



# the lifeboat

THE RNLI IS THE CHARITY THAT SAVES LIVES AT SEA

## Putting life first

FROM GRACE DARLING  
TO THE 21ST CENTURY

PLUS

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**THE RNLI**

A charity registered in England, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution was founded in 1824 as the National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck. Today, it provides the 24-hour on-call search and rescue service out to 100 nautical miles from the coast of the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland; on the tidal reaches of the River Thames; and on selected inland waterways plus a seasonal lifeguard service on appropriate beaches in England and Wales. The RNLI is independent from Government and continues to rely on voluntary contributions and legacies for its income.

**Chairman:** Sir Jock Slater GCB LVO DL  
**Chief Executive:** Andrew Freemantle CBE

**SUPPORTING THE RNLI**

You can help save lives from the beach to the open sea by becoming a regular supporter of the RNLI. There are three adult grades of membership: Shoreline, Offshore (for those who use the sea themselves) and Governor. Storm Force is the RNLI's membership club for children.

**CONTACT DETAILS**

- RNLI 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
- Supporter Care team, for membership, donations, Lifeboat Lottery enquiries: telephone 0845 121 4999, email [supporter\\_care@rnli.org.uk](mailto:supporter_care@rnli.org.uk) or write c/o Headquarters address above
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# rnli.org.uk



Cover picture:  
Volunteer Crew Member Keith Stevens  
Photo: Nigel Millard



## Dear Reader

Putting life first is the very powerful motivation for one donor to the RNLI (see page 6) but it is equally that of every crew member and lifeguard (see page 32) – and indeed every reader of this magazine. 'Life' matters so much to the hundreds of thousands of people who support the charity that, together, you keep it afloat, independent of Government.

As the 2007 operational statistics (see page 8) and financial results (see our next issue) are compiled, the generosity of rescuers and supporters alike is proven yet again. You will

notice, but hopefully not begrudge, a rise in minimum membership fees, the Institution's first for over 2 years (see page 9).

The more regular and planned its income, the more certain this world-leading organisation's investment can be in saving lives at sea, whether through new or modernised lifeboat stations, lifeguard facilities, lifeboats, training or equipment. A reliable infrastructure may not be as glamorous as a successful rescue but is no less worthy of committed support. Thank you, as ever, for putting life first.

### Padstow's award-winning station and crew

Photo: Nigel Millard



*Liz*  
Liz Cook  
Editor

**Friends of the RNLI****Some special offers that can benefit you and the RNLI****Amazon**

At least 5% of order value is donated to the RNLI [www.rnli.org.uk/amazon](http://www.rnli.org.uk/amazon)

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60% of profits on 10-day sailing forecasts goes to the RNLI 0871 200 3985. Quote 'RNLI Marinecall Club offer' to save 10%

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5% of order value is donated to the RNLI. [www.rnli.netstationers.co.uk](http://www.rnli.netstationers.co.uk)

**Recycling – Accutecc**

The RNLI benefits from every recyclable cartridge and mobile phone received. Quote 'RNLI' [www.accutecc.co.uk](http://www.accutecc.co.uk) 01279 401404

**Recycling – Cartridges 4 Causes**

The RNLI receives a donation for every toner or inkjet bought. Quote 'RNLI' [www.cartridges4causes.co.uk](http://www.cartridges4causes.co.uk) 0800 881 8150

**NEW! The Sea magazine**

Discounted subscriptions for members, and up to 10% of the price donated to the RNLI. Call 01442 879097 and quote RNLI18M1. See flyer inserted with this issue.

**Volvo**

You get a discount on a new car, the RNLI receives £500. [www.rnli.org.uk/volvo](http://www.rnli.org.uk/volvo)

**Wedding List Giving**

Set up a charity donation wedding list [www.weddinglistgiving.com](http://www.weddinglistgiving.com)

**Bishop Skinner Marine**

Bishop Skinner Marine offers RNLI Offshore members discounted marine insurance, and donates 2.5% of these policy premiums to the RNLI. More than £300,000 has been donated in this way since the scheme began in 1999.

Visit [www.bishopskinner.com](http://www.bishopskinner.com) or call 0800 783 8057.

Stuart Alexander, Bishop Skinner's parent company, has now chosen the RNLI as its special charity for the next few years. Its staff will raise funds in a number of ways, including running the Flora London Marathon.



RNLI Corporate Partner of the Year 2006



Photo: Bobby Renaud/RNLI



Photo: James Jary/RNLI



Photo: Michael Eickholt/RNLI



Photo: Derek King/RNLI

# the Lifeboat

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Blind and partially sighted readers can choose to receive an audio tape version as well as the magazine – this is a free service.

All recipients of *the Lifeboat* also receive *RNLI Compass* for their region. News in other regions can be viewed at [rnl.org.uk](http://rnl.org.uk). Offshore members, and those Governors who opt to, receive *Offshore* too. Members of the children's club Storm Force receive *Storm Force News*. Occasional donors receive *Lifeline*.

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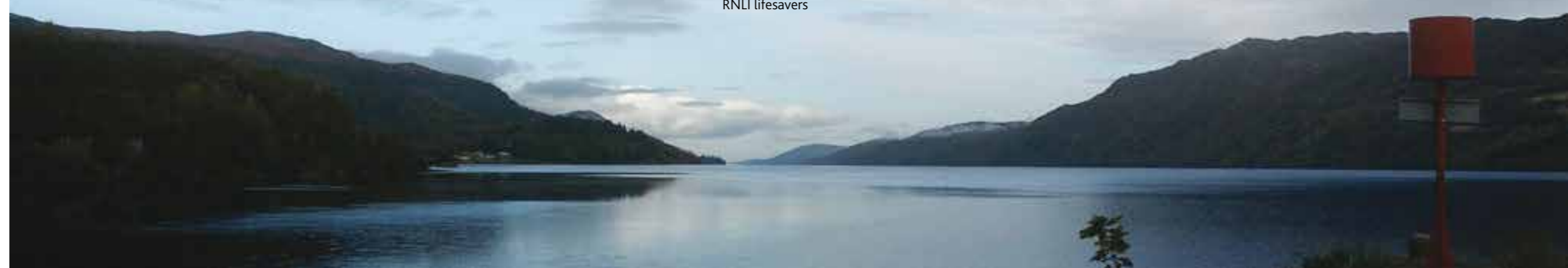
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# Insight

## 1 OVERDUE AT DEPTH

Longhope's Tamar class lifeboat *Helen Comrie* was called on 11 August to help search for a missing diver after his support vessel reported him overdue. The lifeboat's Deputy Second Coxswain took command of the dive boat while her skipper went to look for the diver underwater. Both boats carried out a systematic search for about an hour before the missing man's body was found trapped inside the wreck he had been exploring. The lifeboat crew brought the body ashore to his wife.



## 2 DART'S DEBUT

Dart, the RNLI's newest lifeboat station, had its first shout on 24 November 2007. Relief D class lifeboat *Bob Savage* and her crew were called out to recover a young man who had been thrown from his speedboat after hitting a submerged object. When the lifeboat arrived, he had been pulled from the water by a local fishing boat. The volunteers brought him ashore and he was taken to hospital, to be treated for hypothermia and neck and leg injuries.

## 3 SILVER MEDAL SERVICE

A cargo ship on passage to Egypt got into trouble off the Devon coast in heavy seas and gale force winds when her 5,260-tonne load of timber shifted, causing a severe list. Salcombe and Torbay's all-weather lifeboats launched just after 7.30pm on 13 January, reaching the *Ice Prince* 2 hours later. The Coastguard airlifted 12 crew to hospital, including one man with a broken leg. Torbay lifeboat made dozens of approaches and evacuated the remaining eight crew resulting in the award of an RNLI Silver Medal for Gallantry to her Coxswain. (See *the Lifeboat* Summer 2008 issue for the full story.)

## 4 ON THE ROCKS

The 17m fishing vessel *Crystal Sea* was returning to harbour with a catch at 3am on 22 November when she hit rocks north of Howth Head. As she sank, her crew of four jumped onto the rocks, where they activated their emergency beacon just before 4am. Minutes later, relief lifeboat *Edna May* and Howth's own *Roy Barker III* both launched. The former, a D class, approached the rocks and rescued the *Crystal Sea*'s crew, before transferring them, cold but uninjured, to the Trent class (like the one pictured) for the journey home.

## 5 SPOTTED AT FILEY

Birdwatchers on Filey Brigg saw a 2m dinghy capsize in poor weather on 9 September, throwing its two occupants into the water. Filey's D class *Rotary District 1120* sped to the scene and found one man just about to disappear under the surface. A crew member quickly went into the water to help recover him. After hearing that the second man was safe, the lifeboat immediately returned to land, giving first aid and oxygen to their casualty until paramedics arrived.

## 6 DOUBLE DELIVERANCE DOWN UNDER

RNLI lifeguards have been saving lives in Western Australia as part of the International Lifeguard Exchange scheme. Leon Bennett and Harry Parsons, who usually patrol in Cornwall, saw in the New Year with very similar rescues on Yallingup beach. On 1 January, Leon helped rescue a man and his two children (aged 5 and 8) from a strong rip current. The next day, Harry saved a 6-year-old girl and her father from a rip in the same place.

Here is just a handful of incidents from around the UK and RoI (and beyond!) to give an insight into the thousands of lifeboat rescues carried out each year. See pages 20–27 for in-depth reports of rescues from Alderney, Poole and Padstow.



# SURVIVING AT SEA

*Lifeboat crews will continue to receive the best in sea survival training thanks to an organisation founded in the 18th century*

**A**s an organisation that aims to improve safety at sea – and one that is rooted in the UK's maritime heritage – the Lloyd's Register Group (LRG) shares plenty of ground with the RNLI. In 2004 it set up a separate registered charity dedicated to supporting activities that reinforce the safe-keeping of life and to championing understanding of science, engineering and technology. Named the Lloyd's Register Educational Trust (LRET), it has given financial support to projects all around the world.

In 2007, the RNLI's volunteers became the latest people to benefit from the Trust, when it donated £625,000 to the Institution's Train one, save many campaign – the largest single amount received so far. This will fund sea survival courses at The Lifeboat College in Poole for more than 550 crew members over the next 3 years. 'The RNLI has the same area of focus as us, so it makes complete sense for us to offer our support,' says the Trust's Director, Michael Franklin.

'We aim to fund activities that will be to the benefit of all and, as the campaign title suggests, crew training certainly does that.'

When the Trust first became interested in supporting the RNLI, Michael paid a visit to the RNLI's Headquarters. 'I knew the RNLI ran the lifeboat service, but I was completely bowled over by what a large and professional organisation it is – and I began to appreciate why it needs to be like that, with so many lifeboats and stations and crew members.'

His visit included a tour of the College, where he saw the sea survival training that the Trust would later go on to fund. 'I was really impressed with the facilities – I can completely identify with the RNLI's commitment to training crews,' says Michael. 'I'm not a regular sea user myself, but as someone who has worked for Lloyd's Register, I know how vital sea safety training is. David Moorhouse, LRET's Chair of Trustees, is a recreational diver, so he is even more appreciative!'

As well as supporting training and development such as lifeboat crew courses, the Trust has funded schemes that promote engineering amongst young people. 'We support projects that help young people realise how important and exciting engineering is,' explains Michael. 'We want to destroy the perception, fairly common in the UK, that engineering is just fiddling about with cars – engineers solve the world's problems.'

The RNLI's own engineers would surely agree. They have close links with the University of Southampton, which has itself received support from the Trust for many years. The University has an excellent reputation in the field of marine engineering, and has formed a technology partnership with the RNLI designed to make advancements in the design and engineering of lifeboats.

'I think it's fantastic that we've been able to help the RNLI in this way,' concludes Michael. 'It's just great to know that our donation will be training people who will go on to save lives at sea.'

## IT STARTED WITH A CUP OF COFFEE ...

The Lloyd's Register Educational Trust sprung from the Lloyd's Register Group (LRG), which aims to enhance safety, checking that assets and systems work at sea, on land and in the air. LRG got its name from Edward Lloyd's 18th century London coffee house. (Other famous organisations also started there and should not be confused with the entirely separate LRG – Lloyd's of London international insurance market, for example.)

In the 1760s, coffee house customers with a mutual interest in shipping formed the Register Society and printed the first Register of Ships. The register gave underwriters and merchants an idea as to the condition of the vessels they insured and chartered.

The organisation became Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping in 1834, then began to open its first foreign offices in the 1850s. Through the 20th century, the organisation developed its business to improve safety in other industrial sectors. Today, LRG operates from 240 offices around the world, and has the slogan 'Life matters'.

The Lloyd's Register Educational Trust, set up in 2004, is solely funded by the LRG, but exists as a separate entity and makes independent decisions on which activities it supports.

The best of sea survival techniques in 1923: the crew of the *Adolf Vinnen* are brought ashore by breeches buoy

Photo: Hawkes



# A YEAR OF LIFESAVING

RNLI lifeboats launched an amazing 8,141 times in 2007, rescuing 7,834 people around the UK and RoI. RNLI lifeguards on 71 English beaches rescued 1,350 people and responded to 8,201 incidents. The charity's Flood Rescue team (previously the Rapid Response unit) and some lifeboat crews were in action during the Summer floods in England and Wales, rescuing another 200 people.

Tower, on the River Thames, was the busiest of all 233 lifeboat stations, launching 265 times and rescuing 92 people. Rhyl was

the liveliest station in Wales, launching 84 times and rescuing 53 people.

In Scotland, the most active station was Kinghorn, which launched 69 times and rescued 39 people, while the busiest station in Ireland was Arranmore, with 51 launches and 55 rescued.

RNLI Operations Director Michael Vlasto says: 'Despite fewer visitors to the coast during the early Summer months due to the unseasonable weather, our lifeboats and lifeguards continued to respond to a high

number of calls for help, with more and more people using the water and beaches for leisure pursuits.

'Our crews were also called upon to rescue various animals, including dogs, horses and cows, with figures increasing by approximately a third from 75 in 2004 to 108 in 2007 – our busiest year to date for animal rescues. This work ensures that animal owners are not tempted to try and rescue the animals themselves, which can often result in loss of life.'

## WHISKY BRAVO

Scotch whisky brand Talisker, a single malt that has been distilled on the shores of the Isle of Skye since 1830, has joined forces with the RNLI.

A series of fundraising events called Talisker Tales has been organised for sailing clubs around the UK. RNLI crew members and Yachtsman Pete Goss will share their seafaring stories at these events, which culminate in July with a special evening at the Talisker distillery.

There are more fundraising initiatives planned for 2008, including an exclusive Talisker gift set for the Christmas market, with proceeds going to the RNLI. The company is also generously sponsoring the RNLI's *Offshore* magazine.

Talisker Senior Brand Manager Steve Wood says: 'Our distillery on the shores of the Isle of Skye is exposed to the sea all year round so we appreciate the challenging conditions RNLI crews are faced with. I hope money raised through the partnership will help support the needs of the crews and their valuable service.'

To find out more, and to read the tales of RNLI crew members from Portree, Isle of Skye, visit [www.taliskerlife.com](http://www.taliskerlife.com).

## Model new crew member



Aberdovey's newest crew member, Steve Bowen (18), has been following the family's RNLI tradition since he was 2 years old.

Steve was the star of a UK-wide RNLI advertising campaign in 1992. His father Dave, who was on the crew for 15 years and is now the station's volunteer Lifeboat Press Officer, says: 'It's bizarre to think that 16 years ago Steve was on the jetty with camera flashes going off around him, playing a young child who had been rescued. Now, he will be

saving lives himself as a crew member.'

The Bowen family has been heavily involved in the local lifeboat since moving from the English Midlands in 1967. Steve's grandfather Al Bowen was Deputy Launching Authority for 12 years, and his uncle, Richard Garside, is the current Helmsman of the station's Atlantic 75 lifeboat *Sandwell Lifeline*. The fundraising activities of other relatives have raised thousands of pounds for the RNLI.



Photo: Laura Wiltshire

# Story Of Success

SOS day 2008, on 25 January, was a great success. Thank you to everyone who took part and supported the RNLI's national fundraising day.

Money is still coming in, so *the Lifeboat* can't announce a figure for the total amount raised just yet. Last year's grand total was £540,000, and we expect an even more impressive figure this year.

Schools, businesses and clubs around the UK and RoI did some sterling (and euro!) fundraising work. There were also plenty of events at RNLI branches, guilds and regional offices. See your copy of *RNLI Compass* for details.

At Headquarters in Poole, staff volunteered to pack bags at neighbouring Asda (whose shoppers donated £1,536.50 in 11 hours), washed cars, sold cakes – and played a rather unusual netball match.

A little advance warning: SOS day 2009 takes place on Friday 30 January. It's never too early ...



## Lifeboats on Loch Ness

As if they won't face enough challenges, the RNLI's newest crew will be keeping an eye out for monsters as the charity takes over the Coastguard rescue station on Loch Ness.

At the time of writing, a trial was about to begin of an Atlantic 75 inshore lifeboat from the RNLI's relief fleet, to make sure that this is the right craft for the scenarios likely to be encountered. Her crew is hoped to comprise the Coastguard volunteers already at Drumnadrochit, who would receive full training and equipment, with a view to formally establishing the station from April 2008.

Gareth Wilson, Deputy Divisional Inspector for the RNLI in Scotland, said: 'The RNLI is looking forward to working with the local community, whose involvement is key to the success of the RNLI's lifesaving service. We are grateful for all the support local people have given us since we announced the proposal.'

The current Drumnadrochit rescue boat responds to up to 24 incidents a year. Former Coastguard Manager and now Lifeboat Operations Manager Mike Armitage said: 'The Coastguard has operated a rescue boat on the loch since 1995, and the change to the RNLI will ensure that this vital service is maintained. The RNLI is a world leader in operating dedicated and professional lifeboats.'

## NEXT RNLI CHAIRMAN

Admiral The Lord Boyce will take over as Chairman of the RNLI from 5 November this year.

He joined the RNLI Council in 2004 and has served as Vice-Chairman since 2006. In his naval career he was First Sea Lord and Chief of Defence Staff, before his retirement in 2003.

The current Chairman, Admiral Sir Jock Slater, will be hosting his final AGM in May before retiring after 5 years in the service. Chief Executive Andrew Freemantle says: 'We are all most grateful to Sir Jock for his leadership and guidance and we know that he will remain in touch.'



## NEW YEAR HONOURS

For services to maritime safety, the following have been awarded the MBE in HM The Queen's New Year Honours: Mr Roy Barker, Vice-Chairman, Zetland museum; Mrs Jean Frost, Manager, Rhyl lifeboat souvenir shop; Mr Aran Morris, Vice-President, Borth lifeboat station; Mr Harold Roberts, Senior Hovercraft Commander, Morecambe lifeboat station.

Mr Thomas Boyd, who serves on the RNLI Council, has been awarded the OBE for service to the fishing industry and to his community.

Former RNLI Head of Fundraising Mr Anthony Oliver was also awarded the MBE for service to the community.

## MEMBERSHIP RATES

As of 1 January 2008, the following RNLI membership minimum rates apply:

Shoreline	Single	£26	€38
	Joint	£46	€66
Offshore	Single	£64	€92
	Joint	£110	€160
Governor	Single	£78	€112
	Joint	£130	€188
Life Governor (one-off payment)		£1,750	€2,512
Storm Force children's club		£7.50	€10.50

See the Editor's comments on page 1.



Inshore lifeboat crew winner



All-weather lifeboat crew winner



Rescue winner



Shore helper winner

# A YEAR ON THE FRONT LINE

All lifeboat stations are equipped with digital waterproof Pentax cameras to help the crew take real-time, high-quality images of their lifesaving activities. RNLI lifeguard units also have access to the cameras. The RNLI Pentax Photographer of the year competition was developed to help document the work of the RNLI using that equipment.

Bobby Renaud, an area lifeguard manager from Cornwall, is the winner of 2007's competition with his image of a lifeguard in training.

Eoin Ryan's shot of a Coast Guard helicopter winchman on exercise with the lifeboat crew from Baltimore, was judged the best photograph taken by an all-weather lifeboat crew member.

The inshore lifeboat crew member category winner is Antony Peters from Rye Harbour, for his picture of a foggy fishing boat rescue.

The best photograph of an RNLI rescue came from Rusty Marshall, a member of the West Mersea inshore lifeboat crew. One of his crew mates is pictured attaching a towline to a grounded yacht in rough seas.

Sheelagh Broderick, also from Baltimore, took the best photograph by a volunteer shore helper: a dramatic shot of the station's Tyne class lifeboat launching on an inhospitable day.

See all of these and the runners up at [rnli.org.uk/photooftheyear](http://rnli.org.uk/photooftheyear).



The RNLI Pentax Photographer of the year 2007 winner

**RNLI** LIFEBOATS, LIFEGUARDS, LIFE FIRST



**RNLI LIFEGUARDS MOVE INTO WALES**

RNLI lifeguards have been saving lives on beaches in England since 2001. This year, they make their first move into another part of the UK, patrolling 12 beaches in Wales as part of the RNLI's aim to double its beach coverage by 2011.

Having joined forces with Pembrokeshire County Council, the RNLI will provide lifeguard cover on beaches at Poppet Sands, Newport Sands, Whitesands,

Newgale, Broad Haven North, Dale, Lydstep, Tenby North, Tenby South, Tenby Castle, Saundersfoot and Amroth.

The council previously employed around 45 lifeguards on its busiest beaches for the June–August high season. Many of them have been accepted as RNLI lifeguards, so the RNLI will benefit from their experience of the local hazards while the lifeguards benefit from the specialist

training that the RNLI offers.

There are five RNLI lifeboat stations in Pembrokeshire: Fishguard, St Davids, Angle, Tenby, and Little and Broad Haven. RNLI Lifeguard Inspector John Broad says: 'The RNLI's aim to provide a seamless rescue service from the beach to the open sea is being realised in Pembrokeshire, thanks to the forward-thinking council there. We hope that others will follow.'

**SAFELY ASHORE**

The Portrush Severn class lifeboat *Katie Hannan* was successfully recovered on 15 February, after being grounded on Rathlin Island on 29 January. Severe weather delayed recovery, and the hull has suffered extensive damage. *Katie Hannan's* engines, parts of her superstructure and other valuable equipment were safely removed before her recovery. A decision on the lifeboat's future will be made after a detailed inspection of her hull.

The lifeboat grounded while on service to a vessel with three people onboard. The crew were uninjured, and were taken off by Larne's Trent class lifeboat. The original casualties were later rescued by the Coastguard. A relief Severn class lifeboat arrived on station on 3 February. The RNLI received great support from the local community during the recovery.

**PEACE OF MIND**

Jersey fishermen are among the first to adopt the RNLI-developed MOB Guardian safety system.

Developed over several years especially for fishing, the most dangerous industry in the world, the 'man overboard' equipment is now on sale to commercial fishermen with a boat of under 15m. Fishermen are loath to reveal their location for fear of losing a catch to a rival but this system combines safety with confidentiality. Its price is subsidised thanks to several grants.

MOB Guardian is unique in being connected directly to the RNLI. Once at sea, the onboard unit logs on by satellite link and reports its location regularly. If a report is missed and contact with the vessel cannot be made, details are passed to the Coastguard, and a search and rescue mission begins.

These first customers are now upgrading all their safety equipment,

believing they will now have a fighting chance of survival. Fisherman Don Thompson explains:

'It gives me peace of mind knowing that someone will be alerted that I'm in trouble and will come looking for me. I have a family and I want to keep myself safe for them and give them reassurance every time I go off to work.'

See [mobguardian.com](http://mobguardian.com), email [mob\\_guardian@rnli.org.uk](mailto:mob_guardian@rnli.org.uk) or phone 01202 663142 for more information.

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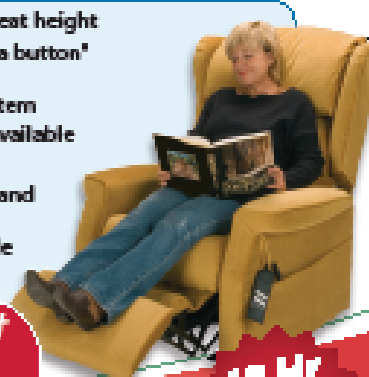
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# AN AMAZING Grace

The interior of the museum is built around a model of Grace Darling's unusual home  
Photo: Jon Stokes

This Spring saw the official reopening of the RNLi Grace Darling museum in Northumberland, after years of redevelopment. Was it worth the wait? Carol Waterkeyn pays a visit to find out

In 1938, a museum opened in Bamburgh to celebrate the life and heroism of a local young woman, Grace Darling. The museum was shown off in a new guise on 4 March 2008 when RNLi Trustee Ron Neil came to declare it well and truly open once again.

What a wonderful day it was for all those who had worked so hard to turn a dream into reality. The RNLi's project manager Maureen La Frenais explains: 'We realised that the old museum was no longer in a fit state to protect the valuable exhibits it housed – it really needed to be replaced. We knew we had a fantastic collection

but it required extensive conservation work and much better interpretation to bring Grace's and her father William's story back to life again for a modern audience. But what a massive task!'

Funding was a great concern – the £1.5M required could not be taken from donations intended for saving lives. But applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Northern Rock Foundation and Foyle Foundation were eventually rewarded and their grants and many others added to the efforts of local fundraisers. In time, evacuation of the exhibits was followed by partial demolition of the building and the appointment of a museum manager and a learning officer. They worked firstly from their homes, then in the midst of the construction site.



## Darling facts

Grace Horsley Darling was born on 24 November 1815 in her grandparents' cottage in Bamburgh. She was the seventh child of Thomasin and William Darling.

William was Lighthouse Keeper on Brownsman Island. Grace and her eight siblings were all expected to help out. The family lived at first in the cottage next to the lighthouse until, in 1826, they moved across to the newly built lighthouse on Longstone Island where life was much tougher.

Grace and the other children were taught at home. Alongside her household skills, William showed Grace how to read and write, row and sail the coble, make and mend fishing nets, and look after the tower light. While the other children gradually moved to the mainland, Grace stayed.

When word got out about Grace's part in the rescue of the *SS Forfarshire*, she became a national celebrity and a role model for women. But she was hounded by painters and writers, the mass media of the time, and found the attention overwhelming. She, as so many of her compatriots, succumbed to tuberculosis, dying at the tender age of 26 on Thursday 20 October 1842.

Although not an RNLi crew member, Grace displayed all the characteristics of the charity's lifesaving volunteers: courage, endurance, determination and selflessness in the face of danger. She was awarded the RNLi's Silver Medal in recognition of this, the first woman to receive any medal from the Institution. Grace has since become permanently linked with the RNLi's history of great rescues.

remote lighthouse home. The museum is well signposted and overlooks St Aidan's church, where Grace was christened and later buried. There is a wonderful memorial to Grace in the churchyard and another in the church itself.

Inside the museum, there is something very moving about the items on view. Many are very personal: letters, drawings, clothes, presents from friends and household items. I was particularly drawn to the different paintings of Grace and wondered which was the closest likeness – the real Grace.

Then there are the artefacts collected from the seabed. Through these and the museum's informative displays, you learn of the demise of the steam ship *Forfarshire*. On passage from Hull to Dundee in 1838, she was hit by a terrible storm and smashed on Big Harcar Rock in the Farne Islands.

That night Grace was on watch at the lighthouse. In the early hours of 7 September she saw the wreck. Waking her father, they decided to launch their small coble, a fishing boat, to look for survivors. Having rowed through treacherous seas, they rescued nine people from the rocks. While Grace's father helped them onboard, Grace skilfully worked to keep the boat close and steady. There followed a terrible journey back to the lighthouse in the open boat. When you see for yourself the size of the coble and then look at Grace's tiny dress hanging in the museum, you wonder how on Earth she managed it.

### Small with a big heart

The museum itself is stunning in both design and content. Like Grace, it is small, perfectly formed and has a big heart. Tardis-like in its capacity, it is amazing how much has been packed in while retaining a spacious feel. The main, circular room is reminiscent of the interior of the lighthouse modelled in its centre, while a large picture window illuminates upstairs. There is a noticeable warmth in the atmosphere even though the site is supposed to be haunted. Perhaps it is Grace herself showing her approval by taking up residence? During my visit I read the visitors book. I have to agree wholeheartedly with this selection of comments:

Eventually the artefacts were moved back in, including the eponymous *Grace Darling* coble. After 2 years at the north of England regional museums' store at Beamish in Co. Durham, her journey culminated in a heart-stopping lift by crane to install her.

### On the scene

My own visit took place during a windy January. If you've never visited this part of England, I urge you to go. The scenery is spectacular and, as you near Bamburgh itself, the castle is majestic. The little town is full of historic character and I could easily imagine Grace and her family visiting from their

'Fantastic! I had some knowledge of Grace, but if you didn't, everything is here to inform you.' The Barnetts from Southampton

'Beautifully presented. Entertaining for all ages.' The Loves from Dudley

'Worth coming all this way.' The Carusos family from Italy



**Dr Joanna Bellis,  
RNLI Heritage Trust Manager**

'The long process of planning and fundraising began in 1999. Brenda Calderwood and a committee of local volunteers were key to getting it off the ground. Then in 2003, the RNLI applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund and finally, in June 2004, we were told our bid was successful. Practically, the project was complex, gaining the permissions we needed and getting the design right for such a small build footprint – its success has been achieved through great teamwork.'



**Carolyn Anand,  
RNLI Heritage  
Collections Officer**

'The Grace Darling collection is a remarkably intact survival of personal objects from a very different time. The collection illustrates the daily life of an ordinary lighthouse keeper's family at a time just before the world became industrialised. The remarkable change in their fortunes after the rescue is there for all to see. We hope that the displays and interpretation will transport the visitor back into this lost world by the clever use of modern and innovative interpretation, involving models, film and interactive exhibits.'

**Clare Laidler, Grace Darling  
museum Learning Officer**

'I think Grace was a very brave woman but she wouldn't have seen what she did as a brave act, rather an everyday part of life on the coast. She wouldn't have wanted the fame as she was very modest and just a basic girl living on a rock. She wouldn't have been used to seeing so many people.'

'I help to bring all this to life for children, organising school visits and workshops. They love dressing up and role-playing. My wider role is to extend the museum's service through learning to all ages, not just children.'

**Dr Patricia Kind, Grace Darling  
museum Volunteer**

'The museum has a very lively team of volunteers helping both front of house and behind the scenes. I've been at the museum since it reopened to the local community in December and usually come in 1 day a week. I'm very interested in history and archaeology myself, so am delighted to help out. I answer visitor queries and assist in the shop and am hoping to help with some of the archive materials too.'



Photo: Michael Charlton/RNLI

RNLI Grace Darling museum,  
Radcliffe Road, Bamburgh,  
Northumberland, NE69 7AE

**Opening times:**  
Tuesday–Sunday and Bank  
Holiday Mondays 10am–4pm  
(5pm Easter–31 October)

Entrance is free but suggested  
donation for groups £1 a head.  
Groups should book to  
avoid disappointment.

Tel: 01668 214910, email:  
AskGraceDarling@rnli.org.uk

The RNLI Grace Darling museum is  
managed by the RNLI Heritage Trust,  
a subsidiary charity of the RNLI.



The museum's stylish glass entrance is inscribed with Grace's signature

Photo: Jon Stokes



# The kindness of strangers

Kevin Payne dreamed of starting a new life by the Mediterranean. On 2 July 2007, he left Southampton in his 25m converted trawler *Abundance*, with friend George, Daisy the dog, Fluffy the cat, and everything he owned onboard. Mairéad Dwane reports



Left: Victoria McAllister held the lurching *Abundance* in her spotlight

Right: Steve and Dean hoped the salvage pump would save Kevin's worldly goods

Photos: James Jary/RNLI

The forecast predicted winds of force 5–6 for the English Channel, decreasing to force 4 for a time. Having spent 5 months working on *Abundance*, and taken her out in such conditions before, Kevin was sure that she would have no problems making it to her first scheduled stop, the Channel Island of Alderney.

However, conditions gradually worsened. At 10.30pm on 3 July, Kevin went to the engine room to pump extra diesel from the reserve tanks to the day tank. It was then that he realised he was in trouble: *Abundance* was taking on water, and lots of it.

George radioed the French Coastguard. Communication was difficult but eventually the message was understood. Help was on

**'I was on the verge of collapse ... It was like being on a rollercoaster – down and up and down and up. But on this rollercoaster you had to stand up and move around.'**

its way, but Kevin and George didn't know from which direction, so decided to stay put and wait.

By now the west south west wind was a force 8 and, with breaking 4m seas, *Abundance* continued to take on water and started to pitch from side to side. The generator was swamped, which meant saying goodbye to the electric pump, the main VHF radio and lights. There were two manual pumps onboard but they were damaged from flying debris. Kevin recalls: 'If we'd had 20 pumps that night it wouldn't have worked; we couldn't even stand up.'

Word came through to the Alderney Harbour Master's office at about 11.30pm. Lifeboat Coxswain Declan Gaudion, also Deputy Harbour Master, finally made contact with the vessel by mobile telephone at midnight. After consultation with Lifeboat Operations Manager Dave McAllister, they paged the volunteers.

#### On the verge

After scrambling down slippery stone steps to a boarding boat and crossing the harbour to the lifeboat's mooring, the crew of seven launched the Trent class *Roy Barker I* at 12.17am. The route to *Abundance*'s reported location was straightforward but actually

finding her proved more difficult. With wind and tide pushing *Abundance* north east, Declan set a course for a radar target almost 6 miles away, but sea interference made it difficult to tune in and the echo kept disappearing.

At 1.08am, the lifeboat crew saw *Abundance* just 100m away. She was very low in the water and rolling violently, the deck strewn with clutter and awash with water. Crew Member Victoria McAllister, who was operating the searchlight, describes the scene: 'It wasn't particularly moonlit, but we spotted a white, wooden boat. It would rise up and then – boom! – slam down.'

Kevin is diabetic and hadn't had a chance to eat. 'I was on the verge of collapse but adrenaline kicked in. You couldn't just lie

down. It was like being on a rollercoaster – down and up and down and up. But on this rollercoaster you had to stand up and move around.'

*Abundance* was too heavy and rolling too much to be towed, so Declan initially decided to escort her to harbour. Kevin explains: 'At that point our engines were miraculously still going, but the boat was so heavy with water it couldn't steer. They said it would be a few hours and we said we probably didn't have that long.'

Declan realised that, whatever the danger, he would have to put crew aboard *Abundance* with the lifeboat's powerful salvage pump. With *Abundance* making a haphazard course, Declan manoeuvred the lifeboat so her bow was alongside the casualty's port quarter. After three attempts Deputy Second Coxswain Steve Wright and Crew Member Dean Geran leaped aboard *Abundance*. It took two more approaches to get the pump onboard.

They continued towards Alderney at a painfully slow 2½ knots. With the pump's suction pipe passed down a hatch into the flooded engine room, the refloat attempt began. 'But every time it started to pump, it would block up,' remembers Dean. 'There were things swirling around down there.'

Over the next 30 minutes the pump blocked about eight times.

At 2.50am, *Abundance*'s engines stopped. The day tank had run out of fuel. Steve strongly advised against going below to top up the tank, as *Abundance* was in imminent danger of capsizing. Declan heard on the hand-held VHF what had happened and decided to take everyone off.

#### Abandoning *Abundance*

But everything Kevin owned was onboard, from his 5,000-strong CD collection to the video of his daughter's Christening. The cat was stuck in the aft deckhouse, the door of which had jammed shut. Kevin was not keen on abandoning ship. But, Steve says: 'When there's a possibility you could start losing people, you must consider personal safety above trying to save the vessel.'

Then came the most challenging part yet: getting Kevin and George, two lifeboat volunteers and a terrified dog off *Abundance* to the safety of the lifeboat. By now the tide had turned, against the wind, making conditions even worse. It was difficult for the evacuees to even stand together on the slippery deck. Approaching from the north east to gain shelter from *Abundance*, Declan tried to place the lifeboat's starboard shoulder on the casualty's starboard quarter. Crew Members Paul Fairclough and Mark Gaudion were standing at the very edge of the lifeboat's deck, harnessed to the jackstay, ready to catch whoever came first.

On the first attempt, Steve and Dean





#### THE DETAIL

Alderney lifeboat station  
All-weather Trent class lifeboat ON-1199 (14-04)  
*Roy Barker I*  
Funded by the legacy of Frederick Roy Barker

#### THE CREW:

Coxswain Declan Gaudion (43, deputy harbour master)  
Deputy Coxswain Steve Wright (41, telecoms engineer)  
Full-time Mechanic Brian Frost (45)  
Dean Geran (34, scaffolder)  
Paul Fairclough (34, builder)  
Mark Gaudion (42, assistant harbour master)  
Victoria McAllister (24, fishmonger)

managed to hand over George. Mechanic Brian Frost took him into the lifeboat wheelhouse, wrapped him in a blanket and assessed his condition. Declan went round for several more attempts but the two vessels collided on the swell, and the ageing timbers of *Abundance's* gunwale began to collapse.

On about the sixth approach, a bolt flew out from *Abundance's* capping rail, hitting Dean in the elbow. With something of an understatement, he remembers: 'It was very painful: I thought it was broken.' The lifeboat stood off while Steve checked the injury – just bruising.

The lifeboat approached yet again, and the dog was next off. Steve and Dean then picked Kevin up and threw him across to Paul. 'The way they operate is most professional,' says Kevin. 'Looking back, that's down to their superb training.' Paul puts it more bluntly: 'You grab hold of something and you are not going to let go.' The lifeboat was still within reach so Steve and Dean jumped across.

Despite attempts to save it, the cat went down with the *Abundance*.

#### The journey home

Kevin remembers very little of the journey back: 'I must have just passed out immediately. I remember waking up and seeing *Abundance* quite low in the water and then I passed out again.' The volunteers remember George as being 'very quiet' – just exhausted. Daisy seemed to come through well, immediately taking a shine to Brian, but Kevin reports her suffering panic attacks in the following weeks.

Unlike *Abundance*, *Roy Barker I* was well

able for the conditions, and her passage home was relatively uneventful. The lifeboat moored at Braye Harbour quay at 4.10am on 4 July. Declan comments on their timing: 'Thankfully, we did it when we did it. The French Coastguard put up a helicopter soon afterwards and *Abundance* was not located ... The boats they give us to do the job are second to none.' Mark adds: 'It certainly doesn't happen every time you go out, but that night we made a difference.'

Taken to Alderney hospital by ambulance, Dean had his arm re-examined, Kevin was treated for exhaustion and a broken finger and George for exhaustion. Kevin's hospital window overlooked the harbour and he could see exactly where he had planned to moor *Abundance* on his life-changing voyage.

Declan, Steve and Dean were all awarded the Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on Vellum for their parts in the rescue. Declan sums up: 'A service like this, with more challenging conditions than usual, underlines the need for crew training and how it all comes together. It's very nice to be recognised but I can't stress enough that it's a team effort. It's a station award.'

As for Kevin and Daisy, they started a new life after all. Having lost so much with the wreck of *Abundance* but experiencing the kindness of the people of the island while recovering, they eventually settled in Alderney. Kevin set up a hairdressing salon and Daisy enjoys visiting Brian and all her old friends at the lifeboat station. 'Your whole life changes when something like that happens,' Kevin says, adding: 'I have nightmares about it even now.'



Top: Kevin and Daisy are rebuilding their lives in Alderney  
Bottom: The crew remember the night that brought them recognition and Kevin disaster

Photos: James Jary/RNLI



# NO PICNIC

Autumn 2007 came in with a vengeful gale. Listening to its howl from the depths of her duvet, volunteer Crew Member Anne Millman hoped that the pager would stay quiet ...



Anne's view, back from the lifeboat to the crippled yacht

Photo: Paul Taylor

## THE DETAIL

Poole lifeboat station

All-weather lifeboat Tyne class,

ON-1131 (47-023) *City of Sheffield*

On station: 5 September 2001

(previously Whitby 1988-96, Hartlepool 1997-2000

and relief fleet 1996-97 and 2000-1)

Funding: City of Sheffield lifeboat appeal 1987-88 and

the bequest of Mrs Mary Mabel Walker

and other gifts and legacies

Crew: Second Coxswain Andy Elton, full-time Mechanic

Paul Taylor, Crew Members Anne Millman,

Mike Hallard, Mike Fearn, Joe Grove, Pete Smith

Inshore lifeboat B class Atlantic 75, B-710

*Friendly Forester II*

On station: 26 April 1995

Funding: Gift from the Ancient Order of Foresters

Friendly Society in memory of Nora Gladys Green

Crew: Helmsman Gavin McGuinness, Crew Members

Zoe George, Sam Wicks

Amazingly, Poole lifeboats hadn't been called out for a month, belying our status as one of the busiest coastal stations, but on Sunday 28 October at 10.59am, my pager broke its silence. Spurred into action, I knew that it could be something serious but it didn't stop me from wishing that I'd had breakfast!

We crew headed down to Poole lifeboat station in and on our various forms of transport. In pouring rain, those who came on bike or foot were wet *before* donning their waterproof gear. We were all anxious about the impending shout, despite knowing that the experience of coping with testing conditions would do us good. The thoughts we voiced varied from 'Great, a job at last!' and 'Looks like I'll miss my Sunday lunch' to 'But who the hell ...?'

The 'Who ...?' were seven people onboard the 11m yacht *Résumé*. They had been enjoying an exhilarating race in Poole Bay and had taken safety precautions but were struck by disaster when their mast broke. Although

shocked, no one was injured. The Coastguard picked up Skipper Ian Standbridge's Pan Pan radio message and contacted our Deputy Launching Authority (DLA) Rod Jenkins.

The choppy seas and winds gusting up to 48mph were above the advised operational limit for our inshore lifeboat so Rod decided to launch the all-weather Tyne class *City of Sheffield*. Second Coxswain Andy Elton picked

**'With the wind driving the waves clean over the boat I got a faceful more than once.'**

six experienced crew, including me. He recalls: 'We had to be cautious but quick in response to the casualties' needs, given their position.'

Within 6 minutes of the page, and in worsening weather, we launched and headed down the harbour. Even with adrenalin pumping there was the usual banter. We couldn't miss out on ribbing full-time

Mechanic Paul Taylor as he ventured out of the wheelhouse – he is more often seen in the depths of the engine room and certainly doesn't do 'wet'! Yet, as Crew Member Pete Smith describes: 'With the wind driving the waves clean over the boat I got a faceful more than once.'

I knew from my own local sailing experience that Ian was a skilled yachtsman

but, as radio operator that day, I could hear his concern as *Résumé* struggled to stay off the notorious Hook Sands. With part of the mast under the hull they had only minutes before they would hit. We wouldn't be able to get close enough in such shallow waters to transfer anyone so Andy requested the launch of the inshore *Friendly Forester II* after all,

knowing that the heavy surf would be within her capabilities. With crew already at the boathouse, she launched at 11.22am.

Meanwhile, *Résumé* was being buffeted by the breaking waves but her crew had already prepared for a tow, tying ropes to the front cleats and back to the winches to spread the load. Paul and lifeboat Crew Members Mike Fearn and Pete Smith tried to stay steady on their feet as they readied a tow line and passed it to fellow volunteer Mike Hallard. As 2m waves hit us the training kicked in: Andy adeptly manoeuvred the lifeboat as close to the yacht as possible and Mike's successful first-time throw to the crew on the foredeck of the yacht meant that she was quickly towed clear of the danger area.

Now the Atlantic 75 approached, with Gavin McGuinness at the helm. Despite the yacht surfing down the waves behind us, sails flailing in the wind, and the *Forester's* propellers making contact with the swinging mast, Crew Members Joe Grove and Sam

Wicks successfully transferred to *Résumé*. They helped lash down the sails and mast and reassured her crew.

As we towed the yacht towards shelter, we thought the worst was over but there was further alarm when we spotted two more potential incidents. The *Forester* intercepted two kayakers heading out to Hook Sands 'to play', while we thought we'd have to rescue a photographer who'd rushed to the water's edge to catch the scene and slipped – but fortunately he grabbed a wooden rail just in time and didn't fall in.

With relief, the repartee resumed onboard as we congratulated Mike on his throwing skills. Then our thoughts turned gratefully to Rod, remembering that doughnuts would be waiting for us back at the station. We can't seem to persuade all our DLAs to bring them!

Bringing the yacht alongside us, with six fenders to cushion any knocks, we continued the tow safely past the international ferry terminal where the tug *Herbert Ballam* (with

our Senior Helmsman Paul Singleton as skipper) was pulling the *Barfleur* ferry off her berth. Once inside the confines of Poole yacht club, Andy skilfully turned the all-weather lifeboat and her partner 180° to bring *Résumé* securely alongside a pontoon at 12.30pm.

Quite often we underplay the role we perform. Andy describes the shout as the 'usual run of the mill stuff, just more lively,' but Probationary Crew Member Sam Wicks remarks: 'The skill of the Helm and Coxswain were something to admire.' Casualty Skipper Ian Standbridge and crew mate Sally agree: 'We were very relieved to see the lifeboat arrive. They pulled us to safety quickly and efficiently – so "thank you" to all those who came out to rescue us.'

Later that week the yacht's crew delivered a token of their appreciation saying: 'Hope you enjoy it!' And the lifeboat crew certainly did enjoy the Dorset apple cake – does *everyone* know the way to our hearts is through our stomachs? Well mine at least!

# DOUBLE TOIL AND

Even experienced sailors can misjudge their situation. Carol Waterkeyn reports on a testing service to two yachts caught out close to harbour

Mr and Mrs Burris checked the forecast on 25 June 2007 as they prepared to sail their 10m wooden yacht *Coresande* up from the Isles of Scilly to Padstow, north Cornwall. If they got a move on, they could surely beat the bad weather coming in. Off Stepper Point, just outside Padstow, a lone yachtsman was taking a rest in his sloop, *Fly*, after his long passage from The Azores. Meanwhile, fisherman and Padstow lifeboat volunteer Ian Kitto was just returning home from a successful early morning.

As Ian unloaded his catch, his lifeboat pager summoned him. The weather was worsening and he realised that this shout might prove tricky. He hurried to the lifeboat station, outside the town at the spectacular Trevoze Head. Meanwhile, painter and decorator Peter Poole dropped everything as his pager went off, with no time to explain.

As Head Winchman, he too was needed urgently. Coxswain Alan Tarby, down at the harbour, had already heard that someone was in difficulty. Other crew

members joined him in speeding to respond. Michael England, the Mechanic, was already at the station and had informed the Coastguard that they would be launching in about 10 minutes. The response was that the casualty vessel might not have even that long!

Alan and his crew launched down the slipway in their new Tamar at 11.20am unaware of the epic that was about to unfold. Alan remembers: 'It wasn't until we got out to sea that we realised just how bad the conditions had got. They had deteriorated so quickly.' The wind was north westerly, gale force 8-9, once reaching storm force 10. The waves were the height of a double-decker bus, breaking over a huge swell, slowing but not stopping the lifeboat's progress. The crew remained firmly strapped into their impact-absorbing seats for as long as possible.

They found *Coresande* 4 miles north of the lifeboat station. She had been unable to outrun the weather and was now taking on water. Her foresail had been blown out so she was without power and pitching heavily.

It took all of the Coxswain's skills at the helm to manoeuvre 16-04 *Spirit of Padstow* alongside. Such was the danger and discomfort to Mr and Mrs Burris that Crew Members Luke Chown and Chris Murphy courageously made the transfer to the yacht to help them off. However, after about 15 more difficult approaches by the lifeboat, it became clear an evacuation would be even harder than expected.

Mrs Burris was simply frozen to the spot with fear and Mr Burris would not go without her.

To tow the yacht to shore in the prevailing conditions would be far too dangerous for the couple. Doom Bar stood in their way, too, a sandbank said in legend to have been created as a result of a mermaid's curse that had conjured up a great storm. Alan therefore requested an airlift and after 30 minutes, a Royal Naval rescue helicopter from Culdrose arrived to transport all four from the yacht. In 10m swells, the helicopter's hi-line became snagged in the yacht's rigging and had to be cut free to avoid catastrophe. Luke had already injured his arm – now as he followed Mrs Burris up into the aircraft, he received a brief dip in the water!

The lifeboat was now free to set a course for Padstow. The yacht in tow kept disappearing from view, so steep were the waves. The pair were just crossing Doom Bar when the remaining lifeboat crew observed *Fly*, whose anchorage looked very vulnerable.

*Coresande* was quickly berthed, Crew Member Neil Simpson assisting. Chris Murphy was already back from the airlift and replaced Neil at the quayside while the

# TROUBLE

*Spirit of Padstow* lifeboat set out again this time to the sloop *Fly*. It was 2.45pm.

By now the Bar was a mass of breaking and dumping seas. They found *Fly* had fouled her anchor and was indeed in a treacherous position, made worse by the now falling tide. The yacht was being thrown about like a rag doll.

Remarkably, her skipper seemed to be unaware of the danger he was in. Though willing to be evacuated, he delayed by rushing off to grab some personal possessions. During the next approach of the lifeboat,

'Alan Tarby, the Coxswain, manoeuvred his craft alongside *Coresande* about 10 times. This vessel could have crushed, indeed sunk, *Coresande* but at the point of contact we received no more than a gentle kiss.'

the two craft collided, knocking the yachtsman into the water, something Alan regrets to this day. But worse was to come. Though the man was wearing a lifejacket, it did not inflate and was later found to have no gas canister. Fortunately he was secured by a safety harness and, in the extremely difficult conditions, the crew managed to haul him onboard the lifeboat, wrapped him in a thermal blanket and administered oxygen.

With the lower tide and opposing wind, crossing the Bar could not be attempted again, so Coxswain Tarby requested the helicopter once more. It was already out responding to another call but, a few minutes later, returned to the scene. Keen by now to abandon ship, *Fly's* skipper nonetheless refused to be airlifted. After much persuasion, he was strapped into a stretcher, which felt more secure, and airlifted to the Royal Cornwall Hospital. He was at risk from secondary drowning, having swallowed seawater, and had a previous back injury to be checked. His escape was not too soon – shortly after the yacht broke free, was dragged across Doom Bar and onto rocks becoming badly holed.

At 5.20pm, with waves too large to recover the lifeboat back up the station slipway, she was first moored out in the bay, but was forced to move out to open water again. Two crew members were seasick. The lifeboat was finally refuelled and returned to station at 11.35pm some 12 hours after launching. Her crew were tired and hungry and looking forward to a cup of tea or something stronger. Many agreed it was the roughest shout they had been on.

The *Coresande* survived her ordeal and, when the weather improved, her owners carried on to Cardiff. They made a generous donation to the charity in gratitude and sent a letter of thanks to the crew.

Padstow's new Lifeboat Operations Manager and former harbour master, Captain Trevor Platt, is extremely proud of how the crew performed: 'Everyone who was at sea that day got caught out by the conditions. It is down to the professionalism of the lifeboat crew that three people survived.'

**THE DETAIL**  
Padstow lifeboat station  
All-weather Tamar class lifeboat,  
ON-1283 (16-04) *Spirit of Padstow*  
On station 17 July 2006  
Funding: Miss Heather 'Mickie' Allen

For this service:  
Coxswain Alan Tarby (47) is accorded  
the Thanks of the Institution  
Inscribed on Vellum for his first-class  
seamanship, decision making,  
determination and courage.

Crew Members Luke Chown (26)  
and Chris Murphy (40) are awarded  
a Framed Letter of Thanks signed by  
the Chairman for their considerable  
courage and willingness to put  
themselves in danger to transfer to  
the first yacht.

Mechanic Michael England (35), Neil  
Simpson (54), Steven Nicholas (30),  
Ian Kitto (27), David Filde (28) and  
Thomas Norfolk (18) each receive  
an individual Letter of Appreciation  
signed by the Chief Executive for their  
excellent support and teamwork.

**Below:**  
The conditions at  
Padstow on 25 June

**Opposite page:**  
Padstow lifeboat  
seen from an RNAS  
Culdrose helicopter

Photo: Nigel Millard



**Above:**  
Coxswain Alan Tarby  
reflects on a  
testing service

Photo: Laura Wiltshire/RNLI







# BOOKS

Reviews of what's new on the shelves this season

**The storm prophet**  
by Hector Macdonald  
Review by Carol Waterkeyn



This extraordinary novel is set around the world-famous Sydney–Hobart yacht race and the role played by Petra Woods, fictitious Director of Sydney New Coastguard, a lifeboating organisation in Australia.

When a psychic boy predicts a violent outcome for the race, Petra, who has already witnessed the truth of his prophecies, tries to get it called off. But with almost everyone against her, and the weather forecast fine, the race inevitably goes ahead ...

This is a truly gripping read with a strong and courageous main protagonist. As a woman myself, I wasn't totally convinced by Hector Macdonald's first-person portrayal of his heroine, but nevertheless the plot's twists and turns will keep you hooked to the end.

Launching his book at a special reception on the TS *Queen Mary* on the River Thames last November, the author explained he is already writing a sequel and hopes that Petra Woods will develop into a major fictional character, who will fly the flag for lifeboat crews around the world.

Published by Viking  
ISBN 9780670071012  
Price: £10.99 paperback (plus postage)

Order direct from the author at [hectormacdonald.com](http://hectormacdonald.com) (on the 'Review your payment' page, type RNLI into the 'special request' box) or email him at [mail@hectormacdonald.com](mailto:mail@hectormacdonald.com) and quote 'RNLI' in your order. £2 will be donated to the RNLI for each book sold.

**Skeletons for sadness**  
by Ewen Southby-Tailyour  
Review by Jon Jones



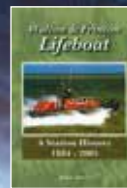
Despite its gloomy title, *Skeletons for sadness* is a beautifully crafted love story set against a backdrop of adventure and espionage during the Falklands war.

Edward Casement, sailing for Cape Horn in his ketch *Nomad*, calls in at the Islands for a brief stopover. Following a series of mishaps, Edward finds himself obliged to sail for the Governor with English nurse Heather Cooper. While delivering medical care and supplies the quarrelsome pair start to grow closer. But when the threat of an Argentine invasion becomes reality they are drawn into the conflict and Edward soon discovers that his lovely Heather is not quite who she seems.

Using his intimate knowledge of the islands, the author fleshes out convincing dialogue with descriptions of breathtaking scenery, some of which are reproduced in watercolours and sketches. This book is compelling throughout, often moving and, surprisingly, sometimes funny.

Published by Seafarer Books  
ISBN 9781906266028  
Price: £9.95 paperback

**Walton and Frinton lifeboat**  
A station history 1884–2005  
by John Steer  
Review by Derek King FWCMT



Crammed with facts and details, this book is one for the real enthusiast, especially with an interest in the Essex coast. The author has researched in detail the history of the lifeboat and its effect on the locals it has served. The accounts of small community politics will bring a wry smile to those in other coastal towns and villages!

He seems to feel that the station and its crew play more of a publicity and fundraising role nowadays, and thus he does not deal with modern 'shouts' in as much detail, or sea safety and accident prevention. A considered foreword by Captain Richard Woodman MNI puts the current station and crew in sharper focus.

The book contains many interesting illustrations and a quirky use of typefaces. Mr Steer's book will earn its place on the bookcase of all with a love of the history of the RNLI.

Published by Walton and Frinton History Book Fund, ISBN 9780955216008  
Price: £14.95 paperback (all profits to the RNLI)

Available from the RNLI shop at Walton and Frinton lifeboat station; by writing to PG Oxley Ltd at 47 High Street, Walton-on-the-Naze, CO14 8BE; or by emailing [john@jsteer.fsworld.co.uk](mailto:john@jsteer.fsworld.co.uk). Please add £4 postage.

Unless other ordering details are stated, all books reviewed in *the Lifeboat* are available from 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 (but you must access Amazon via the RNLI website and not go direct). Offshore members can find further book reviews in their supplement.

# Life first

In a society where self-sacrifice and care for others is often said to be lacking, RNLI lifesavers remind us of a different way. Bethany Hope celebrates their enduring qualities



## Selflessness

We sometimes hear inspiring news reports of people acting on instinct, trying to save a fellow human being with no thought for their own safety. At sea, there is a tradition that mariners should help others in need and an early intervention can often stop a problem from escalating into a life-threatening situation. However, can you be *expected* to risk your life to save another? Over the years, many individuals have selflessly attempted to save others at sea, only to become victims themselves.

Just last year, a near disaster took place at Rhyl, Denbighshire, when a member of the public spotted a small child in trouble in heavy surf near the harbour entrance. The man courageously swam across the river to help, but he had underestimated the power and speed of the water's flow. Thankfully, Rhyl's D class lifeboat and crew were close

at hand to rescue both man and child. In an emergency, the wisest, and most effective, course of action can be to call for help and wait for expert lifesavers to arrive.

**'The dangers are always there and always will be. It [the sea] is a dangerous environment, rough or calm.'**

## Bravery

Thousands of men and women have volunteered to save lives at sea for the RNLI since 1824. Over the years, the Institution has awarded Gold Medals to just 119 who have demonstrated extraordinary courage and skill.

The RNLI's standards for assessing rescues for gallantry medals are as rigorous as ever – lifesaving hasn't got any easier. When deciding whether to award a Medal for a service, assessors look back on Medal rescues of the past, to see if the exceedingly high

standard of heroism and skill is met.

When people decide to join the RNLI as a lifeboat crew member or a lifeguard, they are accepting a certain amount of risk – it's

the nature of the job. Barrow Coxswain Alec Moore, who has been involved with lifeboats for 40 years, reflects: 'The dangers are always there and always will be. It [the sea] is a dangerous environment, rough or calm.' Yet the same individuals rarely talk about their selflessness or bravery. Lifeboat crew and lifeguards alike are a generally modest bunch, who'll mention their good training rather than talk about their own skills or courage. They praise the excellent kit and craft, perhaps compliment the rest of the

team but, even after an heroic rescue, you'll hear comments like: 'It was nothing really. I'm just doing my job.'

Perhaps their modesty stems from seeing themselves as just one small part of a wider RNLI effort to save lives at sea that dates back so long. Lifeboat Operations Manager John Chappel has welcomed many new crew members to Sennen Cove lifeboat station: 'New crew realise there is a risk involved but seem to have an almost unquestioning trust in the record of Coxswain, boat and Institution.'

## Sacrifice

Since lifeboats began, families and friends have held their collective breath waiting to hear that their loved ones have come back home safely. Sadly, over the years, the sea has claimed the lives of several hundred lifeboat crew members. From Lerwick in

Shetland to Penlee in Cornwall, communities still remember the sacrifice made by local lifesavers.

To recognise and celebrate the service given by these and all of the RNLI's volunteers and staff over the decades, a memorial is planned at RNLI Headquarters in Poole. For information on plans and funding see [rnli.org.uk/memorial](http://rnli.org.uk/memorial).

The relative safety of 21st century all-weather lifeboats compared with open lifeboats can be misleading. Despite improvements in training and technology, loss of life remains a threat. Crew have to leave the cosy wheelhouse at some point and face the elements. However well equipped, they are just a handful of humans fighting a cruel and vast ocean on a relatively tiny craft. As Sennen Cove's John Chappel succinctly puts it: 'The overwhelming power of the sea is the same as ever.' →

## DID YOU KNOW ...

In 1824, Captain Charles Fremantle RN was the first person to be recognised by the RNLI, receiving its first Gold Medal for Gallantry. He single-handedly tried to save the lives of the crew of the Swedish ship *Carl Jean* near Christchurch in Hampshire. As in lifeguard rescues of today, his response from the beach was swift and decisive. With a rope around his middle he swam strongly through the rough seas to reach the foundering vessel. His attempts at rescue were thwarted, but his courage, swimming proficiency, strength and stamina were exceptional. He was hauled back to shore, narrowly escaping with his own life. Eventually the ship's crew reached the shore using the remains of their mast.



**Dedication**

The RNLI is not just about one-off spectacular rescues. Being a lifeboat crew member or a lifeguard takes everyday dedication and is a great responsibility. The demands on crews' time are greater than ever, with more training and more shouts. Lifeguards, too, have never been busier with increasingly crowded beaches and surflines.

Crews and shore helpers know they could be called out at any time, leaving families, friends, work or bed. Just hearing a storm in the middle of the night can put some volunteers on edge. Fowey Lifeboat Operations Manager Will Mitchell has great respect for the commitment of his crew: 'Whatever the weather, they always turn up at the boathouse when the pagers go off, not knowing what to expect or how long they will be at sea, in exactly the same way that crews did 100 years ago.' (See page 24 for a personal account.)

Crews and lifeguards may enjoy the camaraderie and the skills learned, but all RNLI lifesavers are motivated essentially by the thought that someone's life is at risk and they can help.

**Strength**

Crews and lifeguards need to be strong, both

physically and mentally, just as they were in the pulling (rowing) lifeboats era.

When a flash rip current hit a busy beach in Perranporth, Cornwall, in 2005, lifeguards famously saved 35 people in just 5 minutes, in an intense and physically exhausting mass rescue. Some lifeguards, armed only with a rescue board or tube, fought through the surf just as Charles Fremantle did in his day.

The success of a lifeboat rescue can still depend on brute strength. St Ives Coxswain Tommy Cocking recalls a service to a small boat that had broken down in a notorious area of surf. One man jumped to safety in the inshore lifeboat but Tommy spotted a child left behind, just as the surf crashed over both boats. Somehow the crew of three had the strength to hang onto the stricken boat. When the surf passed, they got the child out, just before the next wave capsized the vessel. Tommy reflects: 'Had the crew not all been so fit and strong, that child may not have made it.'

Some lifeboat shouts are demanding in a different way. Even a relatively straightforward

tow can be challenging, perhaps lasting for hours. Courtmacsherry Harbour Mechanic Michael Hurley has been on the crew since 1977 and comments that, whatever transpires, crews need 'a reasonable sense of humour'. Laughing binds the team together and helps its members cope in tough situations.

Lifesavers are also no strangers to gruesome accidents or even deaths at sea. One lifeguard recalls the day a swimmer was run over by a motorboat and killed by the propeller. He could do nothing but wait, holding the mangled body, until the police boat arrived.

**Sea sense**

Michael Hurley believes the recruits have essentially changed little in 30 years: 'They are the usual mix of brilliant and useless seamen, drinkers and non, comedians and hard'uns.' The basic skills needed by lifeboat crews are also the same as they always were. So, though a 19th century coxswain might be foxed by the controls on a 2008 lifeboat, their boathandling and ropework skills would still

**'You cannot prepare them for the sights they may encounter or situations they may face.'**

Barrow Coxswain Alec Moore



Top: Lifesaving heroes and heroines through the ages

Bottom: Shore helpers and crew battle the surf at Redcar  
Photo: Michael Picknett/RNLI

hold them in good stead. →

In previous generations, lifeboatmen (and they were all men until the 1960s) were likely to be local fishermen. Their seafaring experience gave them a firm grasp of seamanship and an intimate knowledge of the local area and tides – a feel for the sea. Today, many lifeguards have a similar bond with the sea, having the advantage of years spent getting to know and respect the sea, through surfing.

But only 10% of modern-day lifeboat volunteers have a professional maritime occupation, so in-depth training is essential. RNLI training ensures that all crew have a solid grounding in seamanship and sea survival. They also learn how to deal with the wide range of casualties that they will come across in this day and age.

St Ives Coxswain Tommy Cocking is the fifth generation of lifeboatman in his family. He knows that seagoing experience isn't everything: 'In a lifesaving situation a well-trained first aid crew member is of much more use at times than an experienced fisherman.'

Through years of serving the RNLI, lifesavers with no previous experience hone their skills and build up their own feel for the sea. They can in turn pass on their knowledge and skills to the younger lifesavers. Coxswain Joseph Murphy, who joined the Dunmore East

crew 38 years ago, affirms that with the training and the mentoring of the more experienced volunteers 'new crews are up to the task'.

No matter how experienced, lifesavers all benefit from a healthy respect for the sea. At Headquarters, Service Information Section Manager Brian Wead explains that over the years the best lifeboatmen and women have been 'confident but not gung-ho'. He added 'You can serve a whole lifetime at sea but it can still catch you out.'

## 'If that man were going to hell and back in the boat, I'd be right behind him.'

### Tenacity

Real-life rescues can be 'textbook', with crews using skills they've practised hundreds of times in training, but in exceptional services they can display both creativity and tenacity to save the day.

In one such rescue in 2002, a Silver Medal service by Eastbourne lifeboat crew, two sailors were in the water after their yacht capsized in gale force winds. Hayley Landon was hauled on deck, but her husband Pete was disappearing under the water. Instinctively, Mechanic Daniel Guy climbed over the lifeboat guardrails to grab Pete. Daniel

trapped him between his legs and kept his head above water. It wasn't a manoeuvre that can be found in any RNLI training manual, but it saved a life.

### Trust

Such committed lifesavers have tremendous faith in each other; they must work as a team to stay safe in order to help others in peril. For years, they have followed the orders of their leader – coxswain, helm or senior lifeguard – without question. After a particularly

treacherous and gruelling shout in 2006, Barra Island Second Mechanic Lachlan Douglas said of his Coxswain, Donald MacLeod: 'If that man were going to hell and back in the boat, I'd be right behind him.'

If crews and lifeguards think they're 'just doing their job', we know that their qualities are special – in 2008 just as in 1824. Past and current RNLI lifesavers go on to inspire future generations of lifeboat crews and lifeguards. They have also earned the absolute trust and support of seagoers and landlubbers alike. What they risk in putting life first should never be forgotten.

### A lifeguard escapes a wave on his rescue watercraft

Photo: Alan Williams



The RNLI plans to double its lifeguard coverage by 2011 (see page 12) and is accompanying this expansion with a new campaign to promote awareness of RNLI lifeguards:

**RNLI LIFEBOATS, LIFEGUARDS LIFE FIRST.**

# Lifeboat Lottery

Donor, fundraiser, lifesaver



Regular players of the Lifeboat Lottery will know Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines as a kind sponsor, frequently donating cruises as prizes. But there is a lot more to the RNLI's partnership with Fred. Olsen than holiday giveaways.

The company started fundraising for the RNLI onboard its cruise ships in the 1960s. Last year alone it raised almost £60,000 for the charity through raffles, quizzes, auctions and foreign coin collections as its four-strong fleet showed thousands of passengers around the world's oceans.

In 2008, the launch of the company's new ship *Balmoral* (pictured) gives more fundraising opportunities, as well as more choice and up-to-the-minute facilities for Fred. Olsen's loyal and generous customers. She will ply Mediterranean, Caribbean and northern European cruise routes, berthing at ports from St John's in Antigua to the ancient cities of Rhodes and Piraeus.

The very tangible benefits to the RNLI of Fred. Olsen's donations over recent years include:

- the Atlantic 75 inshore lifeboat *Braemar*, which joined the RNLI's relief fleet in 2001
- four mobile training units, used to help volunteer lifeboat crews throughout the service perfect the skills they need to save lives at sea (picture right)
- the fitting out of three meeting rooms in The Lifeboat College, used for land-based training for staff and volunteers
- the design and development of a new style of launch carriage for the latest generation of Atlantic lifeboats
- the provision of such a carriage to each of: Cullercoats lifeboat station, Mudeford lifeboat station and the RNLI's relief fleet.

Now, Fred. Olsen has turned its fundraising energies to providing a new Atlantic 85 lifeboat for a Scottish station, due in 2011. Publicity Manager Wendy Hooper-Greenhill says: 'Fundraising for the RNLI has

become an institution on all our ships, and it is very rewarding to know that the generosity of our passengers and crew has achieved so much this year.'

Second prize in the Summer 2008 Lifeboat Lottery is a Canary Islands cruise onboard the newest addition to the Fred. Olsen fleet, *Balmoral*. The cruise visits Lisbon, Arrecife, Las Palmas, Santa Cruz, San Sebastian, and Funchal.

With 744 cabins, *Balmoral* is the largest of Fred. Olsen's fleet, but all efforts have been made to create a homely and intimate environment. There is a choice of bars, restaurants and lounges. Other amenities include pools, jacuzzis, internet access, a beauty salon, a medical centre, shops, a casino and a library.

Fred. Olsen has four other ships: *Boudicca*, *Black Prince*, *Black Watch* and *Braemar*. Find out more on [fredolsencruises.co.uk](http://fredolsencruises.co.uk). There is even a ship locator feature on the site, which lets you see where each of the ships is in real time and imagine yourself onboard!

The RNLI is very grateful to Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines for 4 decades of support.

Following the unfortunate collapse of former RNLI partner Travelscope at the end of 2007, Fred. Olsen stepped in with an alternative cruise for the Autumn 2007 Lifeboat Lottery's second prize winner. Mr C Edwards has now been offered a 12-day Baltic cruise onboard *Balmoral*.

The RNLI would like to thank Van Gogh Cruises Ltd, who have agreed to pay all commissions on outstanding Travelscope ocean cruise holidays booked by RNLI supporters through *the Lifeboat* magazine and RNLI website. If you have any concerns about a holiday booked with Travelscope through the RNLI, contact RNLI Corporate Fundraising Officer Rhys Parker on 01202 663285 or email [rparker@rnli.org.uk](mailto:rparker@rnli.org.uk).



## Winter 2007 winners



**1st prize:** Kia Picanto, Mrs S Waterton, Hampshire pictured here on her VIP visit to Lymington lifeboat station

**2nd prize:** Generously donated by Great Rail Journeys, 10-day Alpine train holiday, Mr JL Wilson, Hertfordshire

**3rd prize:** £500, Mr HC Wilson, Suffolk

**4th prize:** £250, Mr AK Forward, Southampton

**Five prizes:** £100 each, Mr I McDiarmid, Argyll; Mr K Johnson, Lancashire; Mr G Shorrocks, Lancashire; Mrs EM Jarvis, Northampton; Mr JR Howard, Suffolk.



## Summer stakes

First prize in the Summer 2008 Lifeboat Lottery is a Vauxhall Corsa Life 1.0i. Second prize is a 13-night cruise to the Canary Islands kindly sponsored by Fred. Olsen. There are seven cash prizes from £500-£100.

Tickets will be available to supporters on 18 April and earlier to fundraising branches. If you don't usually receive tickets and would like to, please call 0845 121 4999 or email [lottery@rnli.org.uk](mailto:lottery@rnli.org.uk). (Please note that, due to differing taxing and gaming laws, lottery tickets are not available in the RoI or Northern Ireland.)

# LAUNCHES 1,196 LIFEBOAT AND HOVERCRAFT LAUNCHES OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2007

**ABERDEEN**

ON-1248(17-24):Oct3,4,5,16,28,Nov3(x2),12,Dec3  
 D-536:Oct4,15,16,28,Nov12  
**ABERDOVEY**  
 B-758:Dec17  
**ABERSOCH**  
 B-790:Oct13,26,Dec13,29  
**ABERYSTWYTH**  
 B-704:Oct3,13,14  
 B-822:Oct19,23,24,28  
**ACHILL ISLAND**  
 ON-1240(14-28):Dec8  
**AITH**  
 ON-1232(17-14):Dec20  
**ALDEBURGH**  
 ON-1193(12-34):Oct3  
 D-673:Oct5,14,Dec20  
**ALDERNEY**  
 ON-1226(14-22):Nov19  
**AMBLE**  
 ON-1176(12-19):Oct14,28,Nov6,11,25,Dec24  
 D-569:Oct28(x3),Nov6,11,Dec24  
**ANGLE**  
 ON-1114(47-011):Oct5,6,14,26,Nov3,Dec25  
 D-638:Oct6,13,Nov3,Dec25  
**ANSTRUTHER**  
 ON-1174(12-17):Oct10,18,Nov12,18  
 D-667:Oct18,Nov12,18  
**APPLEDORE**  
 ON-1140(47-027):Oct26,Nov1  
 B-742:Oct22,28,Dec1,18  
 BB-060:Oct12,22  
**ARAN ISLANDS**  
 ON-1217(17-06):Oct11,16,Nov9,13,22,24,Dec23(x2),25,31  
**ARBROATH**  
 ON-1192(12-33):Oct12,24  
 ON-1194(12-35):Nov28  
 D-621:Oct12,24,Nov1,4,10,28  
**ARKLOW**  
 ON-1223(14-19):Oct6,8,21,Nov26  
**ARRAN (LAMLASH)**  
 B-770:Oct26,30  
**ARRANMORE**  
 ON-1244(17-22):Oct7,19,29,Nov2,12,22,Dec3,7,11,18,24,27  
**BALLYCOTTON**  
 ON-1233(14-25):Oct20,Dec19  
**BALLYGLASS**  
 D-507:Dec10  
**BALTIMORE**

ON-1137(47-024):Oct1  
**BANGOR**  
 B-805:Nov1,Dec2,18  
**BARMOUTH,**  
**ON-1185(12-26):Dec17**  
**BARRA ISLAND**  
 ON-1230(17-12):Nov8  
**BARROW**  
 ON-1117(47-014):Oct27,Nov10  
**BARRY DOCK**  
 ON-1180(14-01):Oct10(x2),28  
**ON-1213(14-15):Nov14,Dec2**  
**BEAUMARIS**  
 B-768:Oct7(x2),20,23(x2),27,28,29(x3),Nov25,29,Dec8,12,26,30  
**BEMBRIDGE**  
 ON-1126(47-018):Oct5,13,Nov9,10  
**BERWICK-UPON-TWEED**  
 ON-1191(12-32):Oct1,4,31  
 D-639:Oct4,14  
**BLYTH**  
 D-606:Oct1,12  
**BORTH**  
 D-622:Nov18  
 D-635:Oct23,24,28  
**BRIDLINGTON**  
 ON-1169(12-12):Oct4,11,25  
 D-505:Nov18(x5),Dec1,28  
 D-557:Oct25  
**BRIGHTON**  
 B-737:Oct9,17,18,27,Nov3,10,11,15,Dec8  
**BROUGH FERRY**  
 ON-1252(14-31):Oct7,26,Nov1,6,24  
 D-539:Oct7,22,23,26(x2),Nov1,24  
**BUCKIE**  
 ON-1268(17-37):Oct13  
**BUDE**  
 D-617:Oct4,Nov1  
**BUNDORAN**  
 B-792:Oct21,Dec3,18  
**BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH**  
 B-733:Oct22,28,Nov16  
**BURNHAM-ON-SEA**  
 B-717:Dec9  
 B-795:Oct23  
**BURRY PORT**  
 D-611:Oct1,2,4,5,13,28,Nov16,Dec31  
**CALSHOT**  
 ON-1109(47-007):Oct27,28  
 ON-1155(47-037):Nov9,30,Dec2,14(x2),16,23  
**D-609:Oct27(x2),28,Nov9,Dec14,16,23**

**CAMPBELTOWN**  
 ON-1241(17-19):Oct3,8,9,Nov1,2(x2)  
**ON-1262(17-33):Nov16,Dec4**  
**CARDIGAN**  
 B-752:Oct30,Nov12,16,23,Dec19  
 D-524:Oct6(x2)  
 D-567:Dec19,30  
**CASTLETOWNBERE**  
 ON-1277(17-44):Oct10  
**CHISWICK**  
 E-003:Oct5,10,13(x2),15,20,26,27(x2),31(x2),Nov3,5(x2),8,Dec9,15,18,26  
**E-006:Oct6,22,25,29,31,Nov14,21,22,30,Dec2,3,11,22**  
**CLACTON-ON-SEA**  
 B-744:Nov18  
 D-559:Dec18  
**CLEETHORPES**  
 D-618:Oct10,13,15,Nov17,25  
**CLIFDEN**  
 B-724:Oct1  
 D-679:Oct1,Nov27  
**CLOVELLY**  
 B-759:Oct17,25  
**CNWCY**  
 D-627:Dec1,8  
 D-675:Oct5,7,10,Nov7  
**COURTMACSHERRY HARBOUR**  
 ON-1205(1407):Oct26,Dec5  
**CROSSHAVEN**  
 B-782:Oct5,6,19(x2),28,Nov18,22,26,Dec6  
**CULLERCOATS**  
 B-811:Oct12,Nov17,18,Dec27  
**DART**  
 D-520:Nov24,Dec25  
**DONAGHADEE**  
 ON-1267(14-36):Oct12,Dec22  
**DOUGLAS**  
 ON-1147(47-032):Oct7,Dec26  
**DOVER**  
 ON-1220(17-09):Dec3,21,28  
**ON-1279(17-46):Oct12,20,Nov25**  
**DUN LAOGHAIRE**  
 ON-1200(14-05):Dec31  
 D-565:Oct4,27(x2),28,Dec1,27  
**DUNBAR**  
**ON-1207(14-09):Oct24,Nov15,Dec30**

**DUNGENESS**  
 ON-1186(12-27):Oct20,21,Dec23  
**DUNMORE EAST**  
 ON-1215(14-17):Oct11,Nov16,Dec7,10  
**EASTBOURNE**  
 ON-1195(12-36):Oct14,Nov6,20,24,Dec11  
**D-605:Oct5,7,13,16,21(x2)**  
**ENNISKILLEN**  
 B-581:Oct11,19  
**B-591:Oct10,Dec27,29**  
**EXMOUTH**  
 ON-1210(14-12):Oct28(x2)  
**D-630:Oct21,28(x3),Nov8(x2)**  
**D-669:Oct6,10,11,Nov28,Dec16(x2)**  
**EYEMOUTH**  
 ON-1209(14-11):Nov21,Dec4,30(x2),31  
**FALMOUTH**  
**ON-1256(17-29):Oct3,16,19,Dec31**  
**B-756:Oct1,3,6(x2),Oct9,16,19,Nov9,20,25,Dec31**  
**FETHARD**  
 D-504:Oct25  
**FILEY**  
 D-563:Oct23  
 D-570:Nov3  
**FISHGUARD**  
 ON-1198(14-03):Oct9,18,22,Nov17  
**D-640:Oct18,24,31,Nov17**  
**FLAMBOROUGH**  
 B-820:Oct14  
**FLEETWOOD**  
 ON-1109(47-007):Nov17,Dec29  
**ON-1156(47-038):Oct9**  
**D-501:Oct9**  
**D-556:Dec29**  
**FLINT**  
 D-658:Nov26(x2),Dec2,9,20,30,31  
**FOWEY**  
 ON-1222(14-18):Oct15  
**D-681:Nov15,25(x2),Dec25**  
**FRASERBURGH**  
 ON-1225(14-21):Dec10  
 ON-1259(14-34):Oct2,Nov11  
**GALWAY**  
 B-738:Oct11,20,31,Nov7,18,28,Dec31  
**GRAVESEND**  
 E-001:Oct6,25,26,28,29,Nov1,3,4,20(x2),Dec6,13,18,21,26,28,30  
**KINGHORN**  
 B-720:Oct1,2,3,17,21,Nov19,Dec5,10,21,23,30  
**KIPPFORD**  
**D-553:Oct25(x2),Dec20**

**GREAT YARMOUTH AND GORLESTON**  
 ON-1208(14-10):Nov12,Dec4  
**B-786:Oct7,10,24,30,Nov25,Dec2,4,15**  
**HARTLEPOOL**  
 ON-1274(14-37):Oct2(x2),28,Nov23  
**B-766:Oct2,11,28,Nov5**  
**HARWICH**  
 B-789:Oct1(x2),2,Oct11,17,27,28,Nov3,11,Dec2,20,31  
**HASTINGS**  
 ON-1125(12-002):Oct14  
**D-540:Oct14**  
**HAYLING ISLAND**  
 B-712:Oct13,Dec26  
**D-642:Oct13,Dec26**  
**HELENSBURGH**  
 B-791:Oct3,6,13,21,Nov6,9,Dec12,18,19,20  
**HELVICK HEAD**  
 B-760:Oct29,Dec24  
**HOLYHEAD**  
 ON-1272(17-41):Oct29,Nov4,23,Dec4  
**D-654:Oct13,Dec29,Dec22,29**  
**HORTON AND PORT EYNON**  
 D-531:Oct6,22  
**HOWTH**  
 ON-1258(14-33):Nov22  
**D-620:Oct6,13,Nov6,7,22**  
**HOYLAKE**  
 ON-1163(12-005):Dec5,29  
**HUMBER**  
 ON-1216(17-05):Oct11,13,30,Nov1,11,21,30,Dec2,17,28  
**HUNSTANTON**  
 B-749:Nov24,29  
**ILFRACOMBE**  
 ON-1187(12-28):Oct17,26  
**D-555:Oct5,30**  
**INVERGORDON**  
 ON-1225(14-21):Oct2  
**ISLAY**  
 ON-1219(17-08):Oct4,9,26,Nov2  
**KESSOCK**  
 B-771:Oct11,16,Nov11  
**KILKEEL**  
 B-812:Oct13,20,27,Dec9  
**KILMORE QUAY**  
 ON-1133(47-021):Oct7,8,11,13,19,25(x2),Nov12  
**KINGHORN**  
 B-720:Oct1,2,3,17,21,Nov19,Dec5,10,21,23,30  
**KIPPFORD**  
**D-553:Oct25(x2),Dec20**

**KIRKWALL**  
 ON-1231(17-13):Nov5,9,11,24  
**KYLE OF LOCHALSH**  
 B-740:Oct1,Dec29,31  
**LARGS**  
 B-739:Oct3,13,19,23,Nov11,Dec6,8,19  
**LARNE**  
 ON-1246(14-30):Oct17,Nov13  
**D-646:Nov4,Dec15**  
**NEW BRIGHTON**  
 ON-1221(17-10):Oct16,Nov8,Dec4  
**LITTLEHAMPTON**  
 B-779:Oct5,13,16,23,Nov1,4,16  
**D-680:Oct16,31,Nov4,16**  
**LITTLESTONE-ON-SEA**  
 B-785:Dec23  
**LLANDUDNO**  
 ON-1164(12-006):Oct15,Nov7  
**D-656:Oct27**  
**LOCHINVER**  
 ON-1271(17-40):Oct23,Dec2,15  
**LONGHOPE**  
 ON-1284(16-05):Oct23,Nov5  
**LOOE**  
 B-793:Nov5,Nov11  
**D-574:Nov11**  
**LOUGH DERG**  
 B-705:Oct12,Nov22  
**LOUGH SWILLY**  
 B-819:Oct8,13,Dec6  
**LOWESTOFT**  
 ON-1121(47-010):Oct3  
**ON-1132(47-020):Oct18,24,28,Dec13**  
**LYME REGIS**  
**LYMINGTON**  
 B-784:Oct6,11,20,27,Nov8,9,Dec29  
**LYTHAM ST ANNES**  
 D-657:Oct24(x2),Dec11  
**MABLETHORPE**  
 B-778:Nov25,26  
**D-653:Nov25,26**  
**MACDUFF**  
 B-815:Oct8  
**MALLAIG**  
 ON-1250(17-26):Oct1,8,Dec9  
**MARGATE**  
 ON-1177(12-20):Oct12,31,Nov1,2,3,27  
**D-503:Oct4,20**  
**D-545:Dec6**

**MINEHEAD**  
 B-708:Oct8,21(x2)  
 B-810:Dec11  
 D-521:Nov20,Dec11  
**MOELFRE**  
 ON-1116(47-013):Oct15  
**D-532:Oct5,28**  
**MONTROSE**  
 ON-1152(47-034):Oct16,Nov26  
**MORECAMBE**  
 D-530:Oct10,13(x2),15  
**D-564:Dec13,16,26**  
**H-002:Dec13,16,21,26**  
**H-006:Oct10,13**  
**MUDEFORD**  
 B-806:Oct1,7,28,Nov17,25,Dec2,17,31  
**NEW BRIGHTON**  
 B-721:Oct22,25,Nov9,12,Dec5,12,16,25,29  
**B-723:Oct17**  
**H-005:Nov3,Dec17**  
**NEW QUAY (CARDIGANSHIRE)**  
 ON-1172(12-15):Nov25  
**D-616:Nov25,Dec11**  
**NEWBIGGIN**  
 B-745:Oct6,13,25  
**NEWCASTLE**  
 ON-1188(12-29):Oct20,Nov27  
**D-601:Oct27**  
**NEWHAVEN**  
 ON-1243(17-21):Oct20,30(x2),Nov3  
**NEWQUAY (CORNWALL)**  
 B-717:Oct11  
**B-821:Nov4(x2),Dec16**  
**D-636:Oct11,Nov4,Dec16**  
**OBAN**  
 ON-1227(14-23):Oct5,6,27,29,30,Nov4,6,11,Dec1(x2),11,21,30  
**ON PASSAGE**  
 ON-1213(14-15):Nov7  
**PADSTOW**  
 ON-1283(16-04):Oct26,Nov22  
**PENARTH**  
 B-725:Oct11,18,Nov19,Dec16  
**D-534:Oct6,Nov29**  
**PENLEE**  
 ON-1265(17-36):Oct31,Nov2  
**B-787:Oct31,Nov25,Dec4**  
**PETERHEAD**  
 ON-1282(16-03):Dec23  
**PLYMOUTH**  
 ON-1264(17-35):Oct27,Nov7,10,13,26  
**B-775:Nov10,13,23,26,30,Dec1,13**  
**POOLE**  
 ON-1131(47-023):Oct28,Dec9  
**B-710:Oct28**  
**B-769:Nov7,11,16,Dec9,21,23,24**

**PORT ERIN**  
 B-734:Oct17  
**PORT ST MARY**  
 ON-1234(14-26):Oct17,21  
**D-575:Oct21**  
**PORT TALBOT**  
 D-523:Oct13  
**D-550:Nov10,Dec15**  
**PORTAFERRY**  
 B-762:Oct7,18,21,Dec1,Dec27  
**PORTHCAWL**  
 B-726:Oct20,28,29,31,Dec27  
**PORTPATRICK**  
 ON-1151(47-033):Oct19,Dec3  
**PORTREE**  
 ON-1214(14-16):Oct30,Nov30  
**PORTRUSH**  
 ON-1247(17-23):Oct1,30,Nov6  
**D-572:Oct22(x2),Nov26**  
**PORTSMOUTH**  
 B-718:Oct13,Nov11,23,Dec2,8  
**B-730:Dec17,26**  
**D-509:Oct1,13,Nov23**  
**D-554:Dec17,26**  
**PWLLHELI**  
 ON-1168(12-010):Oct6  
**D-676:Dec18,28**  
**QUEENS FERRY**  
 B-735:Oct6,14,22,Dec16,29  
**RAMSEY**  
 ON-1171(12-14):Nov2  
**RAMSGATE**  
 ON-1197(14-02):Oct10,28,Nov9,27,Dec1,8,13,19,31  
**B-765:Nov5,9,Dec1,19,20,21,22**  
**RED BAY**  
 B-728:Oct11  
**REDCAR**  
 B-777:Oct7,28,Dec28(x2)  
**D-677:Oct28,Dec28**  
**RHYL**  
 ON-1124(12-001):Oct6,13,15  
**D-604:Oct6,13,26,Dec13**  
**ROCK**  
**D-665:Oct13,22,28(x2)**  
**ROSSLARE HARBOUR**  
 ON-1276(17-43):Oct5,8  
**RYE HARBOUR**  
 B-727:Oct18,Nov24,25,Dec2  
**B-816:Oct27,Nov10,23(x2)**  
**SALCOMBE**  
 ON-1130(47-022):Nov5  
**B-769:Oct1,6**  
**B-794:Oct21,28,Dec1**  
**SCARBOROUGH**  
 ON-1175(12-18):Oct13,14,24,Nov9  
**D-560:Oct1**  
**SEAHOUSES**  
 ON-1173(12-16):Oct14,28,Nov5,13,Dec2  
**D-529:Oct5,14,28,Dec2,27**

**SELSEY**  
 ON-1146(47-031):Oct5,Nov4,5  
**D-533:Oct5,30,Nov5**  
**SENNEN COVE**  
 ON-1110(47-008):Dec6,23  
**D-624:Dec23**  
**SHEERNESS**  
 ON-1211(14-13):Oct12,Nov11,Dec28  
**D-662:Nov10,11,Dec21**  
**SHERINGHAM**  
**B-818:Oct1,Dec31**  
**SHOREHAM HARBOUR**  
 ON-1115(47-012):Oct1  
**ON-1158(47-040):Oct7,Nov4,17**  
**D-647:Oct17,Nov6**  
**SKEGNESS**  
 ON-1166(12-008):Oct3,22,23,Nov7,26,29,Dec20  
**D-518:Oct22,Nov26**  
**D-573:Oct3**  
**SKERRIES**  
**B-713:Nov14,Nov28**  
**B-747:Oct14,21**  
**SLIGO BAY**  
**B-781:Oct17,Dec15**  
**SOUTH BROADS**  
 D-492:Oct20  
**D-514:Nov25,Dec4,8**  
**XP-42:Oct20,Nov25**  
**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA**  
**B-776:Oct6(x3),Nov17,18,24,Dec28**  
**D-527:Oct28,Nov2**  
**D-610:Oct10,Nov18,Dec5**  
**D-682:Nov11(x3)**  
**H-004:Oct6(x2),10,Nov11,12**  
**SOUTHWOLD**  
 B-750:Dec1  
**B-753:Oct26**  
**ST ABBS**  
 B-783:Nov8,Dec8,31(x2)  
**ST AGNES**  
 D-625:Oct7  
**D-641:Dec15**  
**ST BEES**  
**B-719:Oct25**  
**ST CATHERINE**  
 B-772:Oct27(x2),31,Nov1,10,19  
**ST HELIER**  
 ON-1157(47-039):Oct28,Nov10,23,Dec6  
**B-816:Oct27,Nov10,23(x2)**  
**ST IVES**  
 ON-1167(12-009):Oct10,21  
**D-668:Oct7,10,16,21**  
**ST MARY'S**  
 ON-1229(17-11):Oct18  
**ST PETER PORT**  
 ON-1260(17-31):Oct1,8,26,Nov16,Dec10  
**STAITHES AND RUNSWICK**  
 B-788:Oct2,Nov22,Dec19

**STROMNESS**  
 ON-1263(17-34):Oct23,26,Nov8,11  
**SUNDERLAND**  
 B-817:Oct3,4,6,7,8,12,18,23,24,Nov14,23,Dec24  
**D-608:Oct4,Nov4(x2),14,24,Dec6**  
**SWANAGE**  
 ON-1182(12-23):Oct14,21,Dec2  
**ON-1184(12-25):Dec4(x2)**  
**D-613:Oct14,21,24**  
**D-615:Nov30,Dec4**  
**TEDDINGTON**  
**D-648:Oct16,Nov27,Dec26**  
**TEIGNMOUTH**  
**B-809:Nov6,Dec2,9**  
**TENBY**  
 ON-1281(16-02):Oct1,2  
**D-562:Nov11**  
**THE LIZARD**  
 ON-1145(47-030):Dec10  
**THE MUMBLES**  
 ON-1122(47-017):Oct30  
**D-645:Oct30,Nov7,19,21,Dec2**  
**THURSO**  
 ON-1273(17-42):Nov5,Dec6  
**TIGHNABRUAIACH**  
 B-743:Oct14  
**TOBERMORY**  
 ON-1270(17-39):Oct17,29  
**TORBAY**  
 ON-1255(17-28):Oct4,11,15,23,31,Dec18,19,26  
**D-651:Oct4,5,7,11,15,17,21,25,Dec26**

**TOWER**  
 E-004:Nov25,27,Dec3,20,31  
**E-005:Oct1,3,4(x2),6(x2),7,8,10,12(x2),13(x2),14,17,19,20(x2),22(x3),27(x2),28(x3),30,31,Nov2,4,10,18,19,21,24(x3),Dec1(x2),2,3,5(x4),6(x3),8(x3),13,14,16(x2),22,23(x2),24(x2)**  
**E-006:Oct8(x2),9,10**  
**TRAMORE**  
**D-643:Oct12**  
**TROON**  
**ON-1275(14-38):Oct7,28,Nov25,Dec19**  
**D-684:Dec19,20**  
**TYNEMOUTH**  
 ON-1242(17-20):Nov14,18,23(x2)  
**D-535:Oct21,28,Nov1,18,Dec1,27,30**  
**VALENTIA**  
 ON-1218(17-07):Oct1,12,14  
**WALMER**  
 B-808:Oct20,Nov3,4  
**D-663:Nov3**  
**WALTON AND FRINTON**  
 ON-1112(47-010):Oct15  
**ON-1154(47-036):Oct1,Dec23**  
**WELLS**  
 ON-1161(12-003):Nov20,Dec5,16,19  
**D-661:Oct15,24**  
**WEST KIRBY**  
**D-612:Oct10,Nov11**  
**WEST MERSEA**  
**B-761:Oct6,15,21,Nov11**

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE**  
 B-736:Dec1,16  
**D-537:Nov2,Dec1**  
**WEXFORD**  
 D-644:Nov30  
**WEYMOUTH**  
**ON-1201(17-02):Oct6,14,23,24,Nov18,22,23**  
**ON-1261(17-32):Dec2,17**  
**B-746:Oct6,7,14(x2),22,23,24,28,Nov5,22,Dec1,17**  
**WHITBY**  
**ON-1212(14-14):Oct13,Nov17,23,28**  
**D-674:Oct13,24,25**  
**WHITSTABLE**  
**B-764:Oct28,Dec13**  
**WICK**  
 ON-1224(14-20):Oct9,21,Nov4,Dec11,17  
**WICKLOW**  
 ON-1153(47-035):Dec19  
**WORKINGTON**  
 ON-1141(47-028):Nov13  
**D-629:Oct22**  
**YARMOUTH**  
 ON-1249(17-25):Oct13,27,Nov4,8,9,28,Dec14  
**YOUGHAL**  
 B-780:Nov13

### ON STATION

B-825, *Doris Joan*, Criccieth, 6 November 2007  
 (B-707 has been withdrawn)  
 B-821, *Gladys Mildred*, Newquay, 29 October 2007  
 (B-715 has been withdrawn)  
 ON-1288 (16-08), *Grace Dixon*, Barrow, 8 January 2008  
 (ON-1117 has been withdrawn)  
 ON-1287 (16-07), *Lester*, Cromer, 6 January 2008  
 (ON-1162 has been withdrawn)  
 B-824, *Richard and Elizabeth Deaves*, Minehead, 1 December 2007  
 (B-708 has been withdrawn)  
 D-506, *Telford Shopping Centre*, Troon, 17 December 2007  
 (D-506 has been withdrawn)  
 D-682, *The Essex Freemason*, Southend-on-Sea, 5 November 2007  
 (D-527 has been withdrawn)  
 D-683, *Tradewinds*, Fethard, 28 November 2007  
 (D-504 has been withdrawn)

### NAMING CEREMONIES

D-662, *Eleanor*, Sheerness, 18 August 2007  
 D-674, *OEM Stone III*, Whitby, 7 September 2007



<p>ON-####(12-##)                  Mersey class                  last built: 1993                  refit cost: £190,000</p>	<p>ON-####(14-##)                  Trent class                  last built: 2003                  refit cost: £220,000</p>	<p>ON-####(16-##)                  Tamar class                  introduced 2006                  new cost: £2.6M</p>	<p>ON-####(17-##)                  Severn class                  last built: 2004                  refit cost: £290,000</p>	<p>ON-####(47-###)                  Tyne class                  last built: 1990                  refit cost: £220,000</p>	<p>B-###                  B class                  Atlantic 21,75 or 85                  new cost: £135,000</p>	<p>D-###                  D class                  new cost: £29,000</p>	<p>E-###                  E class                  last built: 2002                  refit cost: £60,000</p>	<p>H-###                  Inshore rescue hovercraft                  new cost: £175,000</p>
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Neil Oliver's fascination with daring deeds has led him to champion the RNLI – and he's been in deep water himself a few times, as he tells Rory Stamp

With his rich Scots accent and long black hair, broadcaster, writer and archaeologist Neil Oliver is well known for bringing historic tales of drama and bravery to life. When he was filmed experiencing a crew training session at The Lifeboat College, though, it was the actions of young, modern day lifesavers that particularly struck a chord with him. 'Young people get a really bad press sometimes,' he says, 'and I think some newspapers would have us believe that people in their teens and early 20s are selfish, not selfless. But I trained with a group of young people who give up their own time to train for rescues and carry them out. They stand in readiness to save people they've never met before. That's heart warming and reassuring.'

Neil's experiences at the College were broadcast in January during a report on BBC TV's *The ONE show*, when he declared that he was the RNLI's 'number one fan'. It was one of many television programmes that have utilised Neil's presenting skills. Having qualified as an archaeologist in the late 1980s and worked as a print journalist in the 1990s, his passion for unearthing fascinating stories was first seen on our television screens when he co-presented *Two men in a trench* in 2002. The popular series recounted the brave acts of British soldiers, from the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 to the Second World War.

Today Neil is best known as the charismatic lead presenter of the BBC's *Coast* series. Thanks to his enthusiasm and vigour, nuggets of fascinating history from around our shores have captivated millions. So, what's the secret of his success? 'I think it's because I come at history like Joe Public would. I'm not an academic historian – I'm interested in it as an archaeologist,' says Neil. 'We're a nosy bunch. I don't dig up gold and jewels, I dig up the rubbish of ordinary people. That's how you uncover these amazing stories that show what life was like. That's what I'm drawn

to, and that's what I think people find particularly interesting.'

to, and that's what I think people find particularly interesting.'

Filming *Coast* led Neil to meet several lifeboat crews – and one such encounter was completely unplanned. Neil and the television crew recreated and filmed a cricket match that used to be played annually at Goodwin Sands, 4 miles off the Kent coast. The sandbars there have claimed the world's largest concentration of shipwrecks and, when they tried to revive the sporting tradition, it looked as if Neil and the production team might be the latest casualties of the area known as the 'widowmaker'. Their sandy pitch suddenly began to disappear beneath the waves and, just at the wrong moment, their boat broke down.

'It was a classic case of thinking that we had taken all the right precautions, but when the tide came in and the boat wouldn't start, we were stranded,' recalls Neil. The film crew radioed for help and Ramsgate and Walmer lifeboats were launched to the rescue. 'If you see a breakdown vehicle arrive when you're stuck at the side of a road, you feel relieved,' Neil points out. 'Well, when I saw that orange lifeboat livery come into view, it was that relief times a million! The arrival of the lifeboat doesn't just mean you get to go home, it means you're going to live. We lost all the cameras and kit to the sea. If it wasn't for the lifeboats, that could have been us too.' The BBC later made a donation to the RNLI in return for the lifeboats' help. 'It was such an efficient rescue,' adds the father of two from Renfrew.

Neil's latest projects include presenting a television series on Scottish history and writing a book to be published by Michael Joseph in May: *Amazing tales for making men out of boys*. 'I've always been interested in people who, when required, give more of themselves than they may have thought possible in order to help someone else. These are people who are prepared to put themselves in harm's way to do a great deed,' says Neil, adding that Grace Darling – the young woman who received an RNLI Gallantry Medal for her lifesaving deeds in 1838 – is an example of such a person.

'That story has stayed with me since childhood – a story of bravery during a time when women weren't usually thought of as lifesavers. She underlined the fact that all people are capable of acts of great bravery, regardless of gender or age. I think stories like this, of real-life bravery, are better than fiction.'

To get a closer look at Grace and her life as explained at the RNLI Grace Darling museum in Northumberland, see page 14.

Better than  
*fiction*

# Suited and booted

Rory Stamp meets a City gent who regularly swaps his pinstripes for a yellow drysuit



Many of London's City workers unwind after a hard day with a trip to the gym or a drink in a bar. But sometimes when he leaves his office in Fenchurch Street David Taylor walks to a floating pier on the

River Thames, pulls on a drysuit, and begins his shift as an RNLI lifeboat crew member.

'I've always wanted to be on a lifeboat crew but, with a career in the City, I never thought I'd get the chance,' says David, 32. 'I'm from a boating family and we used to spend many happy holidays by the sea, so I appreciated the lifeboats.' As Deputy Manager for Marine Training Services at Lloyd's Register Group, David thought his chance to volunteer had arrived in 2002 when a lifeboat station opened at Tower just metres from his office. 'There was a long waiting list, though,' he recalls, 'so I didn't initially get on the crew. But I still wanted to help the RNLI, so I got

involved in the fundraising side, collecting donations at boat shows and helping to organise events.'

Eventually, having kept in touch with the station, an opportunity to join arose in 2005 and David became one of Tower lifeboat's 40 volunteers. Now, twice a month, he spends a night on call at the lifeboat station, which can now be found at Lifeboat Pier on the Victoria Embankment. As with Chiswick and Gravesend, Tower lifeboat is crewed by a mix of full-time and volunteer crew members. 'We have a different arrangement from that of the coastal crews, because we're usually dealing with people who are already in the water,' he explains. 'Like lifeguards, we have to be ready to launch instantly – if we're not already on patrol.'

David's most memorable lifeboating experience so far was when a man fell from the Embankment, injuring his back as he landed on the rocky foreshore. 'We worked with the London Air Ambulance team to strap him to a backboard and lift him in a basket

stretcher up a staircase. It was very difficult, but we did it and I was very relieved that we had done our bit without causing further injury.' David adds that he has responded to several people attempting suicide in the Thames, pointing out that 'they usually seem to change their minds once they're in the river.'

On an average night's shift, David helps with routine lifeboat maintenance, goes on patrol and exercise. (Medical training is as essential for Thames crew members as boathandling.) 'Then I climb into a bunk – wearing my drysuit – and try to get some sleep,' he says. 'How much I get depends on how many calls we have!'

'I'm delighted that I get the chance to help people, especially those who enjoy the water or who work on it,' adds David. 'The lifeboat crew are great people, from a very wide range of backgrounds. Sometimes we deal with sad or gruesome cases, but they don't put me off – they just remind me how important the Thames lifeboat service is.'



'I'm delighted that I get the chance to help people, especially those who enjoy the water or who work on it.'

# YOUR shout

Dear Editor

Robert and Frank's letter of thanks to Martin [Rudwick, the Selsey Coxswain] in the Winter 2007-8 issue reminded us that the RNLI is not Government funded. It got me thinking about how different things could be if it was.

There would of course be rescue targets for each station so yachtsmen and swimmers may have to be persuaded to go to sea in nasty weather if it looks as though this month's target would be missed. An audit would reveal that lifeboats are not rescuing people all the time. A simple merger with the Coastguard would sort that ...

People in distress would be known as 'customers' and would have the choice of which lifeboat came to their rescue. To manage all this would of course involve recruiting thousands of new administrators who would have a luxurious new building in a high unemployment area. And then the budget would be cut!

Long may the service be independent and funded by an appreciative public.

Yours  
Ken Aldred, Colchester, Essex

Dear Editor

I know this is pedantic, but it's my big moment.

I have just browsed the last issue of *the Lifeboat* before getting seriously stuck in. On page 33 you make reference to the Courtmacsherry lifeboat being a Solent class. The lifeboat in the picture might be from Courtmacsherry, but it is not a Solent. There is an airbag housing on the aft cabin, which the Solent did not require as it used the buoyancy of the superstructure over the engine compartment to self-right if capsized. I cannot say for sure because I am not an expert, but this looks more like a Watson. Living in the Midlands *the Lifeboat* magazine is a vital link.

All the very best  
Paul Coley,  
Wolverhampton

**The Editor replies:**  
Paul is right. The photo is in fact of relief Watson, ON-885, *Sir Samuel Kelly*



Dear Editor

When my family saw your *Splash out!* virtual gifts catalogue this Christmas we knew the yellow wellies were ideal for my father Brian and his wife Linda.

We are all long-time supporters of the RNLI and have a lot of sea experience having sailed many thousands of miles in both small yachts and tall ships and my Dad has also worked with several search and rescue teams.

There is no easy way to recognise the RNLI crews' dedication, skill and bravery but hopefully our virtual gift will go some small way in making their work easier.

Yours faithfully  
Sue Lamont, Watford, Hertfordshire

**The Editor comments:** The full range of RNLI virtual gifts can now be bought all year round, for any occasion you might want to celebrate, including Christmas. See [rnli.org.uk/splashout](http://rnli.org.uk/splashout) or telephone Supporter Care on 0845 121 4999 to find out more.

To add *your shout*, write to:  
the Editor at [thelifeboat@rnli.org.uk](mailto:thelifeboat@rnli.org.uk) or  
RNLI Headquarters, West Quay Road,  
Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ.

Dear Editor

All crew members are highly trained in handling powered craft but are they equally conversant with sailing craft?

The ability to heave to in a sailing boat, know what halyards and sheets to look for, then lower the sails safely, and even rig a storm sail are surely fundamental requirements for rescuers, especially if the skipper being rescued is injured and unable to participate.

One false move in windy conditions could jeopardise a rescue or even put lives at risk.

Yours sincerely  
Gerald Darby,  
Stourbridge, West Midlands

**The Editor replies:**

Yes, RNLI volunteers train in just such skills as mentioned except rigging storm sails because someone needing assistance is unlikely to have them, has them rigged already or is beyond the point where one would wish to stay to rig sails! Facilities at The Lifeboat College in Poole include the 7m yacht *Splash Happy* and many courses followed there are RYA accredited. See page 24 for a rescue requiring expertise with sails.

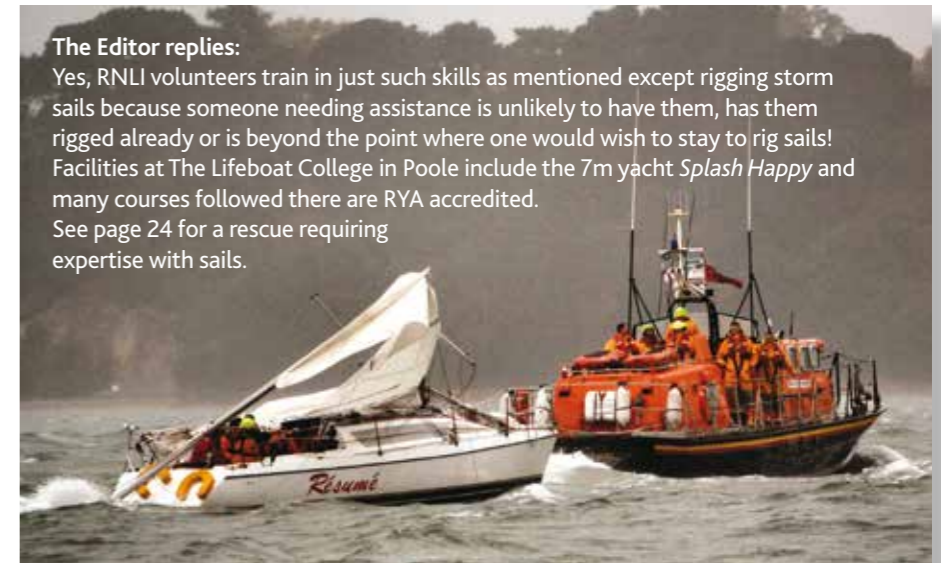


Photo: Chris Walker



Dear Editor

I would like to draw readers' attention to another voluntary activity undertaken by RNLI crew members that has had a profound effect on the children I teach. When the children of Years 1 and 2 from Alderman Davies Church in Wales Primary school in Neath visited the lifeboat station at Horton and Port Eynon, Stephen and Richard entertained (and educated) the children on the importance of beach safety and the role of the charity. It was a great day out: interesting, amusing and informative. Sitting in the lifeboat for a photo was the highlight and the start of a desire to find out more.

The children were keen to write about their experiences and then decided to share their knowledge in a class assembly to which family members were invited. We used the RNLI's *Shorething!* website to find out about the SAFE message and beach flags. The children were further inspired by the story of Grace Darling - which we watched and read on our interactive whiteboard.

The cost of our trip included a donation to the RNLI and I hope that you will have Stephen and Richard to thank for members of the future who remember their trip to the lifeboat station at the age of 6!

Kathryn Davies

**Corrections and clarifications**

In the Autumn 2007 Close up report on flood rescue, we wrongly credited the photo on page 9. It was in fact by Paul Filby. In the Winter 2007-8 Voices profile of Graham Wills, we were unclear about his roles at the Burnham-on-Sea station branch. We apologise for the upset inadvertently caused to Mike Ross, founder member and, from 1992 to date, Treasurer.

# OUT ON A SHOUT

What do you understand by the term 'shout' in lifeboating? Is it simply the launch or the entire rescue mission? Is it derived literally from the call to action and who used it first – volunteers or the mass media? Searching the newly published digital archive of *the Lifeboat*, we find several red herrings – and many fascinating tales.

We find that in April 1943, two landing craft had foundered off Milford Haven with the loss of dozens of lives:

'The [Angle] life-boat reached the scene about one in the morning. Her crew noticed a strong smell of oil, and the sea was smoother, but they saw nothing. Then, at 1.20, in the pitch darkness, they heard **A SHOUT**. The lifeboat steered towards it, and, in the beam of a searchlight from a naval vessel, she saw a man swimming towards her. He was covered with oil, and collapsed as soon as he had been rescued. The crew stripped him of his wet clothing, massaged him and, when he had revived a little, re clothed him in one of the emergency suits carried in the boat, and put him in the engineroom with bags as a pillow and an oilskin coat over him ... Just before day broke, the lifeboat saw a floating mine only a few yards ahead, and avoided it just in time.'

But that isn't the meaning we want! 'Crew from nine lifeboat stations were united in a search for a missing power boat at Cardigan Bay. Fifty lifeboatmen and women looked for the 5.5m, *Teymar*, and her crew of two on **A SHOUT** that spanned 19 and 20 July 2003.'

That's more like it, but very recent ... A quick look aside at 'maroon' and, surprisingly, a 1920s BBC radio script appears. And what about 'pager'?

'In the early hours of Friday, October 16, 1987, hurricane force south-southwesterly winds left a trail of destruction. The bulk cargo vessel *Sumnia* warned that she was dragging both anchors and drifting east of Folkestone ... Dover crew **PAGER**s were activated ... Outside Dover Harbour, seas were up to 60ft in height. The breakwaters were suffering much severe damage (50 ton stone blocks were being broken away and hurled into the sea by the wind) ... The crew



Above: A maroon (rocket) is fired to summon the volunteers in 1944

Photo: *Irish Times*

Below: The latest model of pager to be carried by lifeboat crews



mustered at 0529, having travelled in total darkness as there was no electric power. Crew Member Christopher Ryan found his car undrivable as a fallen chimney stack had demolished its roof and so he ran to the lifeboat, dodging flying portions of wooden bill board.'

Can you help with other documentary evidence of the use of 'shout' to mean a lifeboat call out? Perhaps you would like to be able to browse the entire 152 years of *the Lifeboat* for yourself, by purchasing a DVD or CD-ROM set for £100? In either case, please write to the Publications and Design team at RNLI Headquarters.

