



The Lifeboat

Summer 1991 Silver and Bronze medal services

Fast Afloat Boat prototype

The Annual Meetings



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The Lifeboat

Summer 1991

Royal National



Lifeboat
Institution

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COVER PICTURE

by

Maggie Murray/Format

The five medallists arrive for a photocall at Tower Pier, on the Thames, before the Presentation of Awards at the Royal Festival Hall on 14 May 1991.

Next Issue: The Autumn issue of THE LIFEBOAT will appear in October 1991, and news items should be received by Friday, 23 August 1991.

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Blowing up a Storm

The RNLI's Storm Force junior club will be known to a much wider audience now, following the naming of an InterCity 125 locomotive 'Storm Force' on Saturday 27 April.

The ceremony was held at Poole station just before 0900, in time for the train to make a special trip to the National Exhibition Centre at Birmingham for a commemorative Storm Force rally.

The honour of naming the train fell to seven-year-old Laura Scaife from Barnsley who won a competition in Storm Force News, the regular newspaper for members of the club, and guests at the ceremony included the mayor of Poole Councillor Mrs Anne Stribley, the deputy director of the RNLI Ray Kipling and InterCity Manager Cross Country Brian Johnson.

Ray Kipling voiced the Institution's appreciation of the train's name, saying: 'The RNLI is delighted that an InterCity 125 is to be named Storm Force after its junior club. There are already over 15,000 members and we hope the train will encourage lots more to join. We think it important that as many youngsters as possible should be aware of the lifeboat service.'

On arrival at Birmingham the Storm Force members were treated to a full day's programme of displays, competitions and demonstrations – with an Inshore lifeboat carrying out 'rescues' on the lake at the Exhibition Centre.

Open all hours



Mrs Lucia Hobson unveils the plaque to commemorate the official opening of the RNLI's headquarters extension. Pictured (from left to right) are the Sheriff of Poole Councillor Mrs Doreen Bugo, the Mayor of Poole and Admiral of the Port Councillor Mrs Anne Stribley, Mrs Lucia Hobson, Mr Christopher Hobson, the Chairman of the RNLI Mr Michael Vernon and the Director Lt Cdr Brian Miles.

The new extension to the RNLI headquarters in Poole was officially opened and dedicated at 1130 on Monday 29 April 1991 in conditions often described as 'typical lifeboat weather'.

The building was provided from the bequest of Mr Kenneth Thelwall (whose bequest has already funded two lifeboats) and Mr Christopher Hobson, executor of the estate, handed over the building to the Institution following an address by the Mayor of Poole



Seven-year-old Laura Scaife receives her commemorative Storm Force nameplate from Brian Johnson of InterCity after naming the InterCity 125 train after the RNLI's junior club. The Institution was also presented with a mounted nameplate.

President visits Jersey crews

HRH The Duke of Kent, President of the Institution, met the crew and families of the two RNLI stations in Jersey (St Helier and St Catherine) during a visit to the island on 16 May.

During the visit the Duke signed the lifeboat book of honour and attended a reception at which he met RNLI, Jersey branch and ladies' lifeboat guild officials. Before going on to fulfill other commitments His Royal Highness also presented a certificate of service to Michael Berry, recently retired coxswain of St Helier lifeboat for 20 years.

and Admiral of the Port, Councillor Mrs Anne Stribley.

The building was accepted on the Institution's behalf by its Chairman, Mr Michael Vernon, following which the Rector of Poole, The Reverend Stanley Holbrooke-Jones performed the service of dedication.

Mrs Lucia Hobson, the wife of Mr Thelwall's executor, was then invited to unveil a special commemorative plaque inside the building.

NEWSPOINT

As this issue of The Lifeboat goes to press the 16th International Lifeboat Conference has just come to an end in Oslo. Once again the conference has brought home the value of sharing knowledge between the lifeboat services around the world.

Not only does it avoid the need for each service to 're-invent the wheel' by working in isolation, it also forges closer links – invaluable at a time when the world is becoming smaller and 'international standards' loom.

There is no suggestion at present that any such standards should apply to the lifeboat services of the world, and it would be a virtually impossible task given the widely differing operating conditions, constitutions and tasks of the constituent members. Lifeboat organisations range from the fully government-funded to the fully voluntary, and operate anything from hundreds of sophisticated lifeboats to a handful of vessels.

However each can learn something from the others, and it is thanks to International co-operation on this level that the RNLI began to operate the Waveney (originally an American Coastguard design), and that the Canadians now build and operate the Arun class.

One gratifying feeling brought back by the Institution's delegates was the high regard in which the RNLI is held. Its experience and its entire organisation and operation are frequently held up as an example to the rest of the world. We cannot be complacent, for progress marches on and inflation eats at our financing, but we can be proud of the Institution – and extend again our heartfelt thanks to the voluntary fund raisers and crews without whom it could not exist in any form.



Off on passage – to Oslo!



The International Lifeboat Federation's 16th conference, held every four years in a different member country, was held in Oslo during the week commencing 3 June 1991, hosted by the Norwegian lifeboat service.

The RNLI was very active at the conference, presenting several papers including a technical review of the new Fast Afloat lifeboats now under development.

Lifeboats from several European lifeboat services assembled at Oslo for inspection by the delegates, including two from the RNLI.

The Arun class *Duke of Atholl* and the Mersey *Marine Engineer* left Poole in late May for the passage to Oslo via Newhaven, Dover, Breskens, Ijmuiden, Lauwersoog, Cuxhaven, Copenhagen and Skagen. The number of calls being determined by the need to refuel. They were joined by other nation's lifeboats during the passage – one Belgian, one German, one Danish, two Dutch

and two US Coast Guard vessels.

The crew of the Arun and Mersey class lifeboats are pictured ready to leave Poole Quay on 23 May 1991 and being seen off by the director, Brian Miles (centre) flanked by the two coxswains, Staff Coxswain Mike Houchen (right) and divisional inspector Les Vipond (left).

The crew for the trip was drawn from the Institution's full-time coast staff and volunteers from lifeboat stations around the coast: Second Coxswain Ian Jones from Llandudno, Coxswain Neill Gudgeon from Lochinver, Mechanic Andrew Putt from Ilfracombe, Coxswain Graham Walker from Wells, Coxswain/Mechanic Hewitt Clark from Lerwick and Coxswain Graham McConnell from Donaghadee.

We plan to have a full report of the conference in the Autumn 1991 issue of *The Lifeboat*.

'Help' for children

A new RNLI film, specifically aimed at primary school age children, is now available. Called simply 'Help!' it was made by Anthony Hontoir and sponsored by Barclaycard.

The film examines four separate incidents in which The Mumbles Tyne class lifeboat and Porthcawl's D class are called into action.

'Help!' is available as a 35mm film or on VHS-format video from the RNLI's film distributor's Viscom at Park Hall Trading Estate, Dulwich, London SE21 8EL.

Although hire of the film or video is free the Institution has to meet Viscom's fee for carriage, handling and maintenance. A donation would therefore be much appreciated – £12 would cover the RNLI's costs.

Stamp of approval

A series of new Isle of Man stamps featuring lifeboats was launched with a splash in February when the Douglas lifeboat *Sir William Hillary* was launched into the harbour with the Lieutenant Governor of the island, Sir Laurence Jones, aboard.

Later the chairman of the Isle of Man Post Office Authority presented Lewin Cain, chairman of Douglas branch, with a framed sheet of stamps – the first off the press – and a donation of £100 for the branch funds.

The five stamps show the island's five lifeboats in their ports at Douglas, Ramsey, Peel, Port Erin and Port St Mary.

Due to pressure on space in this issue of *The Lifeboat* reports of several naming and dedication ceremonies have been held over to the Autumn issue

Lifeboat ups and downs...

The RNLI's new dock and boat hoist came into use at the Poole depot in early June, enabling lifeboats to be lifted from the water and positioned anywhere in the yard for storage or inspection and work on underwater areas.

Before the dredged dock and diesel hydraulic lift was installed a crane had to be hired for each lift out of, and each lift back into, the water, at considerable expense.

The cranes were unable to move around the yard with the lifeboats, so only a small part of the depot area could be used for this work. Cranes of the size required to handle the new prototype Fast Afloat Boat were few and far between – and even more expensive to hire.

The hoist has a capacity of 50 tons for



boats of FAB 3's dimensions and both it and the dock are designed to accommodate the largest lifeboats at present envisaged. The photograph shows the first lifeboat to be

lifted in the new hoist, the Watson class *Joseph Soar* (Civil Service No. 34), as part of the proving trials by the contractors, Laings.



Yet another record for lifeboat launches in 1990

The steady increase in the number of lifeboat launches continued during 1990, standing at a new record of 4,935 when the figures were reported to the Annual Meetings in mid-May. The graphs on this page illustrate the trends and the type of casualty and are taken from the Institution's 1990 Annual Report which was issued at the Meetings.

Readers will note a small discrepancy between the total given in the graph and the latest figure, a result of some services for 1990 being notified to headquarters after the preparation of the Annual Report.

There was a small increase in the percentage of launches to pleasure craft, from 54% in 1989 to 56% in 1990, and 72% of the lives saved by the Institution's lifeboats during the year fell into this category. The total number of launches to pleasure craft was 2,715 according to the latest figures.

There was an 8% increase in launches to merchant vessels and tankers, with more than half being at night and 21% in winds over Force 7. A third of services were to take off sick crewmen.

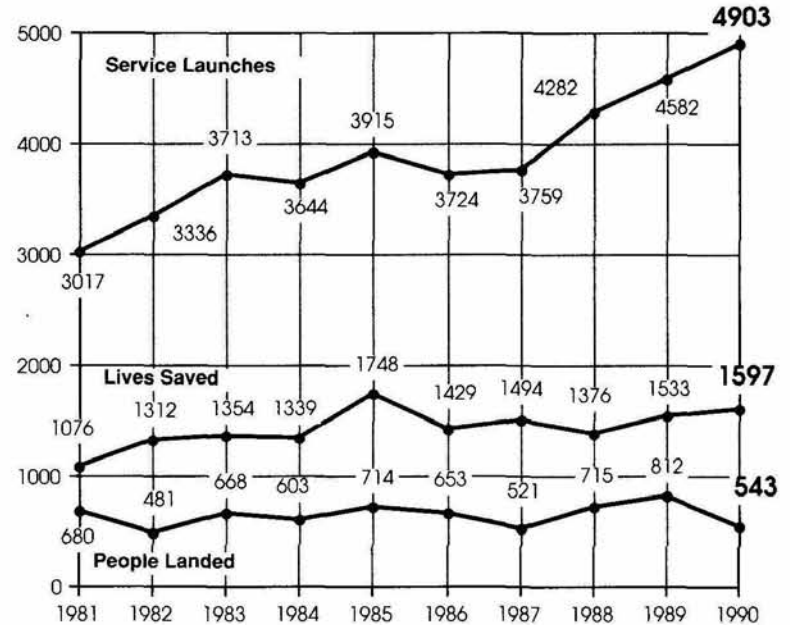
There was also a very small increase in the number of launches to fishing vessels, up just 2 from 810 in 1989 to 812 in 1990, with some 247 fishermen saved during the year (down 12% from 276 to 247).

Lifeboats were called out 555 times to people who were in distress but not aboard any craft or vessel, and 185 lives were saved on these calls. This figure includes skin divers, bathers and waterskiers, people and vehicles cut off by the tide and casualties who had fallen from cliffs or man-made structures.

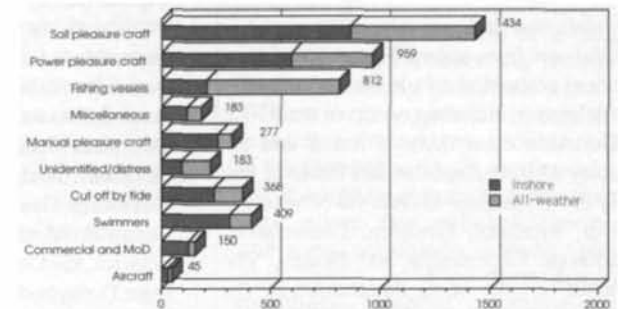
Lifeboat assistance was requested on 45 occasions for aircraft or helicopters, more than half following crashes.

Of 221 launches in answer to unidentified distress signals 216 turned out to be false alarms or hoax calls.

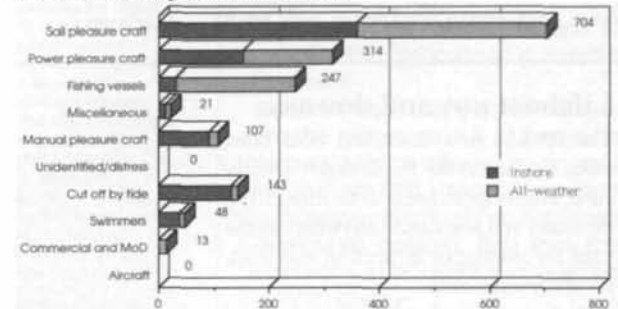
Lifeboat launches, lives saved and people landed 1981 to 1990



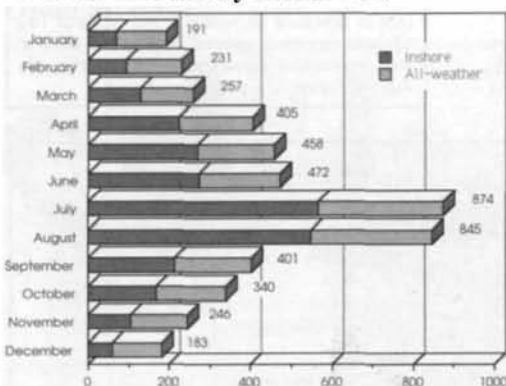
Lifeboat launches 1990



Lives saved by lifeboats 1990



Lifeboat launches by month 1990



Looking at Lifeboats – The Arun Class, Winter 1990/91

G.L. Watson and Company were commissioned by the Institution to prepare the design of the Arun class lifeboat and the lines were the work of Mr J. Allen McLachlan of that firm. The tank tests of the model produced from these lines indicated that the boat would have excellent sea-keeping characteristics.

The modifications to the original drawing referred to in the article were mainly concerned with an increase in the size of the tunnels to incorporate larger

propellers, the design of which had not been the direct responsibility of G. L. Watson and Company. The beam was not increased.

Mr McLachlan's lines incorporated a series of 'ragged chines' (referred to as 'multiple spray rails' in the article) for the purpose of reducing pounding. The



J. Allen McLachlan

Institution elected not to include this feature in the class. The RNLI is pleased to acknowledge that in all material respects the hull form of all boats of the Arun class have been built to the lines drawn by Mr McLachlan.

The Institution regrets any misunderstanding which may have arisen from the article and apologises for any offence or inconvenience caused to G. L. Watson and Company and Mr J. Allen McLachlan.

Lifeboat Services



Hurricane-force winds as two lifeboats search for missing divers

The rescue of two skin divers in appalling weather conditions has won Acting Coxswain James Dougal a Silver Medal for Gallantry. Weather and sea conditions during the service were extremely hazardous, demanding absolute concentration to maintain control of the lifeboat.

The divisional inspector of lifeboats for Scotland South, Tony Course, said: 'The courage displayed in his willingness to undertake the dangerous passage is exemplary, and the skill and determination of all crew members during this arduous service in a lifeboat with a partially exposed wheelhouse are worthy of the highest praise.'

Soon after 1600 on Sunday 6 October 1990 a dramatic change in weather conditions led to hurricane-force northerly winds along the east coast of Scotland, and it soon became clear to Coastguards that a number of divers had been caught at sea. Three lifeboats were alerted, Dunbar, St Abbs and Eyemouth. The winds were far in excess of the launching limitations for St Abbs' rigid inflatable, but the 48ft 6in Solent class lifeboat *Hugh William Viscount Gough* at Dunbar was launched at 1644 and Eyemouth at 1649.

Failure

A telephone failure at Eyemouth as a result of the severe conditions meant that neither the coxswain nor second coxswain could be alerted, so the un-named 44ft Waveney class lifeboat 44-001 on relief duty at the station set out with the assistant mechanic, James Dougal, at the helm.

Taking the lifeboat out of the narrow harbour entrance into the face of 100-knot winds was only the first hazard. It was shortly after high water, spring tides and the River Eye was in spate. 20ft seas were running into the entrance and crashing over the sea walls and visibility was virtually non-existent in the rain, spume and spray.

The lifeboat was scarcely controllable as she took heavy head seas overall but once clear of the dangerous rocks James Dougal headed for St Abbs where one group of divers had been caught in the storm. The lifeboat met seas of 35ft head-on, the acting



coxswain reducing power each time as he negotiated them. The 44ft boat rolled violently as she drove on, her side decks awash. By 1715 the lifeboat was off St Abbs Harbour. Visibility was about 50 yards, wind 90 knots and 35ft seas were breaking over the rocky outcrops. An Auxiliary Coastguard at St Abbs had spotted two of the divers from the harbour wall, but lost sight of them in the spray. All he could see of the lifeboat was her searchlight beam, and with that as his only reference he guided her to the scene. Less than 200ft from the lifeboat's starboard side lay the Cathedral Rock, the same distance to port jutted the Ebb Carr Rocks. Neither were visible and the heavy spray made them undetectable by radar. The acting coxswain persevered, his crew, lifelines secured, out on deck scouring the sea for the divers until they spotted them, close to a creel buoy.

Heaving line

On the third attempt James Dougal brought the lifeboat close enough for a heaving line to be thrown to the divers. They were hauled alongside and manoeuvred one at a time to a position where they could be hauled aboard, encumbered by their diving equipment.

The part played by Dunbar lifeboat in this service is recounted on the following page



While the survivors were treated for shock and hypothermia the acting coxswain used all his skill to keep the lifeboat in position and to minimise the violent motion caused by the sea conditions.

Two divers were still missing south of St Abbs, and the lifeboat began a search for them. However, there was concern for the two survivors aboard the lifeboat, who were severely seasick, and an attempt was made to land them at St Abbs. This had to be abandoned as conditions at the harbour entrance were too dangerous for the lifeboat to enter. The Waveney continued her search until 1900, when an attempt was made to winch the two survivors into a helicopter, but this too had to be abandoned because of the extreme conditions.

Suspended

The search was suspended by the coastguard at 1945 and the lifeboat headed south for Eyemouth. On reaching the entrance it was obvious that there was no safe way into the harbour so the coxswain was forced to continue along the coast to Burnmouth. Although the entrance was less dangerous there was an additional hazard – a power cut had extinguished the leading lights needed to enter – but car headlights were used to guide the lifeboat in to land the survivors.

Fifteen minutes later Dunbar's 48ft 6in Solent class lifeboat followed the Eyemouth lifeboat into Burnmouth Harbour. She had been out for three hours in the same seas, searching the rocky coastline off St Abbs Head. The two remaining divers were washed safely ashore north of Eyemouth.

The Thanks of the Institution on Vellum has been awarded to the other members of the Eyemouth lifeboat crew: Acting Mechanic John Buchan, Acting Assistant Mechanic David Collins and Crew Members George Walker, Joseph Walker, Robert Walker and Alistair Crombie. The coxswain of the Dunbar, lifeboat Robert Wight, was also awarded The Thanks of the Institution on Vellum.

Fishing vessel skipper rescues stranded man in severe conditions

The rescue of a fellow fisherman stranded on an island in Storm Force winds earned Scalloway fisherman George Williamson an RNLi Bronze medal for Gallantry. The three members of the crew of his fishing boat – James Christie, Theodore Fullerton and John Ward – received framed letters of thanks from the Institution’s Chairman.

At about 2115 on Monday 8 October 1990 George Williamson received a telephone call from James Christie of Burra reporting a radio message that a lobster creel boat had been wrecked on Burwick Holm, two miles north west of Scalloway. Her engine had failed and skipper Ralph Pottinger was stranded on the island.

Although Aith lifeboat had been launched it would take her some time to reach the island, so Mr Williamson spoke by radio to four fishing vessels at the scene. They were unable to approach because of their draught and the weather, but with the rising tide and bad conditions it was possible that the stranded man might not survive until the lifeboat arrived.



George Williamson and three other men did not hesitate to launch to the aid of Ralph Pottinger, even though the coastguard had advised them not to attempt a rescue,

and they cast off from Scalloway Harbour at 2138, aboard *Challenge*, a steel-built 36ft salmon work boat. *Challenge* was towing *Conquest*, a 21ft, aluminium open boat with an outboard engine.

Challenge headed north towards the fishing vessels off Burwick Holm, which



were illuminating the island with their searchlights, in heavy and near-continuous rain squalls and only one-mile visibility. The wind was SW, Storm Force 10, and whipping the surface of the sea into driven spray.

Having established by radio that the survivor was on a knoll at the north end of Burwick Holm George Williamson headed to the east of the island to approach from the more sheltered leeward side.

Islands to the SSW were breaking up the swell, but the wind was funnelling between them to create a very steep and confused sea.

Search for missing divers

The 48ft 6in Solent class lifeboat *Hugh William Viscount Gough* was launched from Dunbar in the same search for the missing divers as the Eyemouth lifeboat on 6 October 1990 (see previous page), and the efforts of her Coxswain during the service won him the Thanks of the Institution inscribed on Vellum.

A framed letter of thanks signed by the Chairman has been awarded to the other members of the lifeboat crew: Second Coxswain Orlando Sammels, Acting Mechanic Angus Wight, Crew Members John Fairgrieve, James Huntly, Christopher Renton and Robert Davies.

The coastguard first informed the station of the situation at 1644, and the lifeboat launched at 1705 into hurricane-force northerly winds gusting to more than 100 knots with a very heavy sea breaking on-shore.

In his report on the service the divisional inspector for Scotland South, Tony Course, observed: ‘the crews’ response was in the highest tradition of the lifeboat service. All knew that they would have to pass through what has been described as a maelstrom, and that they would have to rely on the seamanship of their coxswain to reach the relative safety of open water; there would be no

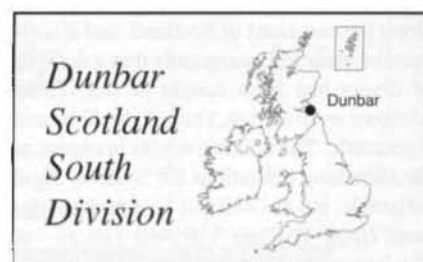


second chance in conditions which were described as the worst in living memory.’

The lifeboat was struck by a large sea as she was leaving the harbour and Coxswain Wight had difficulty in manoeuvring clear of the narrow channel, before pausing to take stock of the conditions at sea and pressing on to clear off-lying rocks.

Coxswain Wight had to head offshore for nearly three miles in a north-easterly direction before he could turn the lifeboat down-weather to the south-east on a course for St Abbs head.

She arrived off the head at around 1905 and was asked by the coastguard to search the area off Coldingham Bay, in a southerly



direction. Although the wind had moderated slightly and backed gradually to the NNW a very heavy sea remained in the moderate gale and visibility was still reduced in the overcast conditions with rain squalls.

The Solent searched for nearly 45 minutes until at 1945 the coastguard decided that it was too dangerous to continue searching close inshore in the dark and very bad conditions and suspended the search.

The lifeboat was faced with the same conditions as the Eyemouth lifeboat, and the same difficulties in finding a safe haven. She eventually followed the Waveney into Burnmouth at 2005, the crew returning to Dunbar after hearing the the missing divers were now all safe.

Hugh William Viscount Gough was not able to return to her station until the following day, being on station and ready for service again by 1930.

The wind was now gusting to Force 11 and visibility still poor.

Challenge worked her way through an area strewn with salmon cages and creels and with some difficulty found her way through into the lee of the island, which was now illuminated by a coastguard auxiliary's searchlight.

Conquest was almost half full of water after the passage, but she was bailed out and motored carefully towards the NE corner of the island where the bow was run on to the shingle at the water's edge. Ralph Pottinger boarded her and she was brought clear and returned safely to *Challenge*. The trip was hazardous, as bilge-water created a stability problem and the Coastguard searchlight was now a hindrance as it lit up the flying spray.

It was now about 2157, and although it had taken just three minutes to use *Conquest* for the rescue, the transfer to the small boat and handling her while picking up the survivor had required seamanship of a high order.

With *Conquest* secured astern *Challenge* retraced her steps between the creels and salmon cages, where it was particularly rough in the confused sea and wind-driven spray. Progress was slow into the wind and sea and some heavy spray and seas were shipped before shelter was reached and more speed could be made.

The survivor was landed at 2220 and found to be suffering only from mild exposure. Aith lifeboat had been making very good progress towards the scene, in extremely bad weather conditions, but was recalled on hearing that the survivor had been rescued.

Two lifeboats called to blazing ammunition ship



Eastbourne and Shoreham lifeboats were launched on 24 February 1991 when fire swept through the 400-ton motor vessel *Breydon Merchant* some 12 miles SW of Newhaven.

The vessel was on passage from Essex to Northern Ireland carrying 120 tons of ammunition for the Army there when fire broke out in the accommodation and spread quickly to the engine room. A six-mile exclusion zone was ordered around the ship while a tug towed the casualty further offshore.

The Eastbourne lifeboat *Duke of Kent* beaches ready for recovery after her service to the blazing ammunition ship *Breydon Merchant* on 24 February. (Photo Paul Russell)

Eastbourne lifeboat had just been recovered after an exercise when the crew heard the ship's initial Mayday on their radio and were able to identify the vessel by radar and pass on her position to Dover Coastguard.

The lifeboats were recalled after the crew of *Breydon Merchant* had been winched to safety by two helicopters from Manston and Lee-on-Solent.

Tyne and helicopter work together to rescue four in heavy swell and gale

The skill and determination of Second Coxswain/Mechanic John O'Donnell, of Arranmore's Tyne class lifeboat *William Luckin*, during a difficult eight-hour service in winds of up to Force 9 has been recognised in a framed letter of Thanks from the Chairman of the Institution.



It was at 2345 on Thursday 8 March 1990 that Shannon MRCC notified the station honorary secretary of Arranmore lifeboat station that a local fishing vessel, the 65ft *Locative*, was in difficulties - drifting with no power and uncertain of her position.

An SAR helicopter of the Army Air Corps and an RAF Nimrod began a search, and at 0015 on Friday 9 March *William Luckin* slipped her mooring with Second Coxswain/Mechanic John O'Donnell in command.

The wind was NW, gale Force 8 gusting to

9, the seas were more than 6ft high and a swell of some 9ft was running.

The position of the casualty was still uncertain, but she had reported that she was somewhere to the west of Burtonport so the lifeboat set course to the NW at full speed, adjusting as necessary for the large swell, and calling the casualty on the VHF radio.

There was no reply to her calls so the lifeboat continued to search out to the west of the area. However, nearly two hours into the search the Nimrod reported some faltering communication with the casualty and as a result of a rough VHF/DF bearing the search was concentrated to the SW of Arranmore, in the vicinity of Rathlin Island.

William Luckin set course to the south, arriving in the search area at 0330 to find that the Nimrod had successfully located the casualty and that the Army Air Corps helicopter was attempting to winch the survivors off.

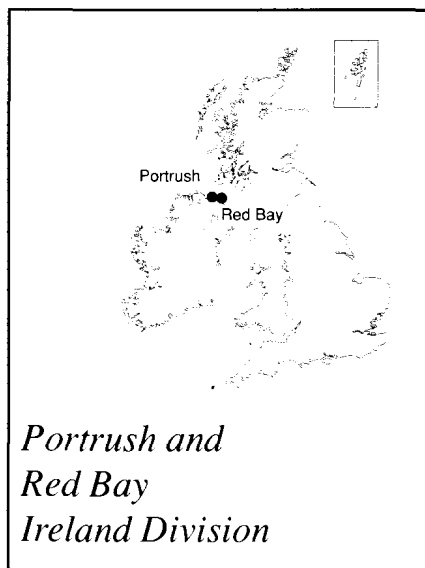
At the casualty the wind was still Force 8 to 9 with a rough sea now running at more than 9ft and with a large swell estimated at more than 30ft. The casualty was lying beam-on to

Continued overleaf

PORTRUSH Y BOAT AND RED BAY C CLASS CREW IN FLOOD EMERGENCY

Lifeboatmen save people and livestock from flooded towns

In the early hours of 18 October 1990 the towns of Ballycastle and nearby Cushendall in Co. Antrim were badly flooded, and Red Bay lifeboat station and two of the Crew Members at nearby Portrush have received framed letters of thanks from the RNLI's Chairman as a result of their actions in helping to rescue and evacuate people in the town.



At about 0500 on 18 October 1990 Ballycastle was under severe threat from rising flood water and Fire Brigade Headquarters asked for help in evacuating people stranded in the area. Portrush lifeboat, the Arun class *Richard Evans* (Civil Service No. 39), was launched at 0535 and the Coastguard advised that the station's Y boat would be required on arrival at the scene.

Coxswain Robert McMullan took the lifeboat to Ballycastle and on the way it became clear, via the Coastguard, that a large number of people had been stranded as the River Tow burst its banks.

Flooding

Meanwhile it had become apparent that similar flooding had occurred at Cushendall where the Red Bay inshore lifeboat is stationed and all the crew assembled at the lifeboat station. They decided not to use their C class inshore lifeboat due to its weight and

the difficulty of manoeuvring and lifting her over obstacles in the flood water, so two 16ft open boats were obtained from Red Bay Boats. The lifeboat crew split into two groups, teamed with crews from the Fire Brigade and began systematically searching the flooded area of Cushendall, checking every property and car. In most places the water was waist deep, but in some areas along the riverside the floods reached 10ft.

At 0630 one of the boats went about a mile up river to a family which was cut off and trapped inside a bungalow with floodwater running fast 4ft deep through their kitchen. The family was taken out through a window and carried to high ground and safety. Meanwhile the main search party was still at Cushendall, searching each house and property.

Stranded

At Ballycastle the Portrush lifeboat had arrived in the bay at 0700, and the Y boat launched with Crew Members Trevor McMullen and Trevor Creelman aboard. She came ashore near Ballycastle Quay and was asked to help people stranded in the central part of the town, approximately a mile inland. The Y boat and crew members were taken by lorry to the area.

Crewmen McMullen and Creelman manoeuvred the boat from house to house in varying depths of water, up to 8ft in places, with underwater obstructions making the going difficult. The boat's engine could not be used and she had to be paddled, sculled, pushed and pulled through the floods. In two hours they ferried 22 people to high ground and to safety, and at 0900 they were released to return to the Portrush lifeboat which was still lying in Ballycastle Bay.

Floodwater

The Red Bay crew were still in action at Cushendall. At 1030 two crew and one of the 16ft boats were despatched by road to assist a farmer near Glengariff some four miles away. The boat was launched into the floodwater to lift livestock (mainly sheep) to safety. Then, at 1045, three crew members with a small inflatable were again sent by road to help in the flood relief work at Ballycastle, where the flood waters had still not receded and the situation was still critical. They helped to bring six more people to safety in the town of Ballycastle.

Cushendall police requested further assistance in the Glengariff area at 1345 where more livestock had become cut off by the flood waters. Five lifeboat crew were despatched to the scene with one of the 16ft boats and 14 sheep were brought to safety.

By 1600 the flood waters had receded sufficiently to declare the emergency over, and all inhabitants of the Cushendall area were accounted for.

Tyne and helicopter work together

the swell, and dead in the water with no engine power, so the helicopter's attempt to lift the survivors had so far been unsuccessful. At about 0335, with the helicopter floodlighting the area, the lifeboat made an approach to the port side of the casualty. The manoeuvre was attempted five or six times but was not successful because of the violent motion of the casualty in the heavy swell.

At about 0345 it was decided to try to position *Locative* in a better position for helicopter winching by towing her into the wind. Second Coxswain O'Donnell manoeuvred the lifeboat up to the port bow of the casualty and a heaving line and then the tow were passed.

With the tow secure, doubled to form a bridle from the lifeboat's stern, the bow of the casualty was brought slowly up into the wind and held there to provide the relative wind needed for the helicopter to lift the crew off.

Almost immediately the helicopter started a transfer from the trawler's deck, but after the first man had been winched aboard the connecting line to the helicopter parted, followed by the lifeboat's port tow line.

Second Coxswain O'Donnell had to reduce engine power to avoid the second tow line parting, and with the engines at slow speed the bow of the casualty fell off the wind another 20° and she began rolling heavily again.

Undaunted the helicopter crew managed to recover the remaining survivors in very difficult conditions, and with all four survivors aboard the helicopter the remaining tow line was cut and the lifeboat set off to the north east to return to her station. Despite the conditions the long passage was uneventful and *William Lukin* was refuelled and declared ready for service again by 0800.

Locative came ashore later, and broke up on the South Donegal coast.

Continued from previous page

TYNE AND CREW MEMBERS HELP REFLOAT STRICKEN VESSEL

Nine seamen rescued from coaster stranded on sandbank in heavy swell

A service by Cromer's Tyne class lifeboat *Ruby and Arthur Reed II* on 21 November 1990 has been recognised in a letter of thanks to the crew from the Chairman of the Institution. During the service, which lasted for almost seven hours, the lifeboat took nine people off a stranded coaster, helped refloat her and put out a fire in a chip pan in the vessel's galley!

First news of the casualty came at 1700 on Wednesday 21 November 1990 when Great Yarmouth Coastguard informed Cromer that the 1,300-ton *Stavroutla*, was aground on the Mid Haisbro Sand but in no danger. It was hoped to refloat her on the next high water at 2120 and the Greek master had requested lifeboat assistance.

At 1807 *Ruby and Arthur Reed II* launched from the slipway to stand by the vessel and proceeded on service with Coxswain Richard Davies in command.

The coxswain set course at full speed to the Mid Haisbro buoy 13 miles distant, but at 1830 the casualty was heard calling the Coastguard. The crew now wanted to abandon ship, and a few minutes later red flares were seen dead ahead. The casualty could be seen aground on the Mid Haisbro Sand, *lifting slightly in the moderate swell*. The wind had increased to ENE Force 4 to 5 with a moderate sea, but there was a heavy swell of some 15ft running from the north east. There were still two hours to go before high water springs on the sand bank.

Swell

At 1910 the coxswain approached the casualty on her port side working the helm and engines continually in the heavy swell and asked the casualty's crew to take the lifeboat's lines forward and aft. However, as soon as the crew saw the lifeboat they hurried along the deck with their suitcases and immediately scrambled over the side onto the lifeboat!

With no-one left to take the lines Second Coxswain William Davies and assistant mechanic John Jonas went aboard and secured the lifeboat, but before the stern line could be attached the heavy swell rolled the lifeboat's starboard quarter against the vessel's side bending the quarter rails.

With the nine survivors on board the lifeboat moved off into deeper water and the two men checked the vessel. Assistant mechanic Jonas found a chip pan on fire in the galley and put it out – this could have caused serious problems for the salvage attempt by a tug on the way from Lowestoft. The casualty was not found to be taking in water, but the rudder was jammed to starboard

'as soon as the crew saw the lifeboat they hurried along the deck with their suitcases and immediately scrambled over the rails on to the lifeboat'

At 1920 two helicopters arrived and the master and engineer were returned to the vessel at 1927 ready to refloat her, and the two crewmen stayed on board to assist.

The survivors were then transferred to one of the helicopters at 2015 and both then left.

Before the tug arrived the lifeboat attempted to refloat the casualty by using a bow line and turning her to starboard, using her own engine and the jammed rudder. However, the line parted when the vessel grounded again.

The casualty was now heading south west, and the swell had built up to some 20ft. It began to run over the main deck and the crew hurried aft to shelter in the accommodation.

The lifeboat was still standing by, and a large swell came around the casualty's stern and rolled her heavily to starboard. Ten gallons of water entered the engine room through an air intake, but both engines con-



tinued to run normally. The lifeboat then lay off waiting for the tug.

At 2200 the casualty refloated herself under her own power, but as the rudder was jammed the lifeboat came in again to secure a towline from the casualty's bow to keep her off the sand.

Tow

The swell was so heavy that the fishing vessel accompanying the tug to run lines would not come in close, so the towline was passed directly to the tug from the lifeboat. However, the connection was lost at the tug end, so the lifeboat moved away to allow the tug right up to the casualty's bow where the lifeboat crew secured the tow wire, after Second Coxswain Davies had started the donkey engine in the fo'c'sle.

Finally at 0015 the casualty was safely under tow to Lowestoft with the master and engineer aboard and the lifeboat was able to retrieve her hard-working crew and return to station.

The lifeboat was rehoisted at 0145 and was refuelled and ready for service at 0215.

Cromer's Tyne class lifeboat Ruby and Arthur Reed II at the top of her slipway ready for launching.



TYNE WITH CASUALTY IN TOW CALLS OUT ARUN TO RESCUE YACHT

Arun saves yacht and skipper after long tow in severe weather

The RNLI's chief of operations has written to thank the crews of both the Falmouth and Lizard lifeboats following a service involving both lifeboats on 16 February 1991.

Falmouth's Arun class *Elizabeth Ann* was launched at 2140 at the request of the coxswain of The Lizard's Tyne class *David Robinson*, which already had *L'Espoir*, a 40ft converted fishing boat, in tow and which was also standing by the yacht *Innocence*. The yacht was unable to make any headway five miles south west of Black Head and the Coastguard reported the weather conditions in the area as poor, with strong winds and a rough sea.

Drifting

After nearly an hour and a half at sea in gale force winds Falmouth lifeboat, under the command of Second Coxswain Alan Barnes, came up on the yacht, a 40ft steel ketch, which was drifting two and a half miles south west of The Lizard Light.

Because of the difference in height between the Arun and the casualty, and the prevailing weather conditions, Second Coxswain Barnes decided that it would not be possible to go alongside without causing damage. The sole occupant of *Innocence* was asked to receive a tow and agreed – the only time the skipper of the yacht answered his radio.

The lifeboat was held close-to off the weather side of the yacht, a heaving line was passed and the tow rope paid out in a bight. To help the casualty get the tow rope aboard



the lifeboat was manoeuvred ahead, and then down across the bows of the yacht. The tow was made fast, and paid out enough to keep the casualty synchronised on the second wave astern of the lifeboat, before a course was set to clear The Lizard.

At first the lifeboat and casualty were being carried astern by the wind and tide, so power was increased in order to make headway. The coxswain considered taking the casualty to Newlyn at this point, which was

‘At first the casualty and lifeboat were being carried astern by the wind and tide...’

to leeward, but decided to continue to Falmouth, as that was the port which the casualty was trying to reach and was also the lifeboat's home port.

When power was increased he was concerned for the skipper on board the yacht, who did not answer his radio, and indeed the safety of the yacht herself. A crewman was instructed to keep the skipper illuminated with the searchlight for the duration of the long tow to safety.

Rounded

As soon as The Lizard was rounded, more than an hour later, power was eased back and the tow continued towards Falmouth. Once past Black Head speed over the ground increased as the tidal stream lessened and on arrival at Falmouth the yacht was finally secured alongside the lifeboat and manoeuvred onto a mooring just after 0400. The whole service had taken some five and a half hours in gale force winds and heavy seas.

First rescue by FAB 3 prototype while on trials

The prototype of the new Fast Afloat Boat 3 (see page 90 of this issue) carried out her first service on 29 May while returning from Salcombe to Weymouth, where she was based for some days for familiarisation trials.

Staff Officer (Trials and Development) Harry Teare was in command when the Coastguard asked the as yet un-named lifeboat to locate a casualty in Lyme Bay, to the west of Portland. Having located the vessel, a yacht called *Sualidaz* with three people aboard, FAB 3 towed her into Weymouth – a two and a half hour tow at about 8 knots.

FAB 3 was reported to have performed well during the service.



The ketch *Sualidaz* under tow by the new FAB 3 prototype off Portland Bill. The service was the first carried out by the new boat, which was on familiarisation trials at the time. (Photo Stuart Welford)

The Annual General Meeting

The 167th Annual General Meeting of the RNLI was held on the morning of 14 May 1991, at the usual venue on the South Bank in London, with the annual presentation of awards for 1990 following in the afternoon at the nearby Royal Festival Hall.

Opening the proceedings at the morning AGM for the Institution's Governors the RNLI's Chairman, Mr Michael Vernon, began by reminding the meeting that 1990 had been an eventful and difficult year in many parts of the world, with a sharp recession and uncomfortably high inflation affecting these islands.

However the Chairman was able to report:

'The evidence of the 1990 annual report and accounts is extremely encouraging. Nevertheless, let us not forget that the cost of our massive boat building and shoreworks modernisation programmes has risen significantly, as has the expense of operating our lifeboat service. Furthermore, despite a recent recovery, the fact that the value of our investments fell very sharply in the calendar year illustrates that we are certainly not insulated from our country's economic problems; this must never be overlooked in planning for the future.'

Having touched on the difficulties of the past year Mr Vernon went on to look at the remarkable successes:

'As usual our lifeboat crews have done the Institution proud. Only two years ago the RNLI answered more than 4,000 calls. Now, we are up by nearly another thousand to 4,935. In fact, in little over a decade our work-load has doubled, and on average 500 more people each year are rescued. In 1990 alone the lives of 1,601 people were saved.'

Although commercial shipping is no less in need of the RNLI's services than it was, launches to pleasure boats and fishing vessels have risen in recent years. A review carried out last year showed that there was an increase in the number of inshore fishing vessels seeking assistance, and modern navigational equipment and greater speed may be tempting this type of vessel further offshore than is sometimes prudent.

Mr Vernon then went on to explain one of the important changes made as a result of the review:

'Also included was a re-assessment of the distance offshore that our fleet could provide effective cover. We felt able to announce that we could increase this from 30 to 50 miles at virtually any point around the coast of Great Britain and Ireland. This is a major landmark in the Institution's policy continuously to improve the lifeboat service.'

The five medallists arrive at Tower Pier for a 'photocall' on the morning of the presentation of awards, with HMS *Belfast* providing the backdrop.

They are (from left to right) Shane Coleman (Second Coxswain/Mechanic Lowestoft lifeboat, Bronze medal), George Williamson (fisherman, Scalloway, Bronze medal), James Dougal (Acting Coxswain Eyemouth lifeboat, Silver medal), Robert Gorman and Peter Heading (Crew Member and Helmsman respectively Aberystwyth lifeboat, Bronze medals).



(Left) Mr Michael Vernon, the Chairman of the RNLI addresses the audience at the Annual Presentation of Awards ceremony in the Festival Hall, London on 14 May 1991.

Stressing that the RNLI's primary aim and duty is to save lives at sea the Chairman emphasised the critical aspect of speed of response.

'Every single minute counts. A minute may sound a short time, but it can easily mean the difference between life and death to someone in the water.'

There were many factors which contributed to the 'speed of response', Mr Vernon went on, outlining the progress the RNLI is making to improve it. One factor has nothing to do with more powerful engines or improved hull design and this is the time between callout and a lifeboat launch. Thanks in large part to electronic paging this has been reduced significantly over the past 10 years.

Moving on to a subject which is high on the RNLI's list of priorities at the moment the Chairman turned to facilities at lifeboat stations, stressing their importance and reflecting how the programme of modernisation and refurbishment has gathered momentum.

He stressed that the rebuilding is not for cosmetic reasons, in many cases the original boathouses were built to house a pulling boat whose launching power was probably munching grass in a nearby field.

'Nowadays sophisticated tractors need to be under cover as much as the high-tech lifeboats they serve. We are also doing our utmost to provide the modern facilities our crews deserve.'

The need to improve boathouses to accommodate the new generation of lifeboats was inextricably linked with the most important factor in getting to a casualty quicker – the increase in the speed of lifeboats – and Mr Vernon



confirmed that the Institution is on schedule for its target to have fast lifeboats at all stations by the end of 1993.

The Mersey building programme had continued at an impressive rate throughout 1990 with orders recently placed for the last 14 fibre reinforced composite (FRC) boats—due to be completed within the next 22 months. Eight new Merseys were completed in 1990, and nine more will be in service by the end of 1991. Two Tyne class and the last of the long line of Aruns had also gone to their new stations.

The Chairman was also able to report that the new Fast Afloat Boats (FAB) 3 and 4 are progressing on schedule. *'The 17m prototype, FAB 3, is undergoing the most rigorous sea trials which will continue until we can be completely satisfied that she is in every way suitable to become the first of a new generation of fast All-weather lifeboats. It is fair to say that first impressions are very encouraging. Last year you will remember I caused something of a sensation by announcing that this boat would cost £1m to build, this year it is the boat herself which is causing the sensation.'*

To put the price into perspective Mr Vernon added that although the 18-knot Arun class building programme was complete the price would now be somewhere around £800,000. Although the extra speed and size was bound to cost more the difference is by no means unreasonable.

The meeting heard that the 14m FAB 4 prototype is not far behind her larger sister and is being fitted out at Osborne's yard in Littlehampton. She will be launched by the end of 1991.

INSHORE LIFEBOATS

Moving on to the smaller lifeboats Mr Vernon referred to development work on a 22ft version of the Atlantic 21 rigid inflatable at the RNLI's Inshore Lifeboat Centre at Cowes. She is showing excellent seakeeping tendencies with impressive speed. Also under examination is the feasibility of a 35 to 40 knot inshore lifeboat, launching from a slipway, davit or off a beach.

Turning from the hardware of sea rescue to the people who make it possible the Chairman emphasised that the contribution of lifeboat crews could not be stressed too highly. Their free availability, their courage and their skill were paramount, but their skill could always be enhanced by rigorous training.

Ten stations receiving new boats in the past year had meant ten crews undergoing week-long familiarisation courses at Poole, followed by a passage back to station.

'I think it is a mark of the whole-hearted dedication of our crews that they are prepared to give up their own

time to attend these courses. Volunteers they may be but highly expert lifeboatmen they are determined to remain.'

New-boat courses only represented a part of the specialised operational training, which is not a new invention, he explained. The RNLI has always recognised the importance of ensuring expertise in every field and there are facilities for training at every level for staff and volunteers.

OPERATIONAL REVIEWS

The RNLI's newly-declared undertaking to increase lifeboat cover to 50 miles offshore had been assisted by the Institution's regular system of 'coast reviews'. These allow it to assess the service provided by every station and take into account local conditions, casualty potential and the availability of crew and ensure that the right boat is in the right place at every location. The reviews now being undertaken include a detailed study to see how many stations operating only an All-weather lifeboat could improve their service if they also had an Inshore lifeboat.

The ebb and flow in the need for lifeboat cover was well illustrated during 1990, Mr Vernon explained. Three former stations, Teignmouth in Devon, Tobermory on Mull and Courtown in the Irish Republic, were reinstated following periods when a lifeboat had not been required.

Brand new stations are also needed sometimes, and an All-weather lifeboat station is currently under evaluation at Portree on the Isle of Skye, while Marazion in Cornwall has an Inshore lifeboat for the first time. Other changes have seen Walmer in Kent operating a 29 knot Atlantic 21 in place of an 8 knot Rother class. The Chairman summed up the changes succinctly:

'No one can accuse us of standing still!'

Two major station projects were also reported to the meeting. The first is at Workington, where the Institution's first 'davit launching' system for an All-weather lifeboat is under construction. It is the only way that 24-hour cover by a Tyne class lifeboat can be guaranteed on that inhospitable section of coastline.

At Angle in Pembrokeshire the first new slipway and boathouse to be built for 31 years is to be constructed. The current slipway is beyond economic repair and a new structure is the only solution. Both Workington and Angle will cost more than £1m, but the shoreworks are as essential to saving life as the new lifeboats.

Paradoxically the RNLI currently pays no Value Added Tax on new lifeboats or new boathouses, but incurs the full rate on slipway and boathouse modification and refurbishment. The Chairman emphasized that VAT is a very serious

A lifeboat is normally available for visit to view between two meetings, but this year major structural work on the Festival Pier made it impossible to bring a lifeboat alongside. A photocall was however arranged for press and photographers at Tower Pier before the AGM, using the Mersey class lifeboat Marine Engineer.



Acting Coxswain James Dougal from Eyemouth and two of the divers involved in his medal-winning service were re-united at the Annual Meetings. James Dougal is pictured (centre) with Elizabeth Mayer and Steven Pettigrew.



James Dougal receives his Silver medal for Gallantry from HRH The Duke of Kent, President of the Institution.

problem which is being tackled with vigour. Increasing expenditure on shoreworks led to a VAT liability of about £600,000 last year, and the figure will be greater still in 1991 – exacerbated by the increase from 15% to 17.5%.

Every effort is being made to persuade the Government to alter the present anomalous regulations and, in company with other charities, the Institution still fears that it could lose its existing zero-rating status after European harmonisation in 1992. This could place a burden on the RNLI of as much as £3m a year on present costs.

The Government's desire to assist charities is seen in concessions to individuals, such as Gift Aid, payroll giving and covenants, but the Chairman remarked that it makes no sense if the Institution has to hand the money back, and more, through Value Added Tax.

THE FUND RAISERS

Having dealt with a less than happy situation Mr Vernon moved on to more pleasant matters, reminding the meeting of the Headquarters and Depot Open Days in August and of the warm reception shown to the public by those who man the lifeboat stations. The effects of this publicity are hugely beneficial, the Chairman explained, adding:

'We know from recent research that some 88% of all adults know about us, and are sympathetic to the cause. There is some concern, however, that we are failing to capture the attention of the under-25s as much as our long term future demands, and steps are currently under way to improve matters.'

No matter how efficient the Institution, how quick its response times or how well it is known nothing would be possible without those who raise the funds to keep the RNLI running, and in reporting the reaching of the end of another financial year in an excellent position to plan for our future the Chairman extended his thanks once again to the fund raisers.

In 1990 the hugely effective volunteer branches and guilds workforce was directly responsible for raising over £10m for the first time, not including the credit for attracting a very large proportion of the legacy income – which was another record in 1990 at some £31m.

Mr Vernon admitted that he could not do justice to all the fund raising efforts of the year, but would nonetheless like to congratulate the organisers of the four local appeals in Lincolnshire, Filey, the Mersey area and Derbyshire who all reached and surpassed their targets in 1990. Between them they had raised over £1.8m to fund new Mersey class boats.

Turning from the past year to the future Mr Vernon sounded a note of warning:

'History shows the Institution feeling the effects not during but immediately following the periods of highest inflation. So I believe we could be entering a danger zone now. Although the RNLI has a unique appeal, the methods of attracting support are in many ways no different to those used by all the other major charities in the country. The job of our full-time fund raisers is to see that the RNLI's use of such methods is as professional as can be.'

MEMBERSHIP

One fund raising effort which is working extremely well is the recruitment of members by advertising. Over 23,000 new members joined thanks to the 1990 campaign and membership currently stands at 190,000, with Governors now numbering 29,676. Mr Vernon then drew attention to rising costs with a comparison of the cost of being a Governor:

'When the Institution was founded in 1824 it cost a guinea a year to be a Governor. It remained a guinea, believe it or not, until 1969 when it increased to a more realistic £10. £10 in 1969 is the equivalent of well over £70 today,

and another increase is long overdue. I suspect I will have something to say about this when we meet again.'

The Chairman then turned his attention to the accounts for 1990, which showed that the Institution had fared extremely well, in spite of inflation. Income during the year had risen by 8% in real terms to £52.4m, and sales of souvenirs and gifts, which fell by 1%, were the only casualty of the economic climate so far. All other sources of income advanced strongly.

Expenditure in the year had increased by exactly the same percentage as income, with almost half of the increase attributable to modernisation and the building of new lifeboat stations. Mr Vernon pointed out that in the next five years this programme will have cost some £20m, and that figure would need to be borne in mind when setting fund raising targets for the future.

Although a significant feature of the 1990 accounts was the substantial fall in the value of investments there had been a significant recovery of the losses so far in 1991:

'The volatility of markets over shorter periods can be withstood thanks to our generally robust financial position. This enables us to think about the RNLI ten, twenty and thirty years into the future. I am confident that we are well able to meet any of today's challenges but this does not mean we can ever relax our efforts to achieve the best in every possible respect. To that end we have a duty to examine all possible means at our disposal of saving life at sea.'

Concluding his report to the Governors Mr Vernon returned to the people who make up the RNLI, and without whom it could not exist.

'Ultimately it is the volunteer spirit of lifeboatmen and women which will guarantee effective lifesaving into the next millenium. The sea will always demand skill and courage from rescuers. Lifeboat crews in turn depend on you and the thousands of Governors and other supporters that you represent to speed them on their way with the resources you provide so unstintingly. Thank you for providing them in 1990. Long may you continue.'

The annual presentation of awards ceremony during the afternoon saw a good turnout of supporters and distinguished guests in the Festival Hall. In his welcome the Chairman expressed the Institution's great pleasure at having its President, His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent, present to make the awards.

Bringing the audience up to date with the news of fund raising, operational and technical advances, which he had earlier reported to the Governors, the Chairman paid tribute to the loyal support from the public and volunteers. This support, he said, enabled the RNLI to follow such ambitious plans for the future and he emphasised that the year's results had been achieved in a period of sharp recession and uncomfortably high inflation.

Referring to the increased speed of response, reported during the AGM, Mr Vernon repeated his praise of the people involved:

'Electronic paging and the gradual improvement in shore facilities account for much of the difference, but it is also a fine reflection on the calibre of the crews and in particular those unsung heroes the shore helpers.'

Mentioning progress in boathouse improvement and the development of new, even faster lifeboats the Chairman

The Presentation of Awards



The medallists in close-up. From left to right Shane Coleman, George Williamson, James Dougal, Robert Gorman and Peter Heading.



HRH The Duke of Kent talks to medallists and voluntary workers at a reception following the presentations

remarked that FAB 3 was:

'...not just a metre longer than an Arun or a good seven knots faster, she is a more sophisticated rescue machine in every respect and in my opinion will provide excellent value for money.'

But it was people who were the Institution's main asset and, linking progress afloat with that ashore Mr Vernon said:

'As lifeboats become faster yet more demands are placed on their crews. There is less time to think as hazards loom quicker than they did in the old boats, and accurate navigation becomes ever more critical. Modern electronic aids have revolutionised search and rescue, but they are only as good as their operators. The time our crews are prepared to sacrifice in learning how to use a modern lifeboat to its full capability is of immense value

to the Institution. Their readiness to man the lifeboat when there's a shout is the most generous gift of all.

The 100th anniversary of the first street collection was of particular interest, as it was an historic event for volunteer fund raisers nationwide. Mr Vernon added that, as though to celebrate the anniversary, the fund raisers had turned in record figures yet again, singling out for special thanks the branches and guilds new record of over £10m.

'That is an extraordinary achievement in which you should all take pride. We have some splendid examples of dedicated voluntary service among our awardees this afternoon. Each one of them will know what it means to take up the challenge year after year of a yet higher fund raising target.

Mr Vernon added that the fund raisers highest recompense would perhaps come when they heard the citations

The Annual Meetings have traditionally been held on a Tuesday in London, for reasons no doubt lost in the mists of time. Although the subject has not been raised at the AGM the Institution would be pleased to hear if Governors, or others would prefer an alternative arrangement.

Awards presented by HRH The Duke of Kent

SILVER MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY

Acting Coxswain James Dougal Eyemouth

On 6 October 1990 Acting Coxswain James Dougal took Eyemouth's relief Waveney class lifeboat to sea in hurricane-force winds when several groups of divers had been caught at sea in rapidly worsening conditions.

Two of the divers were found and taken aboard while the lifeboat searched unsuccessfully for two others, who were later washed ashore safely. Conditions prevented the lifeboat returning to Eyemouth and she had to enter nearby Burnmouth using car headlights as leading marks due to a power failure ashore.

The service is recounted in full in this issue of The Lifeboat.

BRONZE MEDALS FOR GALLANTRY

Second Coxswain/Mechanic Shane Coleman Lowestoft

Shane Coleman was at sea, alone, in the Lowestoft pilot boat on 26 January 1990 when he saw a coaster and tug collide. The wind was Force 9 to 10 with 6ft seas and driving spray.

The tug began to sink so he immediately moved in to the rescue, pluck-

ing the three crew from the wheel-house roof before the vessel sank. Floating cordage fouled both of the pilot boat's propellers and she was in great danger of being pulled under by the sinking tug. All four men were picked up by Lowestoft lifeboat. *The rescue is recounted in full in the Autumn 1990 issue of The Lifeboat.*

Helmsman Peter Heading and Crew Member Robert Gorman Aberystwyth

Peter Heading was helmsman of Aberystwyth's C class inflatable on 18 September 1990 when she launched to an 18ft yacht in difficulties with one man aboard, and subsequently took her in tow. With 5ft to 6ft seas running over the bar outside the harbour and worsening weather there were fears that the lifeboat and tow would have difficulties returning through the dangerous seas.

Crew Member Robert Gorman agreed to take his own 32ft fishing boat to sea, and after careful manoeuvring was able to take over the tow and return to harbour with the yacht while the lifeboat escorted them.

The vessel was swept by a large breaking sea while crossing the bar. *The service is recounted in full in the Spring 1991 issue of The Lifeboat.*

George Williamson Scalloway

Commercial fisherman George Williamson put to sea in his own 36ft boat on 8 October 1990 when another fisherman had been wrecked and stranded on a nearby islet. Aith lifeboat was on her way, but would take some time to arrive. In storm force winds he worked his way through waters strewn with creel lines and then used his 21ft open tender to rescue the man from the island.

The rescue is recounted in full in this issue of The Lifeboat.

HONORARY LIFE GOVERNOR

Mr H Biggs

Broadstairs Branch: Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer 1950 to date

BAR TO THE GOLD BADGE

Mrs B Sanders

Walsall Ladies' Lifeboat Guild: Chairman 1965-1967, 1970-1971, 1976-1978, 1983-1984. Walsall Branch: President 1984 to date

Mrs R Clarke

Colchester Ladies' Lifeboat Guild: Committee Member 1950 to date, Honorary Secretary 1967-1973. Colchester District Branch: Honorary Secretary 1973 to date

Mr S A Chase

Thurrock Branch: Chairman and President 1953 to date

Mrs J Hardy

Swanage Guild: Guild Member 1951 to date, Honorary Secretary and Flag Week Organiser 1965-1984. President 1985 to date

GOLD BADGE

Mrs A M Hodge

Edinburgh Ladies' Lifeboat Guild Committee Member and Honorary Secretary 1952 to date, Flag Day Convener 1969 to date

Mrs D Blackburn

Blackpool North Shore Guild: Honorary Treasurer and Vice Chairman 1975-1987. Blackpool Ladies' Lifeboat Guild: Chairman 1987 to date. Blackpool Luncheon Club: Chairman 1984-1985, Honorary Treasurer 1991 to date. Halifax Ladies' Lifeboat Guild: Honorary Treasurer 1979 to date

Mrs D G Wilson

Bromborough and Eastham Branch Chairman 1965 to date

Mrs C D Price

Prenton (Liverpool) Branch: Chairman 1965 to date

Mrs R G Foster

Driffild Ladies' Lifeboat Guild Honorary Secretary 1969-1983. Chairman 1983 to date

Mrs B Martin

read for the gallantry medals to be awarded that afternoon, there being no better proof of the importance of the Institution for which everyone worked so willingly.

In closing the Chairman introduced His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent, President of the RNLI, who was to present the awards.

It had been five years since the President had last presented the awards for gallantry and to voluntary workers, and in his opening remarks he reflected that in that time over 7,600 lives had been saved, 180 new boats built and lifeboat technology had advanced by leaps and bounds.

His Royal Highness went on to say:

'What you have not done, I am delighted to say, is change the way you are. I can vouch for that from the visits I have made to the coast, the conversations I have had with lifeboat people and the reports I receive about your activities. Society today is so often accused of being too mercenary, and yet the current strength of the RNLI as an organisation dependent on volunteers and voluntary funding must surely temper such an outlook.'

The Duke added, however, that he was pleased to see that the RNLI was not an organisation blinkered by its traditions. He reflected that in his twenty year association with the Institution the lifeboat fleet had been adapted to cope with an increasing variety of casualties, from being tailored to serve merchant and fishing vessels it was now dealing with more than an equal number of calls from the holiday maker and the pleasure sailor.

'Rightly, I am sure, you have put much emphasis on speed to the scene of the casualty.' he added, *'I know that has meant taking younger men as lifeboat crew to withstand the battering they receive in a heavy sea. Indeed, I detect an increased effort all round to attract youth onto the side of the RNLI, and this shows the Institution is looking both*

to the present and to the future and that is admirable. But what makes the RNLI extra special is that it appeals to all ages. Anyone and everyone can become involved. Old age is no barrier to fund raising, in fact it appears to be an excellent way to stave off the effects! The branches and guilds of the RNLI are an example to all the charities in the land both for their dedication and for the results achieved. Congratulations to you all.'

His Royal Highness then singled out those who were to receive awards for special praise before moving the traditional resolution recognising and honouring the work of all crews and voluntary workers. The Duke then presented one honorary life governorship, four bars to the Gold Badge and 27 Gold Badges, honouring tireless work on behalf of the Institution.

The presentations of Awards for Gallantry followed, with a Silver medal for Acting Coxswain James Dougal of Eyemouth lifeboat station and Bronze medals for Second Coxswain/Mechanic Shane Coleman of Lowestoft, Helmsman Peter Heading and Crew member Robert Gorman of Aberystwyth and Scalloway fisherman George Williamson. Interestingly two of the lifeboatmen – Shane Coleman and Robert Gorman were at sea in vessels other than lifeboats in their medal-winning services – and George Williamson is a commercial fisherman with no direct connection with the RNLI. Bravery and the saving of life at sea knows no boundaries.

Full details of the awards for gallantry and to voluntary workers are given below.

To wind up the proceedings Commandant Vonla McBride, a member of the RNLI's Committee of Management, proposed a vote of thanks to His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent for attending the meeting and for presenting the awards.

at the Royal Festival Hall on 14 May

Ludworth and Mellor Ladies' Lifeboat Guild: Honorary Secretary 1962–1968. Cowbridge Branch: Committee Member 1969–1971, Honorary Secretary 1971 to date

Mrs P de Reybekill

Handsworth Wood Guild: Committee Member 1966 to date, Chairman 1968–1970, 1974–1976, 1981–1983. Birmingham Branch: Souvenir Secretary 1979 to date

Miss J Johnstone

Leamington Spa Branch: Honorary Secretary 1965 to date

Mr G A Guy (deceased)

Wolverhampton Branch: Branch Member 1967–1990, President 1972–1990

Mr H P Bell

Harwich Station Branch: Branch Member 1968–1986, Administration Officer 1970–1975, Chairman 1975–1979, Vice Chairman 1979–1981, Chairman 1981–1986, Eastern Region Liaison Officer 1987 to date

The Lady Mackintosh of Halifax

Norwich Ladies' Lifeboat Guild: President 1967 to date

Mrs S A Chase

Thurrock Ladies' Guild (now amalgamated with Branch): Chairman 1968–1980. Thurrock Branch: Honorary Secretary 1968 to date

Mrs M V Blatchford

Plymouth Ladies' Lifeboat Guild: Committee Member 1966 to date, Assistant Honorary Treasurer 1966–1967, Honorary Treasurer 1967–1989

Mr G Moth

Port Isaac Station Branch: Crew Member 1947–1953, Honorary Treasurer 1966 to date

Mr R Norgrove JP

Famham Branch: Committee Member 1974 to date, Vice Chairman 1978–1981, Chairman 1981 to date

Mrs F W Forbes

Horley Ladies' Lifeboat Guild: Honorary Secretary 1967 to date

Mrs P Slater

Margate Ladies' Lifeboat Guild: Committee Member Pre-1956 to date, Vice Chairman 1973–1974, Chairman 1974–1976, Vice President 1976–1978, Assistant Souvenir Secretary 1980 to date

Mrs J Knight

Camberwell Branch: Lifeboat Day Organiser 1953 to date, Honorary Secretary 1967 to date, Honorary Treasurer 1971–1983

Mrs P Johnston

St Marylebone Branch: Chairman 1965–1980, Lifeboat Week Organiser 1980–1984, Chairman 1984 to date

Mrs M Wentworth

Harrogate Ladies' Lifeboat Guild:

Chairman 1950–1960, Committee Member 1961 to date, Vice Chairman 1975–1976

Captain W J Knight

Limerick Branch: Honorary Secretary 1966 to date

Mr T S Wyllie

Dunoon Station Branch: Assistant Honorary Secretary 1937–1939, Assistant Honorary Secretary 1945–1952, Honorary Secretary 1952–1965. Troon Station Branch: Committee Member 1966–1979, Vice Chairman 1979–1982, Chairman 1982–1990

Dr D Busfield

Humber Station Branch: Honorary Medical Adviser 1968–1990

Mr R A Pain

Dover Station Branch: Honorary Treasurer 1966 to date, Chairman 1982 to date, Deputy Launching Authority 1984 to date

Alderman T Bithell

Flint Station Branch: Committee Member 1966 to date, Chairman 1968 to date

Mr D O'Sullivan

Ballycotton Station Branch: Deputy Launching Authority 1964–1967, Honorary Secretary 1967 to date

Mr P J Gallaher

Valentia Station Branch: Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer 1968 to date

Booksheif

some recent publications reviewed

THE STORY OF THE PWLLHELI LIFEBOATS (1891-1991)

by Jeff Morris

THE STORY OF THE FRASERBURGH LIFEBOATS

by Jeff Morris

Both published by Jeff Morris at £2 including p&p

The prolific Honorary Archivist of the Lifeboat Enthusiasts Society has added two further titles to his 'Story of' series of inexpensive booklets which examine in detail particular lifeboat stations or groups of stations.

As usual the author traces the history of the stations from their earliest days, 1891 in the case of Pwllheli, and has located some early photographs including one of the unusual 'tubular' lifeboat which served at this station on the Llyn Peninsula for a short time after it was first opened. There is even a photograph of the boathouse at the same time, sitting in splendid isolation near Gimlet Rock in 1891 and contrasting with the more built-up scene in another photograph taken almost 100 years later.

Pwllheli now operates the RNLI's latest type of lifeboat, a carriage-launch Mersey class, and since 1964 has also had a D class inflatable. The services carried out by both the All-weather and Inshore lifeboats over the years are well documented and, as usual, Jeff Morris's book can be recommended to anyone with an interest in the work and history of lifeboats in the area.

The Story of the Pwllheli Lifeboats can be obtained from Mr C. Thomas, 102 Lon Ceredigion, Pwllheli, Gwynedd LL53 5PP for £2 including postage and packing. Cheques should be made payable to 'Pwllheli Lifeboat Crew – Book Account'.

The Story of the Fraserburgh Lifeboats takes a similar look at the Fraserburgh lifeboat station, which had one of the first lifeboats to be built and which was also the first RNLI lifeboat station in Scotland.

Fraserburgh has a long and distinguished lifeboat history, but the town has paid the price with the loss of no less than 13 lifeboatmen's lives in the course of several disasters. The most recent of course was within the memory of many of today's crews and supporters, the loss of *The Duchess of Kent* in January 1970 with just one survivor from her crew of six. The chilling photograph of the moment of her capsizing appears in the book, and still haunts anyone who has contact with the sea or with the lifeboat service.

Although the station was non-operational

for a few years following the disaster it was fully operational again by April 1979 and since 1985 has had a modern Tyne class lifeboat on station to cover the wild stretch of north-east facing coast around the port.

Copies of The Story of the Fraserburgh Lifeboats can be obtained for £2, including postage and packing, from Mrs T. Summers, 32 Cairnhill Drive, Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire AB43 5ST.

SIMPLE ELECTRONIC NAVIGATION

by Mik Chinery

Published by Fernhurst Books at £7.50

ISBN 0-906754-67-4

With electronic aids to navigation proliferating on small boats of all kinds and technology advancing on all fronts it is hardly surprising that a revised second edition of this volume has been required only three years after first publication.

Author Mik Chinery runs a powerboat school and has been involved in the incorporation of electronic navigation in RYA courses, a background which has enabled him to explain the principles and application of this still relatively new field.

Although he sounds the traditional warning that all electronics are aids to 'proper' navigation it is perhaps a sign of the times that he admits that many now see the chart-and-pencil methods as aids to the electronics... Also of note is that with increasingly user-friendly electronics one finds less in the way of detailed technical explanation of the operating theories, an entirely reasonable approach.

Given the essential technical background and the sound approach advocated in Simple Electronic Navigation both the tyro and the more experienced should be able to select their electronics with ease and obtain better and more reliable use from them.

TOWER ABOVE ALL

by Jimmy Campbell

Published by The Self Publishing Association at £5.95

ISBN 1 85421 126 9

The profits from Jimmy Campbell's cleverly-titled book about the Blackpool he has known for more than 45 years will go to the RNLI, and so it is perhaps appropriate that the very first chapter looks at the well-known Bickerstaffe family. Robert Bickerstaffe was the coxswain of the first Blackpool lifeboat for 23 years until he retired in 1887, and one of his sons, John, became the first

chairman of the Blackpool Tower Company – neatly linking the Institution with the title of the book!

The text takes the form of extracts from the author's holiday diaries between 1946 and 1990 and reflects on changes over that period. Although there is little specific mention of the lifeboat service the sea is never any further from the book than it is from the history of the town of Blackpool.

BRITISH OCEANOGRAPHIC VESSELS 1800-1950

by A. L. Rice

Published by the Ray Society at £9 (see text)

ISBN 0 903874 19 9

Although published some years ago this particular volume from the Ray Society (which is more usually associated with learned works on natural history) had not been brought to The Lifeboat's notice before. The society is

at present having a book sale, offering British Oceanographic Vessels at the reduced price of £9, and it therefore seems appropriate to mention the volume at this time.

The author has compiled a comprehensively illustrated history of vessels involved in oceanographic research stretching over 150 years, and appearing in alphabetical order of the name by which they were known while carrying out their work. This selection obviously takes in the period of purely sailing ships, through hybrids to the fully powered vessels of the mid-20th century.

Perhaps the vessels' only common denominator, other than their work, is that there seems to be no common denominator! As the publishers say on the dust jacket:

'The history of marine science is intimately associated with the development of techniques for obtaining the raw data and with the vessels from which the observations were made. Over the past two centuries the ships employed have ranged from totally unsuitable ones, which happened to be available at the time, to, less commonly, purpose-built vessels incorporating the most sophisticated technology of the day.'

The result is a 192 page, well produced volume which anyone with an interest in ships and the sea will find a delight to dip into.



LOGBOOK FOR CRUISING UNDER SAIL

devised by John Mellor

ISBN 0-906754-62-3

LOGBOOK FOR CRUISING UNDER POWER

devised by Tim Bartlett and Tom Willis of Motorboat and Yachting

ISBN 0-906754-61-5

Published by Fernhurst Books at £12.50 each

Publishing a book for the purchaser to fill in himself may at first seem an odd idea, akin to selling empty wrappers! However any small boat owner will appreciate not only the need for recording navigational information but also the pleasure to be gained after the event in recalling the events of a passage or cruise through the pages of a log kept at the time. He will also appreciate having his memory jogged as to what he should record at any given time.

The differing needs of the sailing and powerboating skipper are well illustrated by the different format of these two companion volumes which, it seems to this reviewer, tread a successful line between the flexibility needed by different owners and a too regimented approach.

A nicely bound A4 format logbook is bound to be more expensive than a tatty exercise book, but as well as being more effective it will also look much more impressive on the chart table or in the bookcase!

THE HAMPDEN FILE

by Harry Moyle

Published by Air Britain (Historians) at £16.50

ISBN 0 85130 128 2

Harry Moyle's very detailed examination of the Hampden, aided by his own personal experience in the aircraft, is perhaps of more interest to the aircraft than the lifeboat enthusiast but is included here for two very good reasons.

The first is that the author, a lifeboat supporter, is donating a substantial amount of the cover price to RNLI funds, and the second is that there are links in the text with the lifeboat service, more particularly in the section dealing with the aircrafts' crashes in the sea.

Harry Moyle himself was rescued after being shot down in the sea (by Spitfires, in fact) and was rescued by a fishing boat from North Berwick. Although that lifeboat station was not operating during the war the crew were from a lifeboat family, one of whom was awarded a Bronze medal for Gallantry some 30 years later.

A comprehensive and exhaustive history of this type of aircraft which will appeal to the aircraft enthusiast. The Hamden File can be obtained from Harry Moyle at 57 Astbury Avenue, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 5DU at £14.50 – £2 less than the bookshop price.

The ISBN will assist bookshops in identifying and obtaining any books reviewed here. They are **NOT** available through the RNLI

The Early Days...

Historic letters give an insight into Sir William Hillary and the founding of the Isle of Man lifeboat stations

Some 60 letters written by Sir William Hillary to the Institution between 1824 and 1845 and now in the RNLI's archives have recently been treated for preservation and placed in a presentation box - the cost being met from money raised by the Lifeboat Enthusiasts Society. Many of these letters deal with the establishment of lifeboat stations on the Isle of Man, where Sir William then lived, and give a fascinating insight into the earliest days of the RNLI on the Island.

Very shortly after the founding of the Institution on 4 March 1824, Sir William proposed the 'establishment of a District Association of the Royal National Institution'. Some three months later, on 5 June 1824, he wrote to the Central Committee pointing out that as the bulk of shipwrecks on the island were from 'the surrounding kingdoms' it would be of benefit to all maritime interests for lifeboat stations to be established by the national organisation.

On 22 June, Sir William forwarded his detailed plan, which covered no less than nine, closely handwritten pages. He proposed seven lifeboat stations for the Isle of Man:-

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1 Douglas | <i>to be made a Depot and have a Life Boat, with a Mortar and other apparatus.</i> |
| 2 Derby Haven | <i>the Life Boat to be placed on a cradle or truck, with high wheels - to be sited on the centre of the ridge between Derby Haven and Castletown Bays</i> |
| 3 Port Le Murray and Port Erin | <i>the Lifeboat to be placed on a cradle with high wheels, to be moved by horses to whichever side of the Calf of Man it is needed</i> |
| 4 Peel | <i>A Life Boat sited on the neck of land between the Castle and the mainland: and a Mortar (between Bishops Court and the point of Ayr)</i> |
| 5 Jurby | <i>A Life Boat and Mortar</i> |
| 6 Ramsey Bay | <i>A Life Boat and Mortar</i> |
| 7 Laxey | <i>A Life Boat'</i> |

The postal services in those days must have been extremely

By Barry Cox, RNLI Honorary Librarian

efficient, for the Minutes of the Committee Meeting held in London four days later (on 26 June, at No. 12 Austin Friars) recorded the receipt of Sir William's plan, commenting that he had indicated there 'would not be found a want of active and intelligent Committees, and hardy boats' crews'!

On 5 July, the draft of a reply to Sir William, to be signed by the Chairman, was approved, but unfortunately the contents are not recorded. Certain matters must however have been put in hand for on 18 August Sir William wrote requesting one of 'Mr Plenty's designed lifeboats of 20 feet length', and the Committee gave approval on 25 August.

This lifeboat, which cost £100, was presented to the Isle of Man District Association and stationed at Castletown. There was already a boat at Douglas built in 1824 by Mr Ogden, jun, of Sunderland from funds supplied before the Institution was formed. (It is interesting to note that the very first lifeboat on the island was given to Douglas by the Duke of Atholl in 1803).

Subsequently, boats to Palmer's plan were supplied to Peel (1829) and Ramsey (1830). As a result four of the seven stations proposed by Sir William Hillary in 1824 were functioning within six years, a very short time in reality. Of the other three, Port Erin had to wait 58 years for its lifeboat station, being formed only in 1882, while those suggested for Jurby and Laxey never materialised.

The station at Castletown closed in 1922 leaving, as now, four of Sir William Hillary's proposed stations active.

ON TRIAL – FAST AFLOAT BOAT P

Sunday 3 February 1991. Wind slight, north easterly. Visibility clear. Sunny. To the layman a crisp bright sunny winter morning. Time 11.45 am.

Alan Norman, slipway superintendent at boatbuilders William Osborne, gave the final command 'Slack off winch'. Less than five minutes later FAB 3 slid gracefully and uneventfully into the waters of the River Arun at Littlehampton.

This undramatic event witnessed by some 40 or 50 people, heralded the start of a new era for lifeboats. It was the first time that FAB 3, a new high-technology lifeboat prototype entered the water. Nine months of intense building activity had come to an end and the boat was now ready for trials.

The building phase was, in itself, just the culmination of two years of research and development by a team of dedicated technical professionals at the RNLI. Starting with a blank sheet of paper and using the wisdom accumulated through more than 150 years of life-saving, the designers and operators together specified a new concept in lifeboats.

It was to be the fastest All-weather lifeboat in the RNLI fleet, with a design speed of 25 knots. Standards of equipment had to be 'state of the art' and accommodation in line with the requirements of today's operating conditions.

An operating range of 250 miles at full speed was required and survivor accommodation had to be greater than in the Arun class, the current large All-weather lifeboat.

These demanding criteria - and many more - led to an immense technical effort headed by David Hudson, chief technical officer of the RNLI. It started with a series of discussions, design drawings and calculations. Later on, the early design ideas were encapsulated in a scale model which was tested exhaustively in tank tests and as a free-running radio controlled model for operational performance under varying wind and sea states. These tests confirmed that the initial technical designs were feasible and indeed acceptable.

But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The RNLI commissioned William Osborne to complete FAB 3 as a first-of-series. To meet the speed criteria it was essential that the weight of the boat was maintained at as low a level as possible, without sacrificing strength. This led to the choice of fibre reinforced composites, or 'FRC', as the building material. The deck and superstructure is effectively a sandwich of foam contained within two fibre reinforced plastic sheets. It has the characteristic of extremely high strength for its weight, considerably higher than aluminium, but it does create special requirements in the building phase. It is not possible, for example, to weld brackets or stiffening materials directly to the surface. Stiffening has to be resin-bonded to the material and even the smallest bolted item has to be located specifically on to wooden cores set and bonded into the FRC material. This leads to an immense amount of detailed design in terms of the location of every single bolt, nut or fastening throughout the whole 17m boat. Given that there are some 20,000 such fastenings in a boat of this size, this is no mean feat.

In addition FAB 3 has been fitted with the latest navigational and electronic equipment. For example, closed circuit television gives the helmsman a view of the engine compartment and of the aft deck of the boat. Satellite navigation equipment enables the boat's position to be established with great accuracy anywhere on the surface of the globe. A comprehensive galley, which includes a microwave oven, gives the operators standards of comfort not hitherto associated with lifeboats, and offers the prospect of

The RNLI must always have an eye of sea rescue many years ahead. Our latest design of Fast Afloat Boat (FAB 3) is designed to achieve even higher standards of performance - retaining - and even improving - the high standards of the current fleet. Although FAB 3 is, as yet, only a prototype, the results of intensive trials and development based on her can enter service, should the need arise.

Here **Neville de Moraes** of William Osborne, from the building phase.

The prototype fast afloat boat (right) may have superficial similarities with the Arun class, but she was the result of a 'clean-sheet' design approach. Apart from being much larger at 17m overall and with roughly one-third as much again in volume (due to extra beam and depth) her engines are mounted aft and use V-drives which gives greater usable internal space. As usual with prototypes the hull has been painted grey (only accepted lifeboats wear the full livery) but the superstructure is in an experimental high-visibility yellow.



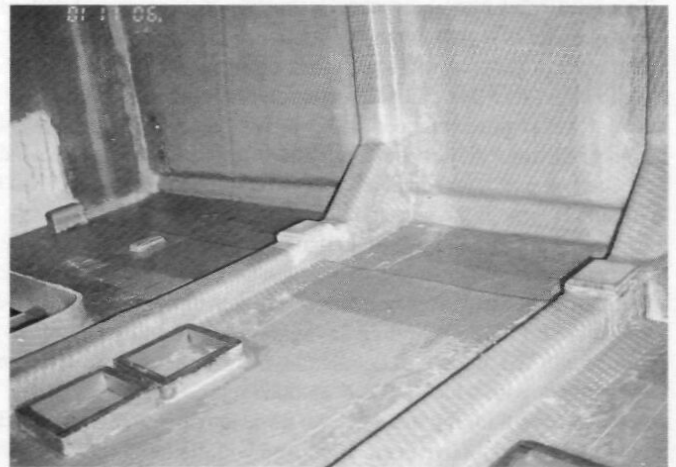
Lifeboats and their equipment are complex and must work with complete reliability in the worst of conditions. It must be stressed that FAB 3 is a prototype, and it is possible that there will be many changes to both boat and equipment before a new FAB enters service.

PROTOTYPE TAKES TO THE WATER

to the future, anticipating the needs of the project now well under way is the prototype known as FAB 3. This 17m boat is faster than current boats while operating on — the current high speed NLI lifeboats.

prototype, and there are many months ahead before a class of lifeboats is already showing great promise.

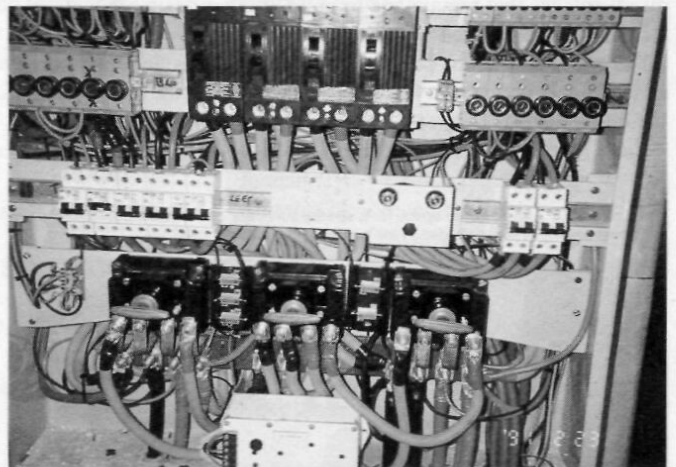
Osborne looks at the FAB 3 story from the point of view



(Above). The sophisticated fibre reinforced composite (FRC) construction gives light weight with strength, but needs much planning at the design stage.



(Above). The unpainted wheelhouse module (also in FRC) is craned into position on the hull.



(Above). A modern lifeboat is complex... just a small part of the wiring, switches and circuit breakers for the engine and equipment in the process of installation.

survivors being given more than the traditional hot cup of tea!

Full medical facilities, including a working space for a doctor and a comprehensive medical kit, are also part of this boat's standard features.

To pack all this new equipment into a boat of this size and still allow operators the maximum operating efficiency and working space was not easy. A full scale mock-up of the wheelhouse was built to make sure that all equipment could be fitted in exactly where it was required and comments were invited on the precise layout of instrumentation and equipment.

Similarly teams of medical advisers were brought down to William Osborne to inspect and comment on the level and location of medical equipment so that as the boat was built the right equipment was installed in the right place.

William Osborne's project manager, Steve Answell, who was responsible for master-minding the nine-month building phase, commented 'The amount of detailed investigation and the thoroughness with which it has been done represents the most comprehensive thinking that has ever gone into a new lifeboat in all the thirty years I have been associated with building them.'

So, after two years of design and development and nearly a year in the building, what happens now?

March and April of 1991 saw George Barnes and Jerry Norris, the two lifeboat coxswains at William Osborne, busily putting the boat through its paces. A set programme of builder's trials included comprehensive testing of every aspect of the boat. Machinery, electronic equipment, loose gear and navigational aids were all each tested separately and together and in the two months after launch FAB 3 was put through some 60 hours of intense examination.

Any weaknesses were determinedly removed, settings were constantly corrected, refinements were built in, until the day came for handing over to the RNLI - Wednesday 15 May 1991.

Between May and August the RNLI's own crews will have put the boat through a similar series of tests, trials and familiarisation trips, which will probably encompass the equivalent of another year of normal operating use.

Plans include trying out the boat in every conceivable condition and every possible sea state. As wide a number of technical people as possible will be invited to state their views, so that by early August further adjustments can be made to eliminate those disadvantages that remain and to build in other desirable features that may be considered worthwhile.

The boat will then be put to the test by operators and their views canvassed.

It will have been one of the most comprehensively designed and tested lifeboats to have been built anywhere in the world. It will

The size of FAB 3 has allowed space for a special survivors' cabin below decks, additional seating is also provided at the aft end of the wheelhouse.



'Sprite', the lifeboat's mascot (provided by Osbornes for all lifeboats built by the yard) watches over the inside steering position with its engine controls and electronics.

have had the views of professional designers, boatbuilders and other advisers, intermingled with the views of experienced operators. This amalgam of experience will embody itself in the final shape and fitting of a lifeboat that is designed to take the RNLI into the 21st century.

All in a day's work for the hundreds of people involved in the various stages - but there is perhaps only one who will have witnessed everything that has happened. For, in common with every William Osborne lifeboat, a small mascot lives in the wheelhouse - presented by the employees of the yard to illustrate their commitment and the part of their lives that has been put into the boat.

This small purple mascot - called Sprite - has lived in the wheelhouse of FAB 3 from the very beginning and will live aboard for the rest of the boat's life. She will be with her on every life-saving mission, she will see the final fulfilment of hundreds of people's work each time a life is saved at sea.

Below decks (this is looking through the engine room) the additional size of the prototype is obvious - as is the amount of plumbing, piping and wiring needed to provide a reliable All-weather lifeboat.



- Aberdeen**, Grampian
54ft Arun ON 1050: December 12 and January 13
- Aberdovey**, Gwynedd
Atlantic 21: November 10, 17 and December 30
- Aith**, Shetland
52ft Arun ON 1100: November 2
- Aldeburgh**, Suffolk
37ft 6in Rother ON 1068: January 28
- Alderney**, Channel Islands
44ft Waveney ON 1045: November 12, 23, 26, December 22, 31 and January 20
- Amble**, Northumberland
44ft Waveney ON 1004: November 4 and December 30
- Angle**, Dyfed
47ft Tyne ON 1114: November 4, December 4 and 25
- Anstruther**, Fife
37ft Oakley ON 983: November 17
- Appledore**, North Devon
47ft Tyne ON 1140: November 23 and 28
Atlantic 21: November 10, December 25 and 26
- Arran** (Lamlash), Strathclyde
C class: November 22
- Arranmore**, Co Donegal
Relief 47ft Tyne ON 1142: November 2, 3 and 9
47ft Tyne ON 1111: November 24, December 7, 29, January 11 and 29
- Atlantic College (St Donat's Castle)**, South Glamorgan
Atlantic 21: December 3
- Ballycotton**, Co Cork
Relief 52ft Arun ON 1071: November 5, 21, December 10 and 14
52ft Arun ON 1067: February 5 and 12
- Baltimore**, Co Cork
47ft Tyne ON 1137: November 14 and February 10
- Ballyglass**, Co Mayo
52ft Arun ON 1159: December 3 and January 15
- Bangor**, Co Down
Atlantic 21: November 24 and December 15
- Barmouth**, Gwynedd
Relief 37ft 6in Rother ON 1022: November 1
37ft 6in Rother ON 1063: February 23
- Barra Island**, Western Isles
52ft Arun ON 1143: November 23
- Barrow**, Cumbria
47ft Tyne ON 1117: November 4, 28 and December 14
- Barry Dock**, South Glamorgan
52ft Arun ON 1018: November 23, December 13, 28, January 5, 8, 26 and 27
- Beaumaris**, Gwynedd
Atlantic 21: December 24 and January 5
- Bembridge**, Isle of Wight
47ft Tyne ON 1126: November 24 and December 10
- D class*: November 23
- Blackpool**, Lancashire
D class: December 16 (twice)
- Blyth**, Northumberland
Relief 44ft Waveney ON 1034: November 13 and 30
- Bridlington**, Humberside
12m Mersey ON 1124: November 9, 10, 21, 24, 26, December 28 and January 15
- Brighton**, East Sussex
Atlantic 21: November 9 (twice), 15, 18 (twice), 28, December 23 (twice), January 6, 12, 13 and February 24
- Buckie**, Grampian
52ft Arun ON 1093: November 26 and December 27
- Burnham-on-Crouch**, Essex
D class: November 24 and January 5
- Calshot**, Hampshire
33ft Brede ON 1104: December 28
Relief 33ft Brede ON 1090: February 2
- Campbeltown**, Strathclyde
Relief 52ft Arun ON 1077: November 5, 6, 10, 23, 27 and December 22
52ft Arun ON 1059: February 21
- Clacton-on-Sea**, Essex
Atlantic 21: November 2, December 3, January 5 and 13
- Cleethorpes**, Humberside
D class: December 14, 30 and February 20
- Clogher Head**, Co Louth
37ft Oakley ON 942: November 26 and January 5
- Criccieth**, Gwynedd
C class: February 3 and 28
- Cromer**, Norfolk
47ft Tyne ON 1097: November 21
- Cullercoats**, Tyne and Wear
C class: November 9 and December 23
- Donaghadee**, Co Down
52ft Arun ON 1107: November 10 (twice), 23, December 12, 16 and 28
- Douglas**, Isle of Man
47ft Tyne ON 1147: December 11
- Dover**, Kent
Relief 52ft Arun ON 1160: December 1, 29, 30 and January 8
50ft Thames ON 1031: February 10
- Dunbar**, Lothian
48ft 6in Solent ON 1020: November 20 and 21
- Dun Laoghaire**, Co Dublin
44ft Waveney ON 1036: January 8
D class: January 24
- Dunmore East**, Co Waterford
44ft Waveney ON 1035: December 8 (twice)
Relief 44ft Waveney ON 1005: December 29
- Eastbourne**, East Sussex
37ft 6in Rother ON 1055: November 29, December 12 and February 24
D class: November 29
- Exmouth**, South Devon
33ft Brede ON 1088: November 10, 11 (twice), December 12 and January 1
D class: January 1 and 20
- Eyemouth**, Borders
44ft Waveney ON 1026: November 20, 21 and 29 (twice)
- Falmouth**, Cornwall
52ft Arun ON 1058: January 20, 21 and February 16
Atlantic 21: December 10 (twice), January 2, 13 and 17
- Filey**, North Yorkshire
37ft Oakley ON 966: November 13 and January 19
- Fishguard**, Dyfed
52ft Arun ON 1076: November 16, 26 and December 7
Relief 52ft Arun ON 1071: February 13
- Flamborough**, Humberside
37ft Oakley ON 972: November 24, January 18 and 19
- Fleetwood**, Lancashire
47ft Tyne ON 1156: November 4, 22, December 3, January 6, 23 and 27
D class: November 4, December 3 and January 15
- Flint**, Clwyd
D class: November 16
- Fowey**, Cornwall
44ft Waveney ON 1028: November 21, December 7 and 20 (three times)
- Fraserburgh**, Grampian
47ft Tyne ON 1109: January 21
- Galway Bay**, Co Galway
52ft Arun ON 1118: November 3, 4, 6 (twice), 15, December 2, 9, 17 (twice), 21, January 6 and 8 (twice)
Relief 52ft Arun ON 1150: January 29, February 9 and 14
- Girvan**, Strathclyde
33ft Brede ON 1105: December 11, January 6 (twice) and February 22
- Great Yarmouth and Gorleston**, Norfolk
44ft Waveney ON 1065: December 9 and January 19
Atlantic 21: November 16
- Hartlepool**, Cleveland
44ft Waveney ON 1044: November 29
Relief 44ft Waveney ON 1001: January 13
Atlantic 21: December 22 and January 13
- Harwich**, Essex
44ft Waveney ON 1060: November 22 (twice), 23, December 14 28 and January 7
Atlantic 21: November 1, 17, 23, January 2, 6 (twice) and February 13
- Hastings**, East Sussex
12m Mersey ON 1125: November 11, December 31 and January 4
D class: November 6, 18, 30 and February 3
- Hayling Island**, Hampshire
Atlantic 21: November 6, 9, 18, December 30 and January 7

LIFEBOAT SERVICES NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

Helensburgh, Strathclyde

Atlantic 21: November 3, 6, December 22, January 1 (twice) and 18

Holyhead, Gwynedd

47ft Tyne ON 1095: November 9, January 6, 27 and February 17

D class: November 8

Horton and Port Eynon, West Glamorgan

D class: November 4

Howth, Co Dublin

52ft Arun ON 1113: November 4 (twice), 24, 25, 26, December 18, January 13 and 24

Hoylake, Merseyside

12m Mersey ON 1163: November 7, December 7, January 8 and February 23

Humber, Humberside

52ft Arun ON 1123: November 1, 6, 23, December 7, 14, January 27, February 2 and 6

Hunstanton, Norfolk

Atlantic 21: January 27

Ilfracombe, North Devon

12m Mersey ON 1165: January 6

Invergordon, Highland

Relief 44ft Waveney ON 1001: November 5

44ft Waveney ON 1033: December 16 and 17

Islay, Strathclyde

50ft Thames ON 1032: December 21 and February 21

Kilmore, Co Wexford

37ft Oakley ON 994: November 7

Kinghorn, Fife

C class: November 25

Kirkwall, Orkney

52ft Arun ON 1135: December 12

Largs, Strathclyde

Atlantic 21: November 4, 8, 25, 29, December 6, 13, January 18 and February 27

Lerwick, Shetland

52ft Arun ON 1057: November 2, December 12, 25 and January 29

Littlehampton, West Sussex

Atlantic 21: November 4, 10, 18 and 25

Littlestone-on-Sea, Kent

Atlantic 21: November 9, 18, December 6, January 23, February 19 and 23

The Lizard, Cornwall

47ft Tyne ON 1145: November 12, 14, 15 and February 16 (twice)

Llandudno (Orme's Head), Gwynedd

D class: December 15, January 12 and February 16 (twice)

Lochinver, Highland

52ft Arun ON 1144: January 7

Longhope, Orkney

47ft Tyne ON 1138: December 25

Lough Swilly (Buncrana), Co Donegal

D class: November 1

Lowestoft, Suffolk

47ft Tyne ON 1132: November 23 and December 24

Relief 47ft Tyne ON 1122: January 5

Lyme Regis, Dorset

Atlantic 21: November 2, December 28 and February 17

Lymington, Hampshire

Atlantic 21: November 3, 11, December 1 and January 20

Lytham St Annes, Lancashire

Relief 47ft Tyne ON 1142: December 15D class: January 3

Macduff, Grampian

Atlantic 21: November 21 and January 13

Mallaig, Highland

52ft Arun ON 1078: November 12, 23, December 11, 30, January 1 and 13

Margate, Kent

37ft 6in Rother ON 1046: November 2, December 8, 22 and January 13

D class: November 7, December 3, 22 and January 17

Minehead, Somerset

Atlantic 21: November 25 and December 23

Moelfre, Gwynedd

47ft Tyne ON 1116: November 18, January 8 and 19 (twice)

Montrose, Tayside

47ft Tyne ON 1152: November 15 and December 2

Mudford, Dorset

Atlantic 21: November 4, 30 and January 15

The Mumbles, West Glamorgan

47ft Tyne ON 1096: November 8, December 21 and January 8

Newbiggin, Northumberland

Atlantic 21: November 29, December 7 and January 10

New Brighton, Merseyside

Atlantic 21: December 15, 22, January 17 and February 2

Newhaven, East Sussex

52ft Arun ON 1106: December 8, 16, 25, January 6 (twice), 12, 13 and 21 (twice)

New Quay, Dyfed

37ft Oakley ON 961: January 24

Oban, Strathclyde

33ft Brede ON 1102: November 4, 16 (twice), 18 (twice), 30, December 1, 2 (twice), 23, January 5, 15, 17, 19 and February 14

Padstow, Cornwall

47ft Tyne ON 1094: January 11, 15 and 26

Peel, Isle of Man

Atlantic 21: November 8 (twice) and December 18

Penlee, Cornwall

52ft Arun ON 1085: November 15, 27, December 25, February 12 and 16

Penarth, South Glamorgan

D class: November 3, 11 (twice), 25, December 2, 8 (twice), January 26, February 1, 2 and 26

Peterhead, Grampian

47ft Tyne ON 1127: February 9 (twice) and 20

Plymouth, South Devon

52ft Arun ON 1136: November 17 (twice), 24 and February 9

Poole, Dorset

33ft Brede ON 1089: November 6

Relief 33ft Brede ON 1090: January 22

Boston Whaler: November 3, 18, January 13 and 21

Portaferry, Co Down

Atlantic 21: November 7, December 16 and 22

Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan

D class: November 11 and January 19

Porthdinllaen, Gwynedd

47ft Tyne ON 1120: January 6

Portpatrick, Dumfries and Galloway

47ft Tyne ON 1151: November 23, December 3 and February 28

Portrush, Co Antrim

52ft Arun ON 1070: January 7

Portsmouth (Langstone Harbour), Hampshire

Atlantic 21: November 3 (four times), 4, 18, December 8 (twice), 30, January 1 (three times), 20 and 26 (twice)

Port Talbot, West Glamorgan

D class: January 19

Queensferry, Lothian

Atlantic 21: December 26

Ramsgate, Kent

47ft Tyne ON 1154: November 2, 8, December 28 and January 8

Atlantic 21: January 26

Red Bay, Co Antrim

C class: November 23 and January 20

Redcar, Cleveland

Atlantic 21: November 11, December 16 (twice), 30 and February 19

Rosslare Harbour, Co Wexford

52ft Arun ON 1092: November 1, December 8, January 4 and 27

Rye Harbour, East Sussex

C class: November 18 and December 16

Lifeboat Services

November and December 1990, January and February 1991

The services listed are those for which returns had been received at headquarters by 30 April 1991.

There may be additional services for which returns had not been received by that date

1990, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 1991 – Continued

St Abbs, Borders

Atlantic 21: November 20

St Bees, Cumbria

C class: November 22 and December 1

St Catherine, Channel Islands

Atlantic 21: November 17 (twice), 29 and December 14

St Davids, Dyfed

47ft Tyne ON 1139: February 3 and 13

St Helier, Channel Islands

47ft Tyne ON 1157: December 4, 14, 15, 30 and January 19 (twice)

St Ives, Cornwall

12m Mersey ON 1167: November 2, 16, 26, February 7 and 19

C class: November 29, December 22 and February 21

St Mary's, Isles of Scilly

52ft Arun ON 1073: December 18

St Peter Port, Channel Islands

52ft Arun ON 1025: December 16, January 6, 7 and February 28

Salcombe, South Devon

47ft Tyne ON 1130: November 14 (twice), 26 and December 25

Scarborough, North Yorkshire

37ft Oakley ON 977: December 5 (twice) and 12 (twice)

37ft Oakley ON 979: February 2, 8 and 28

Selsey, West Sussex

47ft Tyne ON 1074: November 9, December 16, January 29 and February 21

D class: November 9

Sheerness, Kent

44ft Waveney ON 1027: November 18, December 24, 29 (twice), January 27, 31 and February 7

D class: November 3, December 23, 24, 29, January 2, 3, 17, 19 and February 20

Sheringham, Norfolk

37ft Oakley ON 986: November 14 and December 27

Shoreham Harbour, West Sussex

47ft Tyne ON 1158: November 19, December 16, January 6 and February 24 (twice)

D class: December 16 and February 24

Silloth, Cumbria

Atlantic 21: November 1

Skegness, Lincolnshire

12m Mersey ON 1166: November 4

Skerries, Co Dublin

D class: November 24

Southend-on-Sea, Essex

Atlantic 21: November 6, 14, 17, 18 (twice), 25, December 1, 7, 8, January 20, 27 and February 24

D class: November 18, 25, 28, 29, December 15, January 2, 9, 20, 26, 27, 29, February 26 and 27

Southwold, Suffolk

Atlantic 21: November 18 and 27

Staithe and Runswick, North Yorkshire

Atlantic 21: November 30, January 17 and February 12 (twice)

Stornoway (Lewis), Western Isles

52ft Arun ON 1098: November 14, 20, December 22, 27 and January 23

Stromness, Orkney

52ft Arun ON 1099: February 22Sunderland, Tyne and Wear

44ft Waveney ON 1043: November 14, 17, 30, February 5 and 16

D class: November 17 (twice)

Swanage, Dorset

37ft 6in Rother ON 1023: December 1, 2 and 14

Teesmouth, Cleveland

47ft Tyne ON 1110: November 24, January 7 and 13

Teignmouth, South Devon

Atlantic 21: February 21 (twice)

Tenby, Dyfed

Relief 47ft Tyne ON 1146: December 27

(twice) and February 19

D class: December 25

Thurso, Highland

52ft Arun ON 1149: December 3, 23, January 8, 9, 10 and 18

Tobermory, Strathclyde

44ft Waveney ON 1042: November 22 (three times), January 14, 15 and 27

54ft Arun ON 1052: February 13

Torbay, South Devon

Relief 52ft Arun ON 1086: November 17, December 4 and 12

54ft Arun ON 1037: December 26, 30, January 3, 13, 28, February 15, 21 and 23 (twice)

Troon, Strathclyde

52ft Arun ON 1134: November 8, 22, 23, December 1, 2, 3, 4, 17, January 15, 22, 24, 27, February 16 and 20

Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear

52ft Arun ON 1061: November 3, 27, December 6, 7, 15, 31, January 12, February 5 and 23

D class: February 23

Walmer, Kent

Atlantic 21: November 9

Walton and Frinton, Essex

48ft 6in Solent ON 1012: November 2, 3, 22 and December 3

Wells, Norfolk

12m Mersey ON 1161: November 4, December 1 and 6

West Kirby, Merseyside

D class: January 14

West Mersea, Essex

Atlantic 21: November 4, 17 (twice), December 2, 8, 23, 31, January 5, 6 and 10

Weston-super-Mare, Avon

D class: November 2

Atlantic 21: January 26

Weymouth, Dorset

54ft Arun ON 1049: January 15

Whitby, North Yorkshire

47ft Tyne ON 1131: November 2, 7, 11, 30, January 13, 18, February 16, 17, 18 and 27

Whitstable, Kent

Atlantic 21: November 13, 18 and January 20

Wick, Highland

47ft Tyne ON 1121: November 13, December 23, January 10 and 13

Wicklow, Co Wicklow

47ft Tyne ON 1153: November 19 and December 8

Yarmouth, Isle of Wight

52ft Arun ON 1053: December 7, 15, January 8, 29 and February 5

Youghal, Co Cork

Atlantic 21: February 2

Lifeboats on Passage

Mersey ON 1164: November 12

Arun ON 1108: November 29

The prototype 14m Fast Aloft Boat (FAB 4) is at present being fitted out at William Osborne's yard in Littlehampton. See page 90 for details of the 17m FAB 3, now aloft for trials.





Membership News

Governors • Shoreline • Storm Force

Positive Reactions

There's an old saying: 'It only takes one spark to start a fire.'

Well, the spark in this case was the Spring issue's piece 'Moving with the Times.' The fire was your overwhelmingly positive reaction in favour of proposed increases in subscription rates.

We had certainly expected to receive a large response, but had not anticipated the near-unanimous chorus of offers to increase your contributions to the lifeboat service.

The courage and endeavours of the volunteer lifeboat crews have fired the support of many generations. It is evident that today's generation of RNLi members, be they Shoreline members or Governors, continue to give the highest priority to their contribution to the Institution's work. This is especially encouraging when, at a time of particular strain on our domestic budgets, there are more charities than ever making demands on the pounds in our pockets. Your reaction to the article showed the high regard in which the RNLi is held, and deserves our vigilance in applying ever more efficient fundraising methods.

With this thought, let us look at some comments made by members.

Raising the rates

Near-unanimous support was expressed for increasing current subscription rates, especially in the light of 50% inflation since the last increases in 1986. Many members are making financial sacrifices in order to continue their support. Caution was therefore urged that the lowest subscription be kept around £10-£15, an acceptable rise to all those who expressed an opinion.

One of the aims of the Membership scheme is to broaden the RNLi's base of support. A low subscription is thus important for recruiting as many new supporters as possible. You agreed that a tiered membership structure (with stepped rates) was valuable in enabling those who could not afford to contribute above this lower rate to continue doing so.

Paying by instalments

While it would not be cost-effective to administer instalments for lower subscription rates, it was this method which could help make Life Governorship more attractive. The one-off payment could be increased to £300, with an alternative rate of £400 for those wishing to contribute four yearly instalments of £100, perhaps by Deed of Covenant.

Increased value without increased subscriptions

Many members pointed out that conversion to direct debit and signing a covenant would increase the value of subscriptions without costing members anything! When you consider that it costs 40p in bank charges every time a cheque is cashed, or that a covenant will increase your contribution by a third (if you pay income tax), you will appreciate why the fund raising and marketing department is so keen on these cost-effective methods!

The Lifeboat Journal

A split-vote was recorded, with both sides commending the interesting and informative content of the journal. Half of you felt the journal should remain free with membership, as it is an important way of staying in touch with the Institution's work; while other members said they would willingly pay extra, over their subscription, to receive it. A few members felt it was not

necessary and argued it was up to each member to decide whether or not to receive this.

How can I help without paying more?

We have certainly noted your desire to help further, without having to give more money yourselves. Selling lottery tickets among your friends is one way; recruiting new members is another. Look out in the future for a member-get-member scheme and, by the way, do you have the RNLi credit card?

And finally...

Your letters have been most valuable. The comments in them will certainly be considered in our future planning.

In the fund raising and marketing department we will endeavour to strike the right balance between having the most cost-effective membership scheme and safeguarding the needs of our existing members. Your feedback will guide us.

Meanwhile, we trust the endeavours of our lifeboat colleagues will continue to fire your support.

A representative selection of extracts from your letters are printed below:

Letters Extra

Some of your views on membership...

...thank you for the journal which I always enjoy reading. When my membership comes up for renewal in November I would be happy to add £5 to it, or agree to anything similar which is adopted...

RMW
Bexhill-on-Sea

...my wife and I became Life Governors because the payment was £200, and by each signing deposited covenants the Institution received rather more. We would not have done so had the fee been £600. On the other hand we feel that the payment for annual Governorship could be raised...

SLM
Creditor

...I too believe that the subscriptions are not in keeping with today's prices and am prepared to double my yearly subscription from £6 to £12. I authorise you to charge this amount, or whatever sum you may agree to for your future rates...

RS
Leigh-on-Sea

...your article has my full support. With inflation an annual subscription of £25 is not enough! For some time I have been thinking of increasing it to £50pa but haven't got to the bank with this weather. Meanwhile I enclose a cheque for £50...

Miss MB
Worthing

... an optional magazine at, say, £5pa. Only those who really want it would buy it, saving you expense. I feel that a minimum of £20 would put off a number of potential annual members, since I guess that many such persons contribute to a number of worthy causes. £10 would be reasonable, plus the £5 for the magazine...

MJE
Sompting

... I have supported the organisation for many years both by subscriptions and collections. I enjoy the magazine but would prefer to see more of the subscription used for the work of the Institution. I therefore would have no objection to paying, say, an annual subscription of £11 (£5 for the magazine plus £6 sub)...

MGC
Edinburgh

I am a new member of the RNLI, only joining in 1990 spurred into action by visiting the NE coast and seeing one or two of its lifeboats... £6 annual membership is very good value and could be increased, but £20 would possibly see a decline in numbers. I for one would not wish to spend quite so much. £10 would seem a reasonable compromise in view of the many other demands made by the myriad charities in existence today. The magazine, while interesting, is perhaps a perk that could be either decreased in frequency (say twice yearly) or paid for separately...

LS
Headington

...with regard to the article in the current issue of The Lifeboat regarding an increase in fees. I would like to double my subscription, and this may include any increase made by the Institution during the coming year. My subscription is made by covenant and direct debit...

LHW
Andover

...I feel that there may be people willing to pay a small membership fee to the Institution and forego the receipt of the magazine... which could be an 'in addition' cost to those willing to pay for it. Arrangements may have to be made for existing £6 membership who genuinely cannot afford more but who would like to continue to receive the magazine. I enclose a cheque for £5 to cover the cost of The Lifeboat for 1991, and wish you well...

WHM
Stevenage

...At the moment becoming a life governor is, I should think, within the reach of ordinary supporters like myself. Surely if you increase the fee from £200 to £600 you may severely suffer from overkill, as I have recently witnessed in my voluntary work for another organisation. However I agree with your suggestion for possibly charging all members a nominal annual fee of £5 for the lifeboat journal...

RAE
Letchworth

...I fully agree that an increase in subscription should be made, I also agree that some people find it difficult to find the sum required in one lump sum. Would it be possible to donate by monthly instalments?

HWP
Hounslow

...it seems that to pick £600 as a threshold for life governors because of the provisions of Gift Aid is to ignore a less brutal and therefore more acceptable way of achieving Life Governor status while still enabling the Institution to recover income tax. If the subscription for life governors is raised it would seem sensible to follow the example of many other charitable bodies and allow life subscriptions in instalments, covenanted if the subscriber pays income tax...

BS
Llanfairfechan

...it seems clear that either the basic subscription should be increased to say £12 so as to cover the cost of four issues of the journal and leave £7 for the lifeboat service, or members should be asked to pay a subscription for the journal. I favour an increase in subscription because the collection of a separate contribution would entail further costs...

FG
Goring Heath

... I feel that some can pay so much, while others can pay more. So I think it should be left to the individual...

WK
London N13

... the minimum rate should remain at £6 for pensioners and those not at work, but I think £20 is not too much for those in employment. I think we should all be willing to subscribe £5 for four issues of The Lifeboat...

KL
Crewe

...viewed against the annual saving of 1,500 lives and efforts in Force 8+ gales the figures quoted seem minute. If £20 were to be the standard fee, which I support, then OAPs and the unemployed could get a £10 discount. The fact that Governors need only pay £20 flabbergasted me... anyone desiring the privilege of that title should certainly be asked to contribute £50pa. The ratio should probably be retained making a Life Governor £500...

ADE
Girvan

Members already give a lot of their time and spend a great deal of money on souvenirs... an increase to say £20 is unreasonable. Surely you are penalising the sector who are already contributing? I feel a modest increase can be justified with your idea of adding the cost of the journal being one to explore...

AI
Coventry

...membership fees are too low and in need of re-consideration. In 1989 with 163,000 members £1.72m was raised, an average of £10.55 per member, yet in 1990 with 177,000 members £1.77m was raised at an average of £10 per member. So whilst membership continues to grow the average donation has decreased...

I consider that the idea of charging for The Lifeboat to be very reasonable. It is an excellent quality magazine and comparison with other single-interest quality magazines at the newsagents would find costs in the region of £1.50 to £2 per copy. I believe that £5 for four copies of The Lifeboat to be excellent value for money...

PH
Fareham

I have read with considerable concern the remarks which suggest that the Institution is considering discontinuing the free supply of the journal to Life Governors. When some years ago I decided to pay the Life Governor's subscription the expense was for me a serious cost but I was willing to pay it to ensure that I should continue to enjoy the privileges without having to worry about future subscriptions when I had retired from salaried work. For the Institution even to contemplate withdrawing the free journal seems to me a grave injustice, particularly to senior Life Governors (I am 78)...

LSP
Brentwood

...first of all I agree that a £5 annual fee for The Lifeboat seems to be very reasonable and would be acceptable to most readers. Secondly I think annual Governors' subscriptions could be doubled to £40 and Life Governors at least £400, bearing in mind the influence they have in running the Institution's activities...

CG
Reading

...I was recently involved in similar discussions as a committee member of a small society. One comment passed was 'I would rather have 100,000 members paying £1 than 1,000 members paying £100.' In my view this is not the correct approach because membership administration can be expensive and is a variable cost depending on size... a society must set its membership rates on the basis of generating the revenue surplus it needs to meet its expenditure objectives. I think that £10 is not an unreasonable amount for the base subscription, representing less than 20p per week. My view is that a top rate of say £100 will be acceptable to members and I will be willing to pay such a rate once my financial circumstances improve. Just to clarify matters, I have been unemployed since late last year but have budgeted my small income to be able to meet this year's Governors subscription at the current rates and hopefully any increase that may take effect...

CK
Chelmsford

Some ways of filling the coffers...

Pushing and pulling

Although the new term was only days old, the youngsters at Fowey Community School were soon in action supporting the local community. Fifty-two Year Eight pupils and their teacher, Miss Annie Saunders, participated in a sponsored 'lifeboat push' in aid of Fowey lifeboat.

For two hours the 12-year-olds, working in teams, pushed a D class lifeboat round the school bus park. The fine weather made the push even harder work, and participants and spectators alike were grateful for the cooling drinks available from stalls manned by Fowey branch members.

Despite their aching limbs, the pupils were delighted when their final total of 74 laps (over eight miles) raised a splendid £300 towards the £500 required to install a radio in Fowey lifeboat house.

Coxswain Keith Stuart was equally thrilled with the amount raised and intends to mark the Institution's appreciation by placing a commemorative plaque in the boathouse.



Pupils at Fowey Community School put their backs to the wheels and trundled a D class inflatable lifeboat 74 times round their school bus park. Photo Jonathan Barker



Beat the Christmas Rush!

Buy from the comfort of your own home with the

RNLI Autumn/Winter 1991 Catalogue

- Many new Christmas card designs
- Exciting gifts for all the family
- Order early to avoid disappointment
- Many products exclusive to the RNLI
- All profits go to saving life at sea

Your copy of the RNLI Autumn/Winter 1991 catalogue is enclosed with this issue of The Lifeboat.

If you or your friends would like further catalogues please write to RNLI Sales Ltd, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 1HZ quoting reference J91

Great choice! Great value! And a terrific way to help the RNLI's lifesaving work

Maiden bowls them over

North London Area, assisted by Barnet branch and Elstree and Borehamwood branch, organised a highly successful evening at the Wyllyott Centre in Potters Bar.

More than 400 people welcomed Tracy Edwards MBE, skipper of *Maiden* in the 1989/90 Whitbread Round the World race. After a wine reception Tracy entertained her audience with a lively lecture and slide presentation on the voyage and the evening raised over £4,000.

Safety in numbers!

Western Geophysical/Shell UK have again presented three more donations to the RNLI, the results of a safety campaign involving crew members of three research vessels.

A donation of £10,000 was presented by the crew of *Western Cove* towards the up-keep and maintenance of Lerwick lifeboat station, a sum of £4,000 was presented by *Western Challenger* to cover the cost of new fuel storage tanks at Aberdeen and *Western Reliance* donated £10,000 towards the cost of the crew room at Teesmouth.

Buckets of money

Visitors attending the Festival of Underwater Sport held at Crystal Palace in London were met on their arrival by a large contingent of members from the Lewisham branch who had arranged a bucket collection and an indoor souvenir stall.

Despite torrential rain and strong winds the branch raised over £3,000 in only two days.

Proud occasion

After his unsuccessful campaign in 1988 to save Worthing's charming Victorian lifeboat house and turn it into a lifeboat museum, Rob Blann wrote a book about the deeds of 19th century local lifeboatmen, entitled 'A Town's Pride'.

Now, thanks to a unique co-operation between the author, a publican and the RNLI, the lives and times of those early lifeboat crews are commemorated pictorially in a permanent display within a pub, a pub now renamed 'A Town's Pride' after that book, which will support the work of the lifeboat service with raffles and other fund raising activities.

'A Town's Pride' was reviewed in the Autumn 1990 issue of *The Lifeboat* and all profits from sales will be donated to the RNLI.



(Photo Worthing Advertiser)

Rob Blann (right) is pictured with the pub licensees Peter and Linda Sim at the re-naming of the pub.

Car wash marathon

There were a lot of clean cars in Margate on February 24 after an eight-hour car wash marathon in a car park next to the town's lifeboat station.

'Dez', a local young man in business on his own as 'Dez's Car Valeting Service', threw down a challenge that he could wash 40 cars in eight hours. Mrs Jackie Bowshell organised the event and cars were brought in by regular customers to a strict timetable. The local fire service supplied the water from a fire appliance, music was provided by the local hospital radio station, and a hot food stall and an ice cream van catered for all tastes for the crowds attending.

The washing started at 9am and by midday the half-way target was reached. During the lunchtime break those present were enter-

tained by the Margate Drum Majorettes, one hundred balloons were released and a raffle was drawn.

By 3pm Dez had washed 39 cars, mostly Jaguars, Mercedes, Porsches and even a couple of Rolls Royces, plus a few Ford Escorts and other smaller cars, and was appealing for more cars! By 3.45pm he had washed 45 cars – plus a passing police car and the fire engine!

Money raised from the event totalled £1,318, and went towards the local appeal to raise £3,400 for a radio telephone to be fitted in the new Margate lifeboat, *Leonard Kent*, due on station later this year.

Branching out for the men

Solihull ladies' guild, formed in 1964, was made into a branch in October last year, thus admitting men through its hallowed portals for the first time!

The fine tradition of fund raising set by the guild has been continued by the branch, so much so that since October no less than £8,533 has been raised.

Major fund raising events included a concert by the Chanterelle Choir which raised £200, the house-to-house collection and flag day £2,153 and Bob Tench, a committee member, successfully completed the London Marathon and added £160 to the coffers.

Walk this way...

The annual sponsored walk organised by Worthing branch from Splash Point along the seafront to Rustington and back, a total of 12 miles, resulted in £2,700 being raised by the 60 walkers who took part.

Another fund raising event, the Broadwater Fair, realised £547 for the branch.

In brief

FIVE years ago Hamish Fraser asked **Lossiemouth ladies'** guild to supply him with a collecting box to take to work on oil rig MCP 01 in the North Sea. Contributions which he and his workmates have made so far exceed a splendid £1,576.

A CHEQUE for £2,084.19 was presented to **Newquay ladies'** guild by Newquay Pearl, the money being raised during the past year by the organisation of several specialist events in aid of the RNLI. These events included a series of craft fayres, a balloon race during harbour day and a highly successful fashion week. The money raised by the events was added to the donations received from customers visiting the centre.

EVERY Christmas, Denmans Electrical, a Midlands-based firm with several branches, has a charity fund raising day and the staff's efforts are matched pound for pound by the company. The Dawley Telford branch chose to support the RNLI and presented cheques to the value of £430 to **Wellington** branch.

A CHEQUE for just over £117 has been presented to **Bournemouth ladies'** guild by PIP Printing, Bournemouth. The money was raised through a special Christmas card promotion with a percentage of the sales donated by customers to a charity of their choice.

THE ROYAL Mail chose Harwich as a launch pad for its new range of scientific achievement stamps and, as part of the celebrations, generously donated £500 to **Harwich** lifeboat.

AFTER an outstandingly successful year of fund raising in 1990, totalling £13,000, **Broadstairs ladies'** guild were able to make use of an empty shop in Harbour Street which the owner allowed to be used free of charge. Bands of volunteers sold an astonishing array of 'nearly new' clothing and other articles and realised an encouraging £4,050.

SINCE 1980 Mr Peter Tully has organised the annual Paignton regatta week firework display and all collections made at each of these events, totalling over £9,000, have been donated to **Paignton** branch. A town historian, Mr Tully also gives talks on his specialised subject 'Old Paignton', again donating all takings to the RNLI – a great supporter and friend of his local branch.

THE **West Wight ladies'** guild announced the very pleasing results of its fund raising efforts for 1990 with a total of £17,833 being forwarded to Headquarters. Sales of souvenirs and Christmas cards accounted for £6,614 and £4,312 was realised from the flag week collection.

TWO enterprising fund raising activities took place in Peacehaven last Christmas. The first involved the Shell Travellers Check service station where manageress, Juliet Clarke, arranged for her staff to dress up as Father Christmases. Armed with collecting boxes they persuaded customers to part with nearly £135 for **Newhaven** lifeboat. Further up the road, Ivan Gadd at the Telscombe Tavern, donned a lifejacket and oilskins and helped raise £128 in a raffle.

THE BOYS of **Downside Lodge** preparatory school in Purley supported a lifeboat week by having an introductory assembly and a gift and souvenir shop for three afternoons. Many excellent drawings, models and written work were produced and over £200 was raised for the RNLI.

Arrows on target

Shore helper and assistant winchman of Eastbourne lifeboat, Dave Wood, and Dave Pocock, an Eastbourne fisherman, were successful contestants in the TV programme 'Bullseye', which is due to be shown in the autumn.

The two Daves won various prizes in the lead-up to the big prize – when a professional darts player throws the darts, and his points are turned into pounds for a charity chosen by the contestants.

Dennis Priestley was their professional and he scored 265 points. A cheque for that amount in pounds was later presented to Captain Shearer, honorary secretary of Eastbourne lifeboat.

Dry electric!

Condensation in the boathouse at Penarth lifeboat station had been preventing the crew drying out their dry-suits properly, and the moisture was also spoiling some highly specialist equipment.

They knew a dehumidifier was the answer to their problems but did not have the funds to buy one. However South Wales Electricity answered an appeal for help by the Penarth branch and generously donated the appliance and organised its free installation.

The station honorary secretary, Captain Graham Sommerfield, commented 'We are so grateful for this kind donation.....Without the dehumidifier the crew would often be cold and wet even before they even set off on a mission. Now they will always have a warm start'.

All in a day's work

A new committee was formed in the Acomb area of York in January of this year and is already enjoying great success with its fund raising efforts.

The members were very busy on 1 June when they held a grand tombola at the finish of the annual raft race in York. Having appealed for prizes from local traders, 150 very attractive items (all donated) were displayed, and £289 was raised.

Throughout the day a local video store in Acomb ran a small raffle, raising £61, and during the evening members were back raising funds through the sale of raffle tickets at Acomb working men's club, achieving a further £125. A great day for the new committee, resulting in a grand total of £475.

Under starter's orders

The 24-hour Le Mans car race took place in two places this year – France and Beaminster in Dorset!

The starting flag at the Dorset venue was dropped by the Institution's director, Brian Miles, and the Scalextric version of the annual marathon was on.

The race took place in the Greyhound Hotel and was organised by landlord Dave Mason. The tiny racing cars, operated by two sponsored five-men teams, zoomed around a 24-yard track competing for a trophy donated by Major Marques car restorers of Sherborne. The event raised more than £1,200 from sponsorship and a grand raffle.

Pictured at the start of the race are, standing left to right: Mr R. Vivian May, a member of the fund raising committee and deputy president of Bridport branch, the director and Mrs Joan Best, president of Beaminster branch. Kneeling left to right: Dave Mason and the two team

A fishy story

Luncheon with a definitely fishy flavour was served by Rochdale Ladies' guild recently. All the dishes were fish based – except the desserts of course! – and were the brainchild of member Georgie Donnelly.

Guests were full of praise for the culinary delights, and the branch was able to add £527 to its funds.

Swimsafe

On 1 April this year the Royal Life Saving Society and the RNLI launched their first partnered appeal to the general public – Swimsafe UK.

The appeal runs until the end of this year and is asking everyone in the country to take part in a sponsored swim. The appeal has two targets, the first is to celebrate the centenary of the lifesavers by swimming a lap of honour of 7,000 miles – the distance around the UK – and link every lifeguard club and lifeboat station with their dedicated volunteers.

The second target is to raise £500,000 to help support both organisations' committed volunteers.

One participant was Mrs Pat Scanlan, who had recently recovered from an operation to remove a spinal disc and decided to take up swimming to strengthen her back. She accepted the Swimsafe challenge and covered 45 lengths of the Blackpool Lido swimming baths to raise over £80 in sponsorship.

The appeal is being sponsored by British Gas and further details can be obtained from The Royal Life Saving Society UK at Mountbatten House, Studley, Warwickshire B80 7NN.



captains, Dixie House and Dick Wetherden.
(Photo John Gurd Press Photography)

In brief

A PENTAX camera, donated by Boots the Chemists, was the first prize in the Christmas draw organised by Nottingham and District branch. The draw raised over £1,200 for lifeboat funds.

McEWAN'S and Stakis Hotels have donated £500 towards the cost of the new lifeboat station at Tobermory.

A CAKE made by Josephine McLaughlin was raffled at a function organised by Lough Swilly branch and raised £158.

MANY Rame branch members supported the Fashion Show specially staged by Kernow Mill in aid of the RNLI. With wine and cheese, an interesting floor show and raffle it proved to be a most successful event and raised over £250 for lifeboat funds.

THE Swanage lifeboat appeal received a boost when a cheque for nearly £14,000 was presented to Mike O'Sullivan, chairman of the appeal committee. The money was raised through a competition in the Civil Service Motoring Association magazine in conjunction with Frizzell Financial Services and will pay for the intercom system, propeller shafts and coupling to be fitted to the new Mersey class lifeboat *Charles Brown*.

THE SECOND snooker tournament held by Walton and Hershaw branch in February netted a record £1,458 for the RNLI, exactly double the amount raised in the first tournament in 1990. Over 50 people entered the handicap event which was finally won by 14-year-old Scott Friedberg.

THE Wild Bunch Western Society in Milton Keynes raised £300 towards the cost of an echo sounder for the new Filey lifeboat. The money was raised by giving displays in full authentic western costumes.

Two Records

The appeal week held in April by Crowborough branch increased its collection by 7% to £4,670.59. This was a very pleasing result particularly in respect of the village of Hartfield, which for a number of years has been organised by John Milner.

John, who retires this year due to ill health, managed to return a personal record of £348 from the small village.

Run for the boats!

Three crew members of Hunstanton lifeboat undertook a sponsored run from Wells lifeboat station to Hunstanton and raised approximately £600.

First home was Michael Wallace, closely followed by Michael Derby and Michael Reed.

A lot of bottle!

A fund raising evening at the Sun Inn, Llanengan, near Abersoch included the breaking of a bottle which contained £1,260.

This amount had been collected over the winter, with the proceeds of a weekly raffle also being added to the bottle. A cheque was presented to the Abersoch branch of the South Caernarvonshire ladies' guild.

Stalwart support

Loughton and District branch was formed in 1977 and since that time has raised over £103,350. Percy Gibbs, now 90 years old, was one of those who volunteered to serve on the committee – and he has done so ever since.

His usual duty station at indoor events is manning the door to receive donations or admission money and he is always at Buckhurst Hill station during the morning rush hour on Lifeboat Day.

This year he put in a strenuous two hours raising over £65 towards the branch's record Lifeboat Week total of £4,825.

At a committee dinner held in his honour the day following his 90th birthday, Percy was told that the committee would like him to accept the role of branch president, and a commemorative plaque was presented to him to mark the occasion.

All in a row!

Every year some of the Cullercoats ladies dress up in lifeboat gear, and sit in a row as though they are pulling a lifeboat. They then endure buckets of water thrown at them while a member of Cullercoats Club sings the Grace Darling song!

Over the years the ladies have raised several thousands of pounds for the RNLI and this year the total collection in a two-hour session amounted to almost £400. This sum was made up to £500 by the club committee.

This annual endurance test is co-ordinated by Mrs K. Blackman and Mrs Bart Taylor with Mr Blackman usually singing the accompaniment!

Romsey's key event

More than 200 people attended the celebration of Romsey Branch's 21st Anniversary, held by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Trevor Harris in their garden at The Frenchies on Sunday 19 June.

The proceedings were opened by Fiona Richmond who cut the celebration cake and presented the raffle prizes. First prize was a helicopter ride won by Mrs Isobelle Flood. Once her feet were back on firm ground she said she had thoroughly enjoyed the trip, which took her over Romsey town centre, the Broadlands Estate and her own home in North Baddesley.

The Michelmersh Silver Band provided excellent music, and entertainments included a competition in fly casting which was won by 13 year old Helen Carter. At the end of the day a total of £850 had been raised.

Record support

Flag Day in Huntingdon and Godmanchester resulted in a record amount being collected for Huntingdon branch. The street collection raised £255.41 and the house-to-house collection realised £2,928.

The horse before the cart



Websters Yorkshire Bitter has launched a national Shire Horse coastal tour to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first Lifeboat Saturday in Manchester.

The first Lifeboat Saturday, the forerunner of all charity street collections, featured Shire horses pulling two lifeboats through the streets, and this summer's tour

is planned to raise £15,000 for the 27 lifeboat stations at the seaside towns to be visited.

Derek Hallworth, industrial organiser for the north is pictured aboard one of the touring drays, ready for the worst the seaside weather can throw at him!

(Photo Paul Francis Photography)

Food for thought

A buffet lunch to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Sutton-on-Sea and Trusthorpe ladies' guild was held at the Enterprise Club in March, attended by 72 supporters.

A special luncheon to celebrate 25 years of fund raising was organised in March by Sutton Coldfield ladies' guild and 90 guests, including several past members, travelled long distances for the occasion. During its 25 years the guild has raised £132,613.

A luncheon held at 'Langton' proved a great success for Tunbridge Wells branch. The weather was favourable for this outdoor function hosted by Mr and Mrs Graveney and some £674 was collected.

On the right track

Mrs Eve West, chairman of the Alton branch, recently presented an RNLI shield to Mike Reitzler, licensee of the Railway Hotel, Alton and chairman of its Darts and Social Club. The shield is awarded annually to a local public house which has raised the most money for the Institution during the past year.

The sum raised was just over £1,038 and brought the total for the Railway Hotel since 1982 to over £5,000.

Parlour Performers

Following a letter in the Summer 1987 issue of The Lifeboat from John Anstey, a life governor of the RNLI and director of a group of singers called The Parlour Performers, the Bumpstead district branch 'booked' the group for a concert in 1988.

The singers give concerts of Victorian and Edwardian music and proved such a success that they were asked to return in 1989, in 1990 and yet again this year! Over the past four years the concerts have raised more than £1,300 and have become one of the highlights of the village year.

The Parlour Performers give their services free for charity and Bumpstead branch can recommend them highly.

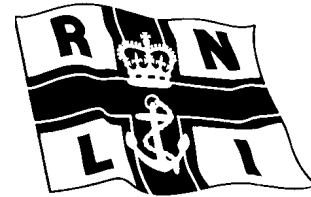
Further information can be obtained from John Anstey, 31 Newbury Street, St Bartholomew's, London EC1A 7HU.

Horses for courses

The fourth annual Minehead driving festival was held in May and spectators enjoyed the display of horses, drivers and carriages. More than £500 was collected during the day and the Minehead Ladies' guild was one of three charities to benefit from the collection.

Continued on following page

YOUR LETTERS



The North West Passage – who was first?

I am most concerned to read in *The Lifeboat* that David Scott-Cowper in the ex-lifeboat *Mabel E. Holland* carried out the first single handed navigation of the 2,000 mile North West Passage.

My understanding is that in 1977 Willy De Roos achieved this under sail in one season, and for this he received a Krug Award for Excellence.

His Arctic voyage was subsequently prolonged to make a complete anti-clockwise circumnavigation of the American continent, via Cape Horn, a voyage completed in the summer of 1979. This voyage in the yacht *Williwaw*, a 13m steel ketch, is the subject of a book called *North West Passage*, originally written in French but translated into English by Bruce Penman and it has Rear Admiral G.S. Ritchie, Hydrographer of the Navy 1966-71 writing the foreword.

I believe the Norwegian explorer Amundsen was the first successful explorer to transit the North West Passage with a 50 tonne fishing boat, taking three years and finally reaching the Pacific in 1906. The next time was in the 1940's -

Sergeant Larsen of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in *St Roche*, a specially built two-masted schooner with auxiliary engine, not only repeated Amundsen's success but also made the passage from west to east.

Willy De Roos may have struck a lucky year enabling him to make the voyage from the Atlantic to the Pacific without having to winter in the Arctic but he did do an enormous amount of preparation and historical reading beforehand for his planning of the voyage so that he was able to snatch opportunities whenever they came.

I do not wish in any way to take away anything from David Scott-Cowper's incredible achievement but I do feel that one should ensure as far as possible that reports are written correctly. Having had the pleasure of meeting Willy De Roos several years ago he made a great impression on me and although little is publicised about his achievements, it is a shame that they are not better known.

H. Gosling

Wheathampstead, Herts

Pride of membership

I became a Shoreline member last year. Although I was unemployed I paid my subscription as I knew the money would be put to good use.

It was only when I started to receive my magazine that I realised just how courageous the lifeboat crews are.

The articles show the bravery, skill and commitment that is needed by each of the lifeboat crews.

I find the magazine very interesting and am very proud to be a member.

Miss C Williams

Cardiff, South Wales

Help on a plate!

May I through *The Lifeboat* thank any readers who responded to my letter in the Spring 1991 issue concerning the breakage of a plate in the 'Heroes of the Sea' series to whom I have not replied personally.

At the last count I have had 15 responses to my letter from readers, many recommending the Bradford Exchange (not infrequently including envelopes addressed to the Exchange and in one case a completed order form), one offering to obtain the plate from a local charity

£ £ £ THE FUND RAISERS £ £ £

Shoreham success

The 100th anniversary of the start of RNLI street collections was celebrated during the annual Shoreham Lifeboat Week, organised by the Shoreham and Lancing ladies' guild and Shoreham Harbour lifeboat society.

They had set a target of £5,000, the same amount that was raised in Manchester and Salford in 1891, and were delighted when a record £6,141 was collected.

Commemorating this historical event aroused considerable interest and media coverage, and while two lifeboats and three bands were used in Manchester, Shoreham managed with one lifeboat and two bands provided by *TS Intrepid* and *TS Implacable*, the Lancing and Littlehampton divisions of the Nautical Training Corps marching through the streets.

Make that donation worth even more!

Don't forget that the Gift Aid scheme, which came into operation in October last year, enables the RNLI to increase the value of almost all single donations of £600 or more.

If the donor is an individual (or a company) and pays basic rate income tax the RNLI can claim back the tax already paid on that money from the Inland Revenue turning the donor's £600, for example, into £800 for the Institution.

This involves the donor in only a single signature on a simple form which any RNLI regional office, or headquarters, can supply. The scheme has already netted the lifeboat service a considerable extra sum of money.

Any branch which receives a gift or donation of this size and does not have the necessary forms should contact its regional office, or the headquarters Fund Raising Department, for advice on increasing the value of the donation even more – at the taxman's expense!

shop and three writers offering a copy of the plate for sale.

One of the sellers was Nairn ladies' guild, who had been given the plate to sell for the guild's funds, and this was the one I bought at the Bradford Exchange price.

Once again my set is now complete and I am very grateful to all those who took the trouble and interest to write to me.

Gordon Whitehead

Copt Hewick, Near Ripon.

Other prayers of the sea

We have been sent a copy of the special prayer approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury for use at ceremonies in connection with the RNLI and printed in your Winter issue. Clearly this meets a felt need for which nothing previously composed was quite appropriate.

We should like to call the attention of your readers, if we may, to the Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea in the Book

of Common Prayer - still the standard authorised prayer book for the Church of England, which include prayers before or during a storm and thanksgiving for safety and deliverance, as well as the very beautiful collect which begins 'Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings', in which the word 'prevent' is used in its old original sense of 'go before us'.

These prayers will be found in the prayer book immediately after the psalms. Though originally composed for use in the Royal Navy there is no reason why anyone may not use them, who would find them helpful.

The Prayer Book Society

Garlick Hill, London EC4V 2AL

To a good home

After the super article on my lucky win, and desire to find a good retirement home for my 33-year-old A35 in the Spring 1991 issue of The Lifeboat, I was delighted to receive so many lovely letters from readers interested in taking over care of my dear little car.

I have replied to all, and would like to report that I have negotiated a suitable figure with Christina Littler and Bob Haddon of Birmingham who will take possession before the end of May.

They seem delighted and although so far we have only had telephone contact, I feel sure they will be able to drive their 'new' acquisition for many years to come.

Thank you again for all your congratulations, good wishes and interest, and I do feel that my lucky win in the 25p raffle will stimulate RNLI funds - after all if I can win, so can anyone!

Miss Daphne Knights

Purley, Surrey

The Lifeboat welcomes reader's letters on any subject connected with the lifeboat service. Write to:

The Editor, The Lifeboat, RNLI,
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People and Places

around and about the RNLI

Commissioned to choose the winners!

Winners of the RNLI's 53rd national lottery were drawn on 30 April by Robin Guthrie, Chief Charity Commissioner for England and Wales.

Mr Guthrie, who was appointed by the Home Secretary in 1988, recently accepted an invitation from the director, Lt Cdr Brian Miles to visit Headquarters and as the date coincided with the lottery, Mr Guthrie agreed to draw the 20 lucky numbers.

The 53rd lottery realised over £87,000 and the prize winners were:

£2,000: L. Summerfield, Caerleon, Gwent.

£1,000: Mr & Mrs P.J. Francis, Gorton, Manchester.

£500: D. Start, Worthing, Sussex.

£250: Sheila Eley, Ipswich, Suffolk.

£100: Mrs I. Quinn, Chatham, Kent; Mr & Mrs A.E. Foreman, South Shields, Tyne & Wear; S.J. East, Sanderstead, Surrey; Mrs J.R. Pearson, Hull, North Humberside; P. Johnson, Winsford, Cheshire;

R.M. Getty, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim; G. Livingstone, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire; R.C. Errington, Ashington, Northumberland.

£50: Miss H. MacLean, Clydebank, Dunbartonshire; Miss U.M. Roe, London; Miss J.E. Briggs, Knaresborough, North Yorkshire; P.V. Turner, Thames Ditton, Surrey; W.H. Child, Mayfield, East Sussex; E.J. Lownes, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands; J. Duncan, Barnet, Herts; Mrs R. Wilsdon, Oxford, Oxon.

Long Service Awards

The Long Service Badge for crew members and shore helpers who have given active service for 20 years or more has been awarded to:

Arbroath – Crew Member S. Ferguson

Barrow – Crew Member T. Keenan

Clogher Head – Mechanic J. Burke

Criccieth – Crew Member J. Owen

Duneness – Head Launcher F. Voller

A long service...

John Chope, retired this year at the age of 65 – after 52 year's service with the RNLI.

John was born on 14 February 1926 and joined the Sennen Cove lifeboat crew ashore as a 'runner' on his thirteenth birthday in 1939.

As far as the records show he went from 'runner' to shore helper and joined the crew in 1950. His last trip in the lifeboat as a crew member was 7 June 1983, and from that date he joined the shore crew again, retiring this year after 52 year's service.

Howth – Crew Member N. McLaughlin

Hoyle – Crew Member P. Langley

Montrose – Mechanic D. Mallie

Porthcawl – Shore Helper D. Thomas

Tenby – Assistant Mechanic D. Young,

Winchman J. Griffiths

On Station

The following lifeboats have taken up station or relief fleet duties:

ALL-WEATHER

Rhyl – Oakley 37-29 (ON 1000) *Mary Gabriel* on 23 December 1990. *On temporary station duty.*

Kilmore Quay – Oakley 37-09 (ON 976) *The Lily Wainwright* on 25 January 1991. *On temporary station duty.*

New Quay – Oakley 37-06 (ON 973) *Fairlight* on 27 January 1991. *On temporary station duty.*

Tobermory – Arun 54-07 (ON 1052) *City of Bradford IV* on 7 February 1991.

Clogher Head – Oakley 37-11 (ON 978) *The Royal Thames* on 29 March 1991. *On temporary station duty.*

Portree – Waveney 44-007 (ON 1042) *Ralph & Joy Swann* on 2 May 1991. *On temporary station duty.*

Filey – Mersey 12-13 (ON 1170) *Keep Fit Association* on 2 June 1991.

INSHORE

Relief – D410 on 6 March 1991.

Courtown – D412 on 16 March 1991.

Marazion – D411 on 23 March 1991.

Ilfracombe – D334 on 23 March 1991.

For one season's operational evaluation.

Cullercoats – B514 on 9 April 1991.

Redesignation to Atlantic 21 status.

Kirkcudbright – B585 on 13 April 1991.

Relief – D413 on 22 April 1991.

Relief – D414 on 29 April 1991.

Relief – D415 on 22 May 1991

Relief – D416 on 5 June 1991

Relief – B586 on 10 June 1991

Obituaries

With deep regret we record the following deaths:
DECEMBER 1990

Angus MacDonald, first coxswain of Invergordon lifeboat from 1974 to 1981.

Mrs Grace Agate, president of Aldeburgh Ladies' guild from 1965 until her death. In 1966 she was elected chairman but had to retire from this post in 1987 due to ill health. Mrs Agate was awarded a silver badge in 1977 and a gold badge in 1986.

Lionel Sharpe, honorary treasurer of West Wickham branch from 1969 until his death in 1990.

Captain John Tickell, honorary secretary of Ilfracombe lifeboat station from 1978 to 1985.
JANUARY 1991

George Jappy, coxswain of Buckie lifeboat from 1962 to 1972, having previously served as second coxswain in 1961. He was awarded a bronze medal in 1968 and a vellum in 1967.
FEBRUARY 1991

Mike Turner, honorary treasurer of Shrewsbury branch from 1974 to 1983 and from 1986 until his death. From 1983 to 1986 he was chairman. Mr Turner was awarded a silver badge in 1985.

Mrs Marjorie Nicklin, a member of Sennen Cove Ladies' guild. Affectionately known as 'Mrs Marmalade', she produced 7,000 jars of marmalade over the past ten years which were sold to raise funds for the guild. She was awarded a framed certificate of thanks in 1990.

Mrs Daisy Gosnay, vice president of Aldeburgh and District Ladies' guild. She was the last direct surviving descendant of the 1899 Aldeburgh lifeboat disaster.
MARCH 1991

Norman Clarke, honorary life governor of the Institution. Mr Clarke became a flag day organ-

iser in Newport, Gwent in 1946 and held various positions with the Harwich branch, Southampton branch and ultimately as treasurer of Colchester District branch. He was appointed honorary information officer in 1974. The following awards were made during his service to the RNLI: a silver badge in 1962, a statuette in 1970, a gold badge in 1976 and honorary life governor in 1987.

David Tate, honorary treasurer of St Albans & District branch from 1966 to 1986. He then became vice chairman and subsequently vice president of the branch. Mr Tate was awarded a silver badge in 1987.

John Barry, coxswain of Courtmacsherry lifeboat from 1952 to 1974, having joined the crew in 1949.

APRIL 1991

W. Softley, the last surviving crew member of the Brancaster lifeboat, the station having closed in 1935.

MAY 1991

Miss F. Piper, MBE, vice chairman of The Lizard Ladies' guild from 1980 until her death, having been a member since its formation in 1971.

MAY 1991

William Gorrie, coxswain of Peel lifeboat from 1967 to 1972. He was assistant mechanic from 1961 until his appointment as second coxswain in 1962 and was awarded a vellum in 1970.

Mrs Mary Stevens, a committee member of Swansea branch for over 20 years. During that time she was minute secretary and flag day organiser and, together with her husband, was awarded a certificate of thanks in 1987.

Philip G. Clarke JP, life vice president of the RNLI since 1986. Mr Clarke was elected to the committee of management in 1972 and was appointed a vice president in 1984.

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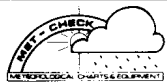
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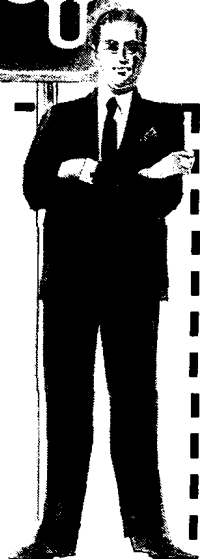
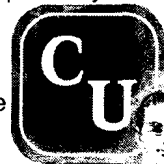
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