



Lifeboats

# the lifeboat

For everyone who helps save lives at sea

Spring  
2007

SAP code: INF001-579



Voices from  
the sea



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We arrive in Tournon and disembark for an exciting excursion through the picturesque Doux Gorge on a steam train. On Day 5 we wake up to the lively city of Vienne where a walking tour of the city reveals a rich history and some magnificent Roman and Medieval architecture including the Roman amphitheatre. We return to the ship and enjoy lunch as we cruise to Lyon.

## Day 6 ♦ Lyon

Lyon is founded on the ancient art - and industry - of silk weaving and its old city is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The old houses of the silk-workers are accessed by secret, narrow passageways called traboules and we discover these, the Quartier St Paul, Vieux Lyon and much more on this morning's guided tour. We leave Lyon at lunch time and continue our journey north.

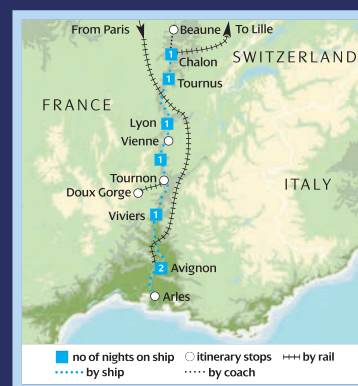
## Days 7-8 ♦ Beaune

On Day 7 we travel by coach through villages with names famous from a million wine labels to Beaune. Here we visit the Hotel Dieu, built originally as a hospice, and famous for its brightly-coloured roof tiles. You have some time to visit a local cellar for wine tasting before returning to *MS Viking Burgundy* for our farewell dinner. On Day 8 we transfer to Chalon to catch the TGV to Lille which connects with Eurostar to London.

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members and Governors. The next issue will be  
Summer 2007 and will appear in July 2007.

For advertising and full details of whom to  
contact about *the Lifeboat*, membership and  
any other RNLI matters, see page 15.

**Front cover:** A view from the water beside  
Oban's all-weather lifeboat. Hear the first-  
hand accounts of rescuers and rescuees alike  
throughout this issue, plus news of a very  
happy 100th anniversary on page 8.  
Photo: Nigel Millard

Please find inserted with this issue of  
*the Lifeboat*: a recycling bag from the RNLI's  
corporate partner Accutec, for toner  
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forecast directory card from Marinecall,  
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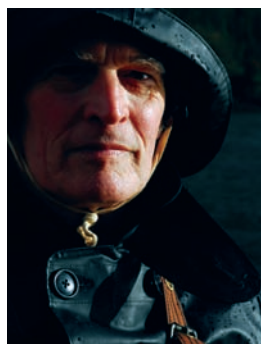
An RNLI in-house publication



Train one, save many



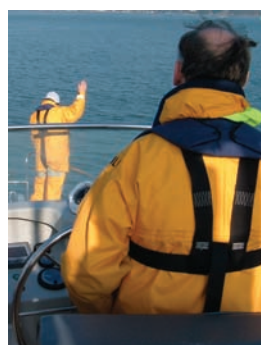
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and it shows  
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Winners, prizes – and a remarkable RNLI character



L-R: Edward Allen presents the award in memory of his father to architect David Bissonett

## 'A treasure trove!'

This is just one glowing comment from a visitor to the RNLI's new Henry Blogg museum in Cromer – and now 'official' accolades have followed.

The building's contemporary design follows the curve of the cliff behind it and mirrors the Georgian crescent opposite. It has now earned architects Purcell Miller Tritton LLP a Graham Allen Award for Conservation and Design from North Norfolk District Council.

Opened by comedian Ronnie Corbett in April 2006, the museum's centrepiece is the Watson class lifeboat *HF Bailey*, which served under Coxswain Henry Blogg (see Letters, page 13). Its many varied interactive displays have won the museum an Interpret Britain and Ireland Award.

Over 35,000 visitors came through the museum's doors in its first seven months and many left their own tributes:

*'A lovely place that captures the imagination. Impressive and heart warming.'*

*'The children loved it.'*

*'An excellent addition to Cromer's seafront and a fine tribute to the great man Henry Blogg and all the crews.'*

*'I liked the big boat!'*

The current inshore lifeboat station is next door and the all-weather at the end of the pier. The all-weather station will be temporarily closed to visitors this Spring while changes are made to the slipway for a new Tamar class lifeboat. Check [rnli.org.uk/cromer](http://rnli.org.uk/cromer) to avoid disappointment.

For museum opening times, see [rnli.org.uk/henryblogg](http://rnli.org.uk/henryblogg) or call 01263 511294. Look out in future issues of *the Lifeboat* for news of developments at other RNLI museums.

## Dear Reader

Welcome to *the Lifeboat*!

You will find that the words 'thank you' feature strongly in this issue – as ever from volunteer to fundraiser and donor but also more unusually from survivor to rescuer. (As I write, the RNLI's official rescue statistics for 2006 have just been published. See the central Listings section for details.)

I'm in a truly privileged position as Editor of *the Lifeboat*, and not just because I know about the latest RNLI news before many others! As a day-to-day part of my job, I get to hear direct from lifeboat crew members and lifeguards, trainers and lifeboat designers, members and supporters, and even, sometimes, those who've been rescued.

Whatever apparently important issue my colleagues and I are struggling with simply fades away when we meet those involved in such matters of life and death. My hope is that you 'meet' them too, through the pages of *the Lifeboat*.

Liz Cook, Editor

P.S. Look out for some changes to *the Lifeboat* from Summer 2007 and the addition of a regional supplement so that you know more about what's happening in your part of the RNLI.



## Keeping watch

At the end of 2006, the North Sea claimed three fishermen's lives; January 2007 saw the deaths of seven fishermen off the Republic of Ireland: just two horrifying statistics that highlight one of the most hazardous of industries. Fortunately, the RNLI-developed MOB Guardian system has been recognised as an essential lifesaving piece of equipment for fishermen.

MOB Guardian helps to 'take the search out of search and rescue', by tracking a vessel's position and automatically alerting emergency services of a man overboard (MOB). It has been



showered with awards in the last few months (see panel).

The system uniquely combines man overboard and vessel-overdue monitoring technology with two-way communications with search and rescue services – all in a form that is robust in the harsh environment at sea and easy to use in life-threatening situations. The project team responsible comprises the RNLI Fishing safety team; manufacturer McMurdo; and satellite software supplier AWS.

The cost to fishermen of buying MOB Guardian has been reduced thanks to a substantial legacy from Miss Constance Linda Mary Hilton and Government fisheries grants (currently in England and Scotland only), and two major marine insurance companies. For further information call 01202 663142, email [mob\\_guardian@rnli.org.uk](mailto:mob_guardian@rnli.org.uk) or go to [www.mobguardian.com](http://www.mobguardian.com).

### RESULTS

#### Fishing News Awards 2006

- Winner of Safety category
- Shortlisted for Technical Innovation
- David Smith, RNLI Fishing Safety Coordinator, nominated for Personality of the Year

#### SEAWORK Innovation Awards 2006

- Winner of Safety category

#### British Computer Society IT Awards 2006

- Winner of The BT Innovation Flagship Award for Technology; the Mobile Computing Award and the Technology Award for Systems

#### Design Week Awards 2007

- Runner up in the Industrial Product Design category



## Lifeguarding to expand

The RNLI's Trustees have decided to expand the charity's lifeguarding service beyond its current 62 beaches in the south and south west of England with the aim of doubling coverage by the year 2012. The success of this plan will depend on building strong and effective relationships with the relevant local authorities, not least regarding funding, so the locations involved have not yet been decided. Since their introduction in 2001, RNLI lifeguards have assisted nearly 47,000 people and directly saved 256 lives. *The Lifeboat* will bring you more information as it becomes available.



## Happy birthday!

Round-the-world sailors Alex Thomson and Dee Caffari (pictured) were just two of the 700 people who signed up as RNLI members at the London Boat Show in January. They had joined the 10th birthday celebrations (sponsored by Old Pulteney Whisky and the Fox Bar at ExCel) of the Offshore category of RNLI membership, designed especially for those who actively use the sea. Alex, famously rescued from the Southern Ocean during the Velux 5 Oceans race by fellow competitor Mike Golding, commented: 'Believe me, if you have to be shipwrecked, the UK has to be the safest place in the world for you to do it, thanks to the RNLI.' He wasn't alone in thanking the volunteer crews. Hundreds of messages of support for them were left by visitors to the RNLI's stand, joining those from the Christmas mailing – see the address sheet accompanying this magazine for a selection.

For further information about joining Offshore, see page 15. Current Offshore members can read more about Alex and Dee's appearance plus the RNLI's new Ambassador scheme for marine traders and its partnership with Ocean Training Ltd in the Spring 2007 issue of *Offshore News*.



Photo: Graham Wilding



## Whisky galore

Old Pulteney sold 15,000 RNLI-promotional tubes of their 'Genuine Maritime Malt' over the Christmas 2006 period, donating £2 from each sale to the charity. Their support has continued at the London Boat Show (see page 3) and they are now offering readers of *the Lifeboat* the chance to win one of five bottles of their 12-year-old single malt with its 'distinctive tangy, dry taste and mineral-salted spiciness that evokes the rugged, windswept character of the far North'.

To enter, send your name, address and supporter number by email to [london@rnli.org.uk](mailto:london@rnli.org.uk) with 'Old Pulteney' in the subject line, or on a postcard to Old Pulteney Prize Draw, RNLI, 20 Buckingham Street, London, WC2N 6EF, by 28 May 2007. You must be aged 18 or over. Winners will be selected at random from all entries received by that date and notified by 28 June 2007. For more information visit [www.oldpulteney.com](http://www.oldpulteney.com).

## Million £ Challenge

A joint bid by the RNLI and the Family Holiday Association is runner up in both the HBOS UK Million £ Challenge 2007 and HBOS (Ireland)'s first such Challenge. The charities will benefit from a year of fundraising by HBOS staff. Look out for counter appeals in Halifax and Bank of Scotland branches, in May, August and November.

## A Fyne offer

At their annual conference, held at The Lifeboat College in February, Loch Fyne Restaurants announced the RNLI as their first 'charity of the year'. Their fundraising target of £125,000 is intended for a new Atlantic 85 inshore lifeboat for Lyme Regis for 2012.

Loch Fyne's Managing Director Richard Morris explains: 'We have a synergy with the RNLI in that we are reliant on fishermen to provide the products for our restaurants. This is an ideal opportunity to support a much-loved and well-respected organisation.'

Loch Fyne is offering every RNLI supporter a complimentary bottle of house wine until 31 May 2007 (except for Easter weekend). To qualify, a minimum of two adult main courses must be ordered and the offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or with the set £10 lunch. Present your RNLI supporter card before ordering. See [www.lochfyne.com](http://www.lochfyne.com) to find your nearest restaurant.



## giftaid it

Many supporters boost their donations to the RNLI by using Gift Aid. For every pound they give, the RNLI gets an extra 28 pence from the taxman. Thanks to these supporters, in 2006, this brought in an extra £3.7M!

If you are a UK tax payer (and have paid sufficient tax within the tax year of your donation) the RNLI can claim back the basic rate tax paid on all your donations. If you are a higher rate tax payer, you can reclaim the difference between the higher and basic rate tax yourself.

For example, if you give £100 to the RNLI, it can reclaim Gift Aid of £28.20 and you can reclaim the difference between the two tax bands, £23.07. This means a £128.20 gift to the RNLI would have cost you only £76.93. Alternatively, you can mark your self-assessment tax form with the RNLI's code, HAB 39GG, and the extra sum will be paid over to the charity.

For further information see [rnli.org.uk/giftaid](http://rnli.org.uk/giftaid) or contact the RNLI's Supporter Care team on 0845 121 4999.

## Recycling to save lives

Recycling is all the rage, and not just for town councils. Now the likes of Lord Sebastian Coe and Dame Ellen MacArthur have joined in. They and other celebrities took part in an eBay online auction to mark the RNLI's SOS day in January, raising a substantial amount for the charity – and if you use eBay, you too can recycle to save lives.

eBay for charity allows you to sell unwanted items and then donate some or all of the proceeds to the charity of your choice. Amazingly, eBay will then match your percentage donation with the same percentage of their fee.

For more information, log on to [www.ebay.co.uk/charity](http://www.ebay.co.uk/charity) or contact the RNLI's Rebecca McCarthy at [rmccarthy@rnli.org.uk](mailto:rmccarthy@rnli.org.uk).





## Open house

The RNLI's Headquarters in Poole, Dorset, is opening to the public on 21 and 22 July 2007. This is a golden opportunity to see behind the scenes at The Lifeboat College, tour the different classes of lifeboat, watch rescue demonstrations, and get safety advice from the RNLI's Sea Safety, Beach Safety and Education teams. Full details will be available nearer the time at [rnli.org.uk](http://rnli.org.uk) or by ringing Headquarters.

## Cuddles, Steve and *Puffin*



A trio of new arrivals at Burnham-on-Sea lifeboat station, Somerset, have been welcomed with open arms. Joining a crew can be a nerve-wracking experience but it didn't take long for Cuddles to settle in last year, especially when the existing crew discovered that he didn't talk back, object to being thrown into the water or scoff their biscuits! For Cuddles was their new 70kg rescue dummy, kindly donated by the regulars of the Orchard Inn at

West Huntspill after a series of fundraising events.

Steve Atkinson (pictured above) has been equally willing in his training. A tractor driver at New Quay lifeboat station, Cardiganshire, he moved to Burnham for work and was accepted as a lifeboat shore helper in 2003. However, when he applied to join the crew, disappointment came – he found his eyesight didn't meet the RNLI's standards. Not to be deterred, Steve went for laser eye surgery until finally, in July 2006 and after six years of perseverance, his dream to become a lifeboat crew member came true.

Burnham-on-Sea (not to be confused with Burnham-on-Crouch in Essex) is considered one of the RNLI's newest lifeboat stations yet it located a series of 10-oared lifeboats there from the mid 1800s–1930. The introduction of longer-range motorised lifeboats along the coast led to closure then, after 64 years, the independent Burnham Area Rescue Boat launched. Invited to return in 2003, the RNLI now operates two inshore lifeboats at Burnham, an Atlantic 75, *Staines Whitfield*, and, since December 2006, a D class, funded by Mrs Oonagh Mitchell of Oxfordshire: *Puffin*. This delightful name will be officially bestowed at a ceremony on 12 May 2007.





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# The most lives saved

A hundred years ago, a liner full of passengers needed saving off the Cornish coast – one lifeboat just wasn't going to be enough

After months at sea, the White Star liner *Suevic* was within hours of completing her voyage from Australia to Plymouth when she hit rocks off The Lizard, Cornwall. Thick fog had disorientated her crew. It was 10.30pm on 17 March 1907 and there was a gale blowing. Heavy seas were pounding the shore – and there were more than 400 people onboard.

It was fortunate for the *Suevic's* passengers that the ship's crew dealt with the situation calmly. One local newspaper later reported: 'Was there any suggestion of a panic? None whatever. I have never seen better behaviour in my life. One must remember the cigar

of Captain Jones [of the *Suevic*]. He directed operations with a cigar in his mouth. It was an inspiration. If anything could stop a panic it would be a man who could keep the ash on the end of his cigar in a gale and an emergency.'

While distress flares were fired, two of the ship's own lifeboats were lowered. Eyewitnesses recalled how two of the *Suevic's* seamen, named Anderson and Adams, worked especially hard to transfer women and children from the liner to one of the boats. But, unknown to the ship's officers, dangerous rocks stood between the *Suevic* and the safety of the shore. Such small vessels faced a perilous journey.

As the *Suevic's* boats struggled out from her shadow, RNLI lifeboats from The Lizard and Cadgwith came into sight, their crews battling with their oars against the swell. They part towed, part guided the two daughter boats

ashore, and then returned to the stranded ship to transfer more passengers themselves. Howard FG Rowley, the then RNLI Inspector, said: 'Had the lifeboats not been at hand they [the passengers] would doubtless never have reached the shore. Such heroic acts deserve to be brought before the notice of all British people.'

Lifeboat crews from Coverack and Porthleven now joined their comrades in bringing passengers from the wreck. One woman, who initially refused to let go of the ladder hanging at the side of the liner, was reportedly involved in a tug-of-war with the lifeboatman who had her by the ankles! The women of Cadgwith were more willing: gathering on the beach, they helped pull the lifeboats ashore, and one in particular was seen to rush in up to her waist to carry children to safety.

As the night wore on, the sea and wind grew more ferocious, but the lifeboat crews kept working. Households from around the



area welcomed the traumatised passengers into their homes, although two rescues quickly disappeared when they reached dry land – they turned out to have been stowaways.

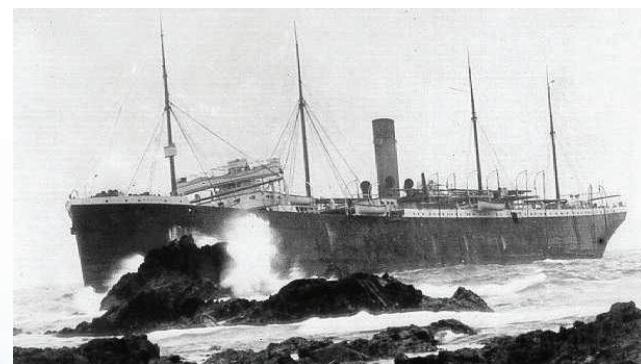
By 12 noon on 18 March, all 456 of the *Suevic's* passengers and crew had been brought to safety, including more than 70 babies. This feat was then, and still stands now, the biggest rescue of human life in one incident by the volunteer crews of the RNLI. In recognition of particular acts of bravery, four RNLI crew members later received Silver Medals for Gallantry. A message from the White Star Line, read at the presentation of the medals, said: 'We take this opportunity of stating that we appreciate most highly the very meritorious services rendered by the crews of the lifeboats on the occasion of the wreck of our steamer.'

After nine days languishing on the rocks, *Suevic* was dealt with in an unusual operation. She was blown in two by dynamite. The bow section, too damaged to

salvage, was left to break up where the ship went aground, but the stern was towed to Southampton for repair. Meanwhile at the Harland and Wolff yard in Belfast, shipbuilders constructed a new bow. With her two sections now so far apart, *Suevic* became known as the longest ship in the world! Once rebuilt, she was renamed the *Skytteren* and became a Norwegian whaling factory ship.

Reporting on the whole remarkable incident, the Autumn 1907 *Life-boat Journal* remarked: 'A disaster of such magnitude seldom occurs on the coast of the United Kingdom ... Thanks to the prompt action of the Life-boats in the neighbourhood and the splendid discipline maintained on board it was happily unattended by loss of life.' An understatement indeed.

(Readers in the south west of England might have seen a dramatised documentary of the *Suevic* rescue on local ITV in March; a real demonstration of Train one, save many!)



Top: The Lizard lifeboat of 1907  
 Above: The *Suevic* founders  
 Below: A reconstruction of the rescue for television  
 Photo: Nigel Millard



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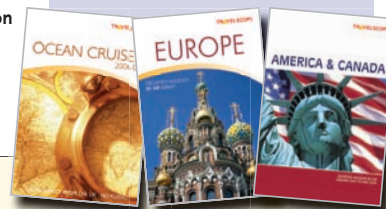
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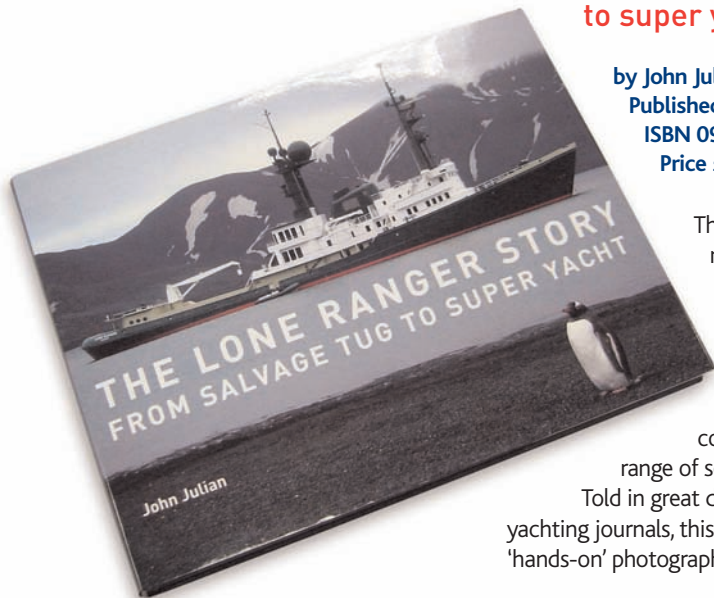
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# Books

## The Lone Ranger story – from salvage tug to super yacht



by John Julian  
Published by Seafarer Books  
ISBN 0955024307  
Price £19.95 hardback

This is the remarkable story of a vessel's transformation over a period of more than 30 years. Starting life as a working tug, then named *Simson*, she travelled the world for 20 years working on large-scale assignments such as the movement of oil platforms across thousands of nautical miles. She was refitted in the early 1990s to become a luxury home for a billionaire and his family. For the last 10 years, the re-named *Lone Ranger* and her owners have covered the world, as befits a vessel so accustomed to such a wide range of seascapes.

Told in great detail thanks to the author's vast experience of the sea and writing for yachting journals, this large-format hardback is impressive in appearance and includes 'hands-on' photography on virtually every page.

## Voices from the sea



by Ruth Cocks  
Self published  
Price £14 paperback  
(plus £3.50 postage)

Astronomer Patrick Moore wrote the Foreword to this extraordinary record of oral history:

'I have known

Selsey all my life, and have lived here for almost 40 years now, so although I am (or was!) an airman I am very well acquainted with the people of the sea. I know the coastguards, the divers, the fishermen and the lifeboat crews.

They are remarkable people and Ruth Cocks has written a remarkable book about them. She has spent 16 months talking to them and she has let them speak

for themselves. They have much to say and much to tell us.

'There are puzzles: how do you tell a male cuttlefish from a female cuttlefish, and why do you want to know?

'There are unexpected twists: ... Divers inspected the Nab Tower, a disused lighthouse, which is now of no use to anybody; the authorities

wanted to blow it up until they were told that it lies on a fault in the earth's crust, and exploding it would trigger the fault to such an extent that parts of Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight would sink into the sea (needless to say, the Nab Tower is still intact).

'There are great characters, such as "Honest Bill", who still has his hut at East Beach and makes his team provide excellent fish at excellent prices as I know, because I am a very regular customer. He is noticeably reticent about an episode in 1950, when after a particularly dangerous rescue he was presented with the RNLI's [Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on] Vellum and also the Maud Smith Award, for the bravest act of lifesaving by any lifeboat man during the year.

'There are tragedies: the sea can be merciless, but the Selsey lifeboat men [and women] have saved many lives, and Ruth Cocks makes us realise how brave and how dedicated they are. ...

'When you read this book you will look into the past and also gain a better understanding of the present. Techniques have changed, but the "people of the sea" have not. Let us pay tribute to them and thank Ruth Cocks for giving us so vivid and accurate a picture.'

Ruth is keen to sell her last remaining 150 copies so that she can donate £12,000 to the RNLI, £4,000 to The Coastguard Association and £4,000 to The Shipwrecked Mariners' Society. The book is available from the author, by telephone 01243 601272 or email [ruth@selseybill.plus.com](mailto:ruth@selseybill.plus.com). Further details can also be found at [voicesfromthesea.net](http://voicesfromthesea.net).

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

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# Letters

To add *your* opinion, write to The Editor at RNLI Headquarters or email [thelifeboat@rnli.org.uk](mailto:thelifeboat@rnli.org.uk)



Photo: Richard Norman

## Dear Editor

My father and I witnessed the whole incident reported in 'Between a rock and an angry sea' in *the Lifeboat* Winter 2006/07.

The RNLI lifeguards were incredible, repeatedly bringing their rescue boat into 1–2m surf only metres from the rocks. The most impressive part was watching them going back out: at times their boat was vertical as it powered through the surf.

Afterwards, we and two other men helped the catamaran's owner to move it some 30m over the rocks until it was up under the cliff and above high water. We took the mast up the cliff to our house and then via trailer back round to Rock. The following day the boat owner was able to retrieve the cat with only superficial damage – she was certainly in no way 'unsalvageable' as stated in the article, which considering the state of the sea and the battering she had on the rocks was amazing.

All in all, the experience was quite exciting, but also very humbling as we are sailors ourselves but had decided against going out on that day – it certainly showed how quickly things can go wrong, in this case from something as simple as a torn jib.

Charlie Goodliffe  
Polzeath, Cornwall

## Dear Editor

Reading the latest issue of *the Lifeboat* I saw a face from my past – Henry Blogg, former Coxswain of the Cromer lifeboat.

During the Second World War, I was in the Royal Naval Patrol Service as a gunman on an old smokey joe trawler, minesweeping around 'the hump' between Great Yarmouth and Cromer. Convoys were constantly under attack by E boats and we would sweep among the debris. If we picked up bodies, alive or dead, we turned them over to the lifeboat, as we had to carry on with our sweep. I didn't know the Coxswain's name until we saw it in the newspaper after one of his many decorations. The next time we met, our skipper gave him a bottle of whisky!

I have had several nostalgic thoughts since seeing the photograph but I am also full of admiration for those who, even in these modern times, live lives of such dedication, and all for free. At 90, I give what I can, little and often.

Yours thankfully  
Arthur Roylance  
Blackpool, Lancashire

The Editor comments:  
See page 2 for more news of the RNLI's Henry Blogg museum.

## Dear Editor

We keep on hearing about the high demand for the RNLI's services together with requests for more funds but I wonder how the 'recipients' respond? If someone saved me, or a member of my family or friends, I would make a donation at the very least and when I found out it was a voluntary organisation would become a member to help others. It would be interesting to know whether during a period of record launchings how many of those rescued feel the same way.

Yours faithfully  
Ernest Duckett  
RNLI Life Governor  
Giffnock, Glasgow

### The Editor comments:

This is something about which many of our readers wonder.

The RNLI's Service information section tells us that, alongside the official report of each and every incident, rescues are given the opportunity to give their own account using a preprinted form. They can describe how they got into trouble and give feedback on the actions of their rescuers. See page 33 for two grateful survivors.

As to money, some rescues will spontaneously donate on scene. Others will show their thanks much later perhaps by sending a one-off donation, setting up a gift in their Will, or even holding a fundraising event, but often with no mention of why. Their family and friends may also react, but again not necessarily with an explanation and sometimes anonymously – there is often much embarrassment at being rescued! All in all it is impossible to put a figure on donations or subscriptions received as a direct result of a rescue.

## Dear Editor

Unlike Mr Long (*the Lifeboat* letters, Winter 2006/07) I don't know anyone who has needed the services of the RNLI. I don't own a boat and my only regular ventures to sea are onboard ferries. Despite this, I have been an RNLI Governor for some years. This is not out of a misguided need for 'status' but because I think RNLI volunteers represent the best in altruism. There is also the minor point that, if there was anything contentious needing a vote, I could have my say.

At present I can afford the level of subscription that gives me this right but retirement is looming. One of the first things I am going to reassess is subscriptions, especially those that require an annual payment. I wonder how many RNLI supporters would welcome the opportunity to make monthly contributions, perhaps by Direct Debit?

Yours sincerely  
Clive French  
Beith, Ayrshire

**The Editor comments:** *The Lifeboat* is pleased to report that the RNLI welcomes subscriptions and donations by Direct Debit, whether monthly, quarterly or annually. As well as spreading the cost for each supporter, regular giving by Direct Debit allows the charity to plan its finances, and therefore its work, more confidently and accurately. See opposite for contact details to set up regular payments.

## Dear Editor

We had a great time at our school, supporting RNLI SOS day on 26 January 2007.

Not all of us wore trainers – some children wore wellies (like the lifeboat crew do), riding boots or the shoes that are also roller skates. Our Head Teacher, Miss Dean, greeted us wearing two different trainers, which made us laugh, and Mrs Hobster our School Secretary came to work in her fluffy slippers.

In the afternoon it was Team Time when all the classes get mixed up. We had a quiz on the work of the RNLI and when it's safe and not safe to play on the beach and in the sea.

We really did enjoy ourselves on the RNLI's special day and we hope our donation of £100 will help.

From the children of  
Gosfield Community Primary School  
Halstead, Essex

**The Editor comments:** The RNLI hopes to receive up to £300,000 from schools, businesses and individuals involved in SOS day around the UK and RoI. Why not put the next RNLI SOS day in your diaries now: Friday 25 January 2008? Also see [rnli.org.uk/shorething](http://rnli.org.uk/shorething), the RNLI's website for young people, parents and teachers.

Some characters from the  
RNLI's *Shorething!* website



## Can you help?

Are you a trained, experienced journalist or writer, with a passion for the sea and the RNLI – and some spare time? If so, please contact the Editor to discuss how you might contribute to the range of RNLI publications.



## Dear Editor

I write to say how pleased I was to read that the 'powers that be' have come to their senses and conceded that *all* fuel for lifeboats will be VAT free. It is a great pity that this concession was not granted from an earlier date and it is to be hoped that the same powers will not be as dilatory in relieving from VAT the various areas you itemise in connection with saving lives at sea.

Yours very sincerely  
WLR Reed  
Cobham, Surrey

**The Editor comments:** This was one of dozens of such letters and emails received following our article. You may wish to petition the UK Government directly at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Charities/> to remove the RNLI and other charities from liability for the high amount of VAT they must still pay on a range of other items.

## Dear Editor

Over the past decade I have had a regular crew of about 20 pals who come sailing with me onboard my Stag 28 yacht *Arkaroola* from Lymington. We set up a schedule at the beginning of the year as to who will be sailing on which weekend and it is very frustrating when a crew member drops out at the last minute. I used to dissuade this with a punishment of walking the plank or keelhauling, but I was losing too many good crew ... I therefore introduced a penalty system where a fine of £10 has to be paid to the RNLI. In this way, I keep to a minimum the number of crew dropping out at the last minute while also raising funds for a worthy cause. Other skippers in a similar situation may want to give it a try!

Best wishes  
Ben Mitchell  
by email

## Corrections

In the Winter 2006/07 account of Barra Island crew's Bronze Medal service to the yacht *Vijaya* we wrongly labelled the wind direction arrow in the accompanying diagram as easterly when it should have been westerly, forgetting that winds are described by the direction they come from, tidal streams by the direction they go to.

In our list of Atlantic 85 lifeboats to come into service during 2006, we included B-808 at Walmer and incorrectly named her *Arthur Donald McLauchlan*. This should have been simply *Donald McLauchlan*.

The former Deputy Launching Authority and Crew Member at Helensburgh listed in our Deaths column should have been Rob Hyslop not Hislop.

## Reader information

### Introducing the RNLI

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

Today, it provides the 24-hour on-call search and rescue service out to 100 nautical miles from the coast of the UK and RoI; on the tidal reaches of the River Thames; and on selected inland waterways plus a seasonal lifeguard service on appropriate beaches in the south and south west of England. (See page 18 for a map of the service as of May 2006.)

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

### How to support the RNLI

You can help save lives by becoming a regular supporter of the RNLI. There are three adult grades of support: Shoreline, Offshore (for those who use the sea themselves) and Governor. Governors may vote at the RNLI's annual general meeting. Storm Force is the RNLI's membership club for children.

Contact the RNLI's Supporter Care team for more information and to set up payments: telephone 0845 121 4999, email [supporter\\_care@rnli.org.uk](mailto:supporter_care@rnli.org.uk) or write to them at Headquarters (see below) quoting LBM579.

*The Lifeboat* is the RNLI's supporter magazine. Blind and partially sighted readers can choose to receive an audio-tape version as well – this is a free service.

To advertise in *the Lifeboat*, contact Laura Gibbs at Madison Bell Ltd on 01225 465060 or email [laura.gibbs@madisonbell.com](mailto:laura.gibbs@madisonbell.com).



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

Storm Force members receive *Storm Force News* quarterly.

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Shoreline single	£24	€34
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Life Governor (One-off payment)	£1,750	€2,512
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**For general enquiries contact Headquarters: telephone 0845 122 6999, email [info@rnli.org.uk](mailto:info@rnli.org.uk), or write to RNLI, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ.**

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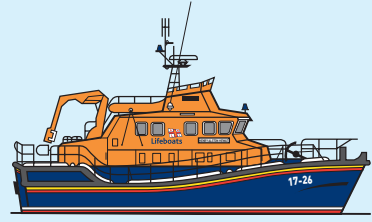
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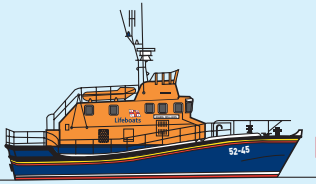
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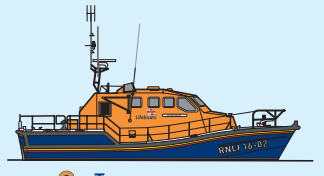
# RNLI lifeboat stations and lifeguard areas as of May 2006



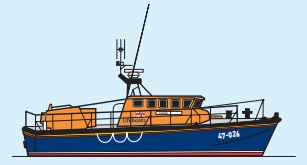
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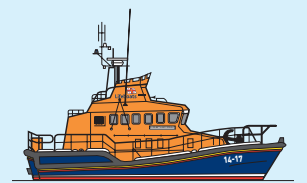
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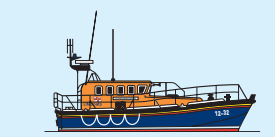
3 Tamar



4 Tyne



5 Trent



6 Mersey



7 E class



8 B class (Atlantic 21, 75, 85)



9 D class



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# RNLI in action

This quarter's highlights of the many hundreds of lifeboat launches and lifeguard incidents around the UK and Republic of Ireland



## Lost and listing

Volunteer lifeboat crews from Falmouth and The Lizard joined the rescue operation of the 26 crew of *MSC Napoli* on 18 January 2007. The vessel, 41 miles SE of The Lizard, was taking on water through a hole in her starboard side. Before the lifeboats reached the scene, *Napoli's* crew abandoned ship in their own lifeboat and were winched safely into two RNAS helicopters. Exmouth inshore lifeboat *George Bearman* was tasked a couple of days later (when this photograph was taken by the crew) with checking that loose containers were not causing a hazard at sea.

## Gas rig tragedy

Barrow and Fleetwood all-weather lifeboats *James Bibby* and *William Street* joined in the search for survivors of a helicopter crash on 27 December 2006. Lifeboat crews worked tirelessly through the night in dark, cold conditions far out in Morecambe Bay, alongside other search and rescue teams, who recovered six bodies. Lytham St Annes' *Lifetime Care* took over at 6am to search for the remaining man, who at the time of writing is still missing, presumed dead. To help the accident

investigation, Fleetwood crew searched the crash site for wreckage, recovering a seat and parts of a door and the nose cone.

## Stafford rescues Staffie

Stan the Staffordshire terrier had a brush with death last Summer, when he nearly drowned at Harlyn Bay, North Cornwall. The white-dappled Staffie was pulled from the surf by his owner and rushed into the arms of RNLI Lifeguard Tim Stafford. Tim's fellow lifeguards were out on another rescue involving a boat that had lost power, so it was left to Tim to save the near-lifeless pooch by using CPR, the 'kiss of life'.

## Knocked for six

Holiday celebrations nearly ended in tragedy when six people were thrown from their boat into the icy sea off the Connemara coast, on 28 December 2006. Their currach was overturned by a giant wave. All six seafarers were thankfully wearing lifejackets and two of them managed to swim to land. A friend back on the beach saw the accident and raised the alarm immediately. Eight minutes later Clifden's B class *Benjamin Downing Fairbridge* had reached the casualties, two of

whom were in the advanced stages of hypothermia.

## Deluge hits Highland homes

Lifeboat crews rescued 40 people after torrential rain caused extensive flooding in Dingwall, Ross and Cromarty. RNLI volunteers joined other emergency services in evacuating residents from their homes as water levels reached waist height. Many people were surprised to see the RNLI so far inland, but the charity's swift-water rescue training is designed for just such emergencies.

## Lifeboatmen on an RWC!

On 21 October 2006, Bude's D class *Henry Philip* was joined on a shout by the station's rather less-traditional rescue watercraft (RWC, often incorrectly called by the trade name jet ski). In rough seas and 2m swell they approached two missing surfers stuck high on a rock, north of Sandymouth. As hoped, the RWC was even better suited than the inflatable to get in close. RWCs have been used to great effect by RNLI lifeguards for years, but volunteers at Bude are the first lifeboat crew to trial RWCs.



## Through hell and high water

Far from land, a lone yachtsman battened down the hatches and prepared to ride out the forecast bad weather, but no one could have predicted what happened next

Keith White was attempting to circumnavigate the British Isles in his yacht *Nephele* to fundraise for the RNLI and four other charities but his project wasn't exactly going smoothly. Early in his voyage, the ex-paratrooper's boat was blown off course, up to the Netherlands and Norway. He broke two ribs and then his autopilot failed. Now north west of Ireland, he made a routine call to the Coast Guard and received more bad news: a force 9 severe gale was heading his way. He was unlikely to make it to the shelter of land, 60 miles

south, in time, so Keith decided to stay put and weather out whatever was coming.

### Growing danger

Sure enough, in time, strong winds shook the 10m yacht and waves crashed about her, damaging the mast. This was worse than anything Keith had been through before. He lost radio contact with the Coast Guard and knew he was in real trouble. He sent a Mayday.

Luckily the distress call was picked up by a passing ship and relayed to Malin Head Coast Guard who tasked two Coast Guard

search and rescue helicopters from Sligo and an RAF Nimrod from Kinloss to find *Nephele*. Eventually they succeeded: she was 11 miles further north east than estimated. However, conditions were now too extreme to winch Keith off and both helicopters returned to land. The Nimrod kept watch while the Arranmore lifeboat crew sprung into action.

The Severn class *Myrtle Maud* launched at 11.45pm, with Anthon Kavanagh in command and Jimmy Early at the helm. Once clear of Arranmore Island the lifeboat was confronted by winds of up to force 10,

Arranmore's lifeboat really did face 'all weathers', like this Severn class, and the inflatable Y boat stored on top proved invaluable once the storm began to ease

6m swells and large breaking seas. Even at 22 knots or so, the crew knew it would be a painfully long haul to cover the 36 miles to the casualty.

Conditions deteriorated further. At one point the lifeboat fell stern first into a deep trough in the swells. The engine overspeed alarm sounded briefly and the crew held their breath as the lifeboat nearly stalled, but the propellers regained thrust just in time.

### Extraordinary strength

Alone on the yacht, Keith found himself in the midst of a tempest; not the predicted force 9 severe gale, but a wicked force 10 storm. *Nephele* was overwhelmed, capsized and Keith fractured two more ribs.

*'I was walking on the ceiling at one point. After that capsize, I went outside to check the damage, but it was so black, I couldn't see the boat. I looked up to see the outline of my six-man liferaft flying like a kite in the sky.'*

Keith returned to the cabin and seconds later, the yacht capsized again. Steering was impossible: he was at the mercy of the winds. Exhausted from trying to keep the yacht stable Keith tried to snatch some sleep. He considered he could properly assess the damage, to both boat and body, at daybreak.

At 3am, the lifeboat was still 7 miles from the besieged *Nephele*, which was now 65 miles north of Arranmore Island, nearly twice the original estimate. The Nimrod crew guided the lifeboat towards the yacht, using illuminating flares, but Keith's boat was impossible to spot from within the now 10m seas, rain and spray. Anthon recalls: 'When we were only half a mile away, we still couldn't see him.'

Keith awoke to a chink of light coming through the cabin window. His first thought was that it was sunlight, dawn, but it was the searchlights from the *Myrtle Maud*. Keith remembers: 'I felt a great sense of relief that I was no longer alone.'

Anthon moved out to the exposed upper steering position and assessed the yacht. She was in a sorry state, listing heavily to port, hit by breaking seas and her torn foresail was flying freely in winds of over 70 knots. Although his instinct was to evacuate the injured Keith from *Nephele*, he knew it would

be far too dangerous to attempt. With dawn fast approaching, he decided to wait until daylight and then rig a tow.

The crew at last made radio contact with Keith and talked him through their plans. He followed instructions on redistributing weight in the cabin, to help level the boat. At sunrise he donned a safety harness and prepared to make his way out to the foredeck, to receive the tow. Where some would have been disabled by fear and pain, Keith was composed and practical. The ex-para simply states:

*'I know what fear is like – you've got to overcome it.'*

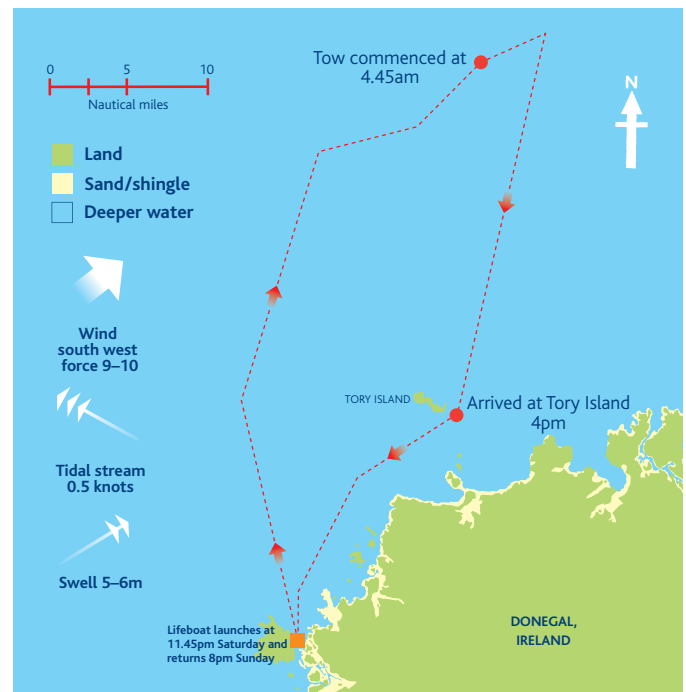
All but two of the lifeboat crew left the security of the wheelhouse and braved the elements to set up the tow. Anthon took the helm at the upper steering position and expertly manoeuvred the lifeboat to within 6m of the yacht, to give Keith the best chance of catching the heaving line. But just as Jimmy Early threw it, a huge wave hit the yacht and Keith was thrown over the far side, out of sight of the lifeboat crew.

After a few terrible minutes the lifeboatmen were amazed to see Keith climbing back onboard, using the lifeboat's heaving line, which had twisted around his leg. This was an extraordinary, even super-human, feat: Keith had five freshly broken ribs, severe bruising and, from an old injury, the use of only one arm. It was by sheer determination and strength that he secured himself and then the tow before retreating to the cockpit.

### Mercy mission

The closest land was Tory Island, 64 miles away so, at just 4 knots, the tow would take some 12 hours. Moreover, the yacht was rocking violently and the lifeboat crew feared for Keith's wellbeing. A large research vessel in the vicinity, *Celtic Explorer*, kindly gave the yacht some shelter and so reduced the sickening motion.

As the morning passed, Keith told the lifeboat crew he felt very tired and hungry.



A sight for sore eyes: Martin gains control of the *Nephele*

At midday, a Coast Guard helicopter returned to the scene. The crew were willing to winch Keith to safety, but he selflessly declined their offer: he thought it would be too dangerous for them.

By 2pm the storm was at last abating.



Keith sounded overtired and was repeatedly saying he was cold. The lifeboat crew suspected hypothermia and there was a good two hours still to go. Anthon considered that the conditions were at last safe enough to transfer someone to the yacht. Jimmy took the helm once again while Anthon manned the lifeboat's Y class inflatable with Martin Gallagher. Anthon explains: 'I volunteered as I'm experienced in small boats and, besides, all the other men are married.'

In a force 5–6 wind, Anthon manoeuvred the tiny boat between the Severn and *Nephele*. Martin climbed aboard with hot tea, biscuits and a thermal suit for Keith and to take control of the steering. It was too rough to recover the Y boat however, so Anthon travelled alongside the lifeboat until they were in the lee of Tory Island. The crew worked together to bring the yacht alongside the lifeboat, so Keith could at last be transferred. He was given dry clothes,

more to drink and hot food: 'The best I'd ever tasted.'

After 19 hours at sea, the exhausted lifeboat crew brought Keith and *Nephele* back to the safety of Burtonport Harbour and returned to station at Arranmore by 8pm. Keith was taken to hospital at Letterkenny

but discharged himself the following day and went on to complete his fundraising voyage, without further drama.

Keith came back to Arranmore with his wife Kathy to personally thank all involved in the operation, presenting a painting of ships on slate to representatives of the Irish Coast Guard, the RAF and the RNLI. 'The people at Arranmore lifeboat station have made Kathy and me feel part of their "family,"' says Keith. He is now planning another fundraising sail in aid of the RNLI – this time across the Atlantic!

The understated Anthon admits it was a 'tough' rescue. His efforts and skills have now been recognised with a Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on Vellum. He, in turn, praises the efforts of his experienced crew (who received a framed Chairman's letter) and commends Keith, 'who never gives up'.

## THE DETAIL

### THE DATE AND TIME

11.45pm Saturday 2 July 2005 to 8pm Sunday 3 July 2005

### THE CASUALTIES

10m yacht *Nephele* and solo yachtsman

### THE CONDITIONS

**Dark Weather:** Overcast  
**Wind:** South west. Force 5–storm force 10  
**Visibility:** Poor  
**Sea state:** 5–10m steep south westerly swells and breaking seas

### THE CREW

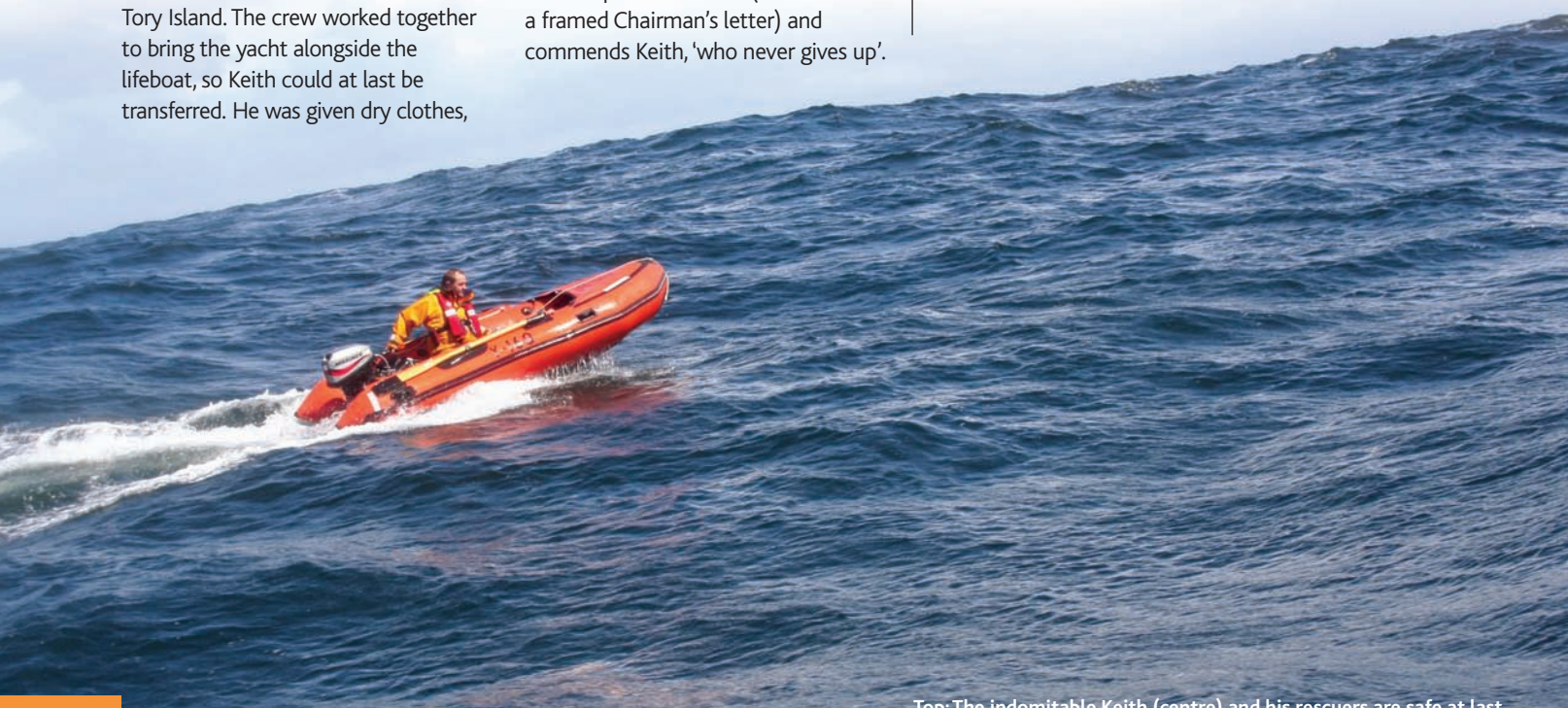
**Coxswain:** Anthon Kavanagh (39, 11 years on crew, 7 as Coxswain) **Deputy Second Coxswain:** Jimmy Early (49, part-time fisherman, 31 years on crew)  
**Mechanic:** Philip McCauley (34, 11 years on crew)  
**Third Mechanic:** Martin Gallagher (29, fisherman, 10 years on crew) **Crew Members:** Kieran Cox (43, construction worker, 18 years on crew), Manus O'Donnell (42, bus driver, 22 years on crew), Sean O'Donnell (41, part-time fisherman, 10 years on crew), Anthony Proctor (38, unemployed, 1 year on crew)

### THE LIFEBOAT

*Myrtle Maud* Severn class all-weather lifeboat, ON-1244 (17-22) **On station:** 1999  
**Funding:** £1.8M Legacies of Mrs Myrtle Maud Campbell-Orde, Mr Nigel Armitage Hardy and Mr Frank Moulson

### THE LIFEBOAT STATION

**Arranmore**  
**Established:** 1883. First lifeboat *Vandaleur* based at Rannagh on the south west of the island. Subsequent lifeboats based at Leabgarrow until the present all-weather station opened in 1997.  
**Previous gallantry awards:** Gold Medal to Coxswain John Boyle (1941); Silver Medals to Sergeant Patrick McPhillips (1887), Mechanic Teague Ward (1941) and Coxswain Philip Byrne (1967); Bronze Medals to Crew Members Philip Boyle, Philip Byrne, Neil Byrne, Bryan Gallagher, Patrick O'Donnell, Joseph Rogers (1941); Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on Vellum awarded to Coxswain and crew (1964), and five crew (1967)



Top: The indomitable Keith (centre) and his rescuers are safe at last  
Above: In force 5–6 winds, Anthon leaves the protection of the *Myrtle Maud* and takes to the Y boat





## Flying the flag

December and January are the busiest months for Surf Life Saving Canterbury, New Zealand, which employs professional lifeguards from around the world to support its volunteers. The 2006–07 season had only just started when visiting RNLI Lifeguard Ross MacLeod had to prove his worth

A man came racing up to the lifeguards patrolling on Waikuku beach. He had run almost a mile to tell them there was an emergency – a boat had capsized and casualties were struggling in the water. Ross and his colleague, New Zealander Jenna Evans, immediately launched their inshore rescue boat to investigate.

It took just 2–3 minutes to cover the passage back to the mouth of the Ashley River. They spotted the upturned 3m boat and found two men clinging to its bow. The men, in their 50s and 60s, were fully clothed but without lifejackets and were being buffeted by the surf and strong winds. Ross recalls:

*'They were exhausted and panicking. One man had his hand in the air to attract our attention, the other was struggling to keep himself above water.'*

Jenna entered the water with a rescue tube and expertly swam the men away from the part-submerged vessel. Once they were clear, Ross carefully drove the rescue boat in towards the casualties. One managed to climb aboard himself but the other was so exhausted it needed the strength of all three to haul him up and in.

The lifeguards sped back to Waikuku and the surf lifesaving club. Paramedics examined the men and treated them for exhaustion and cold before declaring them medically fit. The two told the lifeguards that the boat had been capsized by a rogue wave catching the vessel side on. One confessed he had been 'close to giving up'.

Ross remembers: 'The adrenaline was pumping. I felt really good.' And what of saving two lives? 'Jenna and I were just pleased that we could help.'

Along with the other RNLI lifeguards on exchange in New Zealand and Australia, Ross intends to return to lifeguarding in the UK. The homegrown lifeguards will benefit from Ross's antipodean experience but also from the presence of lifesaver Jenna, who has applied to work as an RNLI lifeguard through the same exchange programme.

Thumbs up for the lifeguard exchange programme! Through working on a New Zealand BeachEd programme, where children learn key safety messages while having an active and fun day at the beach, Ross has gained more skills and knowledge to benefit the RNLI.

Above: Brit Ross MacLeod and Kiwi Jenna Evans in lifeguard kit, New Zealand style

# Meet the team

Lifeboat crew, shore helpers, station officials and fundraising volunteers stand proudly with their new Tamar class all-weather lifeboat, boathouse and slipway at Tenby in Pembrokeshire

Photo: Nigel Millard





# The best of times, the worst of times

While searching for a missing fishing boat, the lifeboat crew smelt diesel – were the fears of a whole community to be realised?

On a mid-Winter evening, Helmsman Simon Rogers and his fellow Portaferry volunteers were training on Strangford Lough, County Down when they heard from Belfast Coastguard that an electronic mayday device (an EPIRB) had been activated near Ardglass. Had a boat sunk? False alarm or no, they reacted quickly, and the Atlantic 75 *Blue Peter V* was soon on her way, just in case.

It was to be a tough service for all four crew members, especially Sinead Breen, on her first shout. The more experienced Philip Sands-Robinson and Andrew Edwards were watching the waves for their Helmsman. On the 17-mile passage to Ardglass, they faced gale-force winds and 5m seas, all in total darkness.

The journey to Ardglass Harbour, which would usually take 8 minutes, took half an hour. Simon reflects: 'I knew the risks if we went any faster. Waves were coming from all directions. But I had confidence in the crew, our training and in the boat.' Meanwhile the Coastguard requested the assistance of Newcastle all-weather *Eleanor and Bryant Girling*. She launched at 8.50pm, under the command of Coxswain Francie Morgan.

## Triumph?

Nearing Ardglass Harbour at around 9pm, the Portaferry crew smelt diesel. Simon recalls: 'In my heart I dreaded the worst had happened.' On a quick sweep of the harbour a man told them that his son was missing, skipper of the fishing boat *Greenhill*. It was no false alarm.

Without further ado, the lifeboat left the shelter of harbour, back into darkness and the treacherous, icy waters. *Blue Peter V* was followed out of the harbour by a fleet of local fishing boats, wanting to help in the search.

Within minutes, the lifeboat crew spotted a liferaft just 500m from the harbour. There appeared to be no one inside, but as they got closer, a man's head appeared. Simon manoeuvred alongside the liferaft and the crew grabbed the fisherman – it was the skipper. It is an emotional memory for Simon:

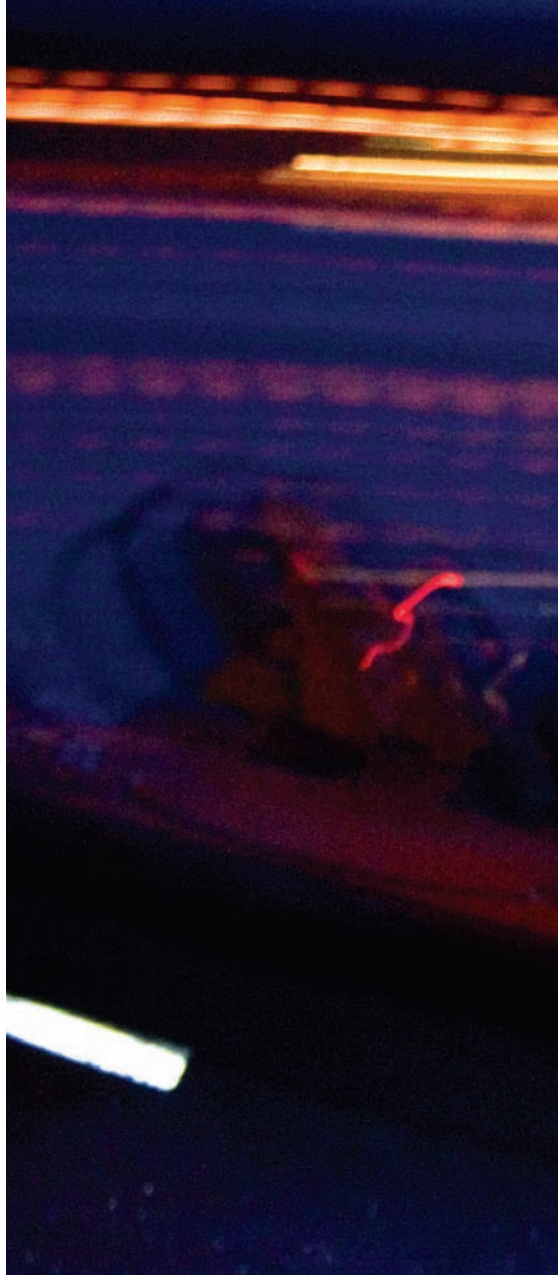
*'I don't know who was more pleased – me to see him or him to see me! It was fantastic – we knew at that moment that we had saved a life.'*

## Community and team

However, the elation was short lived. The skipper asked after the two men who had been with him before the boat sank. Simon remembers the man's reaction to hearing they hadn't yet been found: 'He went downhill quickly, the colour drained out of him.' Highly traumatised, wet through and suffering from severe hypothermia, the survivor needed urgent medical attention. They took the skipper straight to land and a waiting ambulance crew who transferred him to hospital.

Thanks to the RNLI, the waiting was over for one family, but the harbour was packed with local people, including families and friends of the remaining missing fishermen. They waited anxiously for news.

With no time to lose, the Portaferry lifeboat went straight back out. She was soon joined by the Newcastle all-weather. The Atlantic 75 searched close to the shoreline while the Mersey class searched further out. By 10pm, hope was fading of finding the two remaining fishermen alive. Simon and his crew were exhausted and it was time for a fresh crew to take over. He



was devastated that they hadn't found the two missing fishermen:

*'The passage to Ardglass was tough, but the worst part of the service was coming on land and meeting the families when I knew there was no news of their husbands and sons. We're trained for shouts in rough conditions but we're not trained for families desperate for good news.'*

## 'Bring my daddy home'

The search continued long into the night. Portaferry lifeboat completed three crew changes in all, with the logistics handled deftly by Lifeboat Operations Manager John Murray Senior (now retired) and other lifeboat station personnel. Belfast Coastguard coordinated an increasingly large-scale operation involving Coastguard teams on land and a police and Irish Coast Guard helicopter over the sea. By 2am, no one had been found and the search was called off until first light.

All morning, hundreds of locals searched to no avail but at 2pm the fisheries



Portaferry lifeboat saving lives, 24/7

Photo: Patrick Baird

protection vessel *Ken Vickers* located the wreck of *Greenhill* on the seabed off Ardglass using specialised sonar equipment. Newcastle and Portaferry lifeboats were released from service. Two days later, conditions had at last improved enough for volunteer divers to search around the wreck and they located a body. At the time of writing, the third man had still not been found.

A few days after the service, Simon revisited Ardglass with his father, RNLI Bronze Medal awardee John Rogers. He recalls seeing a drawing sent in by a child that took his breath away. The message to everyone involved in the search read: 'Bring my daddy home'.

In recognition of their role in the search for the missing fishermen, Helmsman Simon Rogers receives the Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on Vellum and all the crew Chairman's letters. If it hadn't been for them, another family would surely have lost their son that night.

**EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons)** are portable satellite communication units (see a selection below), designed to send an automated distress signal to search and rescue authorities ashore. The RNLI recommends that small craft carry an EPIRB if they sail more than 60 miles from the coast. EPIRBs are activated either manually, when it is physically lifted out of its bracket, or automatically, when the vessel sinks. The floating beacon emits a homing signal helping the rescue authorities to locate the vessel.



## THE DETAIL

### THE DATE AND TIME

Thursday 19 January 2006, 8.20pm–Friday 20 January 2006, 3pm

### THE CASUALTIES

Fishing Vessel *Greenhill* and three fishermen

### THE CONDITIONS

**Dark**  
**Weather:** Heavy storm **Visibility:** Poor **Wind:** South easterly force 7–8 **Sea state:** 4–5m swell

### THE CREW

Portaferry  
**1st crew:** Helmsman Simon Rogers (38, electronic engineer and charter boat skipper, 10 years on crew, 3 years as Helmsman), Crew Members Philip Sands-Robinson (40, builder, 6 years on crew), Andrew Edwards (38, marine biologist, 7 years on crew), Sinead Breen (30, hotel services manager, 18 months on crew)  
**2nd crew:** S Gordon, P Shanks, C Conway  
**3rd crew:** J Brownlee, D Smith, C Hagan  
**4th crew:** J Rogers, B Fitzmaurice, P Lawson

### THE LIFEBOAT

*Blue Peter V*, Atlantic 75 B-706 **On station:** June 1994  
**Funding:** £61,000 proceeds from *Blue Peter* TV appeal 1993–4

### THE LIFEBOAT STATION

Portaferry  
**Established:** 1980 **Other lifeboats:** D class (1980), C class (1984), Atlantic 21 (1986)  
**Previous gallantry awards:** Bronze Medal to Helmsman John Rogers (1983); Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on Vellum to Crew Members William Ellison and Francis Rogers (1983)

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# Tested to the limit

What would you do if you saw someone drowning? The RNLI is working to help the public be prepared for the worst

Every year, the RNLI's lifeboats launch thousands of times and its lifeguards assist thousands of beachgoers. A record of each and every service is kept and this vast database analysed. Is there a recurring pattern? What would have made a difference? How can such incidents be prevented in future? Saving lives through 'preventative' work has become just as important to the RNLI as saving lives by intervening in an emergency.

For example, the launch of a national standard for beach signs, devised and promoted by the RNLI's Beach safety team, was a highlight of 2005. Local authorities have since increasingly adopted the manual *A guide to beach safety signs, flags and symbols* as their 'bible' for design, manufacture and positioning of beach signage.

Meanwhile, the development of the confidential position reporting system MOB Guardian has been a success for the Fishing safety team (see page 3). The RNLI's safety teams are now focusing on three new projects.

### Public rescue equipment

Since the success of the beach sign project, beach operators have been asking the RNLI for help with choosing the public rescue equipment to locate on their beaches. There is now a confusing variety of more or less sophisticated gadgetry available to help the public assist someone in distress in the water

but, until now, there was no way of knowing which bit of kit is appropriate.

In response, the RNLI led research with RLSS UK, RoSPA, and the Universities of Wales and Plymouth to test 40 different pieces of public rescue equipment from around the world. There were many devices that could be discounted from the start, such as the gas-powered gun that shot a compressed piece of foam to the casualty. Not only was it very expensive and open to vandalism, it would be dangerous to 'shoot' something directly



at a casualty already in distress!

Members of the public were asked to take part and some devices were too complicated for them. RNLI Beach Safety Manager Steve Wills explains: 'The idea with a throw bag is that the rescuer holds on to the end of the rope and then throws the bag to the casualty and uses the rope to pull them to shore. The trained RNLI lifeguards who had used similar equipment before used this more effectively, but the volunteers failed to read the instructions and just threw the whole bag. However, many people found the traditional lifering too heavy, and only managed to throw it a few metres.'

The equipment's effectiveness during rescues was of course paramount but other factors considered included: any need for and ease of maintenance; ease of protecting from vandalism; ease of visibility on a crowded beach; where best to locate the device; and cost of replacement.

Having completed its study, the RNLI will launch a

national industry standard in May 2007 to assist UK beach operators. It is hoped that this will become the basis for an international standard.

Providing the public with rescue equipment is just one side of the equation, however, developing the skills to effectively use it if required is another. Therefore, a second phase of the project will begin in schools this Summer to help children to understand the importance of the equipment, to value it (thus reducing vandalism and theft) and to use it effectively.

### Slipway signage

With over half of lifeboat launches each year being to leisure craft users, the RNLI's '5 points to remember' should prove invaluable (see trial slipway sign design below). This safety campaign is currently focused on owners of small boats, especially those who use public slipways to launch. The RNLI chose four launch sites in 2006 and six more in 2007 to trial new signs, in the style of the acclaimed beach signs.

Funded by Dr Richard Towler of Kent, they feature the 'tips'

alongside information about the particular launch site.

The intention is to agree a national standard and prepare a slipway signage manual in the style of that for the beach. The RNLI will continue liaising with the UK Harbour Masters Association and various port and local authorities to encourage them to adopt any agreed standard and install signs at their slipways, providing those at risk with the simple but key knowledge to help keep themselves safe.

### Fishermen's liferafts

All craft above a certain size (including lifeboats) should have liferafts onboard. Modern liferafts are packed in hydrostatic release units, that is, they open and inflate on contact with water – or they should!

The RNLI is now working with the Fishing Industry Safety Group and SEAFISH, to trial a range of liferafts, using the survival pool at The Lifeboat College in Poole. Under investigation is how effective the rafts are in reality and how well they meet the particular needs of fishing vessels. In the long run, it is hoped that this project will save some of the many lives currently lost every year in fishing, one of the world's most dangerous industries.

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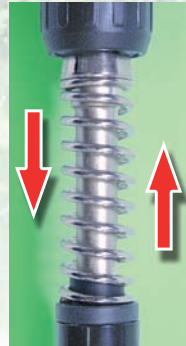
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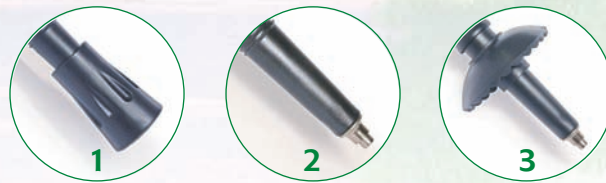
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Manchester M5 4JB. Please send me



ITEM	PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
1 Dalesman Walking Stick	£7.95		
2 Dalesman Walking Sticks	£12.95		
Please add £2.95 p&p to entire order			£2.95
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			

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Start date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Issue No. (Switch/Maestro/Solo Cards) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms \_\_\_\_\_  
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Tel No. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Please allow up to 28 days for delivery. Offer applies to UK mainland inc. N. Ireland only.



# Sincere thanks

Tales of lives dramatically saved in the waters around the British Isles are often reported in the media, and of course *the Lifeboat* – but the survivor's voice is rarely heard. Here's an insight into two rescues from the rescuees' point of view

Alasdair Macintyre of Loughborough, Leicestershire, wrote this email to Alderney lifeboat station a fortnight after his rescue, then sent a donation, and has since become an RNLI Shoreline supporter.

*'Please pass on our sincere thanks to the Alderney lifeboat crew and to the Coastguard for our rescue.'*

*'On 5 September at around 4am our yacht Kamakura was heading for Braye Harbour when we hit rocks around Burhou Island. It was a terrifying experience for us. The yacht was thrashing around and we didn't know if she would go over and break up.'*

*'We sent out a Mayday distress call, which had an immediate response asking for our position and other information. The incident was handled by all concerned in a very professional way resulting in the lifeboat arriving around 20 minutes later. Everybody who took part is to be congratulated for a 110% effort.'*

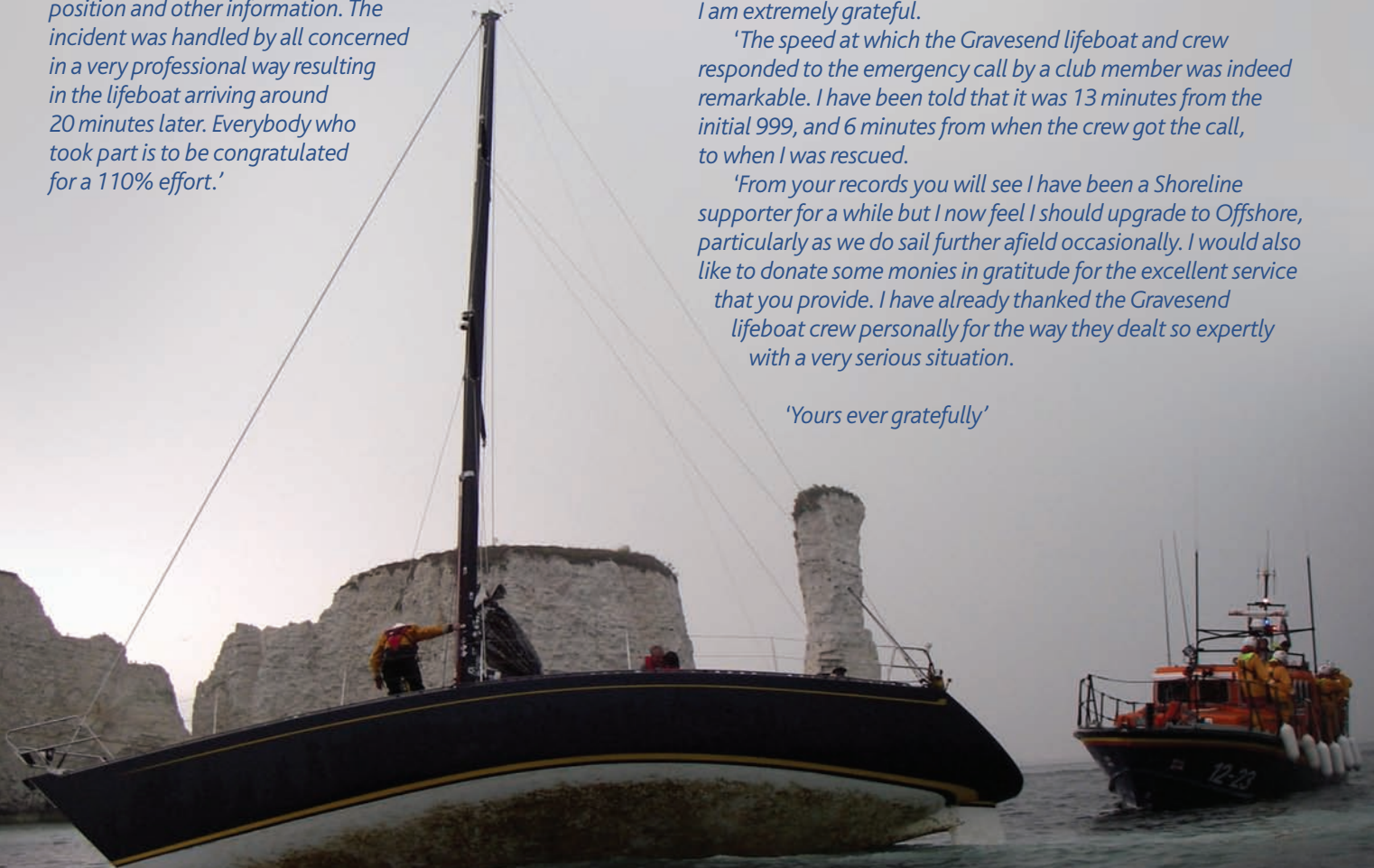
For Jim Mortimer, it was something of a shock to need the services of a charity he'd supported for years:

*'On 29 May at approximately 6pm I found myself in the water at the Thurrock Yacht Club clinging to my upturned dinghy. Although I consider myself a very strong swimmer I would not have wanted to put this to the test in such a strong ebbing tide. It was therefore fortuitous for me that the RNLI, in its wisdom, has such a welcome service covering the River Thames, for which I am extremely grateful.'*

*'The speed at which the Gravesend lifeboat and crew responded to the emergency call by a club member was indeed remarkable. I have been told that it was 13 minutes from the initial 999, and 6 minutes from when the crew got the call, to when I was rescued.'*

*'From your records you will see I have been a Shoreline supporter for a while but I now feel I should upgrade to Offshore, particularly as we do sail further afield occasionally. I would also like to donate some monies in gratitude for the excellent service that you provide. I have already thanked the Gravesend lifeboat crew personally for the way they dealt so expertly with a very serious situation.'*

*'Yours ever gratefully'*



# Did you know?

- The RNLI has over 140 shops throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland.
- RNLI shops are run by hardworking volunteers.
- RNLI shops sell a great range of souvenirs and gifts for children and adults alike and play a vital part in our fundraising efforts.

*Don't just take our word for it, why not come and see for yourself?*

If you visit three of our shops and make a purchase between 6 April and 30 September 2007, you could win one of three cases of *Southern Lights* wine from the award-winning Bonnievale Wine Cellar.

*Buy anything from a lifeboat pen to a beach towel* - then fill in your competition coupon and set off to the next shop!

To help you on your travels we've produced an RNLI shop location map, which will be available in our shops complete with the competition entry form.

*So please come and visit us this summer, we'd love to see you!*



**BONNIEVALE WINE CELLAR**  
ROBERTSON WINE VALLEY  
SOUTH AFRICA

\* The prize draw is open to all over 18 years of age who enter using the official entry form, except for employees of the RNLI, their subsidiary companies and their families.



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**Lifeboats**





## Inshore lifeboats

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

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

### RAMSGATE

**ON-1197(14-02)**:Jul 06,09(x2), 13(x2),14,19(x3),29,31,Aug 03, 14,20,26,28,29,22,24  
**B-765**:Jul 06,09(x2),13(x2), 19(x3),21,27(x2),31,Aug 03,05, 14,19,20,25,26,28,29,01,11,16, 24,25,30  
**RED BAY**  
**B-728**:Aug 01,13,26,28,29,05,24  
**REDCAR**  
**B-777**:Jul 02,03,09,11,12,23,24, 25,26,Aug 04(x2),13,29,15,16  
**D-523**:Jul 03,24,Aug 04(x2),11, Sep 11,15,16  
**RHYL**  
**ON-1183(12-24)**:Jul 02,03,12, Aug 10(x2),12  
**D-632**:Jul 01(x2),02(x2),03(x2), 04,06,12(x2),14,15(x2),16, 18(x5),19(x5),20,21,22(x3),23, 25(x6),26,27,28,29,30(x6)  
**D-660**:Aug 05(x2),10(x2),22,28, Sep 01,05,09,10(x2),13,15  
**ROCK**  
**D-625**:Aug 12(x2),13(x2),14,22, Sep 09  
**D-634**:Jul 02,07(x2),16,31(x2), Aug 01(x2),03(x2),07(x2),09  
**ROSSLARE HARBOUR**  
**ON-1276(17-43)**:Jul 15(x2), 17,22  
**ON-1279(17-46)**:Sep 07,14  
**RYE HARBOUR**  
**B-727**:Jul 02,12,15,18,23(x2), Aug 13,27,28,04  
**SALCOMBE**  
**ON-1130(47-022)**:Jul 01,08,20, 21,Aug 04,29,01,29  
**B-794**:Jul 01(x2),08(x2),23, 24,26,Aug 10,13(x3),25, Sep 05,06,11,13  
**SCARBOROUGH**  
**ON-1175(12-18)**:Jul 25,Aug 12, 22,27(x2),28(x2),29,18,20,22  
**D-560**:Jul 11,Aug 08,27(x3),31, Sep 11  
**SEAHOUSES**  
**ON-1173(12-16)**:Jul 30, Aug 02,28,29,09  
**D-529**:Jul 25,30, Aug 02,27,28,29,09(x2)  
**SELSEY**  
**ON-1138(47-025)**:Jul 05  
**ON-1146(47-031)**:Jul 14,19, Aug 18,23,25  
**D-533**:Jul 15,16, Aug 07(x2),10,15,25,29,19  
**SENNEN COVE**  
**ON-1121(47-016)**:Jul 18,28,31  
**D-601**:Jul 18(x2)  
**D-624**:Aug 22,29,15  
**SHEERNESS**  
**ON-1211(14-13)**:Jul 02,16(x2), 26,31,Aug 09,13,22,25,28, Sep 08,09,12  
**D-513**:Jul 02,15,16,20,21,23, 25,31,Aug 20,21(x2),29,02(x2), 11,16,23  
**SHERINGHAM**  
**B-702**:Jul 06,Aug 02,09,23

### SHOREHAM HARBOUR

**ON-1158(47-040)**:Aug 03,06, 27,29,08  
**D-645**:Jul 02(x2),05,08,09, 16(x2),20,23,31,Aug 04,06, 08(x2),13,15,20,28,29,04(x3), 09,15,16(x2),26  
**SILLOTH**  
**B-714**:Jul 07,Aug 05  
**SKEGNESS**  
**ON-1166(12-008)**:Jul 04(x2), 13,Aug 08,12,22,29,03,10  
**D-573**:Jul 13,19,23(x3),27(x2), 30(x6),31,Aug 05,08(x4),09(x2), 16,19(x2),20,22,26,29,03(x2)  
**SKERRIES**  
**B-747**:Jul 07,09,21,22,28, Aug 05,29,03,15,28  
**SLIGO BAY**  
**B-718**:Jul 08,Aug 24,29,03,14  
**SOUTH BROADS**  
**XP-42**:Jul 21,23(x2)  
**D-492**:Jul 17,21,23,Aug 27, Sep 02  
**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA**  
**B-776**:Jul 01,02(x5),03,09(x3), 14,15(x2),17,19,22,23(x2),26, 29(x2),30,31, Aug 01,02,20(x2),22,28(x3), Sep 02(x3),07,09,10,24  
**D-527**:Jul 15,25,Aug 05,20(x2), 27(x2),29,03,10(x2)  
**D-633**:Jul 02,04,14,17(x2), 18(x5),30,Aug 01(x3),20,25, Sep 02,15(x2)  
**H-001**:Sep 17(x2)  
**H-004**:Jul 01,02(x2),06,12,18, 19,25,Aug 27  
**H-006**:Jul 29  
**SOUTHWOLD**  
**B-750**:Jul 08,09,19,28,31, Aug 01,17,29,09,18,19  
**ST ABBS**  
**B-722**:Jul 13,16  
**ST AGNES**  
**D-641**:Jul 23(x2),27, Aug 10,11,13  
**ST BEES**  
**B-719**:Jul 19,10,17,29,23  
**ST CATHERINE**  
**B-772**:Aug 16,29,03  
**ST DAVIDS**  
**ON-1139(47-026)**:Jul 09,26, Aug 03,05,09,25,31, Sep 03,07,13,29,16,24(x2)  
**D-488**:Aug 09,29,Aug 31,03,07  
**D-543**:Jul 11,29  
**ST HELIER**  
**ON-1157(47-039)**:Jul 14,15,19, 22,31,Aug 08,10,29,01,19  
**B-756**:Jul 22,Aug 08,29,19,21  
**ST IVES**  
**ON-1167(12-009)**:Jul 22, Aug 13,29,06  
**D-515**:Jul 14,21,22,26, Aug 07,13,20,29,05(x2),09,14  
**ST MARY'S**  
**ON-1229(17-11)**:Jul 09,14(x2), 18,Aug 23,30,29,07  
**ST PETER PORT**  
**ON-1203(17-04)**:Jul 09(x2),17, Aug 06,10,11,16,28, Sep 01,02,03(x2)  
**ON-1278(17-45)**:Sep 12  
**STAITHES AND RUNSWICK**  
**B-788**:Jul 03,07,24,29(x3), Aug 06,16(x2),28

### STORNOWAY

**ON-1238(17-18)**:Jul 01,05,10, 31(x2),Aug 02,04,12,18, Sep 07(x2)  
**STRANRAER**  
**D-538**:Jul 30  
**STROMNESS**  
**ON-1236(17-16)**:Jul 01,08,26, Aug 05,11,24,25(x2), Sep 05,19,23  
**SUNDERLAND**  
**B-762**:Jul 02,13,14(x3),16,17, 25,28(x2),30(x2),Aug 11,13,17, 22,27,29,06,10,13,20,27(x2)  
**D-608**:Jul 02,05,24,28,29(x3), 30,Aug 01,17,23,29,01,05,13  
**SWANAGE**  
**ON-1182(12-23)**:Jul 02,08,22, 25,30(x2),Aug 07,08,13,14  
**ON-1187(12-28)**:Sep 01,04, 06,08(x2),10,30  
**D-610**:Sep 08,10(x2),12,15,19  
**D-613**:Jul 28,30,Aug 07,08(x4), 12(x2),13,29,02,01  
**D-625**:Jul 20,22(x3)  
**TEDDINGTON**  
**D-576**:Aug 07  
**D-648**:Jul 01,02(x2),10, 12(x2),16,18,21,26, Aug 07,20(x3),23,26, Sep 10,14,16,20,23  
**TEIGNMOUTH**  
**B-588**:Jul 03,15(x4),25,29,30  
**B-809**:Jul 01,Aug 03,09(x2),17, 18,19(x2),22,29, Sep 03,06,07,10,28  
**TENBY**  
**ON-1115(47-012)**: Sep 04,09(x2)  
**ON-1281(16-02)**:Jul 04,12,16, 22,27(x2), Aug 01,11,17,28,29,31  
**D-562**:Jul 02,04,08,14,16(x2), 17,22,Aug 01(x2),03,05,07(x3), 08,10,14,18,26(x2),29,30, Sep 03,10  
**THE LIZARD**  
**ON-1145(47-030)**:Jul 15, Aug 03,12,13,23,26(x2), Sep 23(x2),28  
**THE MUMBLES**  
**ON-1096(47-005)**:Jul 02  
**ON-1127(47-019)**:Jul 17,27,31, Aug 02,05,08,11,21,27, Sep 09(x2),11  
**D-623**:Jul 02,09(x2),12,13,15, 16(x3),23(x2),29,30, Aug 02,03,06,10,23,27(x2), Sep 06,08,09,10,26  
**THURSO**  
**ON-1273(17-42)**:Jul 06,11, 12,13,15,16,29,01  
**TIGHNABRUACH**  
**B-743**:Aug 02,29,02,08  
**TOBERMORY**  
**ON-1263(17-34)**:Aug 09,11,13, 14,18,19,20,29,30  
**ON-1270(17-39)**:Jul 23,28  
**TORBAY**  
**ON-1255(17-28)**:Jul 02,10,16, 18,25,28,Aug 01,05,09,13,14,15, 21,22(x3),24,25,26,29(x2), Sep 02,03,08,14,21,27  
**D-651**:Jul 01(x3),02,04,08,12, 15,16(x2),22,25(x2),27(x2), Aug 03(x2),08,16,17,21,26, 29,31,29,03,05,14

### TOWER

**E-001**:Jul 18,19(x2),20(x3), 22(x2),23(x2),24,25(x3),26  
**E-004**:Jul 01,02(x2),03(x4), 04,05(x2),06,08,09(x3),10,13(x4), 14(x2),15,16(x2),17,28,29(x3), Aug 03,06,08,09(x2),10,11,12, 14(x2),16(x2),18(x3),29,01(x2), 03(x3),06(x2),07,08(x2),10,12, 14(x2),15(x3),16(x2),17(x3),18, 19,20,21,22(x2),23,24(x3), 25(x2),28(x2),29(x3),30(x2)  
**E-005**:Jul 27(x4),Aug 19(x2), 21(x2),22(x2),23(x2),24(x2),25, 27,28,29,31  
**TRAMORE**  
**D-643**:Jul 23,Aug 02(x2), 17,21,27(x2),29,08  
**TREARDUR BAY**  
**B-731**:Jul 13,15,16,22(x2),26, 30,Aug 13,16,23,27,30,29,02  
**D-614**:Jul 15,16,Aug 07,12, 16,27  
**TROON**  
**ON-1253(14-32)**:Jul 04  
**ON-1275(14-38)**:Jul 13,17(x2), 19(x3),20,27,Aug 09,24,29, Sep 07,08,18  
**D-506**:Jul 04,06,13,17,18,19, 27(x2),29,Aug 24,29,29,08,18  
**TYNEMOUTH**  
**ON-1242(17-20)**:Jul 03,05,08, 31,Aug 03,09,11,31, Sep 03,08,10,12  
**D-535**:Jul 03,11,31,Aug 03, Sep 04,08,11  
**VALENTIA**  
**ON-1218(17-07)**:Jul 13,19, Aug 02,03,20,29,09  
**WALMER**  
**B-589**:Jul 13(x2)  
**D-514**:Jul 08,19,23,Aug 27, Sep 14  
**WALTON AND FRINTON**  
**ON-1154(47-036)**:Jul 08,10,14, 16,23,28,Aug 07,12, Sep 02,09,27

### WELLS

**ON-1161(12-003)**: Jul 15,22(x2)  
**D-512**:Jul 09,11,15,23,25, Aug 02,09(x3),16,29,05,06(x2)  
**WEST KIRBY**  
**D-612**:Jul 01,13(x2),22,28(x2), Aug 12  
**WEST MERSEA**  
**B-761**:Jul 07,08,09(x2),13,14,18, 20,21,24,26,29(x2), Aug 01(x2),Aug 08,21,29,02,09  
**WESTON-SUPER-MARE**  
**B-701**:Jul 08(x2),23,Aug 08,29  
**D-493**:Aug 08,29  
**D-537**:Jul 01,03,08,16(x2),18,25  
**WEXFORD**  
**D-644**:Jul 03  
**D-655**:Jul 28,Aug 11, Sep 07,19,21,22  
**WEYMOUTH**  
**ON-1261(17-32)**:Jul 13,22(x2), 26(x2),27,29,30,Aug 05,08,09, 12(x2),13,23(x2),26, Sep 15,17,24  
**B-746**:Jul 01,02,05,15,16,21,26, 28,Aug 05,06,08,12(x2),14,18, 23,29,01

### WHITBY

**ON-1212(14-14)**:Jul 15, Aug 16,19,27,28,29,07,08,19  
**D-503**:Jul 15,Aug 16  
**D-521**:Jul 22,25,Aug 16,17,27, Sep 19,26  
**WHITSTABLE**  
**B-764**:Jul 05,07,08(x4),09,12,13, 15(x2),16(x2),17,19(x2),21, 22(x2),23,24,25(x3),26,27,28, 29(x3), Aug 13,15,20(x2),26, Sep 03(x2),09(x2),12,15,21,23, 25(x2)  
**WICK**  
**ON-1224(14-20)**:Jul 03,04,18, Aug 06,09,20, Sep 14,16,19(x2),25  
**WICKLOW**  
**ON-1153(47-035)**:Jul 21(x3), Aug 09,26  
**D-510**:Aug 06,19(x2)  
**WITHERNSEA**  
**D-541**:Jul 01,07,15,Aug 20, Sep 09,13,25,26  
**WORKINGTON**  
**D-629**:Aug 23  
**YARMOUTH**  
**ON-1249(17-25)**:Jul 15,20, 23(x3),27,Aug 16(x2),19,21, 23,25,27,29(x3),29,02(x2),19  
**YOUGHAL**  
**B-769**:Jul 06,17,23  
**B-780**:Jul 30,29,02,08

The services listed here are those for which returns had been received at RNLI Headquarters and processed by 18 January 2007

## Stop press

In 2006, RNLI lifeboats launched 8,377 times (the highest ever) and rescued 8,015 people; and RNLI lifeguards assisted 10,331 people and saved 63 lives.

## On station

D-668 **Colin Bramley Parker**, St Ives, 5 February 2007  
(D-515 **Spirit of the RCT** withdrawn to ILC, Cowes)  
B-816 **David Page**, St Helier, 10 January 2007  
(B-756 **Eve Pank** withdrawn to ILC, Cowes)  
B-808 **Donald McLauchlan**, Walmer, 14 December 2006  
(B-589 **James Burgess** withdrawn to ILC, Cowes)  
D-663 **Duggie Rodbard**, Walmer, 13 December 2006  
(D-514 **Lord Kitchener** withdrawn to ILC, Cowes)  
B-812 **Frank William Walton**, Kilkeel, 28 November 2006  
(B-593 **Valerie Hull** withdrawn to ILC, Cowes)  
ON-1284(16-05) **Helen Comrie**, Longhope, 26 October 2006  
(ON-1149(52-43) **The Queen Mother** withdrawn)  
B-811 **Hylton Burdon**, Cullercoats, 9 January 2007  
(B-591 **Edmund and Joan White** withdrawn to ILC, Cowes)  
D-661 **Jane Ann III**, Wells, 9 January 2007  
(D-512 **Jane Ann II** withdrawn to ILC, Cowes)  
B-813 **Muriel and Leslie**, Port Erin, 1 November 2006  
(B-594 **Herbert and Edith** withdrawn to ILC, Cowes)  
B-815 **Peterborough Beer Festival III** placed on service in the relief fleet, 21 December 2006  
D-664 **Puffin**, Burnham-on-Sea, 11 December 2006 (see page 5)  
(D-552 **Global Marine** returned to the relief fleet)  
ON-1155(47-037) **Sarah Emily Harrop**, Calshot, re-allocated from the relief fleet, 3 February 2007  
(ON-1159(52-45) **Mabel Williams** withdrawn from service)  
B-814 **Sheila Stenhouse**, Kirkcudbright, 14 December 2006  
(B-585 **Peter and Grace Ewing** withdrawn to ILC, Cowes)  
D-658 **Sir Y Flint**, Flint, 19 December 2006  
(D-505 **Arthur Bygraves** returned to the relief fleet)  
B-810 **Tabby Cat** placed on service in the relief fleet, 21 December 2006  
D-667 **The Rotary Centennial Queen**, Anstruther, 30 November 2006  
(D-461 **Spirit of RAOC** returned to the relief fleet)  
D-656 **William Robert Saunderson**, Llandudno, 22 November 2006  
(D-508 **John Saunderson** returned to the relief fleet)

## Deaths

**William Arnell** – Selsey former Crew Member  
**Maureen Belbin** – Charminster branch Treasurer and Secretary  
**Howard Bell** MBE – Honorary Liaison Officer Eastern Region and former Harwich Chairman  
**Derek Chambers** – former Portrush Coxswain/Mechanic  
**Darren Cleaver** – Barmouth Third Mechanic and Crew Member  
**Ruby Gooch** – former Hounslow committee member for 40 years  
**Eileen Morris** – Kings Heath fundraising branch President and founder member  
**Betty Mobbs** – Honorary Life Governor, Chilterns fundraising branch cofounder, former Chairman, President and Patron  
**Geoffrey (Vicar Geoff) Williams** – Burry Port former Crew Member



The RNLI's very last Arun class lifeboat on service (right) is finally withdrawn, replaced at Calshot by a former relief Tyne class (left). The first Arun, named *Arun*, was built in 1971 and had a wooden hull. The last, *Duke of Atholl*, was completed in 1990 and served for 17 years in the relief fleet. When introduced, the Arun was the only all-weather lifeboat with a speed of almost 20 knots that offered complete crew protection in the watertight wheelhouse. A Design Council award was presented to the RNLI in 1982 in recognition of the outstandingly good hull shape and overall design of the boat. Ex-RNLI Aruns can be found on service in Iceland, Finland and China Photo: Nicholas Leach/Ships Monthly

## Long service awards

**Gerry Adams** – 48 years, Barry, former Crew Member now Lifeboat Press Officer. (Also Occupational Health Nurse and volunteer Ambulance Service First Responder)  
**Chris Ayres** – 50 years, Sheringham Boat house Manager  
**Anthony Dynan** – 20 years, Maplethorpe Crew Member  
**Anthony Freeman** – 20 years, Maplethorpe Crew Member  
**John Harris** – 22 years, Workington, Head Launcher  
**Ray McDermott** – 16 years, Skegness former Crew Member and Shore Helper  
**David Thompson** – 23 years, Workington, Second Mechanic

## Appointments

**Edward Nuzum** – The Lizard Deputy Launching Authority  
**Clare Pritchard** – Conwy, Crew Member (first woman in station's history)

## Retirements

**Fergus Hopkins** – Youghal Crew Member  
**Jim Hughes** – Flamborough Deputy Launching Authority and Lifeboat Press Officer  
**Joe MacLeod** – Stornoway Crew Member  
**Paul Theaker** – Staithes Crew Member

## In memoriam

**Ieuan Bateman** – St Davids Crew Member's death, on service to the French trawler *Notre Dame de Fatima* 50 years ago, was remembered 8 November 2006



# Peep into the past

Fascinating excerpts from *the Lifeboat* archives

## ... 100 years ago

The May 1907 *Journal* reported on experiments to improve life-belts and the early days of a new era in lifeboat crew kit:

*'The life-belt produced by the experiments is made of kapok and is fitted closely to the body by means of straps and buckles, allowing full freedom for the arms besides affording warmth and protection. The crews of the life-boat stations who have tried and tested the kapok life-belts have reported on them in most*

*favourable terms and it has therefore been decided to adopt the belt generally, the existing cork belts being replaced as they wear out or deteriorate.'*



## ... 50 years ago



An account of a lifesaving service carried out by the Sheringham lifeboat crew featured prominently in the March 1957 *Journal*. The lifeboat launched on the morning of 31 October to the 1,598-ton SS *Wimbledon*, which was taking on water and being washed ashore. A fresh gale was blowing and

the heavy seas had already claimed the life of the ship's master, who had been washed overboard. The *Journal* reported that the Sheringham Coxswain, HE West, faced a difficult rescue:

*'There was a high confused sea; little of the Wimbledon remained above water; and to manoeuvre the boat both the*

*coxswain and the mechanic, EC Craske, had to work in the closest and most exact unison. The mechanic was up to his arm-pits in water more than once and had to hold the radio-telephone microphone above his head to keep it dry.'*

Sheringham's lifeboat crew, under Coxswain West, managed to take off the remaining 18 crew before the ship sank (see the Sheringham lifeboat after the service, pictured left). The Coxswain was awarded an RNLI Silver Medal for Gallantry in recognition of his part in the service.

In 'New Ways of Raising Money', it was reported that Miss Marian Tonge gave a hair styling demonstration to raise funds for the RNLI's Blackpool branch.

## ... 25 years ago

The Spring 1982 *Journal* began on a sorrowful note, reporting on the loss of the Penlee lifeboat and her crew (also see *the Lifeboat* Winter 2006/07).

*'The loss [...] stunned people throughout Great Britain and Ireland and thousands of messages of sympathy from many parts of the world were received by the bereaved families.'*

December 1981 had been a tragic month for the Danish lifeboat service too. The *Journal* reported that the RNLI had sent a message of deep sympathy to the Danish lifeboat authority on the loss of six of its lifeboatmen. The men died when their boat capsized in rough seas as they went to the aid of three men on a wrecked fishing vessel off north west Jutland.

On a far happier note, the *Journal* also reported on the 1982 London Boat Show, which had been opened by the Beaumaris lifeboat crew and the 'fix it for you' broadcaster Jimmy Saville, an honorary member of the crew.



# Dispatches

## RNLI Photographer of the Year 2006

The first ever RNLI Photographer of the Year competition, open to everyone at the charity's lifeboat stations and lifeguard units, recorded the drama of working in a lifesaving environment using the Pentax waterproof cameras newly issued to help raise awareness of the RNLI.

Winners were announced at the London Boat Show, with prizes donated by Pentax UK Ltd and presented by BBC *South Today* weather presenter Georgie Palmer.

### Overall winner (pictured)

John Brooks, Portsmouth lifeboat station

### Best all-weather lifeboat image

Ray Chapman, Skegness lifeboat station

### Best inshore lifeboat image

John Gilmour, Swanage lifeboat station

### Best shorehelper image

Michael Picknett, Redcar lifeboat station

### Best lifeguard image

Robin Howell, Perranporth lifeguard unit

### Highly commended

Richard Glyn, Workington lifeboat station

See [rnli.org.uk/photooftheyear](http://rnli.org.uk/photooftheyear) for more pictures and details of runners up. Also see page 33.



## Home from the sea

The RNLI's music division has combined forces with the world-famous Band of HM Royal Marines and recording company Clovelly to produce another in their highly successful series of CDs.

*Home from the sea* will be available at the RNLI AGM in May and then at [rnli.org.uk](http://rnli.org.uk), by calling 0870 6001824, and at selected RNLI shops.



## Pow wow

There is often confusion in the media between the RNLI and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). Of course the RNLI is a world-leading charity independent of Government while the MCA is responsible for implementing the Government's maritime safety policy and enforcing maritime law, but they work best side by side. In February 2007, the organisation's two Chief Executives met at the RNLI's Headquarters.

Peter Cardy (pictured) formally became the MCA's CE in March, succeeding

Acting Chief Executive John Astbury after five years as CE of Macmillan Cancer Support. He brings over 30 years of varied experience, much within the charity sector, as well as being a recreational sailor.

The RNLI's Chief Executive Andrew Freemantle says: 'I look forward to working closely with Peter and the MCA to ensure together we save even more lives at sea.'





## New Year Honours

The following have been honoured by HM The Queen:

**Member, Order of the British Empire (MBE)**

### For charitable services

Mrs Alison Saunders, RNLI Trustee and Deputy Chairman

### For service to communities

Mrs Marion Watson, member of Helensburgh RNLI fundraising committee and RNLI Life Governor – service to Helensburgh and Lomond;  
Mr John Johnston, former Eyemouth lifeboat station Coxswain – service to Berwickshire

A new emblem for wearing on everyday clothing is now available to anyone appointed GBE, DBE, KBE, CBE, OBE, MBE or who holds the British Empire Medal. It doesn't replace the badge and ribbon, which will continue to be presented at the Investiture. The emblem costs £15 including postage and packing from Toye Kenning & Spencer Limited. See [www.tksmedalsandribbons.co.uk](http://www.tksmedalsandribbons.co.uk), email [OBE.EMBLEM@toye.com](mailto:OBE.EMBLEM@toye.com) or telephone 0247 684 8866 for more information.



## Exe marks the spot

It's an endless task to maintain the 230-plus RNLI lifeboat stations around the coast of the UK and ROI ensuring both operational function and good working conditions. Exmouth in Devon is next on the list.

Currently the all-weather crew have only temporary cabins on the quayside and use public toilets. Their lifeboat is impossible to launch at very low tides across the sand bar that's accumulated at the mouth of the River Exe. Lying afloat, it can only be reached by inflatable boarding boat, which can be hazardous and takes an average of 10 minutes.

The inshore lifeboat is housed further along the seafront and across the road from the beach in a 1903 building. Launching can be delayed crossing the busy road and may be impossible in heavy seas.

Subject to consultation with the District Council, English Nature, the Environment Agency and Highways Department, a new combined boathouse is proposed, at a sheltered site, with carriage launching facilities, modern changing and training rooms, a mechanic's workshop, and improved station access for crew and visitors alike.

The Exmouth crew and supporters in their community have already raised an amazing £880,000 towards the £1.6M needed for their new lifeboat station. If you can help them raise the rest then please contact Appeal Manager David Hannah at [dhannah@rnli.org.uk](mailto:dhannah@rnli.org.uk) or call 0800 543210 to make a donation and quote 'Exmouth'.

## Kay to the rescue

What led BBC *Midlands Today* presenter Kay Alexander (pictured centre) to a conviction that she must support the RNLI? On her recent visit to Angle lifeboat station in Pembrokeshire she explained that it was seeing the lifeboat launch during childhood seaside holidays, and later realising that the RNLI's volunteers risk all to save strangers in terrifying circumstances. 'The crews deserve only the best, safest equipment possible,' she says.

Kay is now Patron of the City of

Birmingham's Tamar lifeboat for Angle £1M appeal. An evening reception hosted by Kay and husband Brian Conway launched the 'Roll of Honour – 207 in 2007', collecting pledges to be displayed at Angle lifeboat station.

For more information about the Tamar lifeboat for Angle appeal, please contact Regional Fundraising Manager June Addison on 01785 284583, [jaddison@rnli.org.uk](mailto:jaddison@rnli.org.uk), or see [rnli.org.uk/tamar4angle](http://rnli.org.uk/tamar4angle).





## No ordinary person.

HENRY BLOGG (1876-1954) dedicated an amazing 53 years of his life to saving the lives of people at sea. He joined the Cromer lifeboat crew in 1894 at the age of just 18 and served for 37 years as its Coxswain.

On his retirement in 1947, his lifeboats had rescued an astonishing 873 lives – an extraordinary contribution, and testimony to the fact he was awarded the RNLI Gold Medal for Gallantry three times and its Silver Medal four times – a record that still stands today. Many have remembered the courage of crew members like Henry by giving the RNLI a gift in their Will. We desperately need the help of people like you as legacy gifts are a vital source of our income. Almost six out of ten launches are only possible thanks to people who remembered the RNLI in their Will.

To find out how you can contribute towards the extraordinary work of the RNLI by leaving a gift in your Will, please call John Marshall, Legacy Enquiries Officer on: 01202 663032 or visit our website, [rnli.org.uk](http://rnli.org.uk).

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Train one, save many

L-R: Kieran, Martin, Paul and trainer Bernie try to keep in mind the six Ps  
Photo: Anne Millman



# Mastering the technique

Although it's not the urgent call of pagers that wake the crew members from their slumbers but the unwelcome shrill of alarm clocks, it's no ordinary morning for Kieran and Paul. They are staying for a week at The Lifeboat College in Poole with the aim of passing a world-class exam

Their classroom is also rather unusual – the RNLI's new training boat, *Ian and Anne Butler*. A Hardy Commodore 42, it's the first of two that will replace the current Nelsons, which have reached the end of their serviceable life. The boat's specification has been modified to suit RNLI requirements: she is built in anonymous grey and the interior includes onboard toilets, showers, a galley, central heating and air conditioning but also a training console featuring a multitude of electronic displays, a classroom area, and berths that sleep up to seven.

## Decades of experience

Kieran Cotter is far from being a novice. He joined the crew at Baltimore, County Cork, in

1975, making him the station's longest serving crew member, and has been Coxswain for the last 17 years. He is also self employed, running his own grocery store and fuel delivery business.

Paul Eastment is a divisional assessor trainer for the RNLI's West division. With 10 years' experience on Porthcawl's Atlantic lifeboat, he has spent the last four instructing and assessing the competence-based training at all 31 inshore lifeboat stations in Wales and on the Isle of Man.

These two are aspiring to the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Yachtmaster Offshore qualification. They are joined by Martin Double, full-time Coxswain at The Mumbles, Swansea. With 19 years on

the crew and four years as Coxswain, he's also the station's Training Coordinator. Martin has already passed his Yachtmaster so he has the luxury of observing the course to find out the level required and the techniques used to instruct. He'll put into practise what he's seen when he next organises and teaches courses for his crew.

The practical part of the Yachtmaster course is unlike most run at the College as it is not based on instruction. It involves two days during which the crew familiarise themselves with the boat and equipment and then two days for the exam, including some night-time work. One of two training coxswains takes charge of each part of the course, effectively playing 'good guy:bad guy'.

The 'good guy' for the first two days is Bernie Mannings. He focuses on preparing and encouraging the candidates. Bernie has lately returned from two years on an exchange to the US Coast Guard's prestigious Yorktown Training Centre in Virginia and has held his post for five years. The Yachtmaster Examiner and 'bad guy' this week is Pete Gale, who has been with the RNLI for 23 years, with the last four as Training Coxswain. It's important that the examiners are independent assessors, not involved in any training of the crews, so that they can be objective when assessing ability.

### From theory to practice

Anyone who wants to take the Yachtmaster exam needs a wealth of experience before they can even be considered. They must have completed a minimum of 50 days sea time, five days as a skipper of a vessel, 2,500 sea miles and five passages, each over 60 miles, including two overnight and two as skipper. All-weather lifeboat volunteers may use their RNLI sea time to qualify and the amount of sea time gained is dependent on whether they are a coxswain or a crew member. They will probably already hold certificates for the RYA Coastal Skipper, the Yachtmaster Offshore theory element, SRC/VHF radio operator and first aid.

Having passed this first round of hurdles, candidates often attend a preparation course, known as 'Expreg'. This provides practical training for the exam and a refresher in the theory of the RYA Coastal Skipper and Yachtmaster syllabuses.

At the start of the final exam week, everyone onboard is given a tour of the vessel and a safety briefing by the All-Weather



Lifeboat Training Mechanic Richard Gillingham. From now on, Kieran and Paul take full responsibility for the management of both vessel and crew. They will be expected to demonstrate both knowledge and practical ability in passage planning, pilotage leaving and entering harbour, safety responsibilities, seamanship and boathandling, navigation and meteorology and to apply the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.

### The challenge builds

At first glance, our candidates have the weather on their side. It is sunny and flat calm – to the uninitiated, apparently ideal conditions. But on checking the detailed inshore waters and shipping forecasts, they find that the Met Office have not only issued a heavy snow warning but also a strong wind warning: 'increasing to gale 8, perhaps severe gale 9 later'. In spite of all-day sunshine, air temperature only reaches a maximum of 6°C and plummets to -5°C with wind chill, while the water is only a few degrees above freezing – all factors that a competent skipper needs to take into account to ensure the safety and comfort of their crew.

Each day for Kieran and Paul becomes a continual round of checking information, updating their passage plans and logging their positions. Martin is at the helm and Kieran says that he'd like him to: 'alter course to port and steer 215°. The leg to steer is 4 miles at 15 knots and will take approximately 16 minutes. The shallowest depth to expect is 12.5m; look out for pot buoys and a yellow special mark about 6 minutes into the leg'. Paul asks Kieran: 'What time do you estimate our arrival at Swanage?' Kieran responds: '1215'. Paul then checks *Reeds Nautical Almanac 2007* and the *Admiralty Tide Stream Atlas* to work out the secondary port calculations and the expected height of tide at Swanage.

They are constantly thinking about the 'six Ps': Prior Planning Prevents Particularly Poor Performance. They begin to talk a different language of DR, GPS, VRM, CTS, ETD, SITREP, COLREGs, waypoints and even cocked hats! Meanwhile 'good guy' Bernie is asking questions about man overboard, collision regulations, chart work, safety briefings, radar and visual fixes. The all-important factor is frequent and persistent communication amongst the crew, ensuring safeguards are in place for every step of their time at sea.



The barometric pressure may be decreasing as the week goes on but stress levels onboard are certainly rising. Martin remembers from his own exam: 'Just when you think you've got everything sussed the "bad guy" throws in something else for you to think about. The pressure doesn't ease up for the two days or so of the exam but as long as you keep calm and don't lose the plot (in more ways than one!) then you should be able to work through most situations.' Cheery banter and several sweet cups of tea help to ease the tension. As they moor up for their second night, Paul checks with the crew that they are all OK. Martin replies, with a cheeky grin: 'No, I'm not, I'm flipping cold!' (or words to that effect). It's all in good humour as they settle down to some last-minute study for the big exam the next day.

#### And finally ...?

When they arrived in Poole, Kieran, Paul and Martin already knew that they are successful in their lifeboating roles, joining their fellow crew to turn out in all weathers, day and night to save lives.

However they are also proud to attempt the RYA Yachtmaster Offshore certificate in recognition of their skills honed over so many years of experience.

At the time of writing, the second training boat, *Robert S Ellsmoor*, completed her passage from Hardy's boatyard in Norfolk to her new home at The Lifeboat College and will soon be made available to help train more such willing candidates from all around the British Isles (see page 29). News also came through from the RYA that Kieran and Paul had been successful – congratulations to them both!

Opposite, top: Bernie and Martin moor around a buoy

Opposite, middle and bottom: The candidates are put through their paces with radar, Admiralty chart and pilotage plan

Photos: Anne Millman

Above: The RNLI's new training boat underway

#### IAN AND ANNE BUTLER

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<b>COST</b>	£450,000
<b>DONORS</b>	Legacies of Anne and Ian Butler and others, with funds from the RNLI Train one, save many campaign, which raises funds for crew training. Each Yachtmaster course for four costs £8,372/€11,720

Ocean Training Ltd provides distance learning courses and CD-ROM packages for lifeboat crew to train at home and at their stations, at a discount to the RNLI. Readers of *Offshore News* can find out more.

# Lifeboat Lottery

## The £1M barrier has been broken!

The Winter 2006 Lifeboat Lottery brought in more than £1M, making the final income for the year £3.9M. This is a magnificent total and more than half as much again as that for 2005 (£2.5M).

The RNLI heartily thanks the 67,000 or so supporters who bought or sold tickets across Great Britain over the Winter alone. In this issue, we meet one extraordinary ticket seller.

### Lifeboat Mary

An RNLI volunteer wearing a lifeboat crew jumper nervously collects an award recognising a lifetime of unpaid service. The resulting applause is not for a young rescuer, or experienced coxswain, but 76-year-old fundraiser Mary Taylor.

Volunteers like Mary are rarely thought of as lifesavers, but the funds they raise allow the RNLI to train and equip lifeboat crews. Mary, a born and bred Padstow girl, has raised money for the charity since 1935 when, at the age of five, she helped her mother collect donations. Since then she has rattled tins, baked cakes and sold Lottery tickets in aid of the RNLI. In 2006 alone, she sold over 5,000 Lottery tickets and has single-handedly raised over £70,000 in the last 24 years.

Mary reckons her secret is in approaching with a smile and asking 'Would you like to buy a raffle ticket to support the lifeboats?' She says she rarely gets people saying no!

Mary's love of the RNLI isn't just shown through her tireless fundraising. Whenever she hears that the Padstow lifeboat crew have launched at night, she lights a candle for them in her window.

'I can't sleep if I know they are out at sea,' she says. In the past, crew members returning from a long service could expect hot breakfasts or pasties cooked by Mary's own hand. And these days she still treats the crew to

her strong 'Lifeboat tea' and lemon cake from time to time.

But what has made her devote her whole life to helping the RNLI? 'I just love it, it's what I live for,' says Mary. 'I still go to the boathouse once a week and, as long as I can see the lifeboat, I'm all right. It's always been part of my life because I was born into a lifeboating family.' Her father and grandfather were both Coxswain of the Padstow lifeboat, and today her son Eric is Deputy Chairman of the Penlee lifeboat station committee. Her grandson, James, is an inshore lifeboat helmsman at Penlee.

Mary's commitment to raising funds has seen her earn a clutch of RNLI fundraising awards, including a Silver Statuette, Silver Badge, Gold Badge and the Bar to Gold Badge. HRH Princess Alexandra presented Mary with her Bar to Gold Badge at the charity's Annual Presentation of Awards in May 2006. 'When I went up, she said that she liked my jumper,' recalls Mary. 'So I said, "you can't have this, my boys gave it to me!"'

The crew so fondly known to Mary as 'her boys' now have a new boathouse, slipway and lifeboat. 'That new lifeboat is amazing,' says Mary of the new 25 knot Tamar class. 'If my father or grandfather had seen one of them Tamars, they wouldn't have believed it! They are all beauties, that lifeboat crew, and they deserve the best.'

Mary says she is glad to know that the funds she helps to raise go towards safer lifeboats and a high standard of training – especially given her own grandson is a crew member. 'The better prepared they are, the better I feel, because I know that when the sea wants, she takes. You look out from here sometimes and you know the sea's hungry, and you don't want to be out there.'



Photo: Nigel Millard





## Be smart in Summer

First prize for the Summer 2007 Lifeboat Lottery is a smart fortwo. The second prize is a Fred. Olsen 13-night cruise to the Canary Islands, and there will also be seven other cash prizes from £500–£100.

Tickets for this draw will be available to members 16 April–15 June and earlier to fundraising branches. If you don't usually receive tickets and would like to, please call on 0845 121 4999 or email [lottery@rnli.org.uk](mailto:lottery@rnli.org.uk) (unless you live in Northern Ireland or the RoI where, unfortunately, tax and gaming laws differ).



## Winter winners

The lucky winner of the first prize in the record-breaking Winter 2006 Lottery (a Ford Ka) was Mrs M Smith, of West Sussex. She took up an invitation to visit her local lifeboat station at Shoreham Harbour and met the crew. By chance, they had just returned from a successful 'shout' to two fishermen on a boat that was taking on water, the 10m *Jackelly*.

Mrs Smith said: 'I was delighted to win first prize in the raffle; I have been buying the tickets for many years! I have great admiration for the brave volunteers who risk their lives to save others, and found my tour of Shoreham lifeboat station both informative and interesting.'

Mrs RM Rowland from Devon won the 11-day 'Land of the midnight sun' cruise donated by Travelscope Holidays Ltd. The £500 high street store vouchers went to Mrs H Whitehurst from Leicestershire; Sir PA Graham from London received £250 cash; and £100 cash each was won by Mr WA Lee of Middlesex; Mrs B Wright of Somerset; Miss JM Disley of Kent; Mrs AM Tudor of Surrey and Mrs JW Lymbery of Hertfordshire.

Prize winners Mr and Mrs Smith meet Coxswain Peter Huxtable and his team at Shoreham Harbour

Photo: John Periam



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