



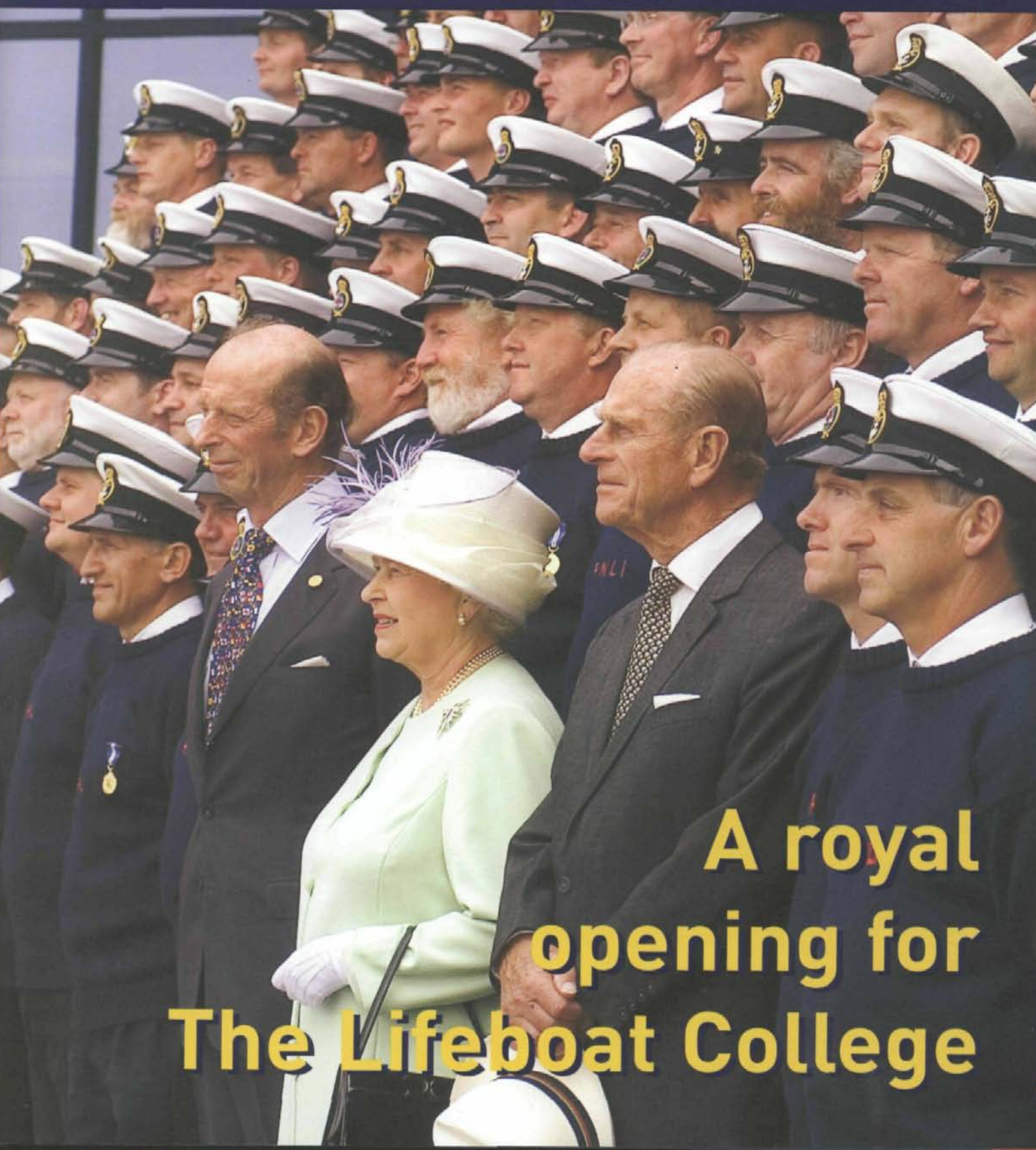
Lifeboats

the Lifeboat

Autumn
2004

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A royal
opening for
The Lifeboat College

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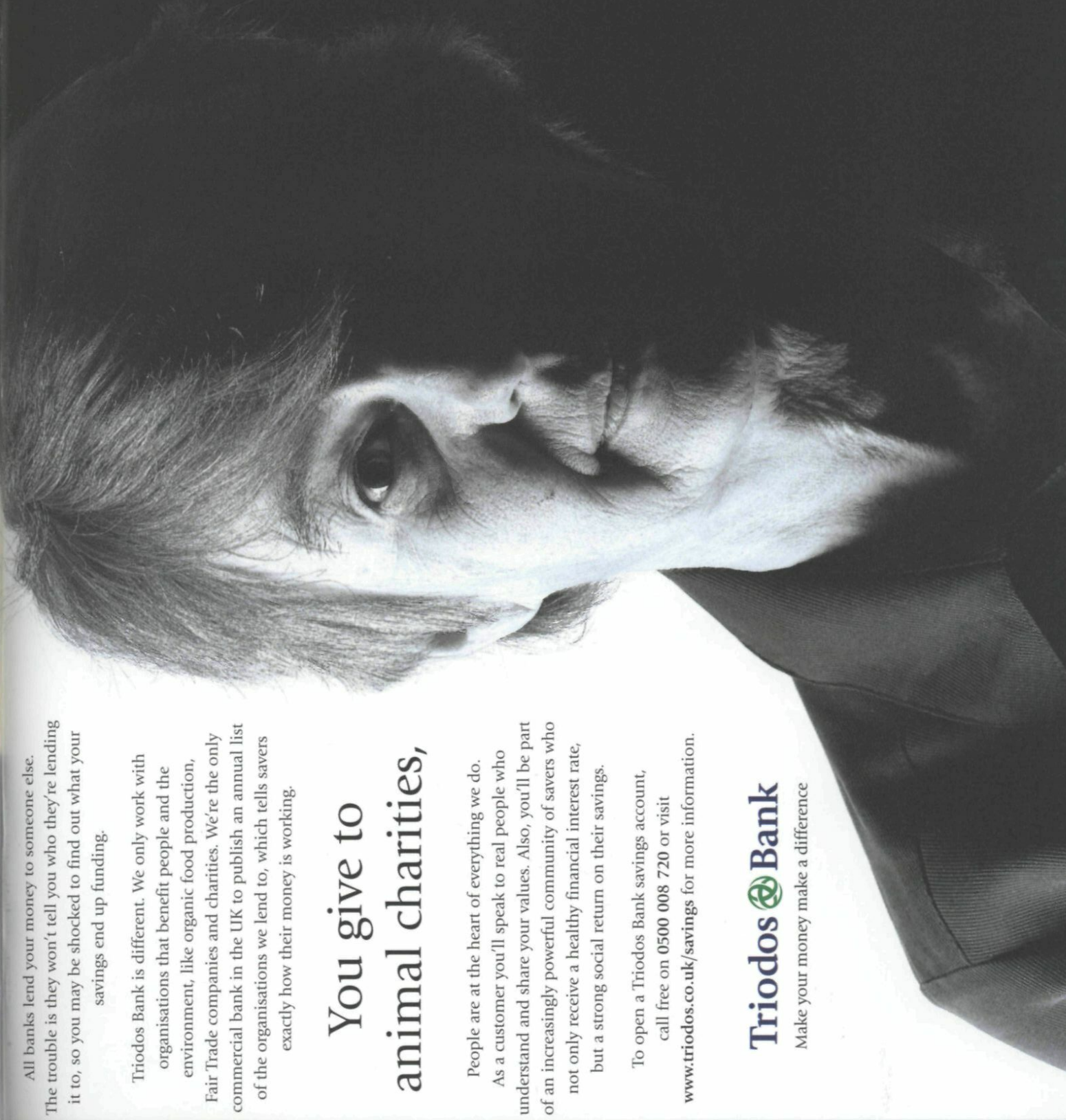
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the lifeboat



Lifeboats

The magazine of the
Royal National Lifeboat Institution

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Issue 569

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Front cover: HM The Queen, The Duke of Edinburgh and The Duke of Kent join 237 RNLI coxswains, helmsmen and lifeguards representing every lifeboat station in the UK and Republic of Ireland following the official opening of The Lifeboat College.
Photo: Bella West Photography

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A day to remember

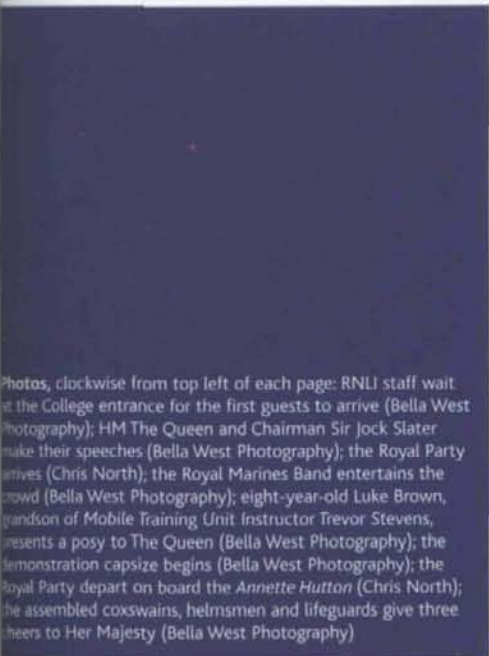
It was a memorable moment on a truly proud day for the Institution that saw Her Majesty The Queen, the RNLI's patron, declare the College officially open. Volunteers, supporters, staff and locals turned out in their hundreds to get a glimpse of The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh during their visit on Wednesday 28 July. With flags waving and the Royal Marines Band providing stirring music, a reception line including the RNLI's President The Duke of Kent,

Chairman Sir Jock Slater, Chief Executive Andrew Freemantle and College Principal Sue Hennessy welcomed the Royal Party.

The tour began with a look at the training rooms, where lifeboat crew members from Castletownbere in the Republic of Ireland were hard at work. They were attending a pre-commissioning training course for their new Severn class lifeboat. The volunteers were delighted to take a break to meet The Queen,

while HRH Prince Philip shook hands with Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteers.

Next the Royal Party met some of the generous fundraisers and donors who helped make The Lifeboat College possible, before walking across the bridge linking the College to its Survival Centre. There they saw a demonstration of the full-bridge training simulator and were also some of the first to witness a capsized drill in the wave tank.



Photos, clockwise from top left of each page: RNLi staff wait at the College entrance for the first guests to arrive (Bella West Photography); HM The Queen and Chairman Sir Jock Slater make their speeches (Bella West Photography); the Royal Party arrives (Chris North); the Royal Marines Band entertains the crowd (Bella West Photography); eight-year-old Luke Brown, grandson of Mobile Training Unit Instructor Trevor Stevens, presents a posy to The Queen (Bella West Photography); the demonstration capsizes begins (Bella West Photography); the Royal Party depart on board the *Annette Hutton* (Chris North); the assembled coxswains, helmsmen and lifeguards give three cheers to Her Majesty (Bella West Photography)

Three cheers from 237 coxswains, helmsmen and lifeguards rang out as Her Majesty The Queen waved to the crowds at the Royal opening of The Lifeboat College

A milestone in RNLi history

Pausing to add their names to the visitors' book, The Queen and Prince Philip were escorted out into the July sunshine in the waterfront courtyard where guests waited in excitement.

'Today marks a major milestone in the history of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution,' said Sir Jock Slater during his Chairman's speech. 'We are greatly

honoured, Ma'am, that, as our patron, you could be with us today to open The Lifeboat College.' He added that lifeboat crews deserve the finest equipment, the best training and the fullest support that can be given.

Wearing a mint green outfit and cream hat with a lilac flower, The Queen said: 'Having just seen some of the excellent training that is already being delivered, I am

certain that The Lifeboat College will play a vital role in helping the RNLi to save even more lives at sea. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I declare The Lifeboat College open.'

Three cheers

As holders of Gold Medals for Gallantry, Keith Bower, Hewitt Clark MBE, and Michael Scales have enjoyed some very proud

moments with the RNLI, but this was an occasion to rival them all as they met the Institution's patron face-to-face.

The Royal Party, including The Duke of Kent, then stood for a much-anticipated photograph with coxswains, helmsmen and lifeguards, representing each of the lifeboat stations in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland.

The organisers who masterminded the successful visit and opening ceremony – James Vaughan, Philip Gilbert, Shelley Tilley and Linda Vatcher – were the next to be presented to The Queen. Then the honour of presenting a posy of blue and white flowers to Her Majesty fell to grinning eight-year-old Luke Brown, grandson of Mobile Training Unit Instructor Trevor Stevens.

Bidding farewell to their hosts, The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh were escorted onto the Severn class lifeboat *Annette Hutton*, crewed by some

now familiar faces: the volunteers from Castletownbere.

Royal waves

The Royal Party and assembled crowds were treated to the fantastic sight and sound of the coxswains and helmsmen holding their caps aloft as they gave three cheers for The Queen, which she acknowledged with a smile and a wave. Crowds waved from the quay and nearby pleasure boats as the Royal Party departed to the sound of *A Life on the Ocean Wave*, the music again provided by the Royal Marines Band.

It was the climax of months of preparation, but the organisers could not have prepared for the worrying discovery made just days before the event.

On the previous Friday, a construction firm working on the neighbouring supermarket site uncovered some long-buried phosphorus grenades. Everyone on the College and RNLI Headquarters site had

to evacuate the area while a controlled explosion was carried out. To the relief of all those looking forward to the big day, the Environment Agency said the phosphorus, once cleared, would not cause a problem to the royal guests during their visit.

Speaking after the opening, RNLI Chief Executive Andrew Freemantle said: 'Her Majesty The Queen's first visit to RNLI Headquarters was an outstanding success, due to the efforts of a large number of staff and volunteers who did a magnificent job. We are grateful and deeply honoured that Her Majesty The Queen, as our patron, was present to open The Lifeboat College, which is a huge asset to the Institution.'

A plaque unveiled by The Queen, which reads 'The Lifeboat College opened by Her Majesty The Queen 28 July 2004,' will now take pride of place in the College reception – a permanent reminder of this most illustrious of commendations for the RNLI's commitment to training.



More details of the various areas of the RNLI's work observed by The Queen on her visit can be found throughout this issue of *the Lifeboat*. To see an online album of photographs taken during the visit, log on to www.lifeboatcollege.org.uk/queensvisit

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The Survival Centre

A crew member urges the Severn class lifeboat towards her destination, a burning tanker apparently on the horizon. Just metres away, the crew of an Atlantic 75 lifeboat works hard to right their capsized vessel

It sounds like a scene disastrous enough to put anyone off taking to the waves again, but this is, in fact, a normal day in The Lifeboat College's integral Survival Centre. This is where trainees get their hands dirty and their feet wet: a centre of excellence for sea survival training. From fixing engines to using a liferaft in raging waves, lifeboat crews are getting the best preparation possible for their life-saving work.

'We have been planning the centre for three years and it is quite something to see it turned into reality,' says Graham Wagstaff, the Technical and Sea Safety Training Manager. He proudly showed HM The Queen some of the excellent facilities during her visit to The Lifeboat College. The tour began with the lifeboat simulator, which is

designed to look and feel like the wheelhouse of a Severn class lifeboat. Featuring a wrap-around screen with 3D graphics, surround sound and a full cockpit of instruments, it is used for a wide variety of training including navigation, search and rescue, and radar. It is so realistic that some trainees have suffered from seasickness even though there is no actual movement involved.

The Royal Party was also shown the 4m-deep wave tank, where an Atlantic 75 lifeboat was capsized. Lifeboats are flipped using a crane and harness suspended above the tank. The wave machine and planned light and sound effects add further realism. 'Crews will be able to train in the dark, with 'lightning' and the sounds of helicopters assaulting their senses,' Graham adds.

The right course

The personal survival course hosted at the centre is accredited by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and certainly won't be a breeze. Any trainee who pictured a swimming pool and computer game when they first heard about the wave tank and simulator is in for a shock. Training includes exercises complete with 'casualties' and powerful waves, and a day of first aid led by a former paramedic – a tough, in-at-the-deep-end introduction to personal sea survival techniques.

Fire safety is a key part of the comprehensive training available and the RNLI has recently taken delivery of a specially adapted fire simulator. Installed in the depot site next to the College, it is based on one designed to train the crews of 747 jumbo jets but this time mimicking a Severn class lifeboat. Here, crews will be trained by a former fire fighter in how to deal with gas-driven fires and smoke. (See page 27 for how to help fund this.)

As well as keeping themselves safe and tending to

casualties, being part of a crew can mean maintaining and mending the lifeboat too. That's where the College workshops come in, which are based on the ground floor of the Survival Centre.

Offering hands-on experience in maintenance, repairs and rubberwork, inshore lifeboat training has moved here from its former base at the Inshore Lifeboat Centre in Cowes, Isle of Wight. Next door is the live engine workshop, which features a real engine from each class of all weather lifeboat.

'Trainees get to know the engines and how they operate first, then we give them a fault to fix,' explains Graham, who points out that lifeboat courses are split 50:50 between classroom and practical. A skills workshop and classroom with audio-visual equipment are the icing on the cake.

It all adds up to a real asset for the Institution, providing progressive, specialist training that protects volunteers – and helping to save more lives at sea, thanks to the generous supporters of the RNLI.





Lifeboats

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Your chance to win

The star prize for the winter 2004 Lifeboat Lottery is a 12-day St Petersburg and Baltic capitals cruise for two aboard the *MV Van Gogh*. The prize is kindly sponsored by Travelscope and tickets are available from 18 October 2004.

The summer 2004 Lifeboat Lottery raised a fantastic £326,318 – the equivalent of two hovercraft and two D class lifeboats. Thank you to everybody who supported the draw.

Congratulations go to Mrs Cowell from Kent who scooped first prize, a 13-night Caribbean cruise for two. A delighted Mrs Cowell said: 'I never imagined when I entered the Lifeboat Lottery that I would end up winning this trip.'

Thanks go to The Royal Bank of Scotland who kindly donated the prize. The Royal Bank of Scotland has supported the RNLI for many years through the issue of the Lifeboats MasterCard which has generated more than £1M to date (see page 28).



The crew of Whitstable lifeboat (Dave Parry, Jon Carter and John Croft) congratulate Mr and Mrs Cowell on winning the star prize in the summer 2004 Lifeboat Lottery. They are joined by Christine Banton from The Royal Bank of Scotland and Whitstable Deputy Launch Authority Brian Hadler.

Congratulations also to cash prize winners:

Mr and Mrs RJ Marshall, Cleveland – second prize £1,000; Mrs HB Boothman, Lancashire – third prize £500; and Mr K Wilson and Miss E Errington, Leicestershire – fourth prize £250. Mr and Mrs MJ Frost, Hertfordshire; Mrs Fitzgerald, East Sussex; Mr T Bellis, Hampshire; Miss JG Richie, Suffolk; and Miss E Williams, London all won £100 each.

If you currently do not receive tickets and would like to, please contact Pauline Teivas-White on 01202 663219 or pteivas-white@mli.org.uk.

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Lifeboats



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See page 44 for a full review

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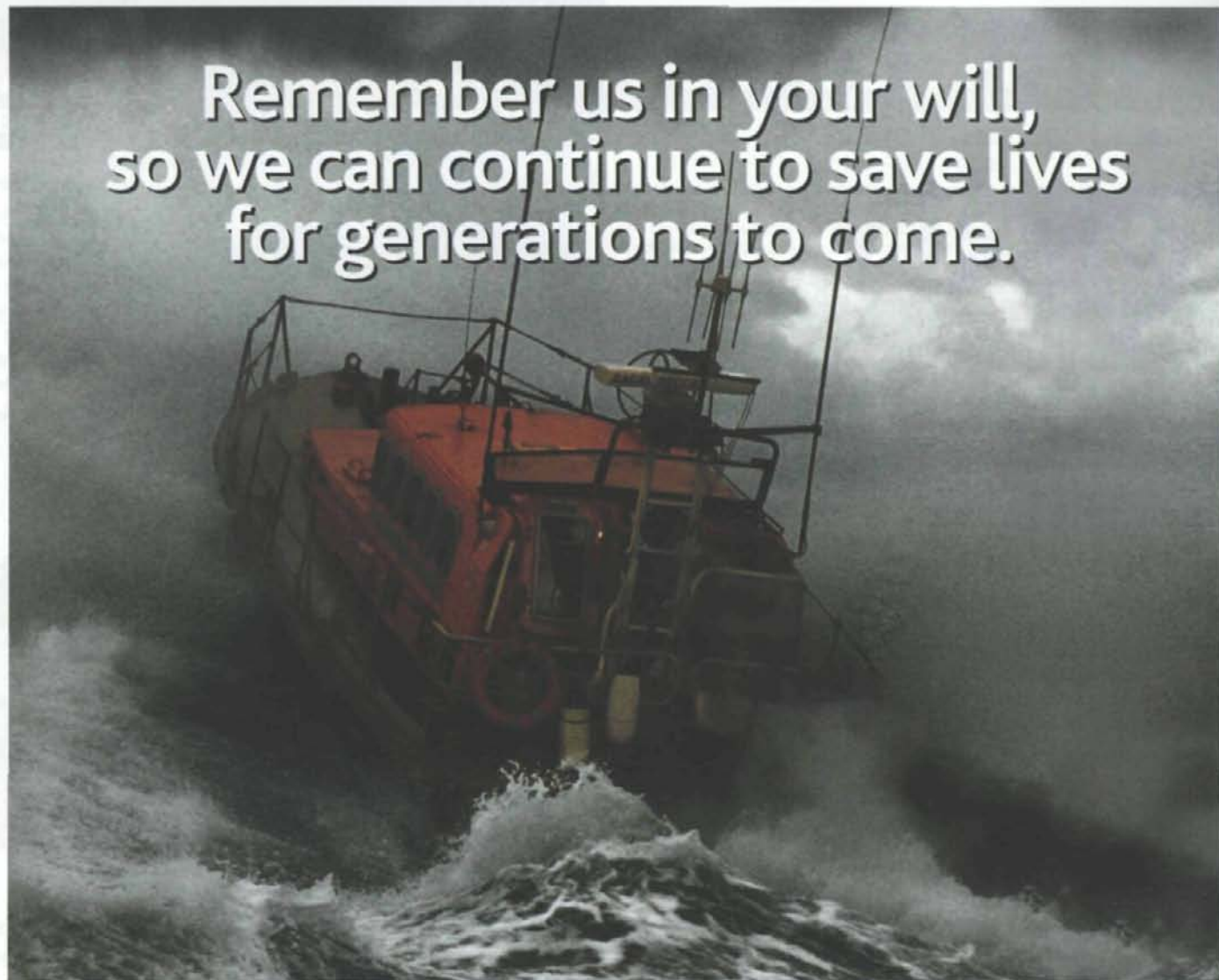
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Lifeboats

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Letters

Where is your hat?!

I have been an RNLI Shoreline member for around 24 years. I joined after chatting to a lifeboat crew member whilst on holiday in North Wales. He told me of an incident where a young boy had got into difficulty while in a small dinghy. The lifeboat was launched and the boy was brought back to safety. His mother was desperately waiting for his safe return and her first words to him were: 'Where is your hat?!' and she walked off without even thanking the crew. We decided that she was probably in a state of shock.

For a couple of years my wife and I did door-to-door collections for the Croydon fundraising guild, but now prefer to support by purchasing Lifeboat Lottery tickets and browsing around RNLI shops at various lifeboat stations around the country.

I must be one of many thousands who would like to be able to give more support to the RNLI as it is such a worthwhile cause. I feel that the RNLI does deserve my continued support for it is seen to be an active charity in providing a real service for those in need and I hope to be able to continue to support the RNLI for many years to come.

Peter Gibbs
Croydon
Surrey



Shoreline

Starting them young

I am sending you this photo of my grandson Liam and the members of the Craster lifeboat hoping you can print it in the magazine, as Liam is a member of Storm Force (the RNLI's club for children). Liam's daddy, Ben, had a collection for charity at his place of work (Norwich Union) in York and raised £175 which was handed over to the RNLI treasurer at Craster whilst we were up there at Easter. I would like to say a big 'thank you' to all at Craster for making us feel very welcome and for making a young boy feel very special.

Mr A Potter
Aspull
Wigan

More Mull memories

I was most interested to read Mrs McBeth's letter in the summer 2004 edition of *the Lifeboat*.

In August 1997 my wife and I were on holiday on Mull and of course were aware from the local publicity of the special service rendered by the lifeboat regarding the birth of Mrs McBeth's granddaughter. Not only that, a day or two later, after a day out in Oban, we had the pleasure of being on the same ferry as mother and daughter returning to Mull, accompanied by a paramedic.

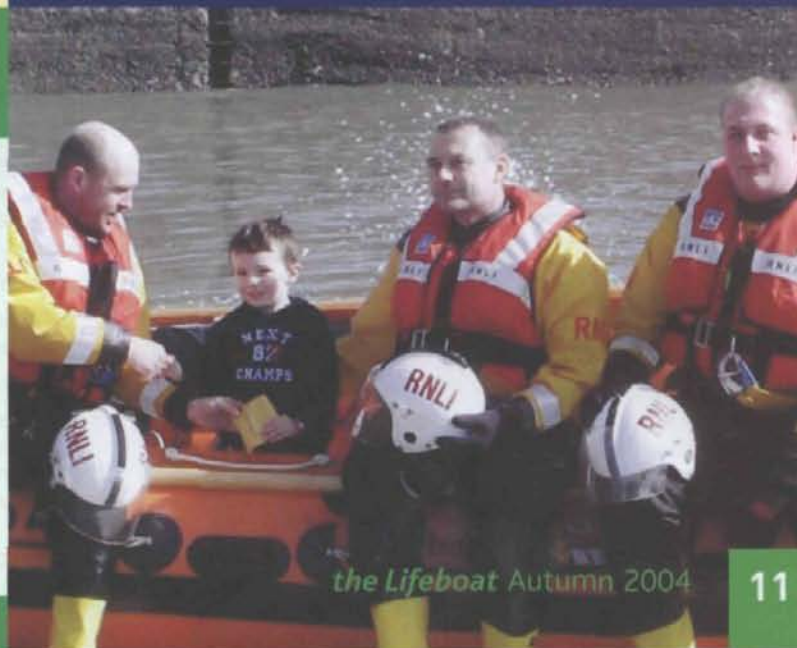
Happy memories.

Congratulations and ongoing thanks to all the RNLI's brave crews.

Richard Elliott
By email

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Sir William lived on

It was with great interest that I read Mr Tite's letter in the summer 2004 issue recounting his experiences on a lifeboat in the Second World War.

My late father-in-law, Wilbur M Muirhead, purchased the *Sir William Hillary* shortly after the war and fitted her out to a high standard as a family cruiser with a large and comfortable saloon, 10 berths and a new wheelhouse. He also fitted two Gardener diesel engines with a speed of 10–12 knots. She was re-named *Isle of Colonsay* and was used by my father-in-law and his family for 30 years, sailing around the west coast of Scotland with the occasional trip to Ireland and Wales.

The boat was sold to a Mr J Sim in 1976, who in turn sold her in 1984 to another party unknown to me. The new owners decided to take the *Isle of Colonsay* to the Mediterranean and whilst doing so went to the rescue of another boat in the Bay of Biscay and towed it to Lisbon. After leaving Lisbon, the *Isle of Colonsay* was struck in darkness by a large tanker. No lives were lost but she sank off Cape St Vincent never to be seen again.

Mr AW Dickie
Kilmacolm
Scotland



Eavesdropping

Recently I had a holiday in Northumberland. I saw a young girl and her father walking towards the Grace Darling Museum. The man said to his daughter: 'We are going to visit the Grace Darling Museum.' The little girl said: 'Daddy, what is a grey starling?' Her father explained what he had said. I had to smile.

Miss Hilary Fowler
Hull



A piece of heaven

In 1995 I bought a disused RNLI boathouse at Greencastle, Co. Donegal, on the shore of Lough Foyle. It had last been used by the RNLI in 1928 and had since been a store for cattle fodder and farm machinery.

Disregarding the negative comments of some of my family, who predicted that it would have no proper foundations and would be riddled with woodworm and damp, I went ahead and bought what was just four walls and a roof. A survey showed that all was well. I drew a sketch of a possible internal layout and was fortunate to know an architect who drew up a plan that, while reflecting my ideas, retained wherever possible the original features of the building. These included the high ceiling, the pine rafters, the original-sized door and all the original-sized windows.

There followed a search for a builder. Again I was lucky: in less than six months, on 23 December, he had finished the work and on the 24th I descended with mops, buckets, dusters and polish. With the help of family and some donations of furniture we were able to have our Christmas dinner there on the 25th. We had no curtains on the windows but we did not care – neither did the seabirds or the seals, then our only neighbours.

It has been hard work but is now what many have called 'a little piece of heaven'. There is an air of peace and calm within the house on which all who have visited have remarked. I feel this is like a scent, almost sacred, of the dedication of the many generous and courageous men who gave their time in the service of those in danger.

Margaret Duffy
Greencastle, Co. Donegal
Republic of Ireland



The last crew at Greencastle

Lifeboats in action

Silver service at Cleethorpes and Humber



Cleethorpes crew (l to r): Shaun Sonley, Tony Salters, Ian Sanderson and Gary Barlow

The skipper of the fishing vessel *Dollard* was used to working in rough conditions in the Humber area, but when his starboard net became entangled in the propeller in gale force conditions and heavy snow showers, he knew he was in grave danger. It would take the combined skills and courage of Cleethorpes and Humber lifeboat crews to rescue *Dollard* in an exceptional service, winning four medals

It is a rare occasion that Cleethorpes and Humber crews work together on shouts. Only 5 miles apart as the crow flies, the two stations couldn't be more different. Cleethorpes lifeboat station has a volunteer crew and the smallest of inshore lifeboats while Humber lifeboat station is unique in the RNLI as it has a full-time lifeboat crew and the largest of all weather lifeboats. On 26 February 2004 these crews joined forces to save the lives of the two fishermen aboard the drifting fishing vessel, *Dollard*.

Late that afternoon, *Morning Star*, a fishing vessel near the casualty, had informed the Humber Coastguard that *Dollard* was in trouble. *Morning Star* had already made three attempts to attach a tow, but had failed each time.

Launching

At Cleethorpes, Helmsman Gary Barlow decided to take three crew with him on the D class rather than the usual two. It would slow down the lifeboat a little, but the heavier weight would make taking head seas easier, there would be an extra lookout in very poor visibility and they could put one or two crew members on board the casualty if necessary.

The weather was poor even at the Cleethorpes launch site, with snow showers, some surf and high winds. In their protective

kit they didn't feel the cold but were concerned about what they were heading out to. Gary remembers: 'It was quite horrendous at the launch site and the reported position was more exposed.' The lifeboat launched at 4.08pm.

Meanwhile the Humber crew were ready to board the Severn class *Pride of the Humber*. Acting Superintendent Coxswain Dave Steenvoorden had paged the crew and let off the Humber sirens twice to let the crew know lives were at risk. Although in a relatively sheltered mooring, even boarding the lifeboat was challenging in the conditions. At 4.12pm the *Pride of the Humber* launched without incident, with Dave in command. Both lifeboats now faced force 8 winds and heavy snow.

So near yet so far

Pride of the Humber was first on scene at 4.21pm, although they soon realised they had found the *Morning Star* not *Dollard*. The Coastguard nominated a VHF channel for direct communications between all the vessels, so the crews were quickly briefed on the situation. *Dollard* was well inside the surf line, over half a mile from the Severn's position. It was difficult to see the casualty because of the snow, wind and spray, and the swells were steeper in the shallows – up to 3m and breaking. *Dollard* had touched the

bottom once or twice and was continually being struck by white water or breaking waves. *Dollard* had an anchor down, but it was on a very short cable and was dragging. With a dangerous motion she was heading towards the shore, just 200–300m behind her. At this point this weak anchor line was the only thing stopping the vessel from going broadside and smashing up in the surf.

Soon after 4.30pm the D class crew spotted the orange superstructure of the Humber lifeboat and arrived on scene. Gary had to manoeuvre the lifeboat constantly to cope with the unpredictable wave patterns. The whole crew had to maintain their vigilance at all times to avoid being caught out and capsized. Gary had great faith in the lifeboat: 'In the D class you feel as safe as houses. She's excellent, proven and great in the surf.'

As always, the priority was to save the people on board the casualty. Gary planned to manoeuvre in next to the boat and transfer the fishermen to the D class. But the pair would not leave their boat. The lifeboatmen realised that the next best option was to establish a tow and bring the casualty clear of the surf and shore. Yet the D class couldn't possibly tow the 11.5m vessel in the conditions and the *Pride of the Humber*, which would be able to, was half a mile away. It seemed impossible to get the

Severn any nearer: the echo sounder was at times reading just 1.5m of water under the keel.

D class transfer

Gary swiftly changed his plan and decided to place two crew on board the *Dollard* to further assess the situation and help with a tow. This was no easy task as *Dollard* was being severely buffeted in the surf: her bows were lifting and crashing through 4m and large waves were breaking directly onto her bows. In a superb show of seamanship, Gary manoeuvred the lifeboat alongside. He recalls the moment: 'Before we knew it, Tony [Salters] was on board, like a rat up a drainpipe!' After a couple more attempts, Crew Member Ian Sanderson also clambered aboard. Both transfers took tremendous courage and agility.

On board the *Dollard*, the skipper was calm but his sole crewman appeared shaken and stayed in the wheelhouse for the rest of the service. Neither was wearing a lifejacket. Just moving around the boat was hazardous: pounded by the waves, the decks were slippery from slushy snow and littered with

bits of equipment. Tony and Ian spotted a large gas cylinder rolling loose and quickly secured it. Gary was concerned for their safety; he was aware that there were no Coastguard shore teams on scene. All the men now on the *Dollard* would be vulnerable if they were swept off the deck or if the vessel foundered.

Dave asked *Morning Star* if she would help set up the tow, as her draught was considerably less than that of the *Pride of the Humber*. When the *Morning Star* agreed, the D class collected a long mooring rope from the Severn. This was difficult but with great skill the D class made a run down sea, close to the Severn's starboard side, as a coil of rope was thrown on board. But their plans were scuppered when the *Morning Star* decided it was too dangerous to help after all and moved away from the area.

Urgent action

It was then that a series of waves hit *Dollard* in quick succession, moving her closer to shore. Gary and Dave agreed that the D class should attempt to pass a tow from *Pride of the Humber* to *Dollard*.



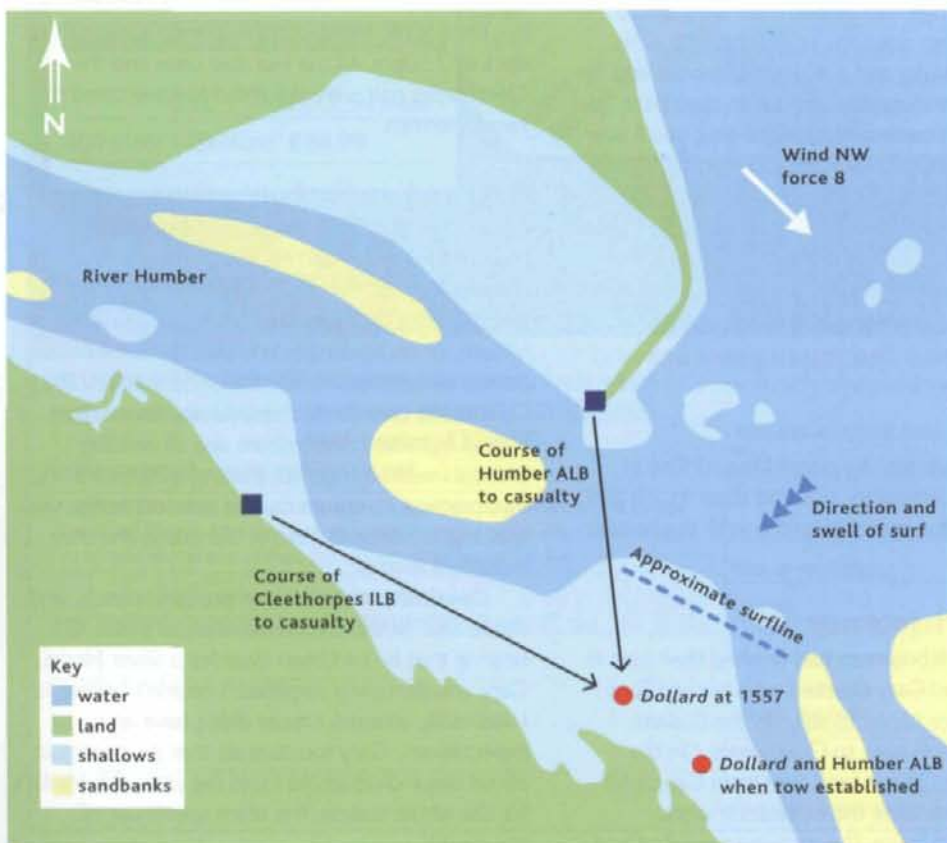
Humber's Dave Steenvoorden

While all this was going on, Dave and his crew had slowly edged the Severn towards the casualty. Despite the poor visibility, Dave and Crew Member Colin Fisk had spotted an area of flatter water between the breaking waves that indicated a deeper channel. So Dave manoeuvred the lifeboat astern, crabbing sideways, then astern again. From being apparently marooned half a mile away, they had managed to get to within 80m of the casualty. At times the echo sounder was reading zero, but the crew didn't feel the lifeboat touch the bottom once.

From 80m away the Severn was still reliant on the D class to take the tow to *Dollard*. Dave knew that the D class would have trouble taking the heavy Severn tow rope through the surf, so a mooring rope was prepared instead. He judged that this would be strong and long enough to act as a temporary tow rope to at least get the *Dollard* out of the surf.

Gary once again executed a first-class manoeuvre to get close enough to the Severn for the line to be thrown. He went past the Severn on the back of a wave and Crew Member Shaun Sonley caught the line and secured it. Half the job was done. The crew on the Severn held their breaths as Gary made a daring approach to the starboard bow of the casualty, dragging the rope behind. Shaun passed the line first time to *Dollard* where Tony gathered it in and secured it at 5.05pm. Dave remembers watching Gary in the D class: 'Gary did an excellent job. Being in a Severn class, you really understand who is up against it: it's the lads in the D class, not us. To get the tow over to the *Dollard* was a brilliant bit of boat handling.'

The Skegness and Mablethorpe lifeboats had been on standby, ready to assist in the



CLEETHORPES LIFEBOAT

D class lifeboat D-454 *Blue Peter VI*

Funding: Proceeds from *Blue Peter* TV appeal 1993/94

THE CLEETHORPES CREW

Helmsman:

Gary Barlow

Crew Members:

Tony Salters

Ian Sanderson

Shaun Sonley

CLEETHORPES LIFEBOAT STATION

Established: at Cleethorpes, Humberside: 1987 (first opened as Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire, 1868)

Previous RNLI Medals: 1 Silver and 4 Bronze (including one Bronze Medal for Dave Steenvoorden as crew member 1987–1990)

HUMBER LIFEBOAT

Severn class ON-1216

Pride of the Humber

Funding: Humber lifeboat appeal 1994–95, fundraising activities of NE region volunteers and several bequests

THE HUMBER CREW

Acting Superintendent Coxswain:

Dave Steenvoorden

Crew Members:

Dan Atkinson

Colin Fisk

Martin Hagan

David Lane

George McClellan

HUMBER LIFEBOAT STATION

Established: 1810

Previous RNLI Medals: 3 Gold, 13 Silver and 17 Bronze

THE CASUALTY

Two fishermen on 11.5m single screw beam trawler, *Dollard* 4.5 miles SSE of Humber lifeboat station, Spurn Point

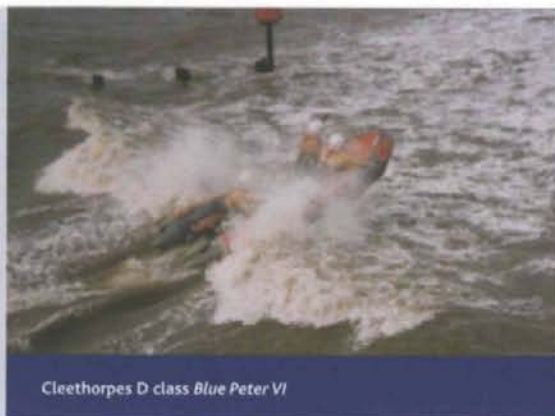
THE CONDITIONS

Weather: Very heavy snow showers

Visibility: Very poor, 0.5–1 mile, reduced in snow showers

Wind: NW force 8

Sea state: Rough with 3m swell



Cleethorpes D class *Blue Peter VI*



Humber Severn class *Pride of the Humber*

perilous conditions, but now that the tow was established, they stood down. On board *Dollard*, the lifeboatmen cut the anchor cable and helped the skipper raise the port trawl beam. Together they battled to raise the starboard beam as much as possible; the nets were still entangled in the propeller and the beam was banging violently against the side of the casualty.

Towing out of the surf

The D class stood by while the Humber lifeboat very slowly started to pull the casualty clear. Dave recalls that the pressure was on: 'Nursing it out, that was the worst time. If the lads who were working the rope had slipped then they would have been dead. You're dealing with a 20 tonne casualty and a 40 tonne lifeboat and the lads are working that rope with their bare hands. It's the hardest manual job that you'll ever do.' Dave cautiously took the *Dollard* at 2 knots back through the dogleg of deeper water. The light was fading and the waves were bigger now, up to 4m high. Dave remembers the tense time:

'It was like flying a big kite with just a bit of cotton – too much pressure and she's gone.'

The Severn successfully cleared the surfline at 5.30pm. The temporary tow had done its job and the Severn crew now replaced it with the heavier tow rope.

The return journey

The D class lifeboatmen had finished their part in the rescue and Gary checked with Ian and Tony that they were happy to stay on the *Dollard* before he set off back to Cleethorpes. On the return journey Shaun took over from Gary, who needed a break after the exhausting work, kneeling at the helm. The mooring rope that had

been intended for the *Morning Star* remained in the D class, its great bulk adding to the crew's discomfort. They were glad to reach Cleethorpes safely, at 6.27pm.

With no time to reflect on what they had just achieved, Gary and Shaun both went off to their work on the tugs.

Those on the towed *Dollard* also had an uncomfortable passage with the wind against the tide making the seas very steep. The lifeboatmen and skipper were kept busy: they re-secured the starboard trawl beam and other bits of equipment not properly stowed. On top of all this, Tony suffered several electric shocks from drenched, poorly insulated sockets.

Pride of the Humber arrived safely at Grimsby dock at 7.50pm. All the Humber crew and the Cleethorpes pair were delighted to have saved the two fishermen.

Recognition for both crews

Gary received a Silver Medal for his courage, leadership and skill and his three crew members all received Bronze Medals for Gallantry. Dave was accorded the Thanks of the Institution inscribed on Vellum for his leadership and skill. The crew of the Severn all received medal service certificates. RNLI Operations Director Michael Vlasto comments: 'Crews from both the inshore and all weather lifeboats worked together, putting all their training into practice, to ensure no-one was lost to the sea that night – they all deserve our praise and their individual awards.'

Dave comments: 'I am as proud as punch,' and thinks that all the crew deserve equal praise. On hearing that he had been awarded a Silver Medal, Gary was genuinely surprised: 'I couldn't believe it. I was really amazed. I really didn't have any expectations.' Gary too stresses that it's never just about one individual: 'As I told the crew, this Medal's for the whole station. The team spirit's out of this world.'

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Epic rescue at Rosslare

When the Rosslare Harbour lifeboat crew were paged, they knew they were heading out into a rough sea and force 9 winds, but they concentrated on the practicalities of launching as quickly as possible. With atrocious sea conditions ahead of them, it was better not to dwell on what was to come

Rosslare Harbour lifeboat *Mabel Williams*
Photo: Rick Tomlinson



ALL WEATHER LIFEBOAT

Arun class ON-1159 (52-45)
Mabel Williams
Funding: RNLI general funds

THE CREW

Coxswain:
Brendan Pitt
Crew Members:
Sean Boyce
Brian Kehoe
Keith Miller
Eamonn O'Rourke
Declan Roche
Matt Wickham

ROSSLARE HARBOUR LIFEBOAT STATION

Established: 1838
Previous RNLI Medals: 2 Gold, 25 Silver
and 4 Bronze

THE CASUALTY

French 24m fishing vessel, *Alf*, with 5 people
12 miles south of Tuskar Rock Lighthouse,
near Rosslare, Ireland

THE CONDITIONS

Weather: Overcast, cold
Visibility: 2 miles, fading light after 4pm
Wind: SSE force 9
Sea state: Turbulent, rough sea

A French trawler with five crew was drifting without power 14 miles south of Tuskar Rock Lighthouse on the south coast of Ireland so the Arun class *Mabel Williams* slipped her moorings at 2.37pm on 5 November 2003. The crew were soon seated and strapped in, ready for a rough passage in gale force winds.

In order to reach the casualty quickly, Brendan took the lifeboat on the most direct route possible into the weather. They passed through a notorious area of overfalls known as the Baillies, where a shelving bottom causes steep waves and turbulent seas. Brendan recalls that he had to slow the lifeboat down to 12 knots 'to prevent excessively severe slamming.' The conditions worsened, with huge waves and a cross swell.

The sea state made visibility less than two miles so Brian Kehoe, operating the radar, had a key role to play in detecting the casualty, especially as the fishermen had little or no English with which to explain their position. Brian first made intermittent radar contact with the French trawler, *Alf*, from 3 miles away. As they neared, the crew saw that the 24m trawler was lying beam to very heavy breaking seas. On scene, the wind was force 9 with towering waves.

Brendan decided that a tow was the best way to rescue the crew, so he skilfully manoeuvred parallel to *Alf*. Both vessels rolled violently, beam to the weather. Despite this, Brendan had faith in the

capabilities of the lifeboat and the crew: 'You always feel safe on the Arun and I have great confidence in the crew.'

As the lifeboat drew alongside *Alf*, Crew Member Eamonn O'Rourke threw a heaving line successfully to the crew on the port shoulder of *Alf*. The Frenchmen hauled in the tow rope and secured it.

With darkness fast approaching the lifeboat took up the strain and began the long process of bringing the casualty safely about. This took half an hour and much patience. It was hazardous for the crew on deck, working in poor light and getting increasingly tired, but they persevered. Brendan stressed that the crew didn't think about how tough it was at the time: 'You're constantly aware of what's on the end of the towline; you're aware of their plight. It doesn't hit you until you get home what you've been through. Of course you sometimes feel the physical effort the following day!'

The *Mabel Williams* towed the large trawler at 3 knots on the return journey. They had to take particular care in the conditions as *Alf* had no steerage and was heavily laden with fish. Brendan took a slightly longer passage back to the station to avoid the Baillies and to gain more sea room. Four and a half hours after the tow was connected, the lifeboat neared the harbour. To reach safety, Brendan had to

bring the lifeboat and tow round to port onto a westerly heading through a channel. This was a dangerous manoeuvre in the dark, with the tidal stream flowing north and a sand bank, Holdens Bed shallows, lying to the north.

Suddenly the crew felt the lifeboat surge ahead and quickly realised the tow had parted. The casualty was drifting towards the bank. The crew reacted swiftly and worked hard to haul in the full length of the tow rope and prepare it again. In a great display of teamwork, when one man tired, another took over. Brendan manoeuvred the lifeboat alongside *Alf*, by which time the crew were ready with the heaving line and the tow was re-established. Finally the trawler was towed safely through the channel into the harbour. It had been an eight-hour service.

There was no shortage of help for the crew while berthing the casualty in Rosslare. Many crew members, past and present, as well as other people associated with the station, gave welcome assistance. Brendan remembers: 'It was a dirty shout so it was nice to be welcomed back by so many people.'

On land, the fishermen thanked the crew, through a translator. As experienced seamen they fully realised the danger they had been in and appreciated the professionalism of the lifeboat crew.

The fishermen stayed at Rosslare for a few days while their boat was repaired and then returned home back to their families at the fishing port of Les Sables d'Olonne, on the French west coast. They showed their gratitude by making the lovely gesture of sending funds to the lifeboat station for a Christmas drink or two.

Awarding the Thanks of the Institution on Vellum, Operations Director Michael Vlasto praised the crew and complimented Brendan, who displayed 'sound leadership and excellent seamanship skills and managed a difficult and arduous service in the very best traditions of the RNLI.'

Brendan modestly plays down his individual role and praises the crew: 'I can't speak highly enough of the way the crew performed. They were exceptional. They gave everything, and more.'

Brendan sees his award as a credit to everyone involved at the station and their families, but stresses:

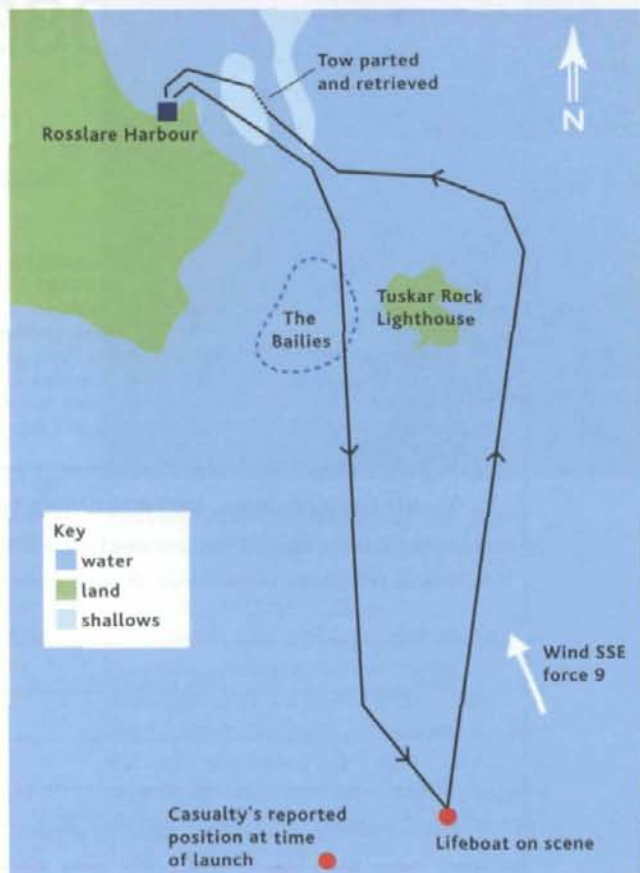
'It's not about awards. We're there when things go wrong for people, there to help them out.'



The lifeboatmen: Declan Roche, Sean Boyce, Brendan Pitt, Eamon O'Rourke, Keith Miller, Matt Wickham, Brian Kehoe
The fishermen: Bruno Charrier, Jean Claude Legal, Maurice Tron, Sylvain Colombe, Bernard Remaud.
In the background is the rescued vessel *Alf*
Photo: Jim Campbell

Log of events

2.26pm	Pagers activated
2.37pm	Lifeboat launched
3.55pm	Arrived on scene
4.04pm	Tow established
8.30pm	Tow parted
8.45pm	Tow retrieved and reconnected
9.30pm	Casualty safely berthed
10.15pm	Lifeboat refuelled and ready for service



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Shore, lifeboat and helicopter crews save angler

A huge wave threw an angler off rocks into the sea near Padstow, Cornwall. Luckily, two boys saw the incident and ran to get help and the Padstow lifeboat crew were soon paged. They jumped in the RNLI Landrover, turned on the blue flashing light and siren, and raced to the station, 5 miles away

The Padstow crew sped down narrow country lanes to the station at Trevoze Head. They all knew time was critical with the angler fighting to stay alive in rough seas. The launch crew, led by Head Launcher Robert Norfolk, prepared the Tyne class lifeboat for a fast slipway launch. With a particularly heavy ground swell of 4–5m to contend with, they worked quickly and skilfully to launch *James Burrough* within eight minutes of being paged, at 8.52am on 31 October 2003.

On their way the lifeboat crew spotted a crowd of people on a nearby cliff, so Coxswain Alan Tarby headed to that area. They were on scene seven minutes after launching. Visibility was good and the wind was force 3, but the rough sea state and a heavy swell made the missing angler hard to find. The lifeboat got to within 200m of the cliff and the crowd pointed out the position of the man. As the lifeboat rose to the top of a wave, the crew spotted the casualty about 25m away.

When the angler fell in the water, he had had the presence of mind and the strength to

swim away from the cliffs rather than trying to swim back in. Alan reflects on what could have easily happened: 'He would almost certainly have been badly hurt or even killed by the force of the sea breaking onto the rocks.' The angler was exhausted when the lifeboat found him. The crew threw him a heaving line, but he was too weak to use it.

Alan manoeuvred the lifeboat alongside and Crew Members Chris Murphy and Kevin Briggs climbed down the scrambling net. Up to their waist in water, they grabbed the angler and, with the help of other crew members, managed to lift him on board and get back on deck themselves.

The casualty was showing signs of hypothermia. The crew placed him in the recovery position and wrapped him in blankets. Two crew members lay alongside him to warm him up gently and he was given oxygen. Yet his condition deteriorated quickly; he was vomiting regularly and drifting in and out of consciousness.

The RNAS Culdrose helicopter arrived on scene and agreed to try to airlift the casualty to hospital at Truro. With some difficulty, due to the heavy swell, the helicopter landed a crew member on the deck with a stretcher. The crew gave the casualty first aid until he was successfully airlifted to the helicopter.

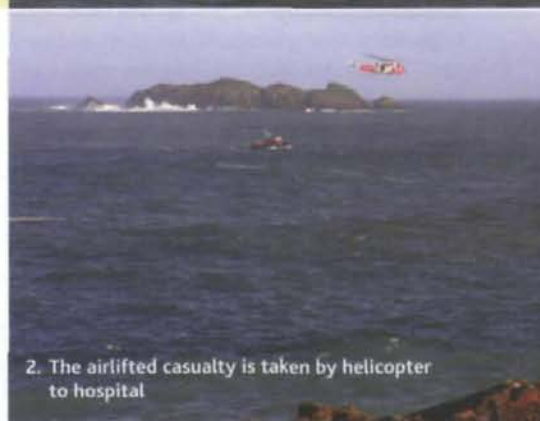
Alan recalls the atmosphere on the lifeboat after the man was taken by the helicopter to hospital:

'There was a great feeling that we had achieved something worthwhile.'

Back at the station there was a difficult



1. Padstow lifeboat crew give an angler first aid while the RNAS Culdrose helicopter lowers a stretcher



2. The airlifted casualty is taken by helicopter to hospital



3. Shore crew and lifeboat crew work together for a safe recovery

recovery back onto the slipway. The shore crew and the lifeboat crew displayed a high level of teamwork to get the lifeboat and crew safely back at 10.08am.

In letters to the lifeboat and shore crews, Operations Director Michael Vlasto commented: 'This was a first-class team effort, demonstrating fast response, excellent first aid and polished team work.' All involved were delighted to hear later that the angler's life had indeed been saved, and that he had made a full recovery.



Thames race disaster averted

The annual Veterans' Head of the River Race ended in chaos on Sunday, 21 March after being hit by gale-force winds and strong tides. More than 140 boats were participating, with nine crew in each boat. Many craft were overwhelmed by waves of exceptional height for this part of the Thames

E class *The Joan and Kenneth Bellamy* at Hammersmith Bridge



Two RNLI lifeboats from Chiswick lifeboat station were ready to back up the race organisers' safety boats. At the start of the race, the E class lifeboat *The Joan and Kenneth Bellamy* was positioned at Chiswick and the Atlantic 75 lifeboat *Amy Constance* was positioned at Putney. As the weather deteriorated, these boats proved essential. They were in action for over an hour and a half as more and more of the rowing boats were swamped.

Action for the RNLI lifeboats started when Helmsman Martin Blaker took the Atlantic 75, with crew members David Ferguson and Matt Gray, to assist a rowing eight taking on water close to Fulham football ground. A number of trainers' launches arrived shortly afterwards and they were able to take the rowers ashore while the Atlantic 75 took the boat in tow.

Shortly after this, Helmsman Neil Roberts in the E class, with crew members Mark Turrell and John Pooley, was called to Hammersmith Bridge to assist a safety boat helping an eight in difficulties. Meanwhile, the Atlantic 75 set off to Putney Bridge where another eight was sinking.

As they came round the bend in the river, Helmsman Martin Blaker and his crew were faced with the sight of three sinking eights and one capsized with people clinging to the upturned hull. The E class, now no longer needed at Hammersmith Bridge, set off to Putney Hard to help deal with the situation.

'The picture of the sinking boats, with about 35 people in the water, is one I will never forget.'

Martin Blaker, Helmsman of the Atlantic 75 *Amy Constance*

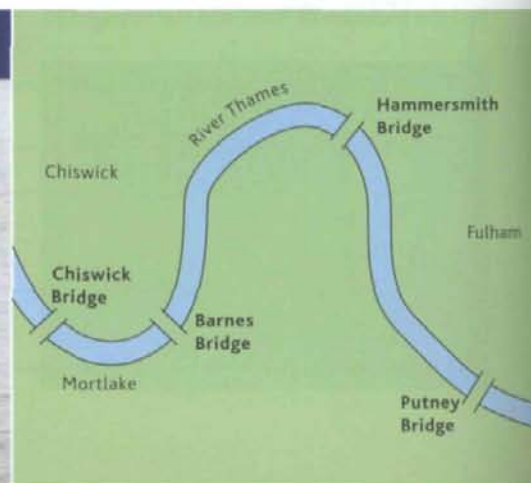
At this point, Martin took on the role of coordinating and controlling all the rescue efforts of the lifeboats, the race safety boats and launches. His first priority was to get all the people in the water or in sinking boats to the shore. When everyone was safely ashore and accounted for, the rescue team began to clear damaged boats and debris out of the water. He was then notified of yet another boat sinking at Barnes Bridge.

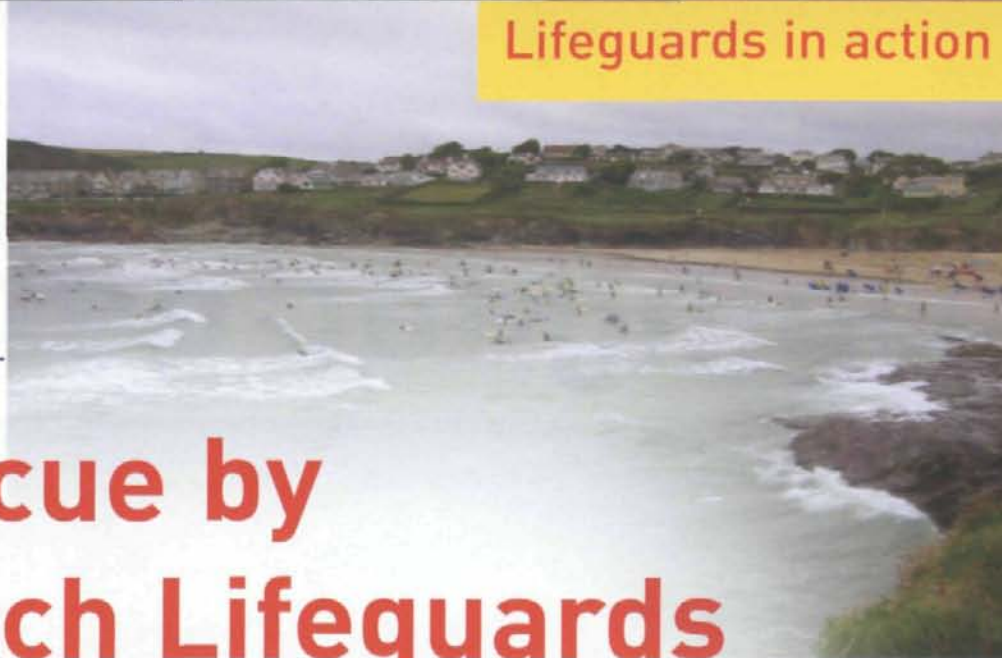
The E class went to deal with the situation and found nine women clinging to their submerged boat. They were taken back to their rowing club aboard the E class.

Martin then arranged for all the rowing crews left on the water to be told to go to the nearest rowing club. The Atlantic 75 then checked the race section of the river to make sure there were no people or rowing eights left in the water and that all the debris had been cleared. Staff at rowing clubs along the river were kept busy giving emergency aid, showers and hot drinks to rowers who swam or scrambled to the shore. Two people were taken to hospital suffering from hypothermia.

In this remarkable and complex service more than 40 rowers were pulled from the water as their boats capsized, took on water, sunk or were badly damaged. If it were not for the RNLI lifeboats, serious injuries or worse could have occurred. The Institution gained a great deal of positive publicity and the reputation of the RNLI lifeboats on the Thames was enhanced.

Left to right: Matt Gray, Mark Turrell, Neil Roberts, Martin Blaker





Mass rescue by RNLI Beach Lifeguards

Brilliant sunshine and perfect surf conditions drew large numbers of people to North Cornwall at the end of May this year. Adults and children were enjoying swimming and playing in the water between the flags at Polzeath beach when a tidal surge swept 20 of them out of their depth into a potentially lethal rip current



Around 20 swimmers and body boarders were taken by surprise by a tidal surge early in the afternoon of 30 May 2004. The current dragged them into powerful breaking waves towards the rocks. Lifeguard Tom Burgess was already in the water on a rescue board, making sure bathers stayed in between the flags, away from the rocks. He was quick to react to the surge and signalled for help. Four other RNLI Beach Lifeguards leapt into action.

Lifeguard Matt Boon went in to assist on a rescue board and Supervisor John Bull and Lifeguard Dave Hooper launched the inshore rescue boat (IRB). John coordinated the rescue from this vantage point. He knew the lifeguards needed to act quickly and work out who needed help most urgently: 'From the IRB it was easier to spot those swimmers who were struggling and to direct the lifeguards on boards.' John soon found a swimmer in distress near the rocks and Dave dived in from the IRB to assist.

Some of the bathers managed to scramble up onto the rocks to safety themselves, but others were struggling and in danger of being thrown onto the rocks and injured. John remembers that some of

the children were scared and exhausted: 'The weaker ones were really bad. A couple may not have made it out of the water.'

The lifeguards all demonstrated great skill and endurance bringing in one casualty after another. The IRB returned to shore to fetch another lifeguard, Cameron Patton, and then sped back to help Dave, who was shielding the casualty from the rocks. The IRB picked up the swimmer and took them to shore. By this time the lifeguards on the rescue boards had brought in seven casualties between them.

One lifeguard checked the casualties at the water's edge for any medical problems. Another lifeguard kept a lookout over the rest of the beach from a clifftop nearby. The 20 bathers had all reached safety, but there was still one more person to rescue: a surfer. Dave swam to him and made sure he was picked up by the IRB and taken safely to shore.

Nine or ten people were rescued by the lifeguards, saved from injury from the rocks and the danger of drowning. It was only after the incident that the lifeguards involved realised what they had achieved. They were delighted that no-one was seriously hurt. Matt had some cuts from the rocks that were treated on the beach with plasters and bandages, but nobody needed further treatment.

On reflection, John is pleased that RNLI Beach Lifeguards did such a good job in their first year at North Cornwall and thinks the successful outcome of this physically and mentally demanding rescue was partly due to their RNLI training. He also emphasises how important it was that the bathers were all swimming in between the flags in the first place: 'This gave the lifeguards time to reach them before they risked being battered against the rocks.'

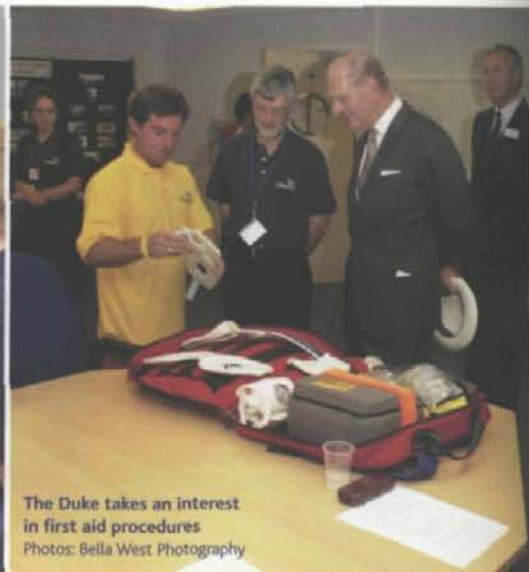


Left to right:
Tom Burgess, Matt Boon, Dave Hooper,
Cameron Patton, Natalie Silverthorn,
John Bull

Going for gold



The Duke of Edinburgh speaks to Gold Award participants during his visit to The Lifeboat College



The Duke takes an interest in first aid procedures
Photos: Bella West Photography

Not only is The Lifeboat College a centre of excellence for lifeboat crews and staff – it provides a base for other organisations to learn about the RNLI's work. Regional Education Officer Dave Cooling looks back on a lively week when 14 Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award participants joined him for their residential module

Aged between 16 and 22, Duke of Edinburgh Award participants from across Wiltshire and Cornwall arrived in Poole on 26 July for their residential experience. This formed part of the requirements for the Gold Award and was the third year that the RNLI has run the scheme in conjunction with Wiltshire County Council. The participants didn't know each other and came together to complete a series of activities.

The RNLI part of the scheme aims to give participants an experience of volunteering for a charity, to learn about the work of the RNLI in particular, understand the work of RNLI Beach Lifeguards, and to be trained in talking to the general public. Participants help to raise holidaymakers' awareness of the RNLI's work and the dangers at the beach. Of course, it is also important that they all have some fun in the process.

Day one

Many of the participants have no previous knowledge of the RNLI so the first day included a tour of the beach facilities, an opportunity to meet staff and to get to know each other. This was followed by an introduction to the RNLI's work and the chance to have some fun, dressing up in crew kit.

Day two

The day started by raising the group's awareness of the dangers on beaches in general. At Sandbanks beach participants conducted their own risk assessments and the outcomes were discussed with the local lifeguards. Beach Safety Roadshow Manager Dave Gorman led a training session in the afternoon. This part of the course is always enjoyed, particularly the water-based activities. The evening saw the group learning about the correct use of distress flares. The Coastguard is warned of this activity and it is always interesting to hear how many 999 calls they receive in response.

Day three

The third day proved very special this year as it coincided with the College opening. The group arrived at the College bright and early to be security checked and attend rehearsals. Amongst all this activity they completed a training session on how to talk to the public about beach safety and the RNLI. This involved role play, with some BAFTA award-winning performances and much laughter. The Duke of Edinburgh's visit proved extremely successful. He was very interested and asked the participants lots of questions – and enjoyed a

few jokes with them. After the excitement of the day the group visited Poole lifeboat station, another highlight of the week.

Days four and five

The last two days depended on the weather for the balance of activities between further training with the lifeguards and working on the beaches talking to the holidaymakers about beach safety and the work of the RNLI. Thursday night was firework night at Sandbanks, an ideal opportunity to promote RNLI membership using the roadshow as a base.

By the time participants left, their commitment to the RNLI and growth in personal confidence was evident. Six committed themselves to RNLI fundraising projects for the service section of the Award and three took their new-found knowledge back to youth groups they lead. Plans are being developed to use the College itself for some of next year's Award work.

'We have seen the whole spectrum of what the RNLI does, which was really good,' said one of the participants. 'The practical lessons were very effective. They brought it all together and were really fun,' said another. Proof indeed that this activity gives talented young people a quality experience of the RNLI.

Listings

Operational changes in North East England

Every five years each stretch of the UK and Irish coastlines undergoes a Coast Review. Senior RNLI operational personnel and trustees visit the lifeboat stations and assess whether the right class, balance and capability of lifeboats are in the best locations to respond to emergencies at sea in that area, in an effort to meet both current and future operational requirements.



In March this year, the maritime rescue cover at the 12 lifeboat stations along the 80-mile stretch of the coast between Berwick-Upon-Tweed and Redcar was reviewed in this way and, at a Trustee Committee meeting in July, it was resolved to change the lifeboat deployment in the area, as follows.

Blyth lifeboat station

Blyth is in close proximity to four other lifeboat stations in the area, providing six lifeboats within a 14-mile radius. Because of this, and due to there being insufficient demand to justify an all weather lifeboat (ALB) at Blyth, the decision was made to withdraw the Trent class. The station continues to operate a D class inshore lifeboat. On 17 July the Trent left Blyth to take up duties in the relief fleet.

Sunderland lifeboat station

The Trent class is to be withdrawn here too because of insufficient demand for an ALB. The casualty trend has changed too, so the area will be better served by a B class, Atlantic 75, inshore lifeboat working alongside the existing D class inshore lifeboat. These will be complemented by the ALBs at Tynemouth (7 miles) and Hartlepool (16 miles away).

Hartlepool lifeboat station

In contrast, to improve the ALB cover in this area, a 25 knot Trent class will replace the 18 knot Arun class lifeboat currently at the station. A further review of the coverage of Tees Bay will be carried out once the Trent has completed 12 months of operational service.

Changing needs

Over the years the traditional pattern of sea use has changed and one of the responsibilities of the Coast Review delegation is to make recommendations to the Trustees to ensure that lifeboat cover meets these changing needs. Such decisions are not new: they have taken place throughout the Institution's history and are never taken in isolation nor lightly. They are not driven by financial considerations, although there will be an estimated saving of £255,000 per annum in this case.

Given that the RNLI is a charity dependent upon the public, it has a duty to make the very best use of its resources on the coast to maximise its effectiveness.



Geoff Leslie, Helmsman, Newbiggin lifeboat

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- When you consider that it costs £300,000 a day to run our essential service, you can see how much **we depend on you.**
- By making a regular contribution as a member we can reduce administration costs – and **plan ahead with greater confidence.**
- We responded to over 8,000 emergency callouts in 2003. With your **regular support** we can be safe in the knowledge that we will be able to continue responding to these.

Keeping you updated

There are a number of membership options available, but whichever you choose, you'll be able to stay in touch with our crews via this quarterly magazine, *the Lifeboat*. And you'll get a window sticker allowing you to fly the flag for the RNLI wherever you go.



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iii. Branch sort code

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iv. Bank or Building Society account number

v. Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

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Lifeboats

Listings



Appointments

The following new appointments have been made:

Sir Jock Slater – RNLI Chairman (see page 36)

Mr Michael Guy – Morecambe lifeboat station Lifeboat Operations manager

Captain HJ Le Cornu – St Helier lifeboat station Lifeboat Operations manager

Retirements

The following people have retired from duty:

Bill Ludlow – Weymouth lifeboat station Chairman

Peter Nicholson CBE – RNLI Chairman since July 2000

(see page 37)

Robert (Bob) Bolt – Fenit lifeboat station Mechanic

Deaths

The following people have sadly passed away:

Eric Couling – Perranzabuloe branch Committee Member and former Honorary Secretary

William Evans – Larne lifeboat station Honorary Press Officer

James (Jimmy) Jack – former Anstruther lifeboat station Coxswain and Crew Member for 28½ years

Lady Macdonald of Sleat – Bridlington guild President

Ashley Moffatt – Sennen Cove lifeboat station Crew Member

Lady Worsley – Malton guild Patron and, 1976–2001, President

Swing low...

Phil Vickery MBE, a member of England's rugby world cup winning side, opened the new lifeboat station at Bude recently.

The England prop forward, who was born in Kilkhampton near Bude, returned to his roots in July. This was his way of putting something back into the community that had done so much for him as a boy.

The boathouse was funded by Bridget Blundell OBE and provides room for the lifeboat, carriage and launching tractor and includes a workshop and storage space. There is a crew training area, changing and

other facilities and a souvenir shop run by the local fundraising guild.

At the same ceremony, a new (IB1) D class inshore lifeboat was named *Henry Philip*. This is the third lifeboat funded by the same person, Mr Underdown. The first two, *Elsie Francis I* and *Elsie Francis II* were named after his late mother and the *Henry Philip* is so called after his father.

The new lifeboat and boathouse will allow the volunteers at Bude to continue their crucial role of saving lives at sea on the north Cornish coast.



A rookie's life

Regular readers of *the Lifeboat* will know that the RNLI takes training very seriously. But there are some things in life that no amount of training can prepare you for. We follow 26-year-old Alison Panes as she takes us through her first few months as a trainee crew member at Poole lifeboat station...

Joining up

Living opposite the station, it was only a matter of time before I was lured to an open day by home-made cakes. I ventured upstairs and chatted to Lifeboat Operations Manager John Carter. Once I'd realised that an 'ordinary' person could join the crew, I didn't think too hard about applying. I love the sea and jump at any opportunity to be out there. I also felt I owed it to the RNLI – for many years I'd sailed with the comforting thought that if I got into trouble, they'd be there. Now that I lived and worked so close to the boathouse, it was practically an obligation.

A few months later I was called to interview and John asked me how I'd feel about dropping everything, day or night, to go off for hours in the lifeboat – or how I'd cope with fishing a dead body out of the sea. 'Fine,' I said – but I guess I'll only really find out when I have to do it.

The following week I was offered a place for a probationary year – I was overjoyed.

Meeting point

Poole crew meet every Thursday night at the boathouse. Strangely, my first meeting took me back to my first night at Brownies. Not that the banter of strapping lifeboatmen was anything like that of 11-year-old girls, but the feeling of being an outsider was just the same. 'How can I ever fit in and convince these blokes that I'm serious?' I wondered. As it turned out, there are five other women on the crew and everybody went out of their way to make me feel welcome. I now see crew members more frequently than I do some of my friends, and the socials are fantastic.

My first exercise

I arrived to the scramble of kitting up. I threw on some spare kit and ran to the lifeboat, lifejacket toggles dangling at my feet. It was blowing a blizzard when I boarded for the night time air-sea rescue exercise. As predicted, the Arctic weather had finally hit us. No sooner had we slipped the pontoon, hail pelted us. The sky flashed white and I could barely see in front of me. My fingers were numb and I wondered

what it would be like on a real shout. 'Can't see a bloody thing down there,' complained the Coxswain as he joined us up on deck. 'Gotta watch out for the boat.' On deck the visibility was no better. Sadly the exercise had to be cancelled as the helicopter was called away on a rescue. That was that then.

Shrink or swim

A month or so later I got a shock when I was given a pager. Up until that point, I had coasted along on training exercises and fundraising, without thinking about going to sea for real. 'Alison, I've told the Coxswain that if there's a shout you're up to, to let you go,' John said. 'And there'll be an assessor on Wednesday's exercise to question you about the inshore lifeboat.' So I had a bit of homework to do. I had keys to the boathouse and was able to pop down at lunchtimes and in the evenings to familiarise myself with the equipment.

On the rota

At the weekly meeting a list is passed around and we note the times we're not available. The Deputy Launching Authority (DLA) then checks there's enough crew to man both boats. The Poole crew are called out frequently and, in the summer, barely get a break. If you say you're free, then you are. That means no beach, no hiking, or shopping in Bournemouth without checking first. I think I'll find that hard. Those who are available hurry to the station and the Coxswain picks his crew. After midnight the procedure is different: the pager alerts everyone but the DLA phones the crew he wants to go out. 'I could never ignore that call,' said Simon who joined six years ago. 'Even now, I get that adrenaline buzz when I'm woken up in the night and wonder what's out there.' Is that how I'll react when I get the call? Will I be scared? It's the odd moments, like when I pull a body bag out of a pocket in the Atlantic 75

or when I watch a video of an X-boat being sucked under the local chain-ferry, that I'm reminded what it is all about. I can't wait to find out more.

Pager phobia

I couldn't sleep for several nights after I got my pager. For someone who has every lunch hour and evening planned for the next month, the hardest thing about being on call is not knowing when it may happen. There's one way to fight a phobia – in at the deep end. I simply had to be paged and get to the station in time. As soon as I'd done my first shout, I'd be released from my anxiety.

My first shout

At last the day arrived. It was a sunny afternoon. I was on my bike and down to the boathouse in a shot – first on the scene. Having waited so anxiously for so long, my first rescue couldn't have been less spectacular. We pulled a fishing boat off the mud and towed her back to the quay. I got the fisherman's number, but apparently only needed his boat details. 'On the pull, are we?' joked the Coxswain. At least I'm sleeping again now.

We will be catching up with Alison again in a future issue of the Lifeboat.



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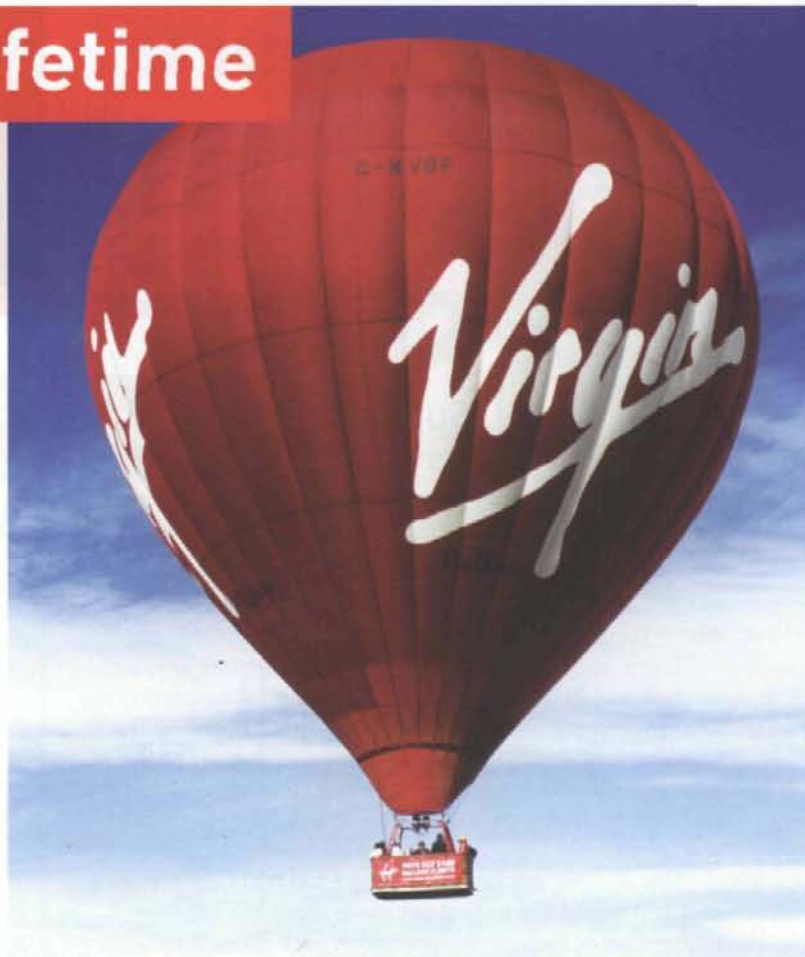
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You, your family and friends can enter by sending name, address, postcode and telephone number to: VIRGIN BALLOON ITALY PRIZE DRAW, Supporter Care, RNLI, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ or by emailing pmason@rnli.org.uk. Closing date for competition entries is 3 December 2004.

Terms and conditions:

Entrants must be able to attend the Virgin Balloon Italy Flight School between 29 January and 5 February 2005. Open to UK residents aged 18 and over excluding employees of Virgin Balloon Flights and RNLI. For full terms and conditions ring 0845 121 4999. For more information, visit www.virginballoonflights.co.uk.



The RNLI never give your information to other organisations. Your details will be used by the RNLI trading companies only. If you do not want to receive information about other ways to support the RNLI, please state on your entry. DPA

Help raise funds for The Lifeboat College

The new fire training simulator described on page 7 will allow crews to practise the valuable skills required to fight a fire onboard whilst under realistic and stressful conditions. They can be faced with a number of decisions that could make the difference between survival or tragedy in real life.

You can help raise funds to provide the remaining equipment needed in the simulator. Virgin Balloon Flights will pay £15 to the RNLI* for every UK balloon flight booked as a result of this promotion. What's more, Virgin Balloon Flights are offering you, your family and friends UK balloon flights at the special price of £130 – 30% off the normal flight voucher price of £189. So there has never been a better time to treat yourself or a loved one to a flight of fancy – the perfect gift for Christmas, birthdays and other special occasions.

*Payments are made to RNLI (Enterprises) Ltd, which pays all its taxable profits to the RNLI.

To book your flight from any of the more than 86 UK launch sites or purchase a gift voucher, please call Virgin Balloon Flights on 0870 444 2768, quoting 'RNLI Lifeboat magazine reader offer'. Vouchers are valid for 12 months from the date of issue.

So why not give a really different gift this year and help keep the RNLI afloat.





Credit where credit's due

The Lifeboats MasterCard has gone from strength to strength, with almost £80,000 raised by cardholders during 2003. This money is being put to

good use, helping to train staff and volunteer crews. Together, money from Bishop Skinner (see right), and the Lifeboats MasterCard has equipped the Learning Resource Centre within The Lifeboat College (see page 35).

Thank you to all cardholders for achieving this wonderful amount and to The Royal Bank of Scotland for supporting the RNLI over many years. For every new account opened, The Royal Bank of Scotland will contribute £10 to the RNLI, plus another £5 if you use your new card 10 times or more in the first month. After that, 25p will be donated for every £100 you spend.

This year we are aiming to raise £100,000 from the card so if you would like to find out more about the Lifeboats MasterCard or request an application pack please call 0800 444 201, quoting LIF9.

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In 2003 alone, these policies raised almost £45,000. This, along with money raised by the Lifeboats MasterCard, is being put towards the new Learning Resource Centre in the Lifeboat College (see page 35).

If you would like to take advantage of the Bishop Skinner Advantage scheme, simply upgrade from *Shoreline* to *Offshore* membership or, if you're an RNLI Governor, opt to receive *Offshore* benefits. Telephone the RNLI Supporter Services Helpdesk to find out more: 0845 121 4999.

For more details of the insurance scheme and a quotation please call 0800 783 8057 or visit www.bishopskinner.com.

Gift a share

Are you the owner of shares? Are they a small holding worth under £100? Such amounts of shares are often difficult or even impossible to dispose of because of the costs involved. Even the RNLI finds it uneconomic to accept them. Well, now a solution is at hand.

ShareGift, the charity share donation scheme, exists to make it easy for you to give any number of shares to charity. ShareGift specialises in accepting small holdings of shares, even those of little value. It collects the shares, sells them *en masse* and then uses the proceeds to make charitable donations.

Donating is easy: simply send your share certificates to ShareGift, 46 Grosvenor Street, London W1K 3HN and nominate the RNLI as your chosen charity. ShareGift will then send you a transfer form to sign. It's as simple as that. So please donate your small value shares to the RNLI via ShareGift. For more information visit www.sharegift.co.uk.

If you would like to discuss donating shares with a value of over £100, please contact Tizzy Perkins, Corporate Fundraising Manager, on 01202 663295 or email tperkins@rnli.org.uk.

Rescue at sea

We are pleased to announce that Chrysalis Books Group Plc has generously offered to donate £2.50 for each copy sold of the new release, *Rescue at Sea*. To find out more

about this book, please read the review on page 44. You can also enter the free prize draw to win one of ten copies. If you're not successful, you can always purchase this fascinating book through the RNLI Sales Company and details are on page 9.



In memory

More than 60% of the RNLI's income is from legacies – that is, gifts left to the RNLI in the Wills of deceased supporters. Similarly, a constant stream of generous and heartfelt gifts is received from the relatives and friends of departed supporters in celebration of their lives or in thanks to the RNLI. Both of these are such private areas of finance for most people that the RNLI finds it increasingly hard to plan for such income. But some examples follow of the kind of gift, large and small, that really makes a difference.



Two more on the Thames

Two new lifeboats on the Thames were named recently. The first, in memory of those who lost their lives in the tragic collision between the *Marchioness* and the *Bowbelle* in 1989, was named by England rugby captain, Lawrence Dallaglio, whose sister, Francesca, died in the tragedy. After the service of dedication, there were two minutes of silence during which the RNLI crew laid 51 roses on the river in memory of the 51 lives lost. The new craft was named *The Legacy* after a generous bequest from Lieutenant Philip Francis Spencer King.

The second lifeboat was provided by a substantial bequest from life-long RNLI supporters Ray and Audrey Lusty and was given their name.

Wayne Bellamy, RNLI Station Manager at Chiswick lifeboat station said: 'I'd like to express our sincere thanks to them, as legacies such as theirs are critically important to the service we provide as a charity.'



A Thames lifeboat in action
Photo: JP Treque

Lindsey and son honoured

Richard Lindsey was a Master Mariner, sailing on several ships, including the *SS Uganda*. He tragically died last year, only five days after his father also died following a long illness. Even at this distressing time his mother Joyce Lindsey kindly donated £100 to honour the memory of her husband and son.

If you would like to find out more about including a legacy to the RNLI in a Will then please contact John Marshall, Legacy Enquiry Officer, on 01202 663032 or jmarshall@rnli.org.uk.

If you would like to make a gift to the RNLI in memory of someone else or for any other reason, please contact the RNLI Supporter Services Helpdesk on 0845 121 4999, or Sarah Sleight, the RNLI's new Personal Donations Manager, on 01202 663115 or ssleight@rnli.org.uk.

Round the Island – twice

A tough challenge in memory of RNLI supporter and keen yachtsman David Knight has raised over £11,000 for the RNLI.

David was sadly killed in a road accident in November 2003 and his son Joe was keen to boost his father's favourite charity in a way that saluted his passion and spirit. Joe and six friends decided to attempt to sail around the Isle of Wight twice, without stopping. David had been a competitor in the Round the Island race every year since 1982.

Setting out in a Hunter 707, *Bogo Pogo*, Joe and his crew got off to a promising start. Strong winds helped them complete the first lap of the island in less than eight hours.

But conditions worsened – the tide was against them and rain began to fall and they had a problem with one of the sails. Eventually, the sun reappeared and the wind made a welcome return. After 22 hours and 24 minutes at sea, cheers of relief rang out among the crew as they crossed the finish line at Cowes.

'We would like to thank everyone who has sponsored us, making this a truly successful event, as well as all our supporters on the island who gave us a wonderful reception on our return,' said Joe. He hopes to raise even more money for the RNLI. Log on to www.justgiving.com/davidknight for more details.

New in the North

On 1 September the RNLI North East and North West regional teams merged to form a new North region. This merger is the result of a review of the regional operation, taking into account a decline in the number of branches and guilds and rising costs. The RNLI constantly strives to ensure that it operates as cost effectively and efficiently as possible and this decision has been made in an effort to achieve this.

The new region is managed by Elaine Close and operates from the original North West office in Manchester. Chris Goodall, the former North East regional manager, has taken on a new role to manage a significant new fundraising campaign for the RNLI as a whole. The new region has an experienced team of support staff, six area fundraising managers, a regional education officer,

events organiser, sea safety coordinator and a visitor centre coordinator for Blackpool.

Contact details for the new office are:
RNLI, 18 Half Edge Lane, Eccles,
Manchester, M30 9GJ
Tel: 0161 787 8779
Fax: 0161 787 8926

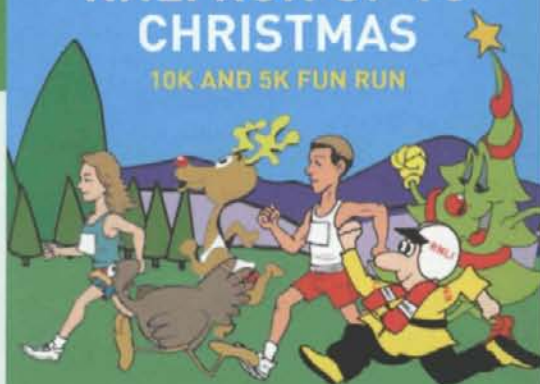
Get festive!

You may have just missed the Great Scottish Run and the Great North Run but there's still time to get involved in the RNLI Run up to Christmas. Yes, Christmas is just around the corner...

The festive season gets off to a cracking start at Moors Valley Country Park in Dorset on Sunday 28 November. It is the perfect opportunity to get trim and raise valuable funds for the RNLI in a 5km fun run or 10km race. This is a great event for all the family and, if running isn't your thing, then why not come and support others. Feel free to relax around the park and play area, learn about local wildlife in the visitor centre, ride the steam train at the Moors Valley Railway or just have a cup of tea in the cafe. For further information contact Clare Kavanagh on 01202 663205 or ckavanagh@rnli.org.uk or visit www.rnli.org.uk/events. Just think about it – all that open air and the exhilaration of crossing the line...

RNLI RUN UP TO CHRISTMAS

10K AND 5K FUN RUN



SUNDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2004

10.30am, Moors Valley Country Park

Horton Road, Ashley Heath, Nr Ringwood, BH24 2ET

Entry fee: 10K £8, under 18's £6 (minimum age 15 yrs), 5K £6

For an entry pack call 01202 663205 or visit www.rnli.org.uk/events

Goody bag, mince pie and a cup of mulled wine or hot chocolate for all competitors. Prizes for winners and fancy dress



A celebration of Grace

The spring 2004 issue of *the Lifeboat* reported that the RNLI's Grace Darling Museum in Bamburgh is to be refurbished and redeveloped with the help of a specific appeal. We are delighted to report that this appeal has now received nearly £1M from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

More than 40,000 visitors go to the volunteer-run museum annually to see the extensive collection of artefacts, which the

HLF consider to be of national importance. Remaining unchanged since the 1930s, many exhibits have been in danger due to unsuitable environmental storage conditions. Maureen La Frenais, the RNLI Museum Redevelopment Project Manager, says: 'the RNLI is delighted to have such positive support from the HLF.' Although the RNLI hopes that the new museum will open in 2006, it still needs to find the

remaining funding, amounting to nearly £400,000 before the project can commence.

Anyone wishing to help preserve the heroic memory of Grace Darling for the nation can do so by contributing to the appeal online at www.rnli.org.uk/gracedarling or by contacting the RNLI's new regional office North on 0161 787 8779.

Thank you

As the RNLI is a charity that relies on public support, the construction and fitting out of The Lifeboat College was only possible thanks to the generosity of people like you. Membership subscriptions, donations and other gifts from many thousands of supporters have all contributed. The RNLI would like to thank all of its supporters, with a particular mention of the following people and organisations

Mr Stanley Rowley kindly paid for 40 sets of dry suits, Musto suits and boots for the Survival Centre in memory of his dearly departed late wife.

Mrs Phyl Cleare, a regular supporter of the RNLI, dedicated all the Gift Aid monies on her recent donations for the benefit of the College.

Dr Ratsey made a generous donation in 2003 for the benefit of the College.

Mrs Christine Louisa Miller donated £20,000 towards the coxswain position in the simulator in memory of her late husband Norman. Following Mrs Miller's own death the RNLI received a legacy of a further £20,000, which has paid for a heavy-duty forklift truck for use in the Lifeboat Support Centre.

Mrs Doris Edna and Mr Eric Ian Fowkes made a donation to the cost of the inshore lifeboat workshop.

Mr Robert Braithwaite MBE, from Sunseeker International, made a very generous donation.

A substantial portion of the £310,000 raised from the purchase by **Mr William I Koch** of the Hennessy's Eaux-de-Vie collection at the 150th anniversary of the America's Cup in 2001 went to Seminar Room 1 in the College.

Generous legacies were received from:

Mr Howard Cragg
Miss Olive Margaret Evans
Mr George Norton Harvey
Mrs Ada Hewson
Mr Richard Anthony Jones
Mrs Rona O'Neill
Mr William Edwin Pemberton
Mr Robert William Prosser
Mrs Vera Gertrude Lilian Varty
Dr Edith Romeyn Murray Aertsen Watts
Mrs Betty Irene Huntbatch
Mr Roy Sykes Parkinson
Mrs Sylvia Beryl Pavitt
Mrs Peggy Irene Rayner

Very generous donations raised by the affinity schemes operated by **The Royal Bank of Scotland** and **Bishop Skinner Marine Insurance**, have funded equipment in the Learning Resource Centre, which will benefit crew, staff and volunteers throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland (see page 35 for more details).

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, as part of their continued efforts to raise £150,000 for crew training, have agreed that £32,000 will be used to equip three syndicate rooms within the College.

Civil Service Motoring Association (CSMA) have continued their long-standing relationship with the RNLI by donating £28,500 for the instructor station in the simulator and over £6,000 to fit out the outboard engine test area.

Other corporate donors include:

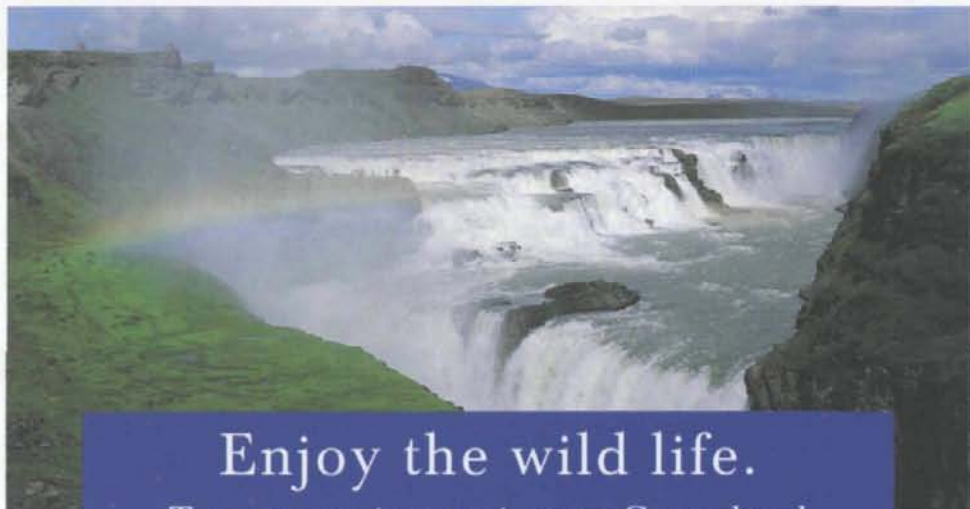
P&O Cruise Lines
Page & Moy
Williamson & Magor (producers of Lifeboat Tea)
Royal Haskoning
Dean & Dyball
Brown & Son
Faber Maunsell
Barclays
African Pride Wines
Drayton Manor Theme Park

The **Worshipful Company of Shipwrights** made a donation of £15,000 for the training rooms' audio visual system.

The **Gosling Foundation** made a generous donation.



A large number of Charitable Trusts came together to grant funds of over £150,000 toward the live engine workshop in the Survival Centre. Major donors included:
Kinsurdy Trust
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Michael Burgess Trust



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Iceland, Greenland & The Faroes

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Our guest speaker is famed wildlife photographer Ian Rumley-Dawson who will entertain us with illustrated talks on the wildlife of the areas we are visiting. *Ports of call: Kangerlussuaq, Sisimiut, Ilulissat, Eqip Glacier, Nuuk, Qaqortoq, Prins Christiansund (cruising), Reykjavik, Akureyri, Torshavn and Stornoway.*



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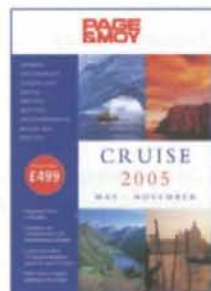
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First impressions

The week of The Queen's visit saw Castletownbere lifeboat crew immersed in training at the College. They were getting to grips with their new Severn class lifeboat, *Annette Hutton*, and so were on hand to aid Her Majesty's departure. We asked them what they thought of their course, the new College and the big day

How did you rate the training?

Joseph O'Sullivan Jnr: 'The course was an excellent way of gaining knowledge of our new lifeboat. We were taken through each mechanical feature and given thorough explanations.'

Paddy O'Connor: 'Very good. There were limitations, as it was a special week, but the trainers did a fine job.'

What were your first impressions of the College?

Paul Stevens: 'It's an impressive facility – it should be of great benefit to crews.'

Brendan Gonnelly: 'Beautiful.'

What did you think of the facilities?

Paddy: 'Very good, especially the accommodation. It was a help to have everything centralised.'

Coxswain Brian O'Driscoll: 'The classrooms, Survival Centre and simulator were excellent.'

And the staff?

Second Coxswain Michael Martin-Sullivan: 'They were very friendly. They knew their stuff.'

Joseph: 'The staff were friendly and well informed.'

How does the College compare with previous training facilities?

Brian: 'Much advanced and much needed.'

Paddy: 'Terrific.'

How did your day go during the Royal opening?

Brendan: 'It was a great day for the RNLI and we were delighted to be part of it.'



L to R: Brendan Gonnelly, Second Coxswain Michael Martin-Sullivan, Paddy O'Connor, Paul Stevens and Coxswain Brian O'Driscoll (Joseph O'Sullivan Jnr attended the course on another date and is not pictured).

Michael: 'I enjoyed every minute. It was a great honour to crew a lifeboat with Royalty on board.'

What was your overall impression of the week?

Brendan: 'It worked well – we had a good team.'

Joseph: 'I enjoyed my stay and meeting the staff.'

Would you recommend the College to other crews?

Brian: 'I would, because it is a good learning environment, with others who want to learn. You get to meet other crews and hear about their experiences.'

Brendan: 'Yes. It is so well organised, it has to be a success.'

Any other comments?

Paul: 'Well done to all! The Lifeboat College will greatly enhance training for the crews of the future.'

Brian: 'I think the College will be of great benefit to lifeboat crews and it is good to see it open at last.'

Following their busy week, the crew took the *Annette Hutton* back to Ireland, continuing their training on the passage home. The new lifeboat had not yet reached Castletownbere when she received her first mayday call – and both Baltimore and Castletownbere lifeboats launched to assist. *The Annette Hutton* arrived on scene just as two casualties were recovered from the sea but it was a great opportunity for the crew to use the new lifeboat in a real emergency.

Lifeboat and crew arrived home in style on 2 August 2004, welcomed by huge crowds and a flotilla of 50 boats. Their first 'real' shout was on 11 August.



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Going the distance



Lough Swilly lifeboat crew inside an MTU

The very nature of the RNLI means that hundreds of miles are clocked up in the name of training.

Crew and lifeguards travel to Poole to benefit from the unique facilities of The Lifeboat College (see pages 6 and 33 for more details) and Mobile Training Units go out from Poole to visit stations across the UK and Republic of Ireland. Soon, though, some training resources will be available without anyone having to travel the length and breadth of the country.

A Learning Resources Centre is being developed in The Lifeboat College, to allow RNLI trainees to borrow printed and recorded training resources or to access them online. Courses and information on everything from radar to first aid will be available by post or at the touch of a button – a distance learning system.

Learning Resources Manager Nicky Swainson believes that it will offer some exciting opportunities for RNLI volunteers and staff alike. 'In time, the Learning Resources Centre will provide a stimulating learning environment, where information can be accessed and specialist advice sought,' says Nicky, a library and

information science professional. 'It is essential that the facility meets the needs of users around the country, so comments and suggestions are always welcome.'

Crew members staying at the College will also be able to browse the resources or sit at a computer for a training session and, Nicky points out, there is scope for staff and fundraising volunteers to benefit from the Centre too.

In the meantime, the RNLI's 10 Mobile Training Units will continue to deliver operational training to the coast. Trainers teach a range of courses that are accredited by relevant organisations such as the Royal Yachting Association and the Red Cross.

Simulator Manager Billy Bean confirms: 'The Mobile Training Units are continuing as usual with some updates to the equipment we use, as it is vital to keep up with the changes in technology.'

With mobile training well established and distance learning soon to be available, the RNLI is committed to making sure crews get the training they need and deserve, wherever they are based.



Learning Resources Manager Nicky Swainson outside the Learning Resources Centre, which has been partly funded by Bishop Skinner and The Royal Bank of Scotland

News

Welcome to Sir Jock

The RNLI has a new Chairman following the retirement of Peter Nicholson CBE

Commenting on the Trustee Committee's appointment of Admiral Sir Jock Slater CCB LVO DL in July, RNLI Chief Executive Andrew Freemantle said: 'We are delighted to welcome Sir Jock as our new Chairman, especially given the wealth of naval and seafaring experience that he brings with him. Sir Jock is taking over as Chairman at a very exciting time for the RNLI.'

Sir Jock's naval career spanned over 40 years, during which time he commanded HM Ships *Soberton*, *Jupiter*, *Kent* and *Illustrious*. In the early 1960s, Sir Jock served on *HM Yacht Britannia* and between 1968 and 1971 he was equerry to HM The Queen.

As an Admiral he held various commands including Chief of Fleet Support, Commander-in-Chief Fleet and Allied Commander-in-Chief Channel & Eastern Atlantic, and Vice Chief of the Defence Staff. Since his retirement as First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff in 1998, Sir Jock's appointments have included Chairman of the Imperial War Museum, Vice Chairman of the British Forces Foundation and Chairman of the White Ensign Association.

Sir Jock has been appointed following the retirement of Peter Nicholson CBE, who has served as Chairman since 2000.

Andrew Freemantle said: 'On behalf of the RNLI I'd like to extend our warmest thanks to Peter Nicholson.'

Peter Nicholson was presented with a silver salver at The Lifeboat College on the evening of the opening and in the presence of The Duke of Kent.



Sir Jock Slater

D-Day remembered

Taking part in one of this summer's many ceremonies to mark the 60th anniversary of D-Day (6 June 1944) the Severn class lifeboat, *Beth Sell*, set out for Ouistreham in Normandy, where veterans gathered to remember their fallen comrades

RNLI Staff Operations Officer Captain Hugh Fogarty, said: 'Volunteer lifeboat crews saved over 6,000 lives during the Second World War and, while we were not directly involved in D-Day itself, troop movements around our coastline during the build up to the battle meant many daring rescues were carried out. It's amazing to think that the service we provide today still depends on the

volunteer spirit that played such a vital role during the war, as it has throughout our 180-year history.'

This relief lifeboat was crewed by volunteers from Harwich station on the east coast, who were very keen to get involved. Andrew Moore, one of the crew members commented: 'There were a lot of veterans around and it was such an emotional few days. As we approached

the beaches and saw their length, it was a daunting experience. You could never hope to understand what the troops went through in the D-Day landings but just being there left a lump in your throat.'

While the formal ceremonies were taking place, the crew patrolled the coast, protecting those taking part. Sixty years on and it was a proud moment for them all.

Barmouth scoops national award

In a follow up to last issue's feature on shoreworks, *the Lifeboat* is pleased to report that the RNLI's beachfront boathouse at Barmouth, costing just over £1M, has beaten tough competition from across the UK to be hailed winner of the Local Authority Building Control National Built in Quality Awards 2004.

Designed by Clive Moore, who is also a second coxswain at Pwllheli lifeboat station, and nominated by Gwynedd Council, the boathouse brings together traditional and innovative construction techniques to provide housing for the all weather and inshore lifeboats and up-to-date facilities for their crews.

Steve Dickinson, RNLI Shoreworks Manager for the West division, said: 'The RNLI is absolutely delighted that the quality of this unique building, made entirely from local materials, has been recognised. Winning this award is a tribute to the excellent teamwork in designing and building this impressive boathouse, which will serve Barmouth for years to come.'

Local residents have described both the building and its award as 'a marvellous tribute to those who risk their lives for others at sea'.



Life Savers awards



Readers may remember that volunteers from Alderney lifeboat station in the Channel Islands were finalists of the 2003 Daily Express/Vodafone/This Morning national Life Savers awards. Earlier this year, the search began again for remarkable men and women who have saved the lives of others and the RNLI nominated its Bronze Medallists from Filey and St Mary's.

The judging panel said that they were 'particularly impressed' by the stories of Michael (Pip) Farline from Filey and Philip Roberts, Mark Bromham and Coxswain Andrew Howells from St Mary's lifeboat station and they placed them on the national shortlist. The record number of entries meant an extremely difficult task for the panel in selecting the final 20 and, unfortunately, the Filey and St Mary's medallists didn't make it through.

The RNLI gained further media coverage from the awards, however, in the *Daily Express*, where Barrow lifeboat station was featured. Shona Dixon was

also shown as a woman who puts other people's safety ahead of her own.

Shona is a crew member on Berwick-Upon-Tweed's inshore lifeboat. As a mum with three children, looking after them can be difficult when the pager goes off. But Shona's husband, Alisdair, is the deputy coxswain at the station so they work in separate crews and one of them can always be with the children.

Of course, lives are saved by RNLI volunteers every day, and every station and every crew member deserves recognition for their commitment and dedication – these awards help to remind the public about their worth.



Shona is seen here on the right with fellow crew member Fiona Knox, Berwick-Upon-Tweed's newest female crew member

Royal Honours

In HM The Queen's Birthday Honours, Peter Nicholson, the just-retired Chairman of the RNLI, was awarded a CBE in recognition of over 10 years of work and dedication to the service.

Roland Stork (former Coxswain, Bridlington lifeboat station), Graham Raines (Helmsman, Hayling Island lifeboat station) and Maurice Blake (Chairman, Surbiton branch) have all been awarded MBEs for their services to the RNLI.

Congratulations to all!

Dr Who meets Miss Moneypenny

Peter Davison and his children with Craster's D class and crew



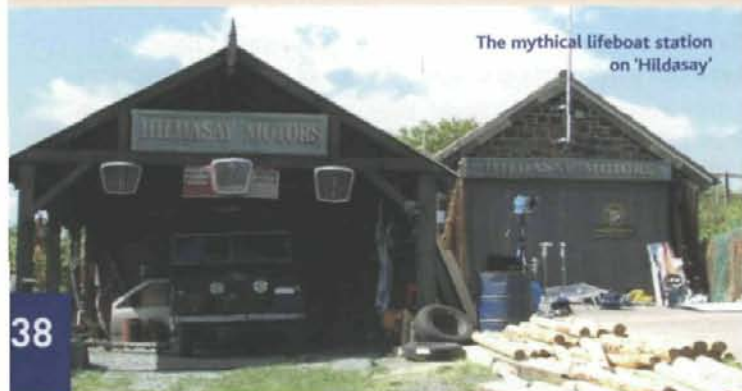
Popular actors Peter Davison and Samantha Bond officially opened Craster lifeboat station's Harbour Day on Saturday 31 July.

Peter and Samantha were filming a new ITV comedy drama in the area and, along with the rest of the cast, became familiar faces in the village. The lifeboat station featured in some of the action as Peter explained.

'We have had a wonderful time filming *Distant Shores*. Everyone in Craster has been incredibly friendly and the RNLI volunteers have been particularly helpful. We needed to make a few temporary alterations to the lifeboat station in order to use it in the filming, so taking part in the Harbour Day was a nice way for us to say thank you.'

The annual Harbour Day is Craster lifeboat committee's biggest fundraising event and this year raised around £8,000. Activities on the day included lifeboat displays, speedboat rides and a canoe race, with a number of stalls around the harbour.

Distant Shores will be shown on ITV in the autumn. See page 11 for more news of Craster.



The mythical lifeboat station on 'Hildasay'

Hunky mix up!

In the last issue we incorrectly said that Coxswain Martyn Phillips appeared on GMTV as one of the entrants in the search for the 'sexiest man in uniform'. In fact it was his hunky Crew Member Mark Stapley who appeared and reached the last 12. Apologies to all concerned.



Cheap as chips

The BBC recently broadcast its first *Bargain Hunt* programme from Northern Ireland with two competing teams from Portaferry lifeboat station

Simon Rogers (Helmsman) and Philip Robinson (Crew Member) formed the station's 'Red Team' and Hugh Edwards (Crew Member) and Mike Miall (Member of Portaferry and District guild) the 'Blue Team'. Presenter David Dickinson was winched down into the inshore lifeboat at the start of the programme before quizzing the teams on their roles and that of the RNLI.

Nearly 4M viewers (22% of the viewing public) saw the 'Red Team' win – but the overall winner was definitely the RNLI with such effective raising of the public's awareness.



The 'Red' and 'Blue teams' from Portaferry pose with David Dickinson and his two antiques specialists

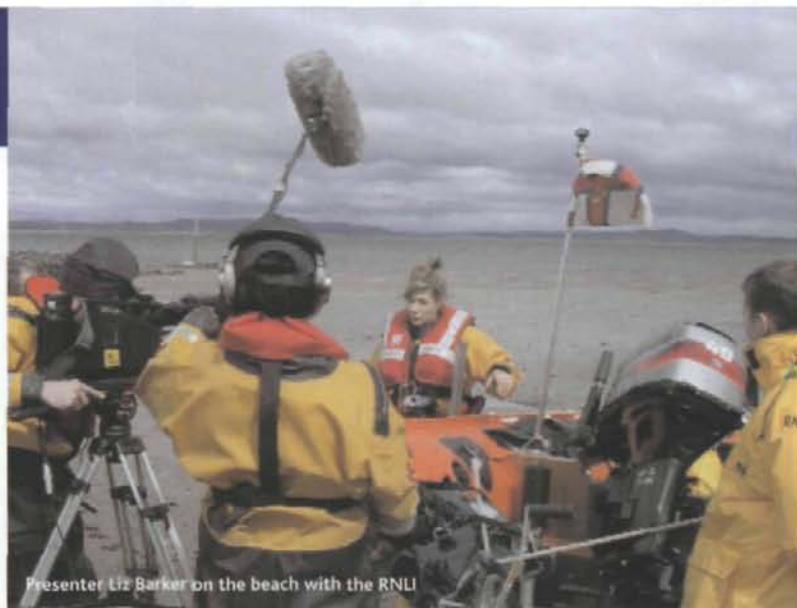
Lifeboats are go!

What do *Thunderbirds*, guinea pigs and the RNLI have in common?

Well, they all appeared on the *Blue Peter* programme shown in June. Presenter Liz Barker spent time with the Morecambe and Appledore lifeboat crews, and beach lifeguards training in Devon, as a way of focusing on sea and beach safety for her young viewers.

Liz was seen piloting the RNLI hovercraft and being rescued from the treacherous Morecambe Bay mud. In Devon she took part in some Rescue Water Craft and All Terrain Vehicle training.

Blue Peter is planning to show more features about the RNLI in future programmes. Keep watching to see the RNLI, and *Blue Peter* presenter, Liz, go!



Presenter Liz Barker on the beach with the RNLI

Give us a bell

The RNLI's Headquarters switchboard telephone number is being replaced by a new 'lo-call' number: 0845 122 6999.

The old number will remain available for some time, although it is hoped that the transition will be complete by the end of the year. Personal direct dial numbers will not change in any way.

As well as reducing the costs to supporters of calling the RNLI HQ, this will improve our service to all our volunteers, staff and

customers. If there is a sudden increase in telephone calls due to, for example, an emergency, the calls can be instantly re-directed to a call centre equipped to deal with large volumes, anywhere in the country.

You will start to see the new number publicised on a variety of RNLI communications but please do help to spread awareness of this change. Other useful numbers to note can be found on page 1.

 **0845 122 6999**

Falklands remembered

Recent letters to *the Lifeboat* have revealed something of the role of lifeboats and their crews during the Second World War. Similar bravery was shown by members of the Merchant Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary. They played a vital role in transporting troops between battle zones and in keeping food and other supply lines open to the UK despite attacks from U-boats, bombers and the like. Those 32,000 individuals who lost

their lives in this way are remembered each year on *Merchant Navy Day* and Remembrance Sunday and, throughout the year, with a Memorial on Tower Hill in central London.

The Merchant Navy Association is now planning a smaller companion Memorial to remember the 17 merchant seamen who died in similar operations during the Falklands conflict of 1982. A trust has been

set up to raise and manage the required £40,000 with the hope of unveiling the new Memorial on Merchant Navy Day, 4 September 2005.

Anyone wishing to contribute should contact the Chairman of the Merchant Navy Falklands '82 Memorial Trust and President of the Merchant Navy Association, Vivien Foster at The Flat, Raveningham Hall, Norwich, NR14 6NS.

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Autumn Collection supporting the Lifeboats

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◀ Lost Photographs of the RNLI

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02224 **£25.00**

▶ RNLI handbook

Now in its fourth year, and it has been brought right up to date for 2004 with lots of extra information and new pages. The RNLI Handbook is an indispensable reference source for anyone going to sea. The advice it gives could help you make the right decision in an emergency situation and significantly improve your chances of surviving. The A5 sized ring binder is split into six updateable sections.

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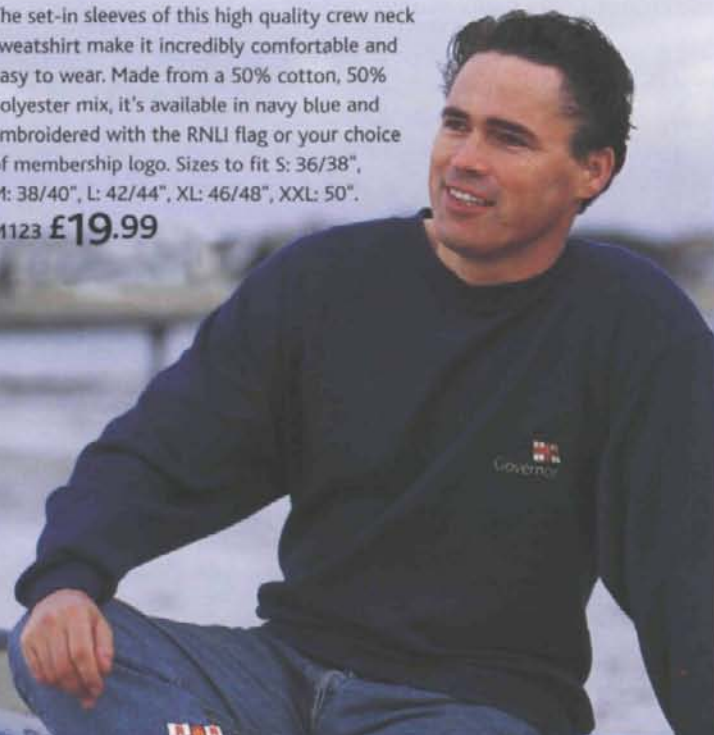
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▼ Sweatshirt

The set-in sleeves of this high quality crew neck sweatshirt make it incredibly comfortable and easy to wear. Made from a 50% cotton, 50% polyester mix, it's available in navy blue and embroidered with the RNLI flag or your choice of membership logo. Sizes to fit S: 36/38", M: 38/40", L: 42/44", XL: 46/48", XXL: 50".

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Insignia 4



Lost Photographs of the RNLI

By Edward Wake-Walker
 Published by Sutton Publishing
 ISBN 0750937181
 Price: £25

A wild February night in 1923 sees the exhausted crew of *Adolf Vinnen* hauled to safety by breeches buoy

Legendary lifeboat rescues are brought vividly to life in this new book by former RNLI PR Director Edward Wake-Walker. The book celebrates the rediscovery of an historic collection of dramatic photographs, borrowed from the RNLI 56 years ago by an eccentric explorer.

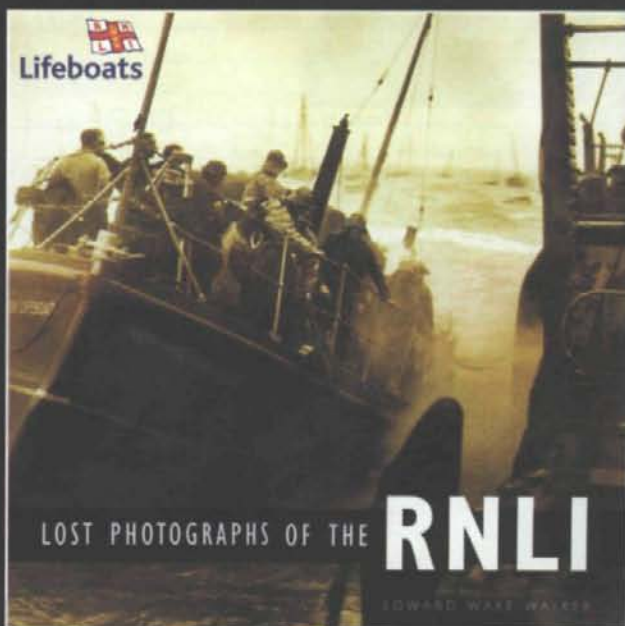
Sometime in 1948, a collection of 37 photographs was borrowed from the RNLI by the American explorer, writer and film maker, Amos Burg. The photographs were never returned to the RNLI but were recently discovered in a shack in Alaska. The collection includes pictures of Henry Blogg, probably the most famous lifeboatman of all time, and of one of his celebrated medal-winning rescues. Stories included are of heroic rescues and tragic disasters, which include photos and accounts of Second World War lifeboat rescues. RNLI wartime records are scarce, so these photographs are of special value. It covers the years 1897 to 1948 when motor lifeboats began to replace pulling and sailing boats.

Together, these stories shed light on one of the most formative 50-year periods in RNLI history. They start at the turn of the 20th century, when the only chance of survival for a shipwrecked crew rested on the grim determination of ten men at the oars of a pulling lifeboat. They take the reader through the days of the first motorised lifeboats, when crews' early mistrust of mechanisation was soon replaced by enthusiastic and expert deployment.

Edward worked for the RNLI for 28 years. He has a profound knowledge of RNLI history and has travelled widely throughout

the UK and Republic of Ireland, meeting and writing about many of the most well-known lifeboat coxswains.

Lost photographs of the RNLI is available from RNLI Sales. Please see page 40 for ordering details, or phone the orderline number on 0870 6001824 – please quote code 02224.



Sailing – a beginner's guide

By David Seidman

Published by Adlard Coles Nautical

ISBN 0713668741

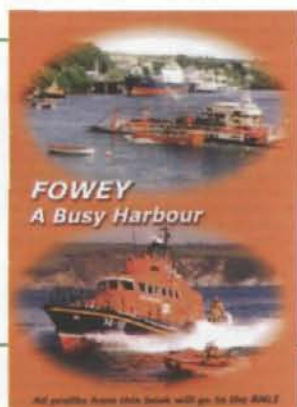
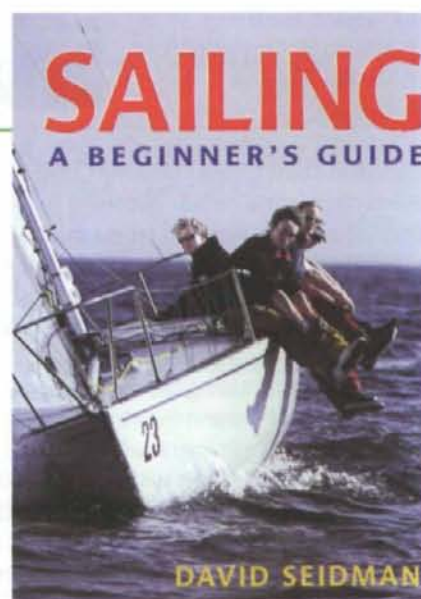
Price: £14.99

'There are many who sail but few who are sailors,' says author David Seidman in his introduction to the book, which, as well as helping people to begin safely enjoying the water, offers to help them become sailors.

The guide includes the nuts and bolts of subjects such as buoyancy and weather, but it is clear that Seidman treats sailing more as an

art than a science. Chapters range from working winds and getting underway to emergencies and navigation, each assisted by simple illustrations, the occasional quote and a touch of history.

Hailed as 'one of the most easily understood books on the subject' in the maritime press, this is a truly useful guide for all ages – and there are still bound to be nuggets of information for those who are a little more familiar with the sea. Copies are available from all good bookshops or by calling Adlard Coles Nautical on 020 7758 0200.



Fowey: a busy harbour

By Gerry Hones

Gerry takes a fond look at everyday life in Fowey harbour, his childhood home. The booklet includes the work of Fowey lifeboat crews and some interesting stories about

this beautiful part of the Cornish coastline.

Fowey: a busy harbour is priced at £3.50 (including postage and packaging) and copies are available direct from the author at 3 Manor Park, Weston, Bath BA1 3RH. Please make cheques payable to Gerry Hones. All profits go to the RNLI.

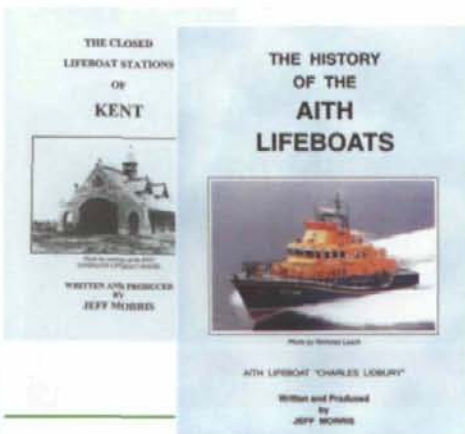
The history of the Aith lifeboats The closed lifeboat stations of Kent

By Jeff Morris

The honorary archivist of the Lifeboat Enthusiasts' Society continues his sterling work in researching the history of RNLI lifeboats. His latest two books cover Aith, in Shetland – the RNLI's most northerly station, as featured in the winter 2003/04 issue of *the Lifeboat* – and the early, now closed, stations of Kent.

Both books are available direct from the author at 14 Medina Road, Coventry CV6 5JB.

The history of the Aith lifeboats is priced at £3.50 and *The closed lifeboat stations of Kent* is priced at £2.50 (prices include postage and packaging). Please make cheques payable to Jeff Morris. All profits go to the RNLI.



Voices from the sea

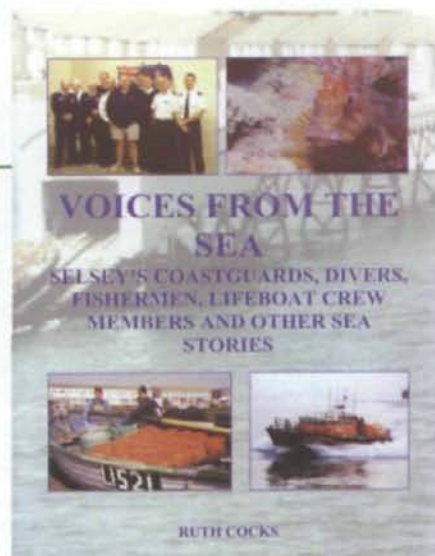
Selsey's coastguards, divers, fishermen, lifeboat crew members and other sea stories

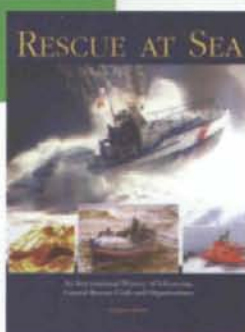
By Ruth Cocks

Voices from the sea records the fascinating stories of Selsey seafarers in their own words. The author, who can trace her Selsey roots back hundreds of years, spent 16 months interviewing lifeboat crew members, coastguards, divers, fishermen

and other locals with memories of Selsey sea life. Introduced by eminent astronomer and Selsey local Sir Patrick Moore, the book also includes lifeboat rescue accounts.

Voices from the sea is priced at £17 (plus £3.50 postage and packaging) and copies are available direct from the author: telephone 01243 601272 or email cocks@quista.net. All profits from *Lifeboat* magazine-related sales go to Selsey lifeboat station.





Rescue at sea

By Clayton Evans
Published by Chrysalis Books
ISBN 0851779344
Price: £35

Canadian Coast Guard Coxswain Clayton Evans has spent a decade gathering material from all over the world to create this reference and general interest book that deals with organised coastal lifesaving and rescue at sea, from the earliest times to the present day. The RNLI has a prominent position within the book, having led the development of both all weather and inshore lifeboats.

The book is split into four sections, all of which are easy to follow with some excellent photographs and diagrams. The first charts the history of coastal lifesaving from the 1700s through to the present day. Section

two traces the development of coastal rescue craft. Although comprehensive and thoroughly researched I felt that the development of the modern lifeguard rescue boat, which was 'invented' by Australian lifeguard Warren Mitchell, would have made an interesting addition. Warren saw the RNLI's D class during the 1960s and took the idea back to New South Wales. The third section looks at the role of the rescue helicopter, offshore patrol boat, global search and rescue and communications network, and the roles that some other rescue agencies undertake. The last section is a

comprehensive compendium of rescue services around the world.

This book should appeal to anyone interested in international lifeboating and will serve as the definitive reference book for years to come.

Reviewed by Adam Wooler, Staff Officer Operations (Beach Lifeguards).

Copies are available from RNLI Sales (see page 9 for ordering details) or from all good bookshops. The publishers will pay £2.50 to the RNLI* for every book sold.

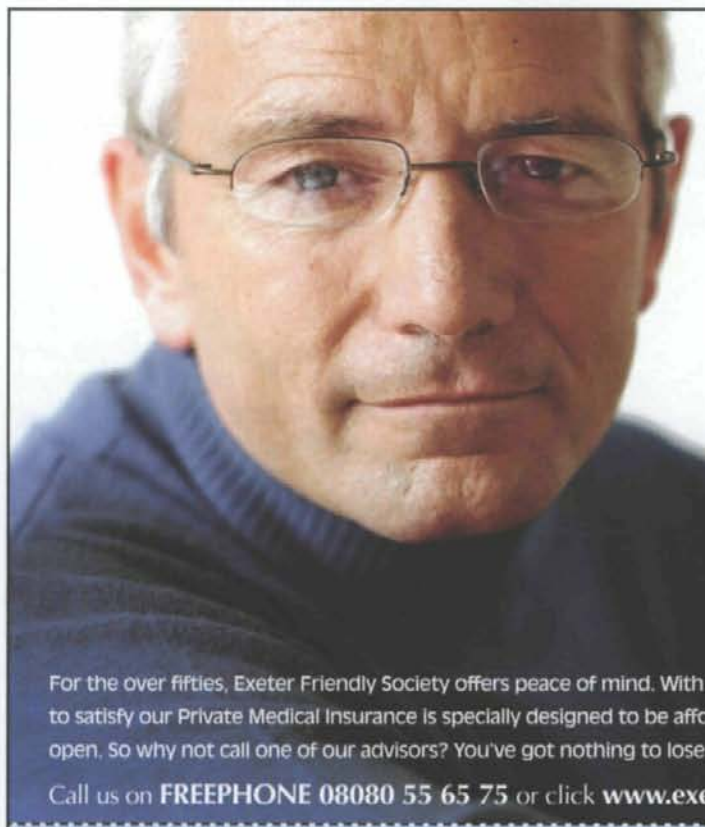
*Payments are made to RNLI (Enterprises) Ltd, which pays all its taxable profits to the RNLI.


Reader giveaway

The RNLI has copies of *Rescue at Sea* to give away to 10 lucky readers of *the Lifeboat*. For your chance to win a copy please send your name, address including postcode, telephone number and membership number to: RESCUE AT SEA BOOK OFFER, Supporter Care, RNLI, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 1HZ or email pmason@mli.org.uk. The first 10 names drawn will each receive a book.

Terms and conditions

Closing date is 3 December 2004. Entries restricted to members resident in UK and ROI only. One entry per person. Entry to draw is free. There is no cash alternative. The draw will be made by the RNLI and winners will receive their copy in December. The RNLI is not responsible for lost, delayed or incomplete entries.






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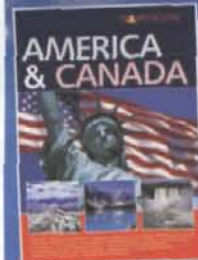
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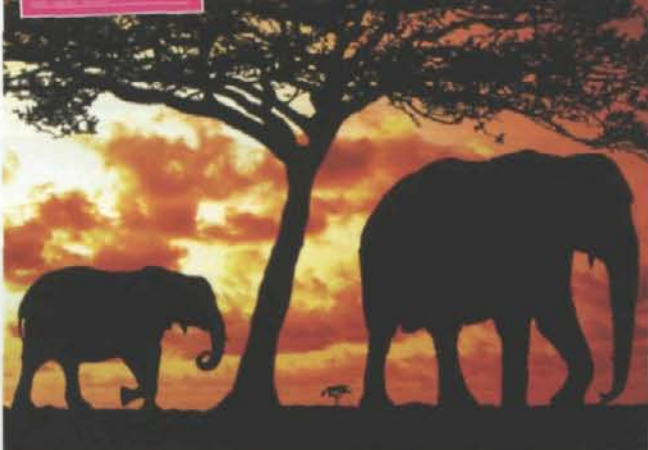
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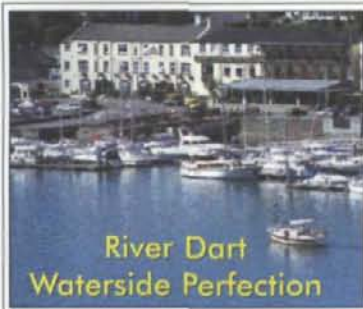
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