or refit.

Is it a ship?

The House of Lords has overturned a landmark decision regarding personal water craft (PWCs, commonly known by the brand name jetski), much to the consternation of sea safety experts.

In autumn 2005, *the Lifeboat* reported the case of a man who collided with a fellow PWC rider, causing serious head injuries. A Crown Court judge ruled that PWCs should be classed as 'ships' and that the man could therefore be prosecuted under the 1995 Merchant Shipping Act. Now, the House of Lords has quashed this judgment on the grounds that a PWC is neither used in navigation nor is it sea going.

Peter Chennell, the RNLI's Sea Safety Manager, comments: 'Although there may be specific circumstances where regulations do not apply, both the RNLI and Maritime and Coastguard Agency regard it as best practice for all craft to observe the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea at all times. This ruling is not helpful to the cause of safety at sea.'



RNLI lifeguards undergo intensive training to ensure they are skilled drivers of PWCs in the form of rescue watercraft (RWCs)

Photo: Deborah Johnson

Anglesey report

Two people died off Anglesey in July 2005 after their dinghy capsized. Now, the Government's Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) have published their findings.

MAIB discovered that the dinghy did not meet stability and buoyancy standards and that the crew were unaware of the deteriorating weather. They were inexperienced dinghy sailors, their clothes gave little protection and the owner's lifejacket was not securely fastened. The RNLI continues to promote its sea safety messages to combat such accidents, including:

- get training to use your craft safely
- ensure your crew have appropriate protective clothing and safety equipment
- ensure lifejackets are worn, correctly fitted and securely fastened

- check the shipping and inshore weather forecasts before you set out
- always have an alternative strategy in case the weather changes and don't be afraid to change your plans

Also see details of the RNLI's new *Sea Safety: the complete guide* on page 8.



Morecambe verdict

Two years after the drowning of 21 cocklepickers in Morecambe Bay, the trial of their gangmaster finally came to its inevitable close with a verdict of multiple manslaughter.

Sixteen RNLI volunteers took part in the search and recovery operations of 5-6 February 2004, using Morecambe's rescue hovercraft *Hurley Flyer* and D class lifeboat *Peter Bond* and Fleetwood's Tyne class *William Street*. They worked tirelessly for 18 hours, rescuing one man and recovering 11 bodies.

Michael Guy, Morecambe's Lifeboat Operations Manager, says: 'Unfortunately, there are no guarantees that such a tragedy will never happen again. Despite the huge publicity surrounding both the incident and the trial, people are still risking their lives by venturing out into Morecambe Bay without checking tide times and weather conditions or seeking advice about where it is safe to go. Morecambe's crew has dealt with about 100 incidents since February 2004 and around half of them were cockling related.'

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The joy of diving

Those in the know describe scuba diving as entering an awe-inspiring and beautiful 'other' world. Unfortunately that experience can all too quickly change to nightmare.

In 2005, RNLI lifeboats launched to divers in distress 177 times, rescuing more than 200 people. The British Sub Aqua Club national diving committee recorded their highest ever annual total of 441 diving incidents and 17 diving deaths. As ever, proper training is key to preventing such tragedies – and to keeping the joy in diving.

Mike's Dive Stores across England are supporting the RNLI by promoting their Professional Association of Diving Instructors Discover Scuba courses at a special price of £20 (usual price £25) and donating £10 from each 'try-dive' to the RNLI, until the end of 2006. Why not try scuba diving for yourself, in a warm and safe environment, and help raise money for the RNLI at the same time? To find the closest dive centre to you, call 020 8994 6006 or go to mikesdivestore.com. Then check out the RNLI's new *Sea Safety: the complete guide* (see right).



Photo: Andrew Bell



Out now – the complete guide

All users of the sea, from sailors to motorboaters, from kitesurfers to divers, can now enjoy a fun and safe summer thanks to *Sea safety – the complete guide*.

This brand new booklet and CD-ROM is written and produced by the RNLI and kindly funded by long-term corporate partner Bishop Skinner. It is designed to address the needs of both first-time and more experienced seagoers.

The booklet provides the basics common to all, such as weather, tides, navigation and

personal flotation devices, while the CD fills in the details for each specialist watersport. At home, the reader can test their knowledge with the interactive animations on screen and then take the booklet with them for quick reference next time they're out and about. Safety information stickers also provided will prompt them in case of an emergency. A website ensures topicality.

To order your free copy, phone RNLI sea safety on 0800 328 0600 or visit rnli.org.uk/seasafety.

Take a magic taxi

You may be familiar with Google, but now there's MagicTaxi – and if you use it to search the internet, the RNLI will benefit too.

The RNLI is one of 20 charities that MagicTaxi is supporting by passing on 50% of all revenue their site generates. For general users, this donation is spread equally between all 20 but users can opt to support just one charity. You can make sure the RNLI benefits by either setting the MagicTaxi RNLI search page as your homepage or downloading the MagicTaxi RNLI toolbar. For information on how to do this visit magictaxi.co.uk/lifeboats.

MagicTaxi is efficient, its results are tailored to UK users (sourced from Google and other search engines), and the MagicTaxi toolbar does not run advertising software, so it's a practical choice as well as a charitable

one. Just as importantly, your privacy is protected, as MagicTaxi won't track your searches. MagicTaxi can provide you with the best search resources on the web, with no strings attached – and help you save lives at sea!



Turn your discs into donations!
Here's a new and easy way for you to support the RNLI

The RNLI trading website brings together buyers and sellers from across the world to buy the things they want and sell the things they don't. And with **ebay.co.uk** you can help raise money for the RNLI at the same time.

To make the most of this new fundraising tool, we're looking for you to send us your unwanted good-quality music CDs, DVD (audio and computer) games, DVD video discs (no Blu-rays), or trading them on eBay. It couldn't be easier! All you need is a PC with an Internet connection and a credit or debit card. You'll be able to help save lives.

Please send your discs to:
RNLI eBay Appeal
West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ

Thank you for your support.

Lifeboats



Trading to save lives at sea

Thanks to the online trading website eBay, you can now enjoy two new ways to raise money for the RNLI, whether or not you're one of eBay's current 168M users.

Firstly, online sellers can opt to donate 10–100% of the final sale price of their items to their chosen charity (a minimum £5 donation applies) and then eBay will add to this by donating the same percentage of their final value fee. Log on to ebay.co.uk/charity to find out more.

If online trading isn't for you, then how about sending in your unwanted CDs, DVDs or computer games so that the RNLI can trade them on eBay for you? This is a pilot scheme in aid of the RNLI's Train one, **save many** campaign but, if successful, it may become a standard way of supporting the charity. To find out more, email Alison O'Neill at aoneill@rnli.org.uk or phone the RNLI Supporter Care team on 0845 121 4999. Send in your good-quality discs, suitably packaged, to RNLI eBay Appeal, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ.

ebay.co.uk



From darkest Peru to ...

A duffle coat, felt hat, Wellington boots and marmalade can only mean one thing – Paddington Bear is around.

Small Paddington Bear soft toys will be on sale in branches of Barclays and Woolwich throughout the UK from 4 July–7 August 2006. They cost just £2 each and all proceeds will go to the RNLI's Train one, **save many** campaign. There are three delightful versions to collect – one on the beach, one in rainy weather gear, and one in his traditional outfit.

Competition

Once you've bought your bears it does not end there. *Paddington* once said: 'Things happen to me – I'm that sort of bear.' So we'd like you to take him on your travels and show us where he's been by having your photo taken with him. The best three photos in the opinion of the judges win.

Prizes are from the RNLI Sales catalogue:

- **First prize:** radio-controlled Severn class lifeboat (RRP £49.99)
- **Runners up prizes:** radio-controlled Atlantic 75 lifeboat (RRP £16.99) and Ollie Bear (RRP £13)

Entries should be sent to Sarah Michell at 'Paddington Bear Competition', RNLI, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ or emailed to sarah_michell@rnli.org.uk by 30 September 2006. Please include your name, address and telephone number.

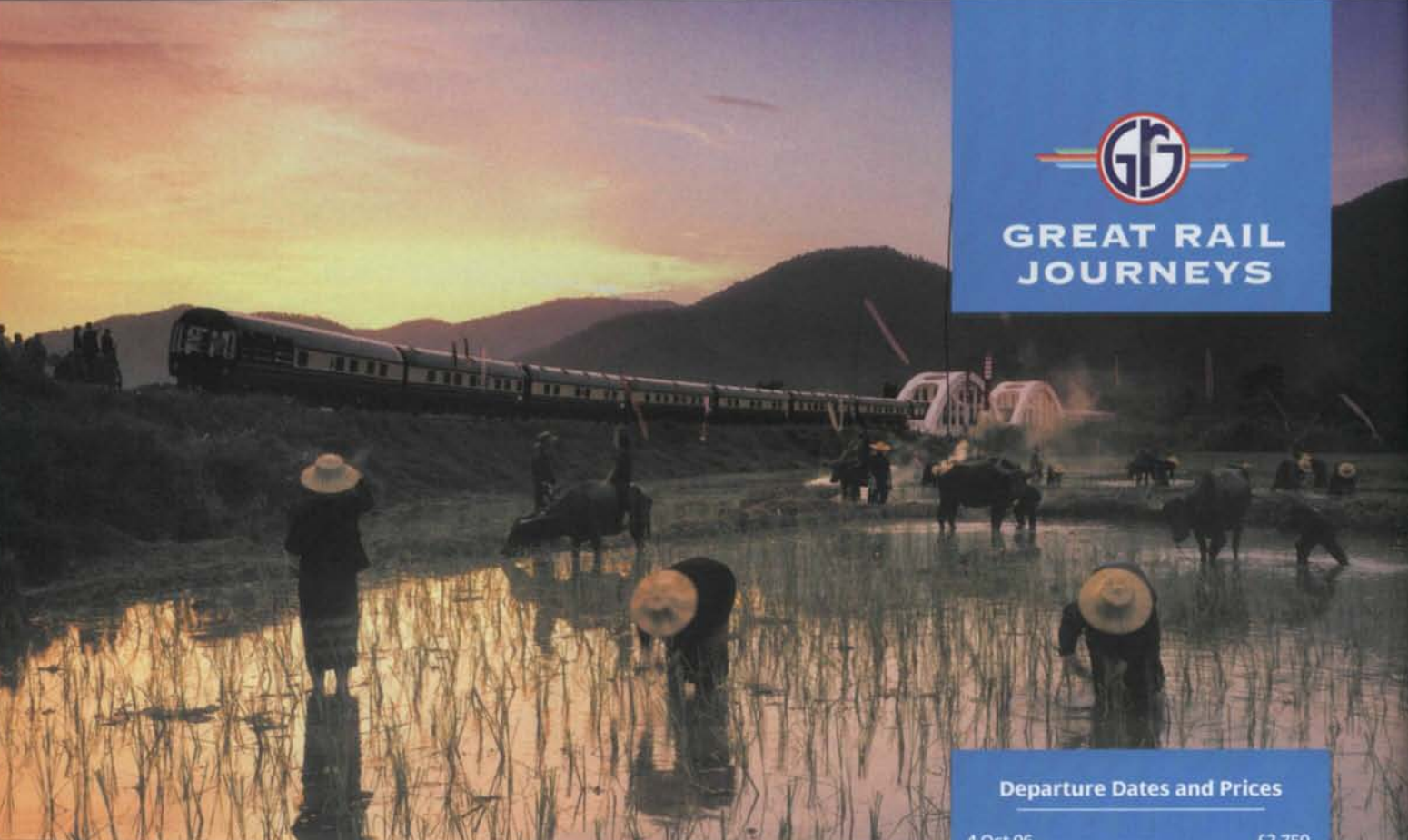
Competition terms and conditions

- The winner will be notified by 31 October 2006
- The judges' decision is final
- Judges cannot enter the competition
- The names of winners and their photos will be published in the winter 2006/07 issue of *the Lifeboat*
- Photographs cannot be returned
- There is no cash alternative to the prizes offered
- Only one entry per individual will be accepted
- Entry implies acceptance of these rules





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Days 8-9 ♦ Singapore

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Cromer's famous son

Henry Blogg is the most decorated RNLI crew member of all time. What kind of man was this lifeboating legend, and what did he do to earn such accolades?

Henry Blogg's time as a crew member and coxswain was an important chapter in the history of both Cromer in Norfolk and the RNLI. Blogg joined the lifeboat crew in 1894, a century after Cromer's first lifeboat was established. His peaceful manner reflected a humble background: he was born in a small cottage near Cromer's pier in 1876 and, in many ways, was a typical Norfolk fisherman. In 1909, though, he was made lifeboat Coxswain and was to go on to save 873 lives.

Blogg received his first major award in 1917 when he led a lifeboat crew to the

rescue of the steamship *Fernebo*, saving 11 lives. In recognition he received the RNLI's Gold Medal for Gallantry. Ten years later he received the equivalent of a second Gold Medal (a clasp to add to his first – and a very rare occurrence), this time for his part in a rescue that saved 15 people from the Gothenburg steamship *Georgia*.

Perhaps the award that summed up Blogg's gallantry most of all, though, was his third Gold Medal award in 1941 – not only because it made him the most decorated lifeboatman ever, but also because it

recognised bravery and dedication of the highest order in the midst of World War II.

In the early hours of 6 August 1941, six steamers, sailing down the east coast as part of a convoy, fell foul of the notorious Haisborough Sands. With gale force winds, rough seas and squalls, the merchant vessels were driven onto the sands and smashed by the waves. News of the disaster reached Blogg and his crew at 8am. They launched the motor lifeboat *HF Bailey* and made first for the *Oxshott*. Although the sea was breaking over the lifeboat, Blogg managed to repeatedly steer onto the stricken *Oxshott* and all 16 surviving crew were hauled aboard.

Blogg then took the *HF Bailey* to the *Gallois*, this time rescuing 31 men, before transferring the 47 survivors to an accompanying destroyer. The Coxswain had not finished for the day, though. He returned

to the sands, powering over the submerged deck of a third steamer, the *Deerwood*, allowing 19 men to jump aboard. By this time, other lifeboats were in action on the sands, coming to the aid of some of the remaining crews, but *HF Bailey* was required yet again: the steamer *Paddy Hendly* was stranded and badly damaged. Blogg manoeuvred alongside and 22 men leapt aboard. The lifeboat again made for a destroyer and transferred the rescued souls.

When *HF Bailey* finally reached harbour that day, it was 5pm. During their day's work, Blogg and his crew had rescued 88 men. In recognition Blogg was awarded a second clasp to his Gold Medal and received the British Empire Medal.

By the time he retired, at the age of 71, Henry Blogg's clutch of awards included three RNLI Gold Medal Awards for Gallantry, four Silver Medals, the George Cross and the British Empire Medal. In 1953, he received the Coronation Medal. When he died the following year, Cromer mourned the loss of a true hero: brave, modest and selfless.

A lasting tribute

The story of Henry Blogg and Cromer's lifeboat crews is now vividly told through a new museum dedicated to them. The RNLI Henry Blogg museum is purpose built near Cromer's pier.

Comedian Ronnie Corbett officially opened the museum in April 2006 (see page 39). The centrepiece of the attraction is the lifeboat *HF Bailey*. She had been on display in the century-old boathouse next door but this was needed operationally once again so the opportunity was taken to conserve her while another home was under construction. The new building is the result of a collaboration with North Norfolk District Council's seafront regeneration scheme and was funded by a mix of RNLI and EU money, individual gifts and a legacy. Responsibility for running this and the RNLI's other museums is that of a subsidiary charity to the RNLI – the RNLI Heritage Trust. Set up with the aim of conserving and displaying the Institution's heritage, it is able to bid for specialised grant funding and so ensure RNLI funds are kept for saving lives at sea.

The emotional return

Among the VIP guests at the museum opening were brother and sister Ramon and Maria Begone Arguelles. In 1938, at the ages



of five and seven respectively, they had been caught up in the Spanish Civil War as it spilled into the North Sea – and Henry Blogg had come to their aid.

Their father, Manuel, was captain of the cargo ship *Cantabria*, which came under attack from a gunboat and began to sink. The gunboat attempted to take the *Cantabria's* occupants prisoner but Manuel and his wife, Trinidad, refused to leave and huddled together with their children to await their fate. News of the stricken vessel had by now reached shore and the *HF Bailey* launched with Blogg and his crew onboard – once again they made a successful rescue. After a short stay in the UK, the Arguelles migrated to Mexico but decades later Ramon and Maria made the return transatlantic journey to see the new museum. 'It is a happy moment,' said Ramon as he met Blogg's lifeboating relations at the ceremony.

Cromer's close-knit community means that the crew history is largely a family history too: see the accompanying photographs. The last surviving member of Blogg's crew, Lewis 'Tuner' then 'Tuna' Harrison had been invited too but sadly died before the big day.

Why not visit the RNLI Henry Blogg Museum for yourself? It is free and is open Tuesday–Saturday, February–November, but times vary so phone 01263 511294 first if you are making a special journey. For more information on the RNLI Heritage Trust or to make a donation, contact RNLI Headquarters, email heritage@rnli.org.uk or see rnli.org.uk/heritage.

Opposite: Henry Blogg in his 30s, wearing a kapok lifejacket and sou'wester

Above: Blogg (second left) with his crew and the Arguelles family in 1938 after their rescue

Right: Alongside Blogg's personal effects and several interactive displays, younger visitors can meet Monte the dog, rescued by Blogg in 1932, adding the Canine Defence Silver Medal to the collection



1. James Harrison, Coxswain 1902-09, ancestor of Tuna
2. Henry Thomas 'Shrimp' Davies, Coxswain 1947-76, Blogg's nephew
3. Richard William Davies, Coxswain 1976-99, Shrimp's nephew
4. Present Coxswain John James Davies, Richard's son



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Peep into the past

Fascinating excerpts from *the Lifeboat* archives

... 100 years ago

The summer 1906 issue of the *Journal* featured an old sea dog – literally – in a report on the Clacton lifeboat, which went to the aid of a wrecked schooner *Renner*. The schooner's captain had been reluctant to leave his beloved pet dog behind. He begged the Clacton Coxswain to go back to the wreck:

'Coxswain Salmon has a soft spot in his heart for animals. He answered with a tug at the tiller, and the Life-boat was once more heading towards the doomed schooner. At daybreak the Life-boat reached Clacton pier with the crew of the *Renner* – and the dog.'

A rather unusual award for Arbroath crew is mentioned – from His Imperial Majesty the German Emperor, three engraved silver watches

and the sum of £20, in recognition of the rescue of five hands of the barque *Gesine*, which was wrecked near Carnoustie. Such was the effect of cold and exposure, the survivors ...

'... were too feeble to help themselves and with all care they were lifted into the Life-boat, which then made for home. One very pleasing incident of this splendid service was that the members of the Life-boat crew, with noble unselfishness, divested themselves of part of their clothing in order to keep the shipwrecked men warm until Arbroath was reached.'



... 50 years ago

Cromer's *Henry Blogg* lifeboat launched to a sinking ship in rough seas, strong winds and snow. Some of the ship's crew had managed to climb aboard another vessel but eight were missing. The body of one man was found and the lifeboat took it to Great Yarmouth, as the weather was too bad for

Henry Blogg to be housed back at Cromer. She finally returned to Cromer the next morning, 12 hours after launching.

In an account of the 1956 RNLI Annual Meeting, the *Journal* reported that the RNLI's then President, HRH The Duchess of Kent, made awards to four coxswains for lifesaving rescues – and one to a 10-year-old boy:

'The President then presented an inscribed wristlet watch to Robert Cann, of Appledore, for the rescue, single-handed, in an eighteen-foot rowing boat, of 2 boys who were in danger of drowning on the 16th of August, 1955.'

... 25 years ago

The Annual Meeting of 1981 saw more RNLI Medals for Gallantry awarded, including a Bronze Medal to Lymington Helmsman Alan Coster, after he and his crew went to the aid of a fishing boat in near gale force conditions. Seas were breaking over the fishing vessel, which had lost power and was being driven ashore. Helmsman Coster could not get close enough without putting the Atlantic 21 lifeboat and his crew at risk, so he took matters into his own hands:

'He slid out of the helmsman's seat and over the side while Crew Member Harvey took the helm. Alan Coster, carried towards the shore by the wind and rough seas, swam the 20 yards or so to the trawler.'

As the helmsman reached the fishing boat, it sank, and the two fishermen jumped into shallow marsh. With his local knowledge of the hazardous area, Helmsman Coster led them across half a mile to a point where the lifeboat could be safely pushed ashore by the other two volunteers. The three men were helped aboard the lifeboat, which was then relaunched and returned to the safety of the lifeboat station.

The guest speaker at the Annual Meeting was Lt Cdr JT Fetherstone-Dilke, then Chief Coastguard. He praised the teamwork of the RNLI and Coastguard:

'I recall one very simple example of this teamwork when the Coastguard of Southend-on-Sea, as dusk was falling, received a telephone call from a distraught mother whose errant daughter had put to sea in the Thames Estuary with a young man whose intentions gave rise to serious parental concern.'

'The co-operation of Southend RNLI was immediately forthcoming, and within minutes, the persuasive personality of the ILB helmsman was sufficient to extract the damsel from her predicament and to leave the disconsolate young man to continue a lone sail through the night. Well, that service may not have earned an award from the Institution, but it certainly should have added to the membership of Shoreline.'



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Lifeboat Lottery

The latest Lottery has brought in just short of £1M for the RNLI!

After the winter 2005 income of almost £750,000, itself a record, the spring 2006 Lifeboat Lottery bettered all expectations with an amazing £976,000. This princely sum could fund more than 40 volunteer crew members through 20 years of training (at today's prices). Thank you to all those who bought or sold tickets.

Congratulations!

The first prize of a Ford Ka, kindly sponsored by Arnold Clark Ltd, was won by Allan McDonald of Worcestershire – much to his surprise! Allan's wife Elsa explains: 'I regularly give to the RNLI when I see the fundraisers collecting in the local area, but I'd never heard of the Lifeboat Lottery. Allan bought a ticket at a club he attends but he'd forgotten all about it. 'We'd just returned from a holiday in Germany to find a letter saying we'd won a new car. We need a new one at the moment, so we couldn't believe our luck and can't wait to pick up the keys.'

Sir Arnold Clark said: 'My congratulations go to Mr McDonald. I'm sure he will love driving away the Ford Ka and, on behalf of all my staff, we look forward to seeing him in the future for all his motoring needs. 'I am delighted that our Ka has managed to help raise such an amazing amount of money for such a worthwhile cause. We've hopefully increased awareness of the invaluable work of the RNLI and their dedicated team of volunteers too.'

Arnold Clark's Drew Sommerville presents a delighted Mr and Mrs McDonald with their Ford Ka



Arnold Clark



Your chance to win!

It's nearly time to enter the autumn 2006 Lifeboat Lottery: tickets are available from 17 July-15 September, and the draw takes place on 29 September. If you don't already receive tickets regularly, please call 0845 121 4999 or email lottery@rnli.org.uk. (Unfortunately, because of the varying tax and gaming laws, tickets are not available in either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.)

First prize this time is a 3-door Mitsubishi Colt (may differ from picture) and second prize is a cruise, kindly sponsored by the RNLI's long-term corporate supporter, Travelscope Holidays Ltd. Richard Ford, MD of Travelscope says: 'It is fantastic that Travelscope are able to continue sponsoring the Lifeboat Lottery. We hope that the autumn 2006 Lottery will be as successful as previous ones at raising funds to help the RNLI continue what they do best – saving lives at sea'. There will also be seven cash prizes, ranging from £100 to £500.



Congratulations also to the other spring 2006 prize winners:

£1,000 cash	Mrs EM Weaver (Worcestershire)
Two-night hotel break for two	Mrs S Hicks (East Sussex)
£250 cash	Mrs AJ Ford (Staffordshire)
£100 cash	Mrs SP Burroughs (Isle of Wight)
£100 cash	Mr F Elgie (London)
£100 cash	Mr A Hardy (Newcastle-upon-Tyne)
£100 cash	Mrs CC Phillippo (Norfolk)
£100 cash	Mr and Mrs NRH Semmence (Somerset)



Train one, save many



Getting to know her

For many, the River Tamar simply marks the point where Devon ends and Cornwall begins (or vice-versa) but it will now become known as the place from which the latest class of RNLI lifeboat has emerged. After seven years of development, the Tamar (class) has now flowed far from its source to Tenby in Pembrokeshire and Peterhead in Grampian before making a return to the South West and Padstow in the autumn. These three stations are the first to receive one of the state-of-the-art 'fly-by-wire' lifeboats.

Jim Reid, who was part of Peterhead's lifeboat crew for 28 years, describes his feelings about past new arrivals: 'When I first volunteered in 1958, we went to sea in a Watson class lifeboat. She had an open cockpit but was a great sea boat, so when the RNLI wanted to introduce a Solent class lifeboat, the crew didn't want to change. It was a case of "better the devil you know". Yet when the bad weather came and the

The arrival of a new lifeboat on station is an exciting time and greatly anticipated by the crew and the community from which they come. But what will she be like?

Solent rolled gunwale to gunwale with the waves crashing over her covered wheelhouse, the crew all began to laugh: they were bone dry and grateful for the modernised lifeboat. Every new RNLI lifeboat has been an improvement on the last which, partnered with the dedicated crew, provides the great service I am proud to be part of.'

As the *Lifeboat* has described in past issues, new crew members have a structured probationary period (see autumn 2005) and all crew members work through a competence-based training scheme throughout their lifeboating 'career' (see spring 2006). But when a crew are to take on a different class of all weather lifeboat from that which they are used to, even the most experienced must receive specialist training if they are to get the best from the boat and remain safe at sea. This is even more important if they are amongst the first ever to operate that class of lifeboat!

Meeting for the first time

Pre-commissioning training (PCT) takes

place at The Lifeboat College in Poole and introduces the crew to their new lifeboat. First, the station mechanic and their deputies come for five days to learn about the intricacies of the engines, sensors and systems. The mechanic is then joined by the coxswain and three experienced crew members for an intensive week. During standard training, crew will undertake individual units from a portfolio of separate courses but the PCT throws everything at them! (See panel top right.)

The crew need to become confident, both in their own abilities and that of their new boat, first in controlled conditions and then when things are less 'ideal'. While most of us might visit Poole and hope for good weather, as the PCT trainees progress they look for something rougher to test their skills and the boat's ability. For expert technical advice throughout the course, the RNLI's own naval architects and engineers, who were instrumental in the development of the lifeboat, are on hand. The trainees' feedback will also prove useful in future boat design work.



Peterhead's crew, in their red 'passage kit', bring their new lifeboat home, accompanied by fellow volunteers onboard the craft she is to replace

Photo: Nicholas Leach

The Tamar class PCT schedule

Mechanics

- Day 1 Course introduction, technical brief, boat tour, SIMS
- Day 2 Engine construction, ventilation, fuel system, raw water system, fresh water system, oil system, engine starting
- Day 3 Gearbox and shafting, radamac, hydraulic ring main, hydraulic fan, trim tabs, bow thrusters
- Day 4 Electrics, shore power, generator set, machinery drills brief, air conditioning and domestics, engine management systems/sensors, at sea for machinery drills
- Day 5 Fire systems, bilge system, debrief

Coxswain and crew

- Day 1 Welcome/introduction, boat design brief, lifeboat tour, SIMS brief, SIMS consolidation, boat handling
- Day 2 Fire fighting brief, SIMS machinery, steering and electrical failure, sea drills
- Day 3 Best face forward – crew photo!, VHF/MF/DF, conventional navigation, prepare for sea, sea drills
- Day 4 Electrics, single engine running, passage planning and SIMS, Solent NAVEX and night exercise
- Day 5 Prepare for sea, technical debrief, course debrief, depart on passage home

Homeward bound

The ultimate test comes at the end of the course when the crew, accompanied by an inspector from their home division, sail their lifeboat home – no matter how far away that may be. Tenby's Training Coordinator Bob James says: 'Our boys encountered some pretty challenging conditions coming back, but our magnificent new lifeboat, *Haydn Miller*, lived up to every expectation and they found she handled brilliantly. She is not only amazing to look at but a safe powerhouse in the sea. Everyone is over the moon.'

En route home, the Tenby boat visited Padstow so that the crew there could have a sneak preview of the Tamar. Padstow Coxswain Alan Tarby says: 'The boat handled beautifully. We've seen "ours" in her self-righting trials down at the DML boatyard and we're very excited.' As the *Lifeboat* went to print Padstow crew were due to have completed their own PCT in Poole and sailed *Spirit of Padstow* home.

RNLI Training Divisional Inspector for Scotland, Paul Jennings, says: 'It's essential to provide our volunteer crews with the best training possible. The triumphant arrival of Peterhead's new generation of lifeboat was a wonderful moment, culminating with cheers from a crowd of well-wishers as she docked.' Volunteer Crew Member Patrick Davidson

says: 'After enduring severe gale force 9 winds on the passage home I have total faith in the new lifeboat, which is a big statement after only being onboard for two weeks. I feel privileged and proud to have the most technically advanced boat in the fleet and trust that her increased capabilities can only save more lives.'

The early days

Once home, the freshly trained crew have a chance to pass on their knowledge to their colleagues. Only when the divisional inspector is happy that all the crew are competent and the safety-critical equipment onboard is working effectively will the new lifeboat be classed as 'on station'. Support will be on hand for any teething problems.

The only sadness accompanying such momentous occasions is the farewell to the trusty old Tyne class lifeboats that have served for so many years. Tenby's *RFA Sir Galahad*, Peterhead's *Babs* and *Agnes Robertson* and Padstow's *James Burrough* will be withdrawn to the relief fleet and/or sold.

Longhope, Cromer and Barrow are next on the list for a Tamar – watch this space! (See previous issues of *the Lifeboat* for details of the Tamar's development and regarding Tenby's new boathouse.)



THE DETAIL

Each Tamar lifeboat cost approximately £2.5M to build.

ON-1280(16-01) *Peter and Lesley-jane Nicholson*

Named 6 July 2005 **Entered** the relief fleet
7 December 2005 **Funded** by the legacies of Mrs Margaret Mary Cripps, Miss Joan Wood, Mrs Gladys Jean Thompson, Mrs Tessa Gladys Florence Jacobs, Mrs Lydia Scarf and Miss Eileen Mary Bate

ON-1281(16-02) *Haydn Miller*

Named 25 June 2006 **On station** at Tenby 28 April 2006
Funded by the legacy of Mr Haydn G Miller

ON-1282(16-03) *The Misses Robertson of Kintail*

Named 11 May 2006 **On station** at Peterhead 28 April 2006 **Funded** by The Robertson Trust (as was the previous Peterhead lifeboat, both lifeboats pictured above)

ON-1283(16-04) *Spirit of Padstow*

Named due 17 September 2006 **On station** at Padstow date tbc **Funded** by the HB Allen Charitable Trust

Each PCT trainee's place costs approximately £2,100.
 See mli.org.uk/crewtraining

Letters

To add your opinion, write to The Editor at RNLI Headquarters
or email thelifeboat@rnli.org.uk

Dear Editor

Having been a Shoreline supporter for many years and now an Offshore member, I thought I would write in and air my views on lilos, rubber rings and inflatable dinghies, which are sold at seaside shops: can't we get these toys banned? Yes, they are a source of enjoyment for kiddies but they are totally dangerous and should not be used in our seas.

I come from a lifeboat family in Eastbourne, the Allchorns, and salute all lifeboat crews across the country. You all have a difficult job to do. Maybe if we can get rid of these dangerous toys, a few more lives will be saved.

Yours sincerely
Nick Page
Frimley, Surrey

The Editor replies:

Using an inflatable in the sea certainly is a risky business. One of the RNLI's key safety messages is to keep such toys for the sand or a swimming pool or, if they must be used, ensure a rope is attached and held by an adult onshore. See the winter 2005/06 issue of *the Lifeboat* for a survivor's account of what can happen otherwise.



Dear Editor

Great informative publication!

I am currently shore based at Hayling Island lifeboat station, awaiting my acceptance onto the crew. I joined the RNLI last November after many years waiting for the opportunity. It's the best thing I ever did.

My son, William, did this picture for me and I liked it so much I wondered if you could share it with all your readers. It's our B class Atlantic 75 *Betty Battle* out on a shout.

Kind regards
Rupert J Hewson
by email



Dear Editor

Just a short note to pass to the Falmouth lifeboat crew [pictured above] for their recent call to the *Galina*.

As a Governor of the RNLI (albeit a 'land-lubber!') it is always very humbling to hear of the heroic efforts of the RNLI crews around the UK. It also instils a steadfast determination to continue supporting those crews. The clear determination of the crew to assist the vessel marks them out for the individuals they are and the organisation they so highly represent.

Whilst a few short lines of thanks can never fully convey the enormity of the task you all face each time the pagers ask for your assistance, it is important that you know your efforts are noticed and appreciated.

Regards
John D Lomas
Manchester

The Editor comments:

The service referred to was both so arduous and so skilful that the Falmouth Coxswain was awarded a Bronze Medal for Gallantry at the RNLI's recent Annual Presentation of Awards (see page 38). See the spring 2006 issue of *the Lifeboat* for a full account of the rescue.

Lastly...

Do you consider the RNLI to be a national cultural icon? If so, cast your vote at www.icons.org.uk. Go to 'Nominations', sort the list alphabetically and select the Royal National Lifeboat Institution entry, where you'll find comments like this: 'The RNLI represents much that is best in Britain: voluntary service; self-sacrifice; unassuming heroism; independence from Government; stoicism and persistence ... Is the RNLI the best sea rescue service in the world? Probably.' David Godfrey



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Storm Force children's club	£7.50	€10.50

Introducing the RNLI

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution is a registered charity that saves lives at sea. It was founded in 1824 as the National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck.

Today, it provides the 24-hour on-call search and rescue service out to 100 nautical miles from the coast of the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland; on the tidal reaches of the River Thames; and on selected inland waterways plus a seasonal lifeguard service on appropriate beaches in the south and south west of England. (See page 25 for a map of the service.)

The RNLI is independent from Government and continues to rely on voluntary contributions and legacies for its income.

Income and expenditure

The RNLI's running costs averaged at about £330,000 (€462,000) every day in 2005. For every £1 raised, 78p was spent on operations, 3p on support and 19p on fundraising.

Total expenditure in 2005: £120.2M

Total income in 2005: £117.5M

Expenditure in excess of income in 2005: £2.7M

Saving lives at sea

The RNLI has saved more than 137,000 lives in its 182-year history and 2005 was its busiest year.

Lifeboat services in 2005		Lifeguard services in 2005	
Launches	Total people rescued	Incidents	People assisted
8,273	8,104	8,644	9,930
average 23 a day	average 22 a day	(during summer season)	

How to support the RNLI

You can help save lives by becoming a regular supporter of the RNLI. There are three adult grades of support: Shoreline, Offshore (for those who use the sea themselves) and Governor. Governors may vote at the RNLI's annual general meeting. Storm Force is the RNLI's membership club for children. Contact the RNLI's Supporter Care team for more information: telephone 0845 121 4999, email supporter_care@rnli.org.uk or write to them at Headquarters quoting LBM0706.

For general enquiries contact Headquarters: telephone 0845 122 6999, email info@rnli.org.uk or write to RNLI, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ.

The Lifeboat is the RNLI supporter magazine and is published in January, April, July and October. Blind and partially sighted readers can choose to receive an audio-tape version as well – this is a free service. To advertise in *the Lifeboat*, contact Steve Hulbert at Madison Bell Ltd on 01225 465060 or email steve.hulbert@madisonbell.com.



Offshore members, and those Governors who opt to, receive *Offshore News* as well, in April, July and October.

Storm Force members receive *Storm Force News* quarterly.



Six out of 10 lifeboat launches are funded by legacies. If you would like to find out more about arranging a gift for the RNLI in your Will, whether large or small, cash or a gift in kind, contact Legacy Enquiry Officer John Marshall. Telephone him on 01202 663032, email jmarshall@rnli.org.uk or write to him at Headquarters.



Lifeboats

Every booking
benefits the RNLI

Venice, Dubrovnik & Pearls of the Adriatic Cruise

21 days Sailing direct from Falmouth, 12th April 2007 - NO FLYING!

9 ports of call: Malaga, Tunis, Corfu, Valletta, Dubrovnik, Venice, Rimini, Messina & Gibraltar

Join us to discover the Pearls of the Adriatic and savour an array of fascinating cities and enchanting islands bathed in warm late April sunshine, beginning with the Spanish city Arab traders christened 'earthly paradise' – Malaga. Next stop is the historic North African city of Tunis, where you can visit the exquisitely preserved 13th century Moorish Medina or the atmospheric ruins of the once mighty Carthage.

We leave Tunis behind for Malta's magnificent capital and Unesco World Heritage Site of Valletta. So much more than a popular beach resort is our next stop, the beautiful Greek Island of Corfu, followed by Dubrovnik on Croatia's stunning Adriatic Coast. Wonderfully restored to its former glory, the Pearl of the Adriatic is a glowing citadel of medieval, gothic, renaissance and baroque architecture fantastically clustered around its picture-perfect port. We then head north for 32 glorious hours in La Serenissima, Venice – its unique Grand Canal lined with Venetian Gothic palaces and afloat with vaporetti, motorboats and gondolas.



Explore the old walled town of next stop Rimini on the fashionable Adriatic Riviera, before we cruise through the fantastically scenic straits of Messina to the Sicilian town of the same name. Here, indulge yourself in one of the famous seafood restaurants, bars or cafés that line the timeless seafront, or perhaps join an optional excursion to fiery Mount Etna, Italy's liveliest volcano. There's fire in the night sky next as we cruise past the spectacular volcanic Aeolian island of Stromboli and arrive in Gibraltar on day eighteen, for a bit of VAT-free shopping before heading for home filled with amazing memories.

So join the impressive MV Athena in Falmouth for the cruising experience of a lifetime. The terrific itinerary offers leisurely days cruising at sea and time ashore, allowing plenty of time at leisure to take advantage of many impressive facilities aboard the Athena, including a cinema, casino, fitness centre, beauty salon and comfortable bars and lounges. In the evening, there's top-class entertainment in the Show Lounge, followed by the chance to dance in the nightclub. After a great day, a good night's rest is guaranteed as all of the Athena's 278 passenger cabins have full private facilities, air-conditioning, TV with movie channel, fridge, hairdryer and safe.

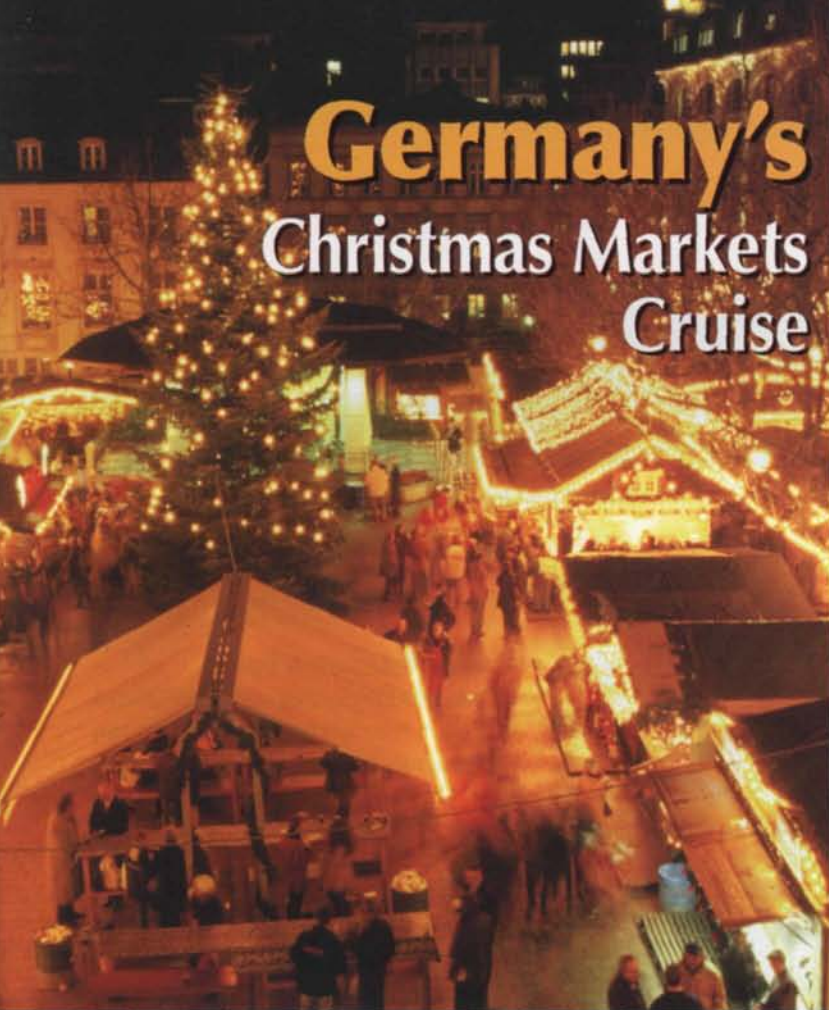
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- Excellent on board facilities including swimming pool, fitness centre, cinema and casino
- Choice of cabins with full private facilities, air conditioning and TV - many balcony suites available
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November & December
2006

On board MS Britannia

Cruise the romantic Rhine when its famous Christmas Markets are in full swing and its villages and towns are jingling with festivity. Enjoy the terrific shopping opportunities, the splendid decorations, the sounds of carol singers in the streets, the spicy smell of warming mulled wines and the taste of cinnamon Christmas biscuits bought from wonderfully decorated roadside stalls.

Our enchanting Christmas Markets Cruise will gently take you along the romantic Rhine River. It's easy to understand why visitors over the ages have enthused over this magical river with its romantic atmosphere, charming old medieval towns and pretty villages with narrow, cobbled streets full of traditional style half-timbered houses and wine cellars alive with Christmas spirit.

To ensure you enjoy a memorable River Cruise, we have used all of our 14 years' experience to carefully select the superior and well furnished MS Britannia. With a range of excellent facilities, friendly crew, comfortable en suite cabins and a variety of entertainment day and night, we know that you will soon feel at home on board.

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RNLI in action

The RNLI provides a 24-hours-a-day, 365-days-a-year rescue service. Every lifeboat launch is recorded (see centre Listings section) but what actually happens? Here is just a selection of background stories and, in the next few pages, some detailed accounts of particularly notable services



High and dry

Tobermory's *Elizabeth Fairlie Ramsey* launched three times between 6.20am and 5pm on 10 March 2006 to a 16m fishing vessel run aground and listing heavily off Calve Island in Strathclyde (see above). When the Severn class and her crew returned to station for the last time, they had rescued three fishermen, assisted in a pollution hazard assessment by the Coastguard and righted and refloated the vessel for tow.

Dinghy in distress

The volunteers at Burnham-on-Sea lifeboat station in Somerset were out on exercise on 19 February 2006 when a call came to assist dinghy sailor Tanya Tucker. The boom clip to her mast had broken, causing repeated capsizing. Finally, after being under water for some seconds, Tanya was unable to right the 5m dinghy and became vulnerable to the pull of the receding tide. Her partner dialled

999 from onshore and was relieved to see Burnham's B class Atlantic 75 *Staines Whitfield* and D class *Global Marine* divert to Tanya's aid.

Man overboard

The dangers of the sea were tragically demonstrated on 18 March 2006 when David Clear was washed off his yacht, *Past Times*, off St Aldhelm's Head near Swanage, Dorset. His inexperienced crew member made a Mayday call but was unable to confirm their position. The resulting search involved three all weather lifeboats (Swanage's *Robert Charles Brown*, Weymouth's *Ernest and Mabel* and Yarmouth, Isle of Wight's *Eric and Susan Hiscock*), five merchant vessels and a Coastguard helicopter. Weymouth's crew recovered the remaining casualty but when Yarmouth's crew found David Clear he had already died from hypothermia. (See previous issues of

the Lifeboat for news of the RNLI-developed MOB Guardian, an automatic alarm and position reporting system designed to help prevent just such loss of life.)

Easter falls on a beach

As the 2006 lifeguarding season got off to a brisk start, Perranporth beach unusually saw two incidents involving horse riders within a week. On Maundy Thursday, a woman was thrown from her galloping horse when it was frightened by kites being flown nearby and on Easter Tuesday a teenage girl fell off her horse. In both cases, RNLI lifeguards suspected spinal injuries. As qualified first responders, they administered first aid, called the air ambulance and prepared the casualties using spinal boards for a safe journey to hospital.

Outbreak of fires

At 4.30am on 4 January 2006, the B class Atlantic 21 *Falmouth Round Table* launched to a 6.7m yacht on fire on the Penryn River, Cornwall. The skipper had been asleep when the fire started but managed to escape through the front hatch to safety onshore. The yacht later sank. On 5 February, Anstruther's Mersey class *Kingdom of Fife* and Kinghorn's B class Atlantic 75 *Frederick Robertson* assisted a 10m fishing vessel in flames in Largo Bay, Fife. Humber's Severn class *Pride of the Humber*, Bridlington's Mersey class *Marine Engineer* and three RAF helicopters were launched on 16 February to evacuate workers when a fire broke out on a gas rig off Flamborough Head in East Yorkshire.

Channel Island collision

Alderney's Trent class *Roy Barker I* and St Peter Port's Severn class *Spirit of Guernsey* attended in the early hours of 31 January 2006 after chemical tanker *ECE* collided with the bulk carrier *Grot-Roweck*. The *ECE* was listing heavily with a 10,000 tonne cargo of phosphoric acid, prompting fears of toxic and explosive fumes. *Spirit of Guernsey* rescued 10 of her crew and the remainder were airlifted by helicopter while a Coastguard tug attempted a tow. The *ECE* later sank.

Listings

ABERDEEN

ON-1248(17-24):Dec 12,13,26,
Feb 9,16,19,20
D-536:Dec 12,13,24,26(x2),Feb 20

ABERDOVEY

B-758:Jan 30, Feb 19

ABERYSTWYTH

B-704:Dec 21,Jan 20, Feb 26

ACHILL ISLAND

ON-1245(14-29):Feb 19,20

AITH

ON-1232(17-14):Jan 21

ALDEBURGH

D-520:Feb 13

ALDERNEY

ON-1199(14-04):Jan 5,31

AMBLE

ON-1176(12-19):Dec 11,31, Feb 2,18
D-569:Dec 11,31, Feb 18

ANSTRUTHER

ON-1174(12-17):Feb 5

APPLEDORE

B-742:Jan 29, Feb 10

ARAN ISLANDS

ON-1217(17-06):Dec 26(x2),29,
Jan 25, Feb 1,2,16
ON-1269(17-38):Jan 4(x2)

ARKLOW

ON-1223(14-19):Dec 10,11

ARRAN (LAMLAH)

B-770:Feb 21

ARRANMORE

ON-1244(17-22):Dec 21,31,
Jan 1,21, Feb 16

ATLANTIC COLLEGE

B-763:Jan 1

BALLYCOTTON

ON-1233(14-25):Dec 4, Feb 11,21

BALLYGLASS

ON-1235(17-15):Jan 30

BALTIMORE

ON-1137(47-024):Dec 19,Jan 24,25

BANGOR

B-584:Dec 23,Dec 30,Jan 25,Jan 31,
Feb 19

BARMOUTH

D-524:Feb 19

BARRA ISLAND

ON-1230(17-12):Dec 7, Feb 25,26,27

BARROW

ON-1109(47-007):Feb 19
ON-1117(47-014):Jan 6
D-567:Jan 15,18,29, Feb 19

BARRY DOCK

ON-1135(52-39):Dec 28,Jan 6,13
ON-1213(14-15):Jan 24,30, Feb 18,26

BEAUMARIS

B-768:Jan 3,28, Feb 5,17

BEMBRIDGE

ON-1126(47-018):Feb 20(x2)
D-649:Dec 14

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED

ON-1191(12-32):Jan 30

BLACKPOOL

B-748:Dec 26,Jan 15
D-558:Jan 15

BLYTH

D-606:Dec 12

BORTH

D-622:Dec 21,Jan 3

BRIDLINGTON

ON-1169(12-12):Feb 8,16,18
D-557:Dec 25, Feb 16

BRIGHTON

B-737:Dec 25,Jan 1
B-753:Jan 15, Feb 1

BROUGHTY FERRY

ON-1252(14-31):Feb 4,6,26
D-539:Dec 11, Feb 4,6,9,26

BUCKIE

ON-1268(17-37):Feb 15, 23

BUDE

D-617:Dec 6,8

BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH

D-519:Dec 16(x2)

BURNHAM-ON-SEA

B-795:Feb 19
D-552:Feb 19

BURRY PORT

D-611:Dec 11,31,Jan 1,27,28, Feb 3

CALSHOT

ON-1159(52-45):Dec 5,21(x2), 30(x2),
Feb 5,10(x2),13
D-609:Dec 5,21(x2),30(x2), Feb 13

CAMPBELTOWN

ON-1241(17-19):Feb 6

CARDIGAN

D-547:Feb 7,20

CASTLETOWNBERE

ON-1269(17-38):Dec 11

CHISWICK

E-003:Dec 2,6,8,9,12,15,16(x2),17,
19,20,23,24,27,31,
Jan 1,2,10,14,19,21,22,25,27,28,
Feb 6,11,27,28
E-006:Dec 10,Jan 31, Feb 15,18,20,21

CLACTON-ON-SEA

D-559:Dec 18

CLEETHORPES

D-618:Dec 4, Feb 8(x2),18

CLOGHER HEAD

ON-1190(12-31):Dec 4

CLOVELLY

B-759:Dec 18,Jan 29

COURTOWN

D-548:Feb 12

CRICCIETH

B-707:Feb 11

CROMER

ON-1097(47-006):Feb 18

CULLERCOATS

B-591:Dec 26,Jan 19

DONAGHADEE

ON-1253(14-32):Jan 12

DOUGLAS

ON-1122(47-017):Dec 11,Jan 24
ON-1147(47-032):Feb 19

DOVER

ON-1220(17-09):Dec 2,
Jan 3(x2),10,15,21, Feb 8,10

DUN LAOGHAIRE

ON-1200(14-05):Jan 15, Feb 9,25
D-565:Jan 26

DUNBAR

ON-1225(14-21):Jan 1,2,22,23
D-462:Jan 1,2,22
D-544:Feb 11

DUNGENESS

ON-1186(12-27):Dec 7,Jan 18

DUNMORE EAST

ON-1215(14-17):Dec 12,Jan 31(x2)

EASTBOURNE

ON-1178(12-21):Dec 11,14,24,
Jan 7,11(x2),14
ON-1184(12-25):Feb 4,19
D-605:Dec 11,14, Feb 19

ENNISKILLEN

B-592:Feb 9,19

EXMOUTH

ON-1210(14-12):Dec 20,21
D-516(17-29):Dec 4,21,
Jan 13,15,21,28,30(x2), Feb 14

EYEMOUTH

ON-1209(14-11):Jan 23, Feb 5(x2)

FALMOUTH

ON-1256(17-29):Dec 19, Feb 11,19
B-595:Dec 24,29(x2),30,Jan 4,11,
Feb 11

FETHARD

D-494:Dec 1,2,3(x2),4(x2)

FILEY

ON-1170(12-13):Dec 4,12, Feb 27
D-474:Feb 19,27

FISHGUARD

ON-1198(14-03):Dec 13, Feb 19
D-505:Dec 13, Feb 19

FLAMBOROUGH

B-703:Dec 24,Jan 6, Feb 23

FLEETWOOD

ON-1156(47-038):Dec 29
D-556:Dec 29,Jan 15

FLINT

D-483:Jan 13, Feb 5(x2)

FOWEY

ON-1222(14-18):Dec 15
D-526:Dec 15,28

FRASERBURGH

ON-1259(14-34):Dec 18, Feb 6,12

GALWAY

B-738:Dec 2

GIRVAN

ON-1196(12-37):Jan 14

GRAVESEND

E-002:Dec 1,24,29,Jan 2,7,31,
Feb 12(x2),19,25
E-004:Dec 7

GREAT YARMOUTH AND GORLESTON

ON-1208(14-10):Dec 18,3,Jan 10
B-786:Dec 4,20,Jan 3,30, Feb 16

Identifying lifeboat classes

Amongst other things, lifeboat numbers can be used to determine the class:

All weather lifeboats

ON-### (12-###) Mersey
ON-### (14-###) Trent
ON-### (16-###) Tamar

ON-### (17-###) Severn
ON-### (47-###) Tyne
ON-### (52-###) Arun

HARTLEPOOL

ON-1274(14-37):Dec 4,6,20,
Jan 6,19,24,Feb 16,20
B-766:Dec 4,6,Jan 18,19,29,Feb 18,20

HARWICH

ON-1202(17-03):Dec 16
B-789:Dec 4,19,29,Feb 12(x2)

HASTINGS

ON-1125(12-002):Dec 10,Jan 1

HAYLING ISLAND

B-712:Dec 18,19,Jan 1,4,15,21,28
D-642:Dec 19,Jan 28

HELENSBURGH

B-757:Feb 22
B-791:Dec 7,Jan 14,15

HELVICK HEAD

B-760:Dec 23

HOLYHEAD

ON-1257(17-30):Jan 28,Feb 1,2
ON-1272(17-41):Dec 12,Feb 10
D-654:Jan 27

HORTON AND PORT EYNON

D-531:Dec 20,27

HOWTH

ON-1258(14-33):Dec 24,Jan 7,13,Feb 6
D-530:Dec 7(x2),24(x2)
D-659:Feb 7

HUMBER

ON-1216(17-05):Dec 4,21,Jan 30,
Feb 5,8,16(x2),18

HUNSTANTON

B-749:Dec 4,12

ISLAY

ON-1219(17-08):Feb 4

KESSOCK

B-771:Dec 3,5,Jan 23,Feb 9,13

KILKEEL

B-593:Jan 19,Feb 8

KILMORE QUAY

ON-1133(47-021):
Dec1(x2),2(x2),3(x2),4(x2),5(x2),6(x2),
7(x2),8(x2),9(x2),10(x2),11,Jan 3

KILRUSH

B-713:Dec 1

KINGHORN

B-720:Dec 1,9,13,14,17,Jan 8,15,
Feb 5,7,19

KINSALE

B-796:Dec 17

KIRKCUDBRIGHT

B-585:Feb 5

KIRKWALL

ON-1201(17-02):Dec 18,Jan 6,14

KYLE OF LOCHALSH

B-767:Dec 20,21(x2),Jan 12,Feb 3,17

LARGS

B-739:Dec 29,Jan 5,7(x2)

LARNE

D-646:Dec 16

LITTLEHAMPTON

B-792:Feb 8,14,26
D-602:Dec 13,Feb 14

LITTLESTONE-ON-SEA

B-785:Jan 2,20

LLANDUDNO

ON-1164(12-006):Dec 12

LOCHINVER

ON-1271(17-40):Dec 20,22

LOOE

B-793:Dec 15,29,Jan 9
D-574:Dec 29

LOUGH DERG

B-586:Jan 22

LOUGH SWILLY

B-717:Dec 23,Jan 7,22

LOWESTOFT

ON-1132(47-020):Dec 12,Feb 14
ON-1155(47-037):Jan 27,Feb 5

LYME REGIS

B-741:Feb 15

LYMINGTON

B-784:Feb 5,25

LYTHAM ST ANNES

ON-1189(12-30):Jan 23
D-509:Feb 21(x2)

MACDUFF

B-578:Dec 17

MALLAIG

ON-1250(17-26):Dec 7,14,21,Feb 5,7,26

MARGATE

D-500:Jan 5

MINEHEAD

B-708:Jan 22
D-485:Feb 15
D-549:Jan 22(x3)

MOELFRE

ON-1116(47-013):Feb 22
D-532:Dec 3

MORECAMBE

H-006:Dec 17

MUDEFORD

B-583:Dec 27,29,Jan 18,Feb 5,11(x2)

NEW BRIGHTON

B-721:Feb 14

NEWBIGGIN

B-745:Jan 1,18,Feb 18

NEWCASTLE

ON-1188(12-29):Dec 2,
Jan 19,20,21,22,28
D-637:Dec 29

NEWHAVEN

ON-1278(17-45):Dec 14,18,19,21

NEWQUAY (CORNWALL)

B-715:Jan 29,Feb 18(x2)
D-636:Jan 29,Feb 12(x2),17,18(x2)

NORTH BERWICK

D-619:Dec 1

OBAN

ON-1227(14-23):Dec 11,Jan 22,30,
Feb 1,11,18,28

PADSTOW

ON-1094(47-003):Jan 27,
Feb 14,22,26(x2)

PEEL

ON-1181(12-22):Dec 20,Jan 10,11

PENARTH

B-725:Dec 11(x3)

PENLEE

ON-1265(17-36):Jan 1
B-787:Jan 1,5

PETERHEAD

ON-1127(47-019):Dec 14,Feb 28

PLYMOUTH

ON-1264(17-35):Feb 6
ON-1279(17-46):Dec 10,12,
Jan 16,24,Feb 4
B-769:Jan 24
B-775:Feb 5

POOLE

ON-1131(47-023):Dec 12,Feb 7,10
B-710:Dec 12,21,27,Jan 22,23,28,29,
Feb 1,7,10,25

PORT ERIN

B-594:Dec 21

PORT ISAAC

D-546:Feb 5

PORT ST MARY

ON-1204(14-06):Jan 28
ON-1234(14-26):Dec 21
D-575:Dec 21

PORT TALBOT

D-550:Dec 17,30,Jan 10,11,22(x2)

PORTAFERRY

B-706:Dec 2,Jan 19,20

PORHCRAWL

B-726:Dec 4(x4),19

PORHDINLLAEN

ON-1120(47-015):Dec 10,31

PORTPATRICK

ON-1151(47-033):Jan 3,Feb 24

PORTREE

ON-1204(14-06):Dec 1,20(x3)

PORTRUSH

ON-1247(17-23):Jan 31
D-572:Dec 2,Jan 31,Feb 12

PORTSMOUTH

B-730:Dec 1,9,Jan 6,27,Feb 21
D-554:Dec 1,25,Jan 27

PWLLHELI

ON-1168(12-010):Feb 13
D-522:Jan 28,Feb 13

QUEENSFERRY

B-774:Dec 16,17,19,Feb 4,7,15,19

RAMSGATE

ON-1197(14-02):Jan 4,Feb 5
B-765:Dec 12,Jan 8,16

RED BAY

B-728:Feb 28

REDCAR

B-773:Dec 13,Jan 19,Feb 18,19
D-480:Dec 13,Jan 19,Feb 18,19

RHYL

ON-1183(12-24):Jan 21
D-604:Dec 1,Jan 21
D-632:Feb 5

ROCK

D-634:Feb 26(x2)

ROSSLARE HARBOUR

ON-1276(17-43):Dec1(x2),2,8(x2),
9(x2),10(x2),11,16,
Jan 9,12,Feb 10

RYE HARBOUR

B-727:Dec 4,10

SALCOMBE

B-794:Dec 31

SELSEY

ON-1074(47-001):Dec 7,13(x2),17

SENNEN COVE

ON-1121(47-016):Dec 25
D-624:Dec 25

SHEERNESS

ON-1211(14-13):Dec 1(x2)
D-495:Dec 1
D-513:Dec 31,Jan 1,21,Feb 18

SHERINGHAM

B-702:Jan 3

Inshore lifeboats

B-### B class lifeboat (Atlantic 21, Atlantic 75 or Atlantic 85)
D-### D class lifeboat
E-### E class lifeboat

H-### Inshore rescue hovercraft
XP-### X boat; small powered inflatable lifeboat
BB-### Boarding boat

See the map on page 25 for more information

SHOREHAM HARBOUR

ON-1158(47-040):Jan 28
D-647:Feb 12

SKEGNESS

ON-1166(12-008):Feb 18
ON-1184(12-25):Dec 16
D-573:Feb 8,17

SKERRIES

B-747:Jan 11

SOUTH BROADS

D-486:Jan 27, Feb 26
XP-42:Jan 27
XP-45:Feb 26

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

H-004:Jan 17,15,28
B-723:Dec 17
D-527:Jan 15
D-603:Dec 17

ST ABBS

B-783:Feb 5(x2),22

ST AGNES

D-641:Jan 29

ST BEES

B-719:Dec 11,Jan 11

ST CATHERINE

B-772:Jan 6

ST DAVIDS

ON-1139(47-026):Feb 19
D-543:Feb 19

ST HELIER

ON-1142(47-029):Jan 6

ST IVES

ON-1167(12-009):Jan 11,14
D-515:Jan 11,29

ST MARY'S

ON-1229(17-11):Feb 18,21

ST PETER PORT

ON-1203(17-04):Dec 3,19,Jan 31,
Feb 17,22

STORNOWAY

ON-1238(17-18):Jan 13

STROMNESS

ON-1236(17-16):Dec 10

SUNDERLAND

B-762:Dec 22,26,Jan 12,15, Feb 5,12,28
D-608:Dec 26, Feb 12

SWANAGE

ON-1182(12-23):Jan 11,15
ON-1187(12-28):Feb 15,19,26
D-613:Dec 27,Jan 2,11, Feb 15,19(x3),26

TEDDINGTON

D-648:Dec 10,16,Jan 6,16,18,22,31,
Feb 2,13

TEESMOUTH

ON-1110(47-008):Dec 13,
Jan 16,19(x2),22

TEIGNMOUTH

B-588:Dec 11,Jan 10,30(x2)

TENBY

ON-1112(47-010):Jan 25,27

THE MUMBLES

ON-1096(47-005):Jan 31
D-601:Dec 17,Jan 16,29

THURSO

ON-1273(17-42):Dec 2

TIGHNABRUAICH

B-743:Dec 29,Jan 1

TOBERMORY

ON-1201:Jan 27

TORBAY

ON-1254(17-27):Jan 1
ON-1255(17-28):Jan 29, Feb 19,26,27
D-651:Dec 22,27,31,Jan 1(x2),2,29,
Feb 17,27

TOWER

E-002:Dec 19(x2)
E-004:Dec 16,31,Jan 13,15,21(x2),23,
26,27(x3),29,31(x2), Feb 1,2(x3),4,5,
6(x2),8,17(x2),18, 19,21,24,25
E-005:Dec 2,3(x2),4,5,9,16,17,24,
25,29,30(x2),31, Jan 1,2(x2),3(x4),4,5(x2),
7(x4),8,11,13,1, Feb 12

TRAMORE

D-643:Jan 14

TROON

ON-1275(14-38):Dec 18, Feb 18,26
D-467:Dec 18

TYNEMOUTH

ON-1237(17-17):Feb 5
D-535:Dec 3,Jan 4, Feb 5,15

VALENTIA

ON-1218(17-07):Jan 22

WALMER

B-589:Jan 3
D-514:Dec 12,Jan 3,31

WALTON AND FRINTON

ON-1154(47-036):Feb 18(x2),24

WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA

D-512:Feb 10

WEST MERSEA

B-755:Feb 25
B-761:Dec 12,16(x2)

WESTON-SUPER-MARE

B-701:Feb 1

WEXFORD

D-644:Feb 10

WEYMOUTH

ON-1260(17-31):Dec 7,18
ON-1261(17-32):Jan 19, Feb 11,15,19
B-746:Dec 30, Feb 4,19

WHITBY

ON-1212(14-14):Dec 7
ON-1226(14-22):Jan 11
D-503:Jan 17, Feb 3
D-511:Jan 26
D-521:Dec 7,Jan 10

WHITSTABLE

B-764:Jan 11,19,29, Feb 12,18

WICKLOW

D-518:Jan 24

WORKINGTON

D-635:Jan 2

YARMOUTH

ON-1249(17-25):Dec 7(x2),8,10,
Feb 12,27

YOUGHAL

B-780:Dec 17, Feb 9

The services listed here are those for which returns had been received at RNLI headquarters by 3 April 2006 and processed by 5 April 2006.



Mrs Townrow of Frome, Somerset, was proud to see the outcome of her funding of an IB1-type D class lifeboat as it passed en route to Howth, Co. Dublin. (Pictured centre with the RNLI's Sarah Sleigh and Hugh Fogarty.) Partially sighted, Mrs Townrow was able to 'touch read' her father's name on the boat's plaque. As a prescribed oxygen user, she has also contributed to the cost of oxygen cylinders onboard a number of all weather lifeboats in the fleet. As the Lifeboat went to print, a new lifeguard training rescue boat, also funded by Mrs Townrow, was named. Photo: Elizabeth George

On station

D-659 *George Godfrey Benbow* (pictured),
Howth, 7 February 2006
(D-530 withdrawn)
B-775 *Millennium Forester*, Plymouth, 27 January 2006
D-657 *Sally*, Lytham St Annes, 18 April 2006
(D-509 withdrawn to the relief fleet)
D-652 *Team Effort*, Fishguard, 10 April 2006
(D-505 withdrawn to the relief fleet)
ON-1146(47-031) *Voluntary Worker*, Selsey,
26 February 2006
(ON-1074(47-001) withdrawn)

Naming ceremonies

D-649 *Dorothy Beatrice May Gorman*, Bembridge, 29 April 2006
D-646 *Hannahbella Ferguson*, Larne, 22 April 2006
D-661 *Jane Ann III*, Wells-next-the-Sea, 5 April 2006
D-651 *John William Hirst*, Torbay, 9 April 2006



The late Charlie Cocks in his early days (above, front row with cap) and more recently (below)

Appointments

Vic Derham – Mudeford lifeboat station
Deputy Launching Authority
Lt Cdr Richard (Ollie) Edwards – Newquay lifeboat station
Deputy Launching Authority
Andrew Hack – Mudeford lifeboat station
Lifeboat Operations Manager
Gareth Horner – Newquay lifeboat station
Lifeboat Operations Manager
Wayne Martin – Newquay lifeboat station
Deputy Launching Authority
Dr Gerald Rhodes – Mudeford lifeboat station
Deputy Lifeboat Medical Adviser
Nick Snelling – Southend-on-Sea lifeboat station
Deputy Launching Authority
Dr Neil Tallant – Mudeford lifeboat station
Lifeboat Medical Adviser
Capt. Brian Wood – Southend-on-Sea lifeboat station
Deputy Launching Authority

Retirements

Martin Burt – Newquay lifeboat station Lifeboat Operations Manager
Capt. Malcolm Gater – Newquay lifeboat station
Deputy Launching Authority
Matt Wickham – Rosslare lifeboat station Mechanic

Deaths

Mrs Chater-Hughes – Malvern fundraising branch member
Charlie Cocks – former Redcar lifeboat station Crew Member, Mechanic and Signaller, and Station Administrator since 1992



Ken Eade – former Scarborough lifeboat station Coxswain
John Hardy – Tavistock and district fundraising branch Treasurer
Lewis 'Tuner' Harrison – former Cromer lifeboat station Crew Member (alongside Henry Blogg, see page 12)
Kathleen James – Brixham fundraising guild President
Ann Jeavons – former Moelfre fundraising guild and lifeboat station committee member
Peter Kenny – former Arklow lifeboat station Coxswain and Crew Member
Phillip Lill – Skegness lifeboat station fundraising branch President and former Vice President and Chairman
Graham Louth – Gravesend lifeboat station Crew Member
Harold Riggs – founder member of Twickenham and district fundraising branch and former Treasurer
Joan Sharp – former Sennen Cove fundraising guild Chairman
Betty Thomson – Mid Argyll fundraising branch/guild President
John Ware – former Southend-on-Sea lifeboat station Deputy Launching Authority



Severn



Arun



Tamar



Tyne

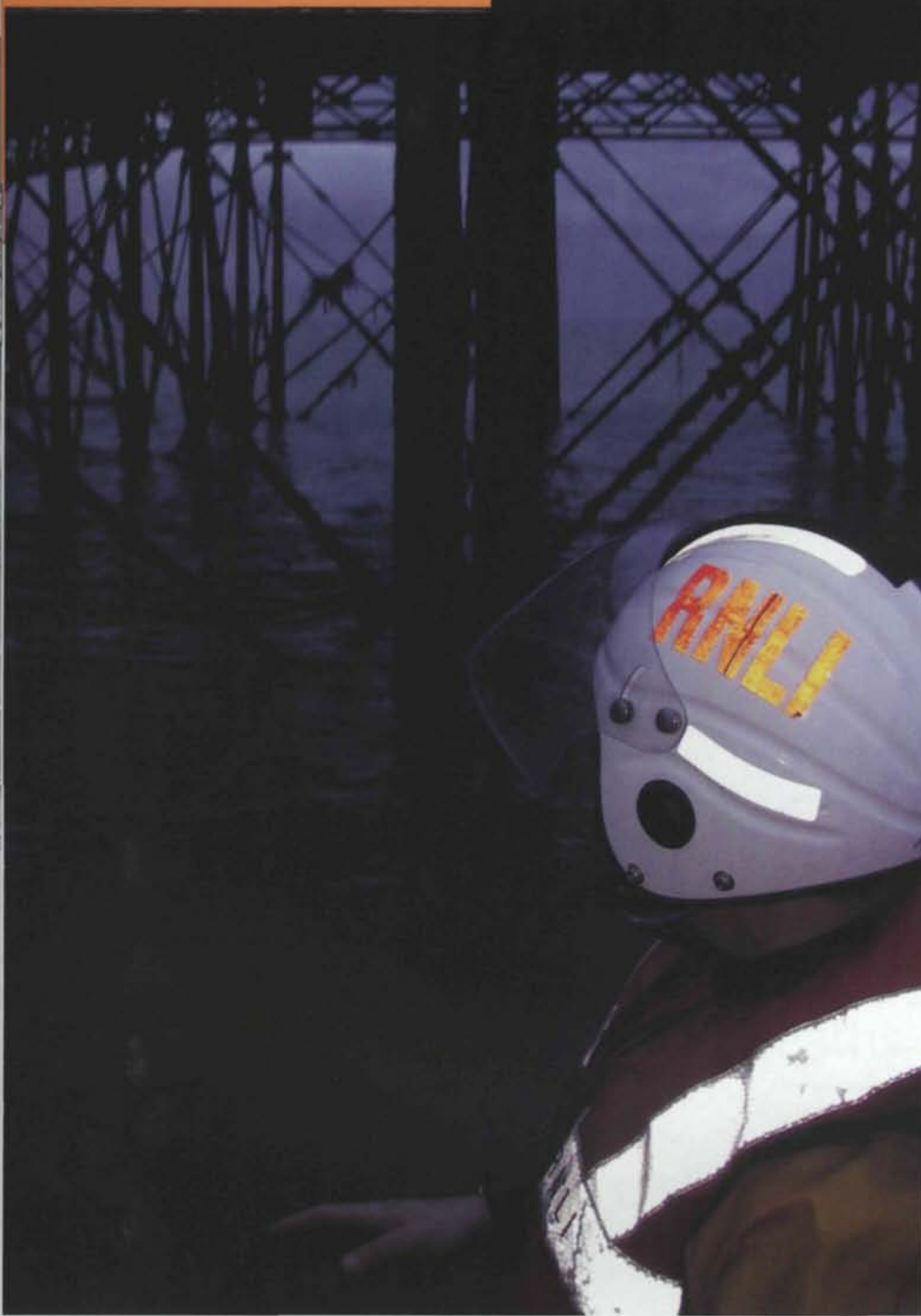


Trent



Mersey





An icy plunge

When Portsmouth's volunteers heard that a man was trapped in icy waters below a pier, they knew they were in a race against time

Police officers had been called to Portsmouth's South Marine Parade Pier on the evening of 10 January 2005 when a man was seen in the freezing cold sea below. Shining their torches down onto the water, they saw waves battering the man against the barnacle-encrusted legs of the pier. He seemed unable to swim to safety.

The Police alerted Solent Coastguard, who in turn requested the launch of a lifeboat from Portsmouth. Within 10 minutes the Atlantic 75 CSMA Frizzell launched with Helmsman John Brooks and Crew Members Paul Clark and Tobi O'Neill aboard. In order to reach the pier, John headed out of Langstone Harbour (where the lifeboat station is based) and followed the coastline to the west. Once out of the

harbour's shelter, the team faced moderate to rough seas and a fresh breeze from the west, gusting up to force 6: 'It wasn't the worst weather I've been out in but it was pretty evil,' recalls Tobi.

Despite the challenging conditions, the lifeboat arrived at the pier just three minutes after launching. The light from the police officers' torches helped the crew quickly spot the man on the east side of the pier. John made a swift approach alongside the pier, heading to sea as he drew close to the struggling man. He was apparently trapped by something and large waves were going over his head. He was certainly in danger of drowning.

'The structure right under the pier is complex – it wasn't a very safe place for someone to be swimming and we couldn't have got the lifeboat under there,' John explains. 'I realised that the only way to reach the man was for one of us to enter the water. Full credit goes to Tobi and Paul because they showed no hesitation when I asked them.'

The two crew members swam to the casualty with some difficulty: they were close to the surf line and took freezing cold waves in the face time and again. Meanwhile, their helmsman showed exceptional seamanship by keeping the lifeboat close, despite the powerful waves and dangerous structure nearby, and operating the radio at the same time. 'The lifeboat handled superbly,' says John. 'I have 100% faith in these boats, and ours is maintained by an excellent station mechanic and the centre at Cowes.'

Upon reaching the casualty, Tobi and Paul discovered that the man was snared in a submerged electric cable. Tobi remembers: 'I was trying to speak to him but he was extremely distressed and there were large waves breaking around us. He was only wearing jeans and a T-shirt.' Paul adds: 'If we had arrived a minute later he would have been a goner. That's why we had to jump in. His teeth were chattering and he could barely speak.'

While Paul kept the casualty's head above water, Tobi attempted to loosen the cable. 'The RNLI has excellent training but it is hard to prepare for a situation like that,' he says. 'We have knives but they're not for electric cable! It was a strange sensation: one minute we were treading water and being bashed against a post by

a wave, the next we were touching the seabed.'

Eventually, Tobi managed to free the man and John quickly moved in with the lifeboat. He left the helm briefly to help Paul aboard, who in turn pulled the casualty and Tobi into the lifeboat. By now, an ambulance (which had been called by the Police) had arrived on the beach.

John took the lifeboat into the beach as close as he could without hitting the bottom, then faced head to sea and instructed the crew to jump out of the stern with the survivor. 'He was obviously reluctant to get back into the water but, in a rigid inflatable, it was the quickest way to get him to safety,' explains John.

Tobi and Paul carefully brought the casualty to shore and handed him over to the waiting paramedics, informing them of his condition and injuries. 'The whole thing ran like clockwork,' says Tobi, 'and it felt really good to know we'd saved him.' Paul adds: 'It was a good bit of work with all the other emergency services.

'If we hadn't got there when we did, he would have been dragged under and died.'

In recognition of their actions, Crew Members Paul Clark and Tobi O'Neill are awarded the Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on Vellum, while Helmsman John Brooks receives a Framed Letter of Thanks from the RNLI's Chairman, Sir Jock Slater. 'It's nice to get recognition for the crew – it boosts morale,' says John. 'After the shout I remember thinking: "Well, that's bloody good – we've just saved a life!"'

Richard Wynn, Training Divisional Inspector for the East, says: 'While this was not a lengthy service, it was carried out in atrocious weather conditions with the sea temperature close to freezing and the tide still flooding. Thanks to the actions of the Helmsman and crew of the Atlantic 75, a man's life has been saved.'

The casualty remains unidentified.



THE DETAIL

THE DATE AND TIME

Monday 10 January 2005, 9.07pm–9.30pm

THE CASUALTY

One man

THE CONDITIONS

Dark Weather: Cold, overcast.

Wind: Fresh breeze from west gusting to force 6

Sea state: Moderate to rough 1.5m swell

THE CREW Helmsman: John Brooks (44, marine engineer). Crew Members: Paul Clark (36, Royal Navy Petty Officer) Tobi O'Neill (25, trials skipper/technician)

THE LIFEBOAT B-730 Atlantic 75 inshore CSMA Frizzell On station: 1996

Funding: £64,000 raised by members of the Civil Service Motoring Association (CSMA) Ltd (their fourth lifeboat) and Frizzell financial services.

THE LIFEBOAT STATION Portsmouth (previously called Eastney lifeboat station and Portsmouth (Langstone Harbour) lifeboat station) Established: 1965

Other lifeboats: a D class (1965), a McLachlan class added (1967), McLachlan replaced with a B class Atlantic 21 (1975), Atlantic 21 replaced with current Atlantic 75 (1996), D class replaced with current D class Heyland II (2000) **Previous RNLI awards:** Bronze Medal to: Helmsman Dennis Faro (1973); Helmsman Sydney Thayers and Crew Members William Hawkins and Dennis Faro (1974). Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on Vellum to: IT McLachlan, D Cook-Radmore and S Thayers (1965); Robert John Faro and Roy Richards (1967); IT McLachlan, P Bannister and RB Needle (1970); B Needle (1970); Helmsman John Fletcher (1972); Helmsman Martin Icke and Crew Members Paul Venton and Adrian West (1989); Helmsman Martin Icke (1996). Framed Letters of Thanks to Helmsman Stephen Alexander and Crew Members Adrian West, Paul Venton and James Beach (1988).

Left: The pier was a treacherous place for the lifeboat crew to venture

Top right: CSMA Frizzell in action

Bottom right L-R: Volunteers John, Tobi and Paul safely back on terra firma



Twelve minutes of terror

It took Port Talbot's inshore lifeboat crew just a few minutes to save a life at sea but the three found their training and courage tested to the limit

On the morning of 10 January 2006 a call came through to Port Talbot's Lifeboat Operations Manager Robbie Harris requesting the immediate launch of the station's D class *Gwenllian*. There was a man overboard from a motorboat somewhere near the deep-water harbour.

Seven minutes later, Helmsman David Jones and Crew Members Chris Thomas and Rachel Thomas left the boathouse for their launching site on the beach. They were faced with torrential rain and an exceptionally high wind that was driving a heavy, dumping surf for 400m out to sea. It was vital to time their launch precisely if they were to avoid capsize.

Once in position, David boarded the lifeboat to start the engine while Chris and Rachel held it head to surf. With waves breaking over the lifeboat and a powerful undertow, this was quite a challenge.

Picking his moment, David called for Chris and Rachel to board and they set out on a skilfully negotiated path through the heavy surf – on occasion, the lifeboat even became airborne. Once clear of the surf, David turned the lifeboat to run south easterly, parallel to the shore and along the crests of the incoming waves, from where they spotted the motorboat, *Holly*.

Minutes later, *Gwenllian* safely reached *Holly* and they spotted the man overboard, Lyndon Ward. He had one arm through a buoy and the other holding onto the motorboat. He was not wearing a lifejacket.

With *Holly* pitching and rolling heavily in 3m waves, it would not be possible to manoeuvre the lifeboat alongside without posing a danger to Lyndon, so David asked Chris to enter the water and swim to him with the rescue float.

No sooner was Chris in the water than Lyndon went under. Chris forced himself underneath the hull of the motorboat in a desperate bid to find him. He was able to grab Lyndon's arm and bring his head clear of the surface – undoubtedly saving his life.

Whilst Chris put his energies into keeping Lyndon afloat, David skilfully held the lifeboat as steady as possible so that Rachel could drag the pair back to the lifeboat using the rescue float. Once they were alongside, Rachel held onto Lyndon while Chris got himself back into the lifeboat and then she swapped with David at the helm. Due to Lyndon's several layers of saturated clothing, it took the combined strength of the two men to get him onboard. On the third attempt, they used the lifeboat's rolling motion to good effect and successfully hauled Lyndon in. David resumed his position at the helm for the return passage.



From her experience as a student nurse, Rachel could tell that Lyndon was in urgent need of medical attention but her attempts to administer first aid were hindered by the lifeboat's violent motion. Chris informed the Coastguard that they would need back up to get the casualty to hospital. To save time, David took full advantage of the D class's flat bottom and, skirting an area of difficult seas, made an emergency landing on the beach. They were met by other crew and the Coastguard.

Lyndon was now only semiconscious and fitting. Rachel wrapped him in a survival bag and gave him oxygen. Meanwhile, David and Chris saw that *Holly* was close to capsize. Thinking of the man still onboard, who had declined their offer of evacuation, they were glad to see a rescue helicopter from RAF Chivenor approaching. A winchman was put onboard and the man recovered. Lyndon was picked up from the beach and both casualties were flown to hospital. Within a minute, *Holly* was hit by a large breaking wave and did indeed capsize. She was later washed up on the beach.

Helmsman David Jones and Crew Member Chris Thomas receive the

Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on Vellum in recognition of their courageous rescue in difficult circumstances. Rob Atkinson, RNLI Deputy Divisional Inspector (West) praises their actions: 'David demonstrated both courage and great skill in safely manoeuvring the lifeboat through the large breaking seas. He remained calm, made a number of excellent decisions and led his crew in an exemplary fashion. Chris showed great courage and physical strength by entering the water, swimming to and getting underneath the vessel to recover Mr Ward.'

The important role played by Rachel Thomas is also recognised in a Framed Letter of Thanks from RNLI Chairman Sir Jock Slater. 'Rachel's medical knowledge played an important part in this service,' explains Rob. 'Equally, despite her inexperience on the helm, she managed to hold the lifeboat head to sea while David assisted in recovering the casualty.'

Left: *Gwenllian* and crew in training on a calm, sunny day

Top right: RAF helicopter attending an Atlantic lifeboat

Photo: AE Turner

Bottom right: (L-R) Crew Members Rachel and Chris and Helmsman David reunited with Lyndon



THE DETAIL

THE DATE AND TIME

Tuesday 10 January 2006, 9.54am–11.00am

THE CASUALTIES

Two men on 6m motorboat *Holly*

THE CONDITIONS Weather: Torrential rain

Visibility: Poor Wind: South west force 6–7 (outside usual operating range of a D class)

Sea state: Rough, 2–3m swell

THE CREW Helmsman: David Jones

(27, Coastguard watch assistant, 9 years on crew)

Crew Members: Chris Thomas (24, motor

mechanic, 9 years on crew) Rachel Thomas

(22, student nurse, 4 years on crew)

THE LIFEBOAT

D-550 D class inshore *Gwenllian* Rotary Club of Port Talbot

On station: 1999

Funding: £14,000 Port Talbot Rotary Club

THE LIFEBOAT STATION Port Talbot

Established: 1966

Previous lifeboats: a D class (1966), replaced by current D class (1995)

Previous gallantry awards:

The Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on Vellum to Crew Member Robert Vernon Harris and Framed Letters of Thanks to Crew Members Leigh Worth and Stanley May (1995), Framed Letters of Thanks to

Helmsman Matthew Rossi and Crew Member Leon Murphy and a Director's letter to Crew Member David Jones (1999).

As the yacht *Classic Wave* passed between the Isles of Kerrera and Bach off Oban, Argyll, her engine cut out. Skipper Bob Hartley recalls: 'We got the foresail up but it wasn't enough to keep us clear, and we went aground.' He made a precautionary call to the Coastguard saying he was confident of refloating the *Classic Wave* on the turning tide, but they requested the launch of Oban's *Mora Edith Macdonald*.

Coxswain Ronnie MacKillop and his crew arrived on scene to find *Classic Wave* taking on water in a 3m swell and backwash off the rocks. Ronnie brought the

lifeboat through the narrow stretch of deep water to one side of the yacht and Crew Member Peter MacKinnon climbed across with a salvage pump. The flooding tide and damaged hull became too much for the pump, though, so the decision was taken to abandon ship.

Now in driving rain and strong wind, with waves breaking across both craft and a rise and fall between their decks of 2–3m, Ronnie manoeuvred the lifeboat back alongside *Classic Wave* and the first of her crew leapt to safety. Seeing that the older yachtsmen couldn't safely perform

such a feat, Ronnie decided to use the lifeboat's liferaft to recover them and so turned and approached stern to stern.

But just as the raft was being prepared, the yacht suddenly dislodged from the rocks. She slipped and sank in a matter of seconds, throwing the three men into the sea. The yachtsmen grabbed onto the raft and were swept clear but Peter was not so lucky – the sinking yacht was drawing him down with her. He had to work with all his might to regain the surface.

Ronnie recalls. 'I was absolutely terrified for his safety but you just have to steel

Sunk in seconds

It was a calm September afternoon for a yacht and her crew – until sudden engine trouble combined with a turning tide and a change in the weather



yourself and get on with it.' Thankfully, *Classic Wave* had also been equipped with a liferaft and this now inflated next to Peter and soon he too was recovered.

After the rescue, a grateful Bob said: 'I always believed in the RNLI but I never thought I would have to use them. They saved our lives. At no time did we feel desperate – we felt the lifeboat was in control. It was all so quick. We went aground at 12.15pm and were back in Oban two hours later.'

Ronnie was happy to be able to conclude: 'At the end of the day we lost a salvage pump [since replaced by the yacht's insurers] but that's a small price to pay. You have to trust your training and your instincts and the boys who are with you.'

Ronnie and Peter receive Framed Letters of Thanks from the RNLI Chairman Sir Jock Slater for their 'first class leadership' and 'resolute actions and bravery' respectively, while fellow crew Keith, Ian and Barry receive letters of appreciation from Chief Executive Andrew Freemantle.

Oban's Deputy Launching Authority Michael Robertson comments:

'Peter acted in the best traditions of the lifeboat service by continuing to help the yacht's crew without regard to his own safety – he could have jumped back onboard the lifeboat on several occasions but chose not to.'

As a young and relatively inexperienced coxswain Ronnie kept calm throughout and handled the boat with exceptional skill to carry out the manoeuvres described, recover all the casualties and avoid damage to the lifeboat.'



RNLI Sea Safety Manager Peter Chennell comments:

'This incident is a classic example of how the sea can turn a simple machinery failure into a life-threatening situation.'

The crew were well prepared with lifejackets and a liferaft and the failure took place very close to land – yet without the RNLI, lives would most likely have been lost. All sea users should remember that the sea is a dangerous environment in which to enjoy oneself, and ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken when going to sea.'

(See page 8 for news of the RNLI's latest in the sea safety armoury, pictured above.)



Left and top: The sinking yacht is caught on mobile phone camera from the lifeboat while a survivor makes it to the liferaft

Above L-R: Coxswain Ronnie MacKillop and Third Mechanic Peter MacKinnon

Photos: Nigel Millard

THE DETAIL

THE DATE AND TIME Saturday 17 September 2005, 12.28pm–2.03pm

THE CASUALTIES

Three men on 12m yacht *Classic Wave*

THE CONDITIONS Weather: Rain Visibility: Good, 5–10 miles Wind: South west force 6

Sea state: Rough, 2–3m swell

THE CREW Coxswain: Ronnie MacKillop (31, full-time Coxswain since 2004, 9 years on crew.)

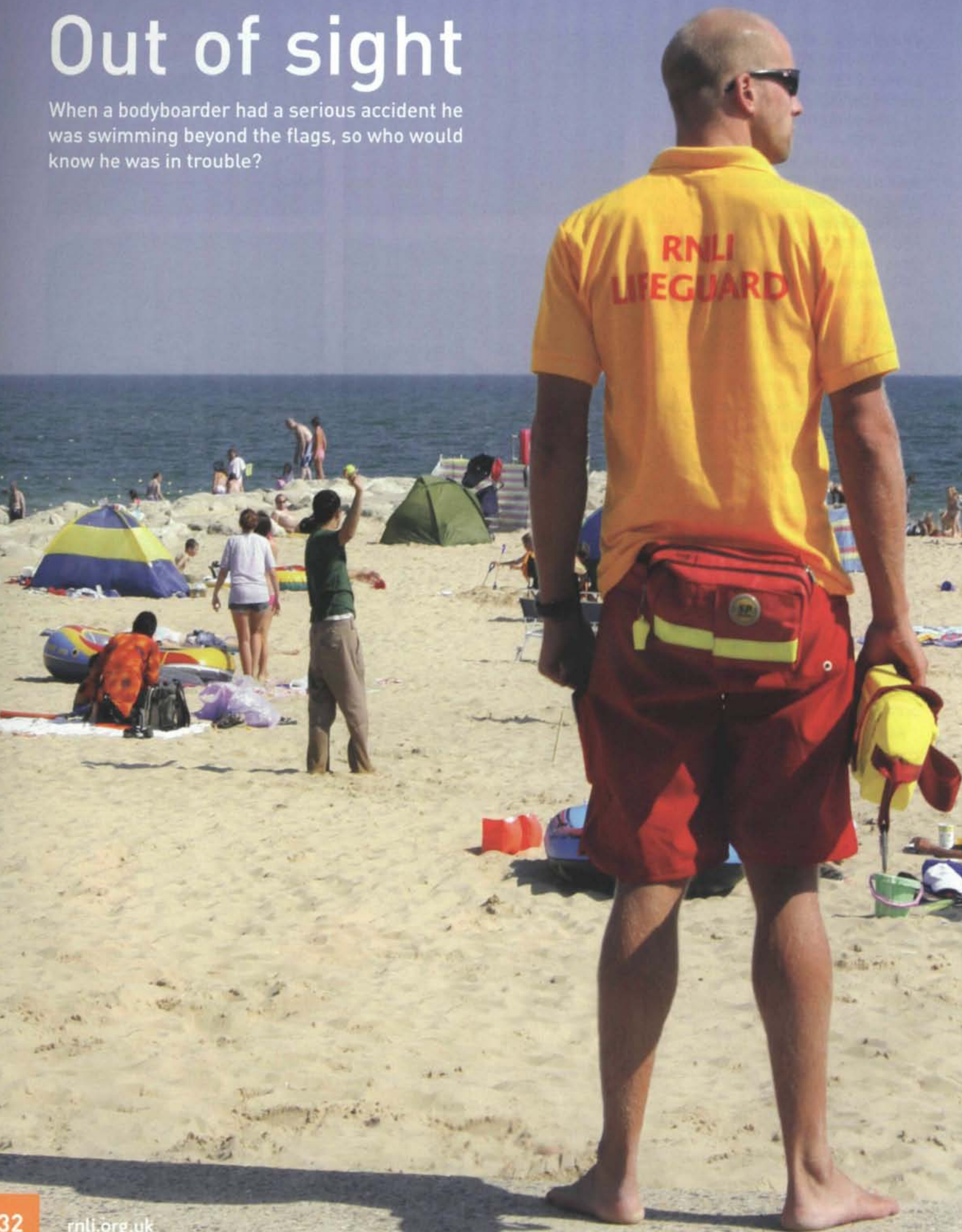
Crew Members: Second Mechanic Keith Burnett (43, Scottish and Southern Energy plc manager, 7 years on crew), Third Mechanic Peter MacKinnon (48, self-employed maintenance contractor, 4 years on crew), Ian Henry (46, ship agency manager, 16 years on crew), Barry MacTaggart (36, electrical linesman, 6 years on crew)

THE LIFEBOAT ON-1227(14-23) Trent class all weather *Mora Edith MacDonald* On station: 1997 Funding: £1.2M Bequest of Miss ME MacDonald, and of Mrs Janet Boyd Finlay-Maclean, Mrs Harriet Willis Gaunt, the Most Noble George Iain Murray 10th Duke of Atholl and RNLI Chairman (specifically funded communications equipment), and Mrs Annie Thomson Hart, and a gift in memory of Mr Doug Halliday (specifically funded rudder)

THE LIFEBOAT STATION Oban Established: 1972 Previous lifeboats: a McLachlan class (1972), an all weather added (1978), both replaced by a Brede class (1982), replaced by the current Trent class in 1997 Previous gallantry awards: Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on Vellum to Coxswain/Mechanic John Patrick Maclean (1985), Framed Letter of Thanks to then Crew Member Ronnie MacKillop (2001)

Out of sight

When a bodyboarder had a serious accident he was swimming beyond the flags, so who would know he was in trouble?



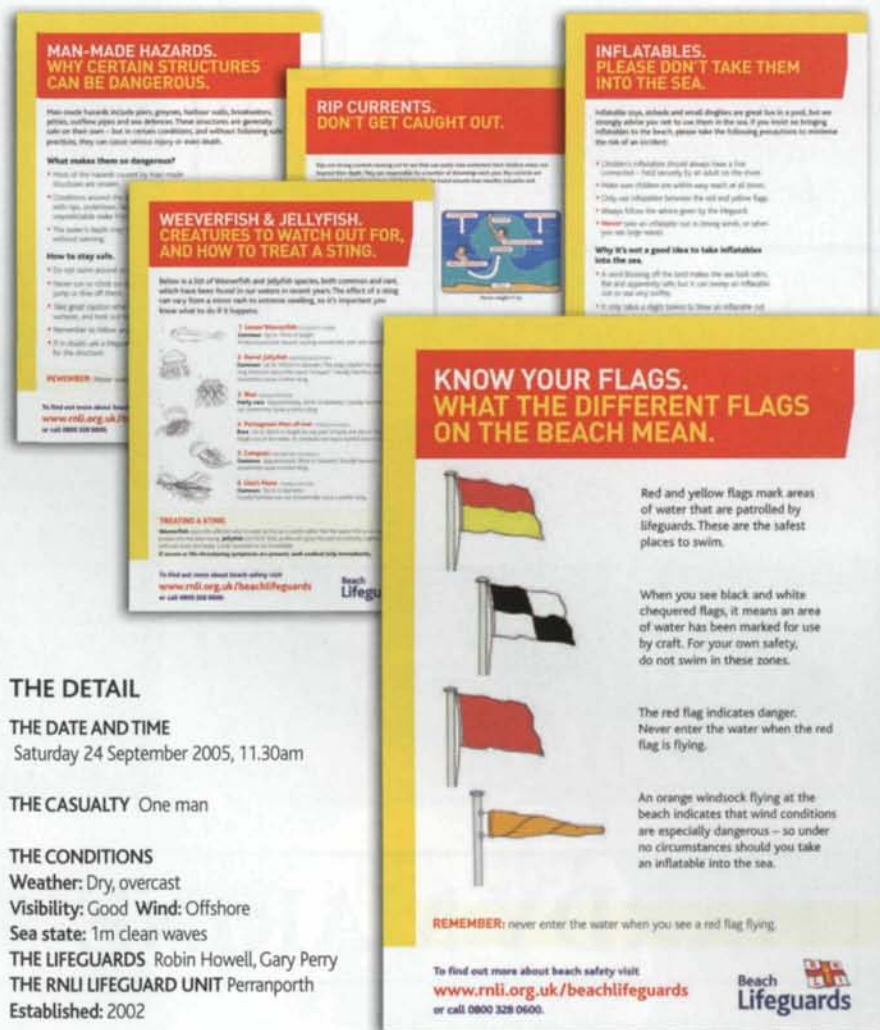
Surfer Neil Futton was waiting in the water for the next wave to ride and, looking around, noticed a bodyboard floating in the water. He paddled over and found a man who had stopped breathing. He started to attempt resuscitation there and then, while waving to attract the attention of the lifeguards on shore.

Robin Howell, both a Perranporth Surf Lifesaving Club and RNLI lifeguard, happened to be passing after his rescue boat exam and spotted Neil. He launched the inshore rescue boat with fellow club member Gary Perry. They pulled the man onboard and continued the resuscitation effort until he showed signs of life. Once back on shore, the duty RNLI lifeguard team and two local doctors continued treatment. The air ambulance arrived within five minutes of being scrambled and took the bodyboarder, Paul Marchant, to the Royal Cornwall Hospital, Treliske. He was treated in the intensive care unit and made a full recovery.

Greg Spray, RNLI Area Lifeguard Manager for Carrick, was on the beach at the time and praised the actions of all those involved in the rescue and underlined the casualty's good fortune: 'This was a great example of teamwork between Perranporth Surf Lifesaving Club and the RNLI lifeguard team who reacted very quickly and professionally. They used their first aid training to best effect and ensured the casualty had excellent care and attention. This was an incredibly close call for Paul and my hearty congratulations go to all those involved from the local community, including Robin and Gary, Cornwall Air Ambulance who were on the scene so quickly, members of the Surf Lifesaving Club who were being examined at the time and cleared an area for the helicopter to land, the doctors and of course, Neil, who spotted the casualty in the first place and did the right thing.

'Despite their constant vigilance, lifeguards can't see everything, especially when there are many people in the sea, and so they also rely on other water users to alert them to problems. This incident highlights the need for beach signs and flags, keeping within the lifeguarded area, where they have the best chance of being spotted if they do get into trouble.'

Left: Keeping watch on a busy beach
Right: After his stay in hospital, rescued bodyboarder Paul Marchant meets Gary (L) and Robin (R)



THE DETAIL

THE DATE AND TIME

Saturday 24 September 2005, 11.30am

THE CASUALTY

One man

THE CONDITIONS

Weather: Dry, overcast

Visibility: Good Wind: Offshore

Sea state: 1m clean waves

THE LIFEGUARDS Robin Howell, Gary Perry

THE RNLI LIFEGUARD UNIT Perranporth

Established: 2002

THE INSHORE RESCUE BOAT

Owned by Perranporth Surf Lifesaving Club

Funding: £10,000 West Country TV community challenge project

Five of the 10 information cards produced by the RNLI beach safety team. Download a set of pdfs from the website or contact Headquarters



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HOW AND WHEN COULD I USE MARINECALL SERVICES?

Here's an example. If you're planning to sail from Portsmouth you might choose Cherbourg as your destination, checking the weather situation for the central channel area in the free Marinecall e-newsletter you registered for in advance. En route, you can get updates by phone to Marinecall's special RNLI supporter line for the English Channel (09001 353 641) while in range of UK-based mobile signals (typically up to 10 miles offshore). You might find a change in wind direction and decide to adapt your passage plan accordingly.

A call to 09001 353 662 (Northern France) will inform you of the conditions at your destination, where you can benefit from a Continental forecast that you have already paid for, avoiding a premium rate. You can similarly plan for your return passage.

And the cost of all that Met Office information? About £10-£12 and we donate a percentage of this to the RNLI.

All the numbers you need for all Marinecall services are featured on the RNLI/Marinecall directory card included in this issue of the *Lifeboat*. If your card is missing, simply request another on 0871 200 3985.

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Books

Guides for lifeboat enthusiasts

For those who are fascinated by the history of an individual station, who want to trace a relief lifeboat through its travels from station to station, or who just want to check their facts and figures, these guides are a must.



Lifeboat Enthusiasts' Society handbook 2006

By Tony Denton, published by the Lifeboat Enthusiasts' Society
Paperback. Free to Society members, or £5 including postage to non-members (cheques payable to Lifeboat Enthusiasts' Society), from the author and Society Hon. Treasurer at Dawn, Upper Battlefield, Shrewsbury, SY4 4AA.



The story of the Thurso lifeboats

By Jeff Morris, published by the Lifeboat Enthusiasts' Society
Paperback. £4.75 including postage (cheques payable to RNLI) from Mr A Oag, 12 River View, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7QJ.



The story of the Castletown and Port St Mary lifeboats

By Jeff Morris, published by the Lifeboat Enthusiasts' Society
Paperback. £4.25 including postage (cheques payable to RNLI) from Mr A Maddrell, Atholl Lodge, Fistard, Port St Mary, Isle of Man, IM9 5PE.



The history of the Aberystwyth lifeboats and

The closed lifeboat stations of Yorkshire

Both written and published by Jeff Morris
Paperback. £3 each including postage (cheques payable to Jeff Morris) from the author at 14 Medina Road, Coventry, CV6 5JB.

Longshore drift: a radio poem

By Katrina Porteous with linocuts by James Dodds

Published by Jardine Press Ltd

ISBN 0953947297

Price: £10 hardback

Longshore Drift celebrates the skills and knowledge of the fishermen at Aldeburgh in Suffolk. From the luxurious slipcase through the enchanting poem and James Dodds' stunning linocuts, this is a pleasure to read. Commissioned by BBC Radio 3, the broadcast poem featured real speech from the fishermen Porteous had interviewed. These multiple voices have been successfully translated to the written page with the use of two tones of text featured on adjacent pages. In short, this beautifully produced book is a treat to read but also holds a serious message: at the time of writing there were seven fishing boats working on Aldeburgh beach; two years later at the time of publication, only three remained.



First across the line and fifty other poems

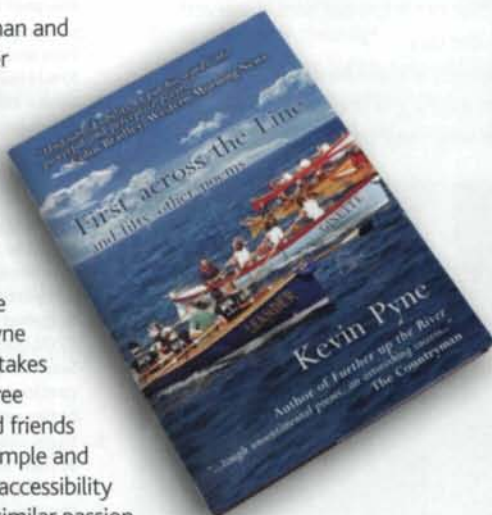
By Kevin Pyne

Published by Richard Webb

ISBN 0953636143

Price: £9.99 hardback

Kevin Pyne has worked as a boatman and ferryman on the River Dart for over 35 years and he writes from the heart with breath-taking honesty. His love of the local waters, his friends and family and in particular his recently deceased wife, resonates on every page and makes for a beautiful, moving read. In his preface and the brief notes beneath each poem, Pyne opens his world to the reader and takes them on a journey through the three sections: water stories, medley, and friends and scallywags. His poetry has a simple and seemingly effortless elegance and accessibility that will appeal to anyone with a similar passion for life in and around the water.



Unless other ordering details are stated, all books reviewed in *the Lifeboat* are available from all good bookshops and online from Amazon via the RNLI website at rnli.org.uk/amazon. Amazon will donate a minimum of 5% of the value of all such orders to the RNLI. (For the RNLI to benefit in this way you must access Amazon via the RNLI website and not go direct to Amazon.)

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Dispatches



A day to remember

The RNLI's Annual Presentation of Awards ceremony is an uplifting experience

More than 1,000 supporters, volunteers, staff and, most importantly, awardees attended this year's event on Thursday 18 May at the Barbican in London. They were there to celebrate the RNLI year that was 2005 and the contribution made to the charity by so many very different people and organisations.

Octogenarian Chelsea Pensioners jostled shoulders with junior school children and suited managers from the corporate world mixed with grass-roots volunteers.

The guest of honour was HRH Princess Alexandra, The Hon. Lady Ogilvy KCGVO and she was generous with her time as she met each awardee on stage and then afterwards with their families backstage. Several were nearly overcome by the excitement and honour of the occasion but well-deserved pride won the day.

Participants and audience alike went home with a spring in their step reminded once more why they support the RNLI.



1. The audience is spell bound during the review of the year film. (Send in your snippets of 2006 for consideration for next year's review to Film and Image Manager Eleanor Driscoll at RNLI Headquarters)
2. Senior Helmsman Gavin Forehead of St Agnes, Coxswain Mark Pollard of Falmouth and Helmsman Gary Stanbury of Appledore are proud of their Gallantry Medals
3. Tim Hall of Bishop Skinner Marine insurance brokers, who have added to seven years of valuable contributions with their latest sponsorship of the RNLI's *Sea Safety: the complete guide* (see page 8)
4. Sergeant Bob Martin has single-handedly raised £200,000 by collecting at the London and Southampton Boat Shows and other events, continuing a long and fruitful relationship between the RNLI and the Chelsea Hospital
5. Ysgol Glan-y-Mor school children are so active in their support for the RNLI that they received an award too
6. Mrs Beryl Heber-Owen, just one of the 90-plus lifelong supporters honoured for their stalwart commitment and hard work





L-R: RNLI Chief Executive Andrew Freemantle, guest Ronnie Corbett and Honorary Curator Frank Muirhead
Photo: Sam Robbins

Ronnie and Henry

On 12 April 2006 a little man came to Cromer in Norfolk to honour a very big man indeed. Ronnie Corbett returned to his comedy roots by the pier and opened the RNLI's new museum dedicated to the most decorated lifeboatman of all time, Henry Blogg. Read more on page 12.

Right royal reception

The RNLI's Patron, HM The Queen, celebrated her 80th birthday in April with special dinners, walkabouts, a service in St George's Chapel and thousands of well-wishers' cards.

In February, she and The Duke of Edinburgh hosted a reception at Buckingham Palace to recognise the work of those who respond to emergencies and disasters in the UK and overseas. Amongst the guest list were ten people from the RNLI. Nominated from across the organisation they represented the mix of volunteer and paid roles in this diverse lifesaving organisation, including officials, fundraisers and crew from across the UK and RoI.

In May, The Queen's cousin and RNLI President, HRH the Duke of Kent, had a two-day whistle-stop tour of eight lifeboat stations in the RNLI's north division: Skegness (where he also met representatives from neighbouring Mablethorpe), Cleethorpes, Humber (the only full-time coastal lifeboat station in the UK and RoI), Withernsea, Bridlington, Flamborough, Filey and Scarborough. A frequent guest of honour at the RNLI's Annual Presentation of Awards, this role was taken by HRH The Princess Alexandra this year (see opposite).

Get some *Sea Sense*

Listeners to BBC Radio Cornwall have been treated to a feast of exciting features about the RNLI – and learnt how to keep safe in the process.

Whether or not you're in range of BBC Radio Cornwall, you can still follow their *Sea Sense* campaign throughout 2006 as regular broadcasts are paired with a comprehensive website. Partly funded by a grant from the BBC Radio Cornwall Appeal run by the Cornwall Community Foundation, the radio station is working with the RNLI to promote all aspects of beach and sea safety.

Amateur Swimming Association statistics show up to 40% of the adult population of the UK can swim either only very slightly or not at all.

Listeners are encouraged to get back into swimming or to learn the skill for the first time, whatever their age.

BBC presenter James Churchfield and RNLI Media Relations Manager for the south west Tamsin Thomas have accepted the

ultimate test of *their* swimming abilities: they have until October to show they can swim 16 lengths of a 25m pool in nine minutes or under – just like an RNLI lifeguard. You can check on their progress, and that of five 'real' RNLI volunteers, at bbc.co.uk/cornwall/sea_sense.

BBC Radio Cornwall's weatherman Chris Stumbles and colleagues learning to swim again





Come visit us

For 15 years Hoylake's Mersey class *Lady of Hilbre* has kept watch over the Wirral Peninsula, enjoying dramatic views of the Liverpool skyline to one side and north Wales to the other. As attractive as the scene surrounding the lifeboat station is, the famous Sands of Dee are notoriously treacherous. The three Hilbre Islands in the mouth of the Dee estuary are cut off from the mainland for up to five hours out of every 12 and, invariably, many of Hoylake's shouts are to those who find themselves caught out by the speed of the incoming tide.

Hoylake is one of the oldest lifeboat stations in the UK and Republic of Ireland, established in 1803 with its first lifeboat built

by Henry Greathead. Today, the all weather lifeboat station has nearly 30 volunteer lifeboat crew, shore helpers and other station personnel and has received nine awards for Gallantry.

Land, sea and air

Carole Jackson has been an RNLI volunteer fundraiser at Hoylake for over 30 years. For the last 15, she's concentrated on the station open day, using expertise gained in her 'day job', organising and promoting events in the Wirral. Hoylake open day involves action on land and sea and in the air.

Stretching two miles along the promenade, hundreds of stalls and stands pay to attend, with local bands, street

The bustling seaside town of Hoylake, Merseyside, draws many a visitor but, for an amazing 30,000 people, Hoylake lifeboat station's annual open day is the main attraction

theatre, classic cars and a small funfair.

On the beach and in the water, the Hoylake crew are joined by volunteers from neighbouring West Kirby and New Brighton lifeboat stations, demonstrating and giving guided tours of their various craft: two inshore lifeboats and a hovercraft to add to the Hoylake all weather lifeboat, plus launch vehicles and associated paraphernalia.

And to top it all, in the air, the world-famous Red Arrows bring their heart-stopping aerobatics display to the town.

Making it happen

Carole is keen to point out that the open day doesn't happen by itself. The crew, their spouses and partners and many others they 'rope in', join forces.

Over the years, they've forged strong and productive relationships with, amongst others, the MoD, to ensure they are able to book the Red Arrows; the local authority Wirral MBC, who help with the publicity, road closures and clean up operation after the event; and the local police, who maintain order on the day with a supportive, light touch. BBC radio presenter Roger Summerville also helps out, commentating on the day's events from a vintage double-decker bus.

This all comes with a substantial price tag, however, so Carole is working on sponsorship all year round in the form of money or gifts in kind. At the end of the open day, more than 12 hours since it opened and 12 months since the planning began, the fundraisers and crew crowd into the sailing club next door for a celebratory barbeque and drink. And who can blame them, as the day's net income amounted to a massive £27,000 in 2005, almost equivalent to the entire annual training bill for the Hoylake lifeboat crew.

Visit us in 2006

This year's Hoylake open day is on Bank Holiday Monday 28 August, with the Red Arrows display at 12 noon. If you want to visit, make sure you set off early, as many people didn't make it in time last year because of heavy traffic.

Hoylake is of course just one of many RNLI open days, and even open weeks, taking place each year. Not all can emulate Hoylake's extravaganza but they will certainly bring the RNLI's volunteers and their lifesaving work closer to both existing and new supporters – and be fun! So check your local press and media or call your RNLI regional office for details of your nearest such event (see details right). This year RNLI open days have the 'Beachwise' theme (see page 2).



Opposite and above: 30,000 people enjoy visiting the RNLI at Hoylake each year
Below: The Red Arrows put on a world-class show

Photos: Metropolitan Borough of Wirral



Want to fundraise? What's happening near you?

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Email: scotland@rnli.org.uk

Eastern

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Ipswich, Suffolk, IP7 5AD
Tel: 01473 822837
Email: eastern@rnli.org.uk

Greater London

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Tel: 020 7839 3369
Email: london@rnli.org.uk

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Photo: JP Treggie

It was on 2 January 2002 that, for the first time, RNLI lifeboats were seen on a river rather than estuarial or true coastal waters. Lifeboat stations were established at Gravesend in Kent; Tower in the heart of the city; Chiswick to the west and, at the upper end of the tidal waters of the river, Teddington in Middlesex.

With its fast-running tide, powerful undercurrents, hidden debris and heavy traffic, the Thames is a surprisingly hostile environment for those on and by the water. Time is of the essence on any shout, but especially here when many rescues involve people already in the water. Just as with

beach lifeguarding, therefore, a mix of full-timers and volunteers are needed to ensure a fast enough response. They can launch within 90 seconds and aim to reach 95% of casualties on the river between Canvey Island in Essex and Teddington within 15 minutes.

The pattern of services on the Thames differs markedly from that on the coast, no more so than in July 2005 when London came under terrorist attack. With buses, railways and the underground out of service, the river provided the only route for many people to evacuate. All four Thames lifeboat stations were called into action, including assisting at Canary Wharf on the Isle of Dogs,

where their E class lifeboats were joined by Sheerness's Trent class *George and Ivy Swanson*.

Service snapshots

Gravesend crew recall a sadly more farcical shout in 2005 when they attended a motor cruiser run hard aground underneath a lighthouse (pictured), the inexperienced owner thinking he ought to keep the red-painted structure close to his port side. The boat was severely damaged and a potential hazard to other craft so it was salvaged by the Port of London Authority.

Chiswick crew rescued their 500th casualty on 12 April 2006. Responding to a report of a collision in Syon Reach, they arrived to find two rowers had clambered onto a buoy. During the collision, one had received a heavy blow to the back of the ribcage and was finding it painful to breathe; both were suffering from the cold.

Teddington's most unorthodox rescue came in January 2003. Two lifeboats were called to evacuate 50 residents from Thames Ditton Island when flooding cut off the

A pier without equal

It was the collision of the *Bowbelle* and *Marchioness* in 1989 and the resulting 51 deaths that led the Government to ask the RNLI to provide a lifeboat service on the Thames. Now the RNLI's busiest lifeboat station of all, Tower, has taken up a new and even more prominent home on the capital's river

footbridge to the river bank and left the island without electricity. One elderly gentleman had recently undergone a hip operation and was unable to bend or use his legs in any way so the crew floated him across in a standing position – in a wheelie bin!

Sadly, many shouts on the Thames follow a suicide attempt. Tower crew launched on 19 March 2006 after a man had jumped from Tower Bridge. After a brief search, they found him face down in the water about 150m downstream from the Tower and recovered him onto the lifeboat. After failing to resuscitate him manually they resorted to the defibrillator (recently donated to the station by Laerdal Medical). They shocked the man nine times before his heart restarted.

A new home

After just four years' operation, Tower lifeboat station has carried out over 1,300 services, rescuing more than 380 people and saving nearly 100 lives. Earlier this year the station was relocated from a dark and uncomfortable position underneath Tower Millennium Pier to the newly renovated Lifeboat Pier by Waterloo Bridge. This is a site with a passionate and fascinating lifesaving history stretching over 140 years.

Built near the original Waterloo Bridge in the 1860s, the Pier is not a fixed structure but floats with a hull like a boat. In 1874 the Thames Police took up residence, adopting a Navy-like culture with a requirement to remain in uniform at all times and for 'shore leave' to be requested. The original recovery room was fitted with a bath with which to revive casualties. Indeed, a hot bath remained the first course of treatment as late as the 1960s when a specially designed tub on wheels was in use.

In 1891, Third Class Inspector John Lediard was on duty when he saw a woman jump from the then Waterloo Bridge. Finding no assistance, John went out to help the woman single-handedly. He caught up with her as she was swept downstream, lifted her into his boat and returned to the pier, sculling against the tide. Once on deck, John successfully resuscitated the woman, lifted her into the hand ambulance and pushed her through heavy rain to Westminster Hospital, where she eventually recovered. John received a commendation from the Police Commissioner.

The RNLI, in its dedication to saving lives, has continued in the tradition of those who previously occupied this historic site.

The charity bought the Pier for a nominal £1 in 2004. Towing the Pier away from its niche in the Victoria Embankment – a listed structure – required the consent of English Heritage. This was granted and work began.

Converting the floating pier to a modern lifeboat station has been a fascinating project for the RNLI Shoreworks team. Lifted from the water at Piper's Wharf in Greenwich, both the pontoon and the building were found to be in better condition than previously thought. They were carefully renovated and an extra walkway added along the full length of the riverside at boat level. The Pier was then brought back to its original berth in July 2005 and superstructure work began. New operational facilities include a training room, crew room, galley and changing room, workshop and storage space. Sleeping accommodation is provided for standby crew and a small office for the Metropolitan Police – one of the RNLI's essential partners on the Thames. All work was completed at the end of January 2006, the station was operational a month later and was formally opened at the start of London Lifeboat Week in May. See News, page 5.



Above: Gravesend lifeboat crew went to the help of this motorboat when her inexperienced skipper ran her aground at the foot of a lighthouse

Photo: Port of London Authority

Below: London's police relied on Thames Specials, volunteers with a good knowledge of boat handling. Three steam launches were stationed at the pier, the one pictured here was named *Chowkidar* after an Indian night watchman.

Bottom, opposite: Tower lifeboat station moved to Lifeboat Pier earlier this year thanks to funding from the Civil Service Lifeboat Fund, Northwood Golf Club, Pettswood fundraising branch, the Albert Hunt Charitable Trust and legacies from Mrs O Ransome, Mrs Betty Irene Huntback and Glen Tunstall of the Metropolitan Police



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