

ISSUE 585  
AUTUMN 2008



# the lifeline oat

THE RNLI IS THE CHARITY  
THAT SAVES LIVES AT SEA

## Top Gear

SAFETY FIRST  
NOT FASHION

SETH  
LAKEMAN

THE FOLK STAR  
REMEMBERS PENLEE

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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.

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- Lifeboat Enthusiasts' Society, for those passionate about rescue craft: email [john\\_francis@rnli.org.uk](mailto:john_francis@rnli.org.uk)
- The Editor: telephone 01202 662254, email [thelifeboat@rnli.org.uk](mailto:thelifeboat@rnli.org.uk) or write c/o Headquarters address above
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Cover picture: Whitby's Henry Freeman whose life was saved in 1861 by his innovative kit. See pages 16 and 52  
Photo: Sutcliffe Gallery, Whitby

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# Dear Reader

What a face! Weathered, steely, reliable ... Our Autumn cover shows a remarkable image, startlingly sharp despite its vintage, of a remarkable man. Henry Freeman is still famous, both for his lifesaving achievements and for his own survival against the odds: when his lifeboat capsized, he was the only crewman wearing a cork lifebelt.

Ever since its foundation in 1824, the RNLI has striven to advance the technology of its lifeboats but also of its crews' protective equipment (see pages 16 and 52) and training. Freeman followed the norm in being a fisherman but coastal communities have since changed. Preparing modern crews for any eventuality aboard a complex and powerful lifeboat is thus an expensive business, a fact that the charity's Train one, save many campaign has brought powerfully into focus.

At the end of August, the campaign's 5-year fundraising target of £10M for crew training was triumphantly met, a year early. I'm delighted to relay the profound gratitude of RNLI crews – and their families – to everyone who supported this cause. But the costs are of course ongoing: at about £4M every year training still needs your support.

As I write, the Olympics have drawn to a close and the Paralympics are about to begin. Young and

old have been inspired by the heights of endeavour reached by so many dedicated sportspeople.

A previous *Lifeboat* magazine interviewee and Paralympian, Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson, drew a parallel to the RNLI people she so admires: they too experience the daily, hard grind of training to be ready for the explosive moment of action that might bring joy and glory.

In 2007, quadriplegic yachtsman Geoff Holt lost all sense of glory – and almost his life – at the start of a rather different record-breaking attempt. Now, he inspires others to achieve the apparently impossible too (page 34). Glory was far from the mind of RNLI Lifeguard Chris Boundy, when he risked his own life to save another this Summer, but joy eventually came (page 26).

Sorrow is closer in Seth Lakeman's homage to the Penlee lifeboat crew lost at sea in 1981 (pages 31 and 46) but he turned to celebration in September, joining the Team GB Olympic Yngling crew to launch RNLI SOS day, the largest fundraising day in the charity's calendar (page 13).

The RNLI is an inspiring organisation to work for and I hope you find much to inspire you in this issue of *the Lifeboat*.



*Liz Cook*  
Liz Cook  
Editor

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**Talisker**

From November, Sainsbury's will be stocking a Talisker gift pack with £2 from every sale donated to the RNLI. Talisker and the RNLI are also encouraging supporters to host Burns night events between 25 January and SOS day 30 January.

To receive a Talisker/RNLI Burns pack call 0845 121 4999 or visit [rnli.org.uk/sos](http://rnli.org.uk/sos).





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# the Lifeboat

AUTUMN 2008 ISSUE 585  
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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*.

**Publications and Design Manager:** Mark Dunne;  
**Editor:** Liz Cook; **Researchers/Writers/Assistant Editors:** Mairéad Dwane, Valerie French, Anne Millman, Rory Stamp, Carol Waterkeyn, Claire Vandvik; **Proofreader:** Anne Millman;  
**Designers:** Stephen Berriman, Mark Dunne, Jonathon Lotriet, Laura Wiltshire;  
**Publications Assistant:** Tracy Carey;  
**Print Manager:** Sonia Harris;  
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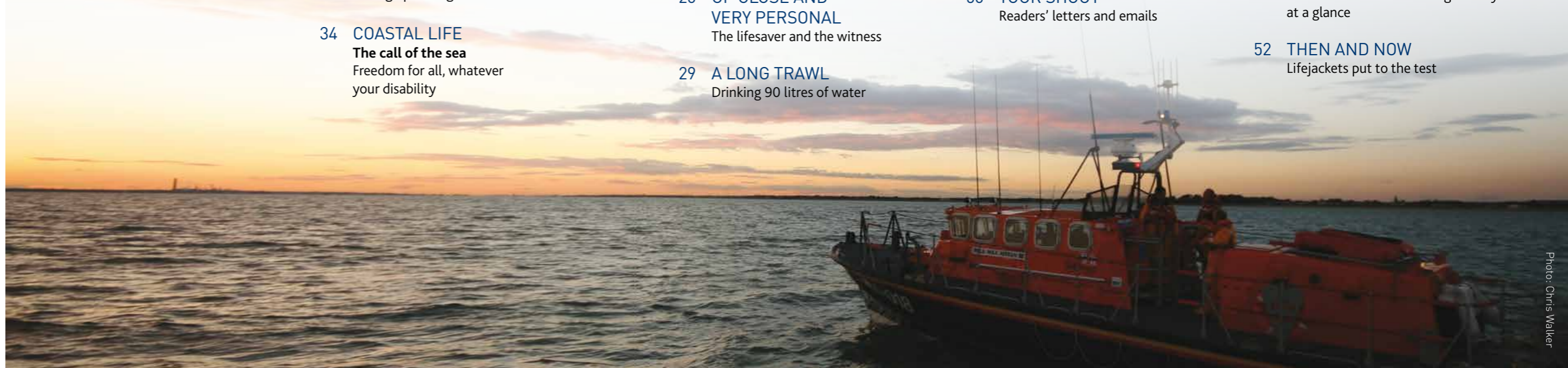
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# Insight

## 2 LATEST FROM LOCH NESS

As reported in the last issue of *the Lifeboat*, Loch Ness lifeboat station joined the RNLI fold on 2 April, and the crew have since been out on a number of shouts. At the time of writing, they had assisted two grounded cruisers and two yachts that had slipped their moorings. The first was adrift in the middle of the night with a still-sleeping crew onboard. Lifeboat Crew Member Martin Douglas says: 'The yacht's crew were understandably surprised to be woken to a slightly different view of the loch than they'd seen before bedtime!'



## 1 TRIUMPH OVER TRAILER

Burnham-on-Sea's lifeboats were returning from their regular Wednesday night training session on 18 June when the Coastguard asked their crews to investigate a sailor who looked to be in trouble. The man was having difficulty recovering his yacht to the trailer in freshening force 4-5 winds. The volunteers helped him in what proved to be quite an intricate task, before returning to station.



## 4 TRUE LIFELINE

A woman slipped on rocks while fishing near Aberdovey on 8 June. Despite being in severe pain from suspected wrist and knee fractures she got back to shore herself where coastguards and paramedics gave first aid. It was too difficult to recover her across land so Aberdovey's B class lifeboat *Sandwell Lifeline* was called upon. Crew members are pictured helping stretcher the casualty to their Atlantic for transfer to the lifeboat station, from where she was taken to hospital by ambulance.



## 3 MERSEY MAKES HER MARK

Exmouth lifeboat volunteers received a Mersey class lifeboat in May as a replacement for their Trent. Although another all-weather lifeboat, the *Margaret Jean's* shallower draught proved more suited to the location when, on 8 May, she successfully negotiated the Swashway channel to aid a grounded yacht. The station's inshore lifeboat was also launched and within half an hour the sailing boat had been towed off the sand on the rising tide.



## 5 PUMP ACTION

A trawler with a lone fisherman onboard got her nets caught in her propeller on 2 June off Cliffe Marshes. She then sustained damage and began to take on water as her skipper tried to clear the obstruction. Gravesend's E class lifeboat *Olive Laura Deane* quickly arrived to assist and a crew member transferred with a salvage pump. So much water was being taken on that the trawler was secured alongside the lifeboat and taken under tow to Holehaven creek, while Sheerness's Trent class lifeboat stood by.

## 6 SOME SWIM

A Wicklow family brought their yacht across Ireland by canal to the Shannon estuary in June. On the last Saturday of the month, the skipper stopped to erect the mast but drifted onto rocks 1½ miles east of Aughinish. Kilrush's B class lifeboat was launched to the emergency call. To prevent damaging the *Rose West* on the rocks, one of her volunteer crew swam to the yacht. She made sure the craft was secured before helping the family onto their own safety dinghy for transfer to the lifeboat.



Here is just a handful of incidents from around the UK and RoI to give an insight into the thousands of lifeboat rescues carried out each year. All photos were taken by crew using waterproof cameras supplied by Pentax. See pages 22-29 for in-depth reports of rescues from Humber, Trebarwith Strand and St Peter Port.



*The Essex Freemason  
is put through her paces*  
Photo: Graeme Sweeney

# The lifesaving craft

Members of an ancient society are helping to ensure that the ring of safety around our coasts has a bright future. Rory Stamp investigates

Anyone who thinks the world of Freemasonry is shrouded in mystery and self-service obviously didn't get a taste of OrangeAid. Alluding to the distinctive RNLI lifeboat livery, the OrangeAid appeal saw Essex members of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) create a feast of fundraising fun.

In one frantic weekend, people across the county rode bikes, raced balloons, washed cars and even pulled buses, raising £61,000 – more than double the sum needed to pay for Southend's D class lifeboat. She was named *The Essex Freemason* in June, while the surplus bought a launching tractor and contributed towards a new Atlantic 85 lifeboat for Clacton lifeboat station.

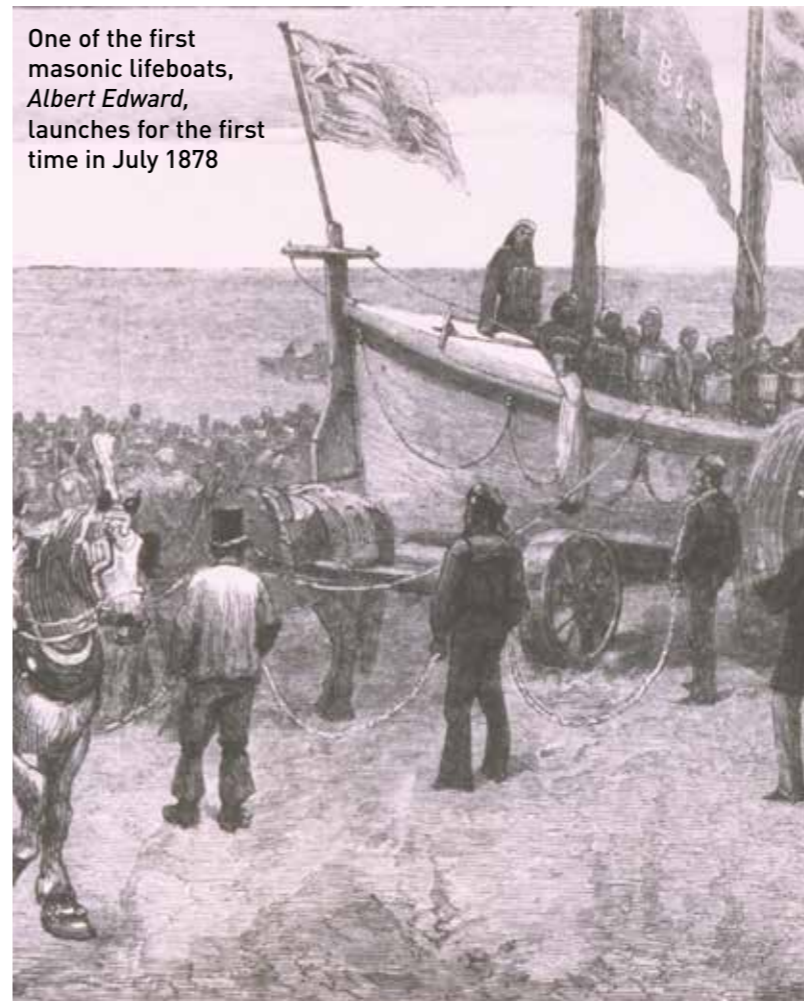
'Southend-on-Sea is one of the busiest areas in the country for rescues and [the lifeboat crew] plays a vital role in helping to save lives,' says Neil Beverley, Event Coordinator. 'We're naturally proud to be involved. This is all about masons and their friends and families coming together to raise money for a good cause.'

Such charitable activities have long been at the core of Freemasonry. The principles said to form its basis are 'brotherly love, truth and relief'. Brotherly love encourages tolerance, mutual respect and the creation of a harmonious and productive society. Truth emphasises high moral standards and the fulfilment of responsibilities, while relief refers to the provision of assistance and charitable donations. The United Grand Lodge of England, for instance, formed its Committee of Charity in the early 18th century, to help masons and their families and non-masonic charitable causes.

Clacton's first ever lifeboat was funded by freemasons, in the days when horses, rather than tractors, were used to launch lifesaving craft. Delivered in 1878, the *Albert Edward* was named after the then Prince of Wales and Grand Master of the UGLE. The Prince had made safe passage home from his travels in India in 1876 and his fellow masons were so grateful to 'The Almighty Architect of the Universe' (all masons believe in a supreme being, whatever their religious interpretation) that they decided to fund two lifeboats: one at Hope Cove, Devon, the other at Clacton.

The UGLE set up The Freemasons' Grand Charity in 1981. Funded by annual contributions and fundraising 'festivals', it was set up to make donations to charities and distressed individuals. It also has the ability to make emergency grants for disaster relief. One of the first of these was made to the Penlee disaster fund following the loss of the Penlee lifeboat and crew shortly before Christmas 1981 (see pages 31 and 46 for more on the *Solomon Browne*). →

One of the first masonic lifeboats, *Albert Edward*, launches for the first time in July 1878



advert

→ The Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons has a charitable arm too: The Mark Benevolent Fund. Thanks to a £1.6M donation from this fund, the Pembrokeshire-based Angle lifeboat crew will soon have a new all-weather lifeboat. The huge donation completed the task to foot the £2.6M price tag that was begun so effectively by grass-roots RNLI supporters in Birmingham and Wales.

Grand Secretary John Brackley says that the Mark Master Masons are delighted to have helped provide such an advanced lifesaving vessel: 'We're an island nation; we know what a fine job the lifeboat volunteers do, and that the RNLI does not receive Government funding. So when we heard that the charity was raising money for a Tamar class lifeboat, we thought it would be an excellent cause to choose.' The impressive figure was raised through collections and fundraising events at meetings across England and Wales.

Freemasons also contribute to the RNLI non-financially. They crew

lifeboats and help with the governance of the charity: the RNLI's President, HRH The Duke of Kent, is Grand Master of the UGLE. (His brother, HRH Prince Michael of Kent, is Grand Master of the Mark Master Masons and due to visit RNLI Headquarters as this issue of *the Lifeboat* goes to print.)

The Duke of Kent is also involved with another principal Masonic body – he is the First Grand Principal of the Supreme Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of England.

The RNLI's relationship with the UGLE's Grand Charity continues to flourish. In August, a £72,000 donation from the charity to the RNLI for crew training was announced and the first £24,000 handed over. At the time of writing, plans were afoot for an RNLI search and rescue demonstration for attendees of the Grand Charity's general meeting in Bournemouth in September. What a chance for freemasons to see for themselves how valuable their support is: truly a lifesaving craft.

## MASONIC FACTS

Principal masonic bodies in England and Wales are the United Grand Lodge of England, the Supreme Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of England and the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons. There are also The Grand Lodge of Freemasons of Ireland and The Grand Lodge of Scotland – one of the oldest in the world.

There are believed to be around 480,000 freemasons in the UK and RoI.

The majority of masons practise 'craft freemasonry', which is primarily divided into three 'degrees' or levels of personal development: Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason. These degrees are controlled by UGLE. Other degrees include The Royal Arch, controlled by The Supreme Grand Chapter, and Mark Master Mason, controlled by the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons.

Masonic bodies have funded 13 RNLI lifeboats, which have saved more than 1,000 lives. Other masonic donations used for equipment, training and fuel have helped to save many more.

The *Freemason* was the first mason-funded lifeboat. In 1871, JR Stebbing, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master for Hampshire proposed that funds be granted for a lifeboat and she was stationed at North Berwick a year later.

Today there are two in operation: *The Essex Freemason* at Southend and *Valerie Wilson* at Newquay.

Freemasonry is a global phenomenon. There are believed to be 2M freemasons in the US, and Freemasonry is practised across continental Europe, India and Australia as well as China, Mexico and Israel.

The term 'lodge' refers to a group of masons rather than their meeting place.

There are various theories as to the origins of Freemasonry. Some claim there is strong evidence connecting it to the Knights Templar, others that it is derived from the practices of medieval stonemasons.

**Southend's new D class lifeboat was named *The Essex Freemason* in June**

Photo: Nicholas Leach





Photo: Graham Blair

## RNLI station at Cowes

The inshore lifeboat station at Cowes, Isle of Wight, joined the RNLI fold on 1 July. The trustees of the town's independent lifeboat service, which had been serving the community for 19 years, asked the RNLI to take on responsibility for running the station. This brings the number of RNLI lifeboat stations around the UK and RoI to 235.

The station's newly-appointed Lifeboat Operations Manager, Paul Townsend, says: 'Cowes inshore lifeboat has been very well respected and has provided an effective and important lifesaving service since it was established. The majority of the crew have transferred to the RNLI and they are very much looking forward to working under the umbrella of such a dedicated service.'

A relief Atlantic 85 lifeboat, *Tabbycat*, has been placed on service until the station gets its own permanent boat. The crew's first shout in their RNLI lifeboat came on 4 July, when they towed back to harbour a motorboat that had lost power. They had been training with their new equipment since May.

RNLI Operations Director Michael Vlasto said, in the run-up to the world-famous Cowes Week regatta: 'It is a very busy time of year in the waters around Cowes and I have every confidence that the volunteer crew will continue to carry out the excellent lifesaving work they have in the past.'

There are now three RNLI lifeboat stations on the Isle of Wight – Cowes, Yarmouth and Bembridge. Cowes is also home to the RNLI's Inshore Lifeboat Centre, where the charity builds, fits out and repairs its B class and D class lifeboats.



Photo: Laura Willshire

## Back to the drawing board

Last Autumn's issue of *the Lifeboat* introduced the RNLI's experimental lifeboat FCB2. It is hoped this will evolve into the next generation of carriage-launched all-weather lifeboat, replacing the Mersey class. Unfortunately, the hull shape proved inadequate

when tested in rough weather so the RNLI's engineers are now working on a new design. More positively, trials also showed that

the FCB2's pioneering water-jet propulsion proved very effective, with significant advantages over propeller-driven craft, especially when manoeuvring in shallow water. Launch and recovery systems worked well too. However, at speeds of over 14 knots in rough head seas, the hull was slamming from wave peaks into troughs far too heavily to guarantee crew safety. This setback will delay the FCB2 going on service, but having a lifeboat that is both safe and fit for purpose for many years to come is the paramount concern.



## THANKS TO STAVROS

RNLI lifeguards patrolled beaches in Wales this year, with substantial support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. Formed in 1996 on the death of the eponymous Greek shipping magnate, the foundation gave a very generous grant to pay for equipment for the RNLI's Pembrokeshire lifeguards. In their first ever season, they needed rescue tubes, rescue boards, inshore rescue boats, all-terrain vehicles, hand-held radios, defibrillators, wetsuits and more, and these funds contributed significantly.



## GET A WARM GLOW

As oil prices continue to rise, it is timely that the RNLI has struck a deal with *Switch with Which?*, the UK's only not-for-profit energy price comparison website.

*Switch with Which?* compares thousands of tariff and payment options on both gas and electricity services, saving the average

customer £233 a year. Run by Which?, the highly respected UK consumer association, it aims to offer users a 'transparent and impartial view of all their energy options'.

After comparing prices there is no obligation to actually switch suppliers but if you do decide to take up a better deal, *Switch with Which?* will do most of the hard work for you. You won't be the only one

to benefit either – for every supporter who switches supplier, Which? will donate £10 to the RNLI. If you find a new deal for both your gas and your electricity, the donation is £20.

With Winter approaching and fuel prices set to go up again, now is a great time to explore what's available at [switchwithwhich.co.uk/rnli](http://switchwithwhich.co.uk/rnli) or call 0800 533 011 and quote RNLI.



## Green grant

The newly refurbished Grace Darling museum in Bamburgh, Northumberland, has proved a very popular tourist attraction. But it's not just the exhibits that are attracting plaudits. The Low Carbon Buildings Programme has awarded the museum a £10,000 grant for its ground source heat pump. The pump will save the RNLI Heritage Trust money on energy bills while also being kinder to the environment. The RNLI has just launched its own Environmental policy, committing the charity to reducing waste and pollution while never compromising lifesaving operations.



Painting by Charles Achille D'Hardvillier



## ATLANTIC AWARD

The Walter and Elizabeth Groombridge award is made each year for the most meritorious service in an Atlantic B class lifeboat. The RNLI Trustee Committee met on 23 July and agreed that the 2007 award should be made to Flamborough Helmsman Darren Pollard for his and his crew's daring rescue of a swimmer on 22 August last year. (See report in the Summer 2008 issue of *the Lifeboat*.)

## NEW DIRECTOR

James Vaughan is the RNLI's new Corporate Services Director, taking over from Ian Venham who retired in August after 18 years with the charity. Promoted internally from Head of Fundraising and Communications



Services, James is now responsible for the RNLI's properties around the UK and RoI as well as the Legal, Health and Safety, and Business Services teams – and working with the international lifesaving community. James is married with two sons and balances the demands of family life with work, animal husbandry (he is a keen smallholder) and whenever possible sailing.

## THIS JUST IN

The internet has had a huge effect on the way local and national newsrooms are run. In response, the RNLI has launched a multimedia press centre with the latest RNLI news releases, photos and videos from all corners of the UK and RoI, all available at the click of a mouse. The press centre is free for everyone to use, so you don't have to be a journalist to search by region, topic or date, and you can also sign up for RSS feeds. Visit [mli.org.uk/press](http://mli.org.uk/press) and stay ahead of the game!



# Dolphin friendly

Falmouth's inshore lifeboat crew was involved in a large and unusual rescue operation on 9 June when a pod of dolphins became stranded in Porth Creek on the Percuil River. When the lifeboat arrived on scene, more than 20 had already died, while others were struggling in the shallows and on the water's edge.

Helmsman Dave Nicoll says: 'I can't say I've ever seen such a terrible scene. It was horrific, but my two volunteer colleagues were brilliant. They got into the water to assist the dolphins that were still

alive.

We managed to encourage some of them away from the shallows and out into deeper water. RNLI crew training is extremely thorough, but this took all our skills. We are only glad we were able to help.'

Marine experts, including British Divers Marine Life Rescue and a vet, soon arrived. Three stranded creatures were still alive, two of which were stretchered into deeper water and swam to safety, but the third was put down.

Dave continues: 'All the time we were concerned for about 60 dolphins that had gathered near the creek, as we didn't want them getting stranded too. As the procession of boats made their way downriver, the pod followed us out; it was extraordinary to see.' It's still not clear why the dolphins swam upriver, although a number of theories have been put forward in the local media.

While the RNLI exists to save human life, no one likes to see an animal suffer. Lifeboats are occasionally called to help pets and livestock in danger, especially if this prevents their owners putting themselves at risk.



The RNLI often receives 'in memory' donations when a supporter passes away. The RNLI's new Forever by the sea funds are a means to carry on celebrating the memory of a friend or loved one, while helping to train and equip the lifeboat crews and lifeguards of tomorrow.

Once a fund is set up in the deceased's name, family members, friends and colleagues can help it grow. They might give on special occasions such as Christmas, birthdays or anniversaries, set up a small monthly gift or organise a sponsored event. However the money is raised, a Forever by the sea fund is a tribute to a loved one that continues their support for the lifesaving work of the RNLI.

If you're interested in setting up a fund, call Karen Wills on 01202 663331 to find out more. Anyone can also share their memories of past RNLI supporters, volunteers and staff at [rnl.org.uk/rememeralovedone](http://rnl.org.uk/rememeralovedone).



## SKILLS FOR SUMMER

RNLI lifeguards have had another busy Summer on the beaches. However, it's not just on patrol that they prove their worth – as the Hit the surf and Beach to city programmes show.

Hit the surf teaches children aged 8–12 a combination of surf skills and beach safety. RNLI lifeguards give them examples of life-threatening situations

and teach them how to get out of trouble in and around the sea. Last year, surfing and bodyboarding accounted for nearly half the major incidents for RNLI lifeguards. As these sports grow more popular, Hit the surf is teaching vital safety messages in a fun way.

This Summer, Hit the surf programmes were run in Jersey,

Cornwall, Dorset, Norfolk, Sunderland and Pembrokeshire and featured on Radio 4's *The learning curve*. Since the scheme began in 2005, it has already reached more than 2,000 children including some with disabilities.

Meanwhile, Beach to city has been bringing the RNLI's beach safety messages to the children of Birmingham for the past 4 years. Last April, for the first time, Beach to city went to London, and RNLI lifeguards spoke to more than

2,000 children in Lewisham and Southwark schools.

The Beach to city talks are given just before the Summer break, so that the tips on how to stay safe are still fresh in the children's minds when they go on holiday to the seaside. The programme was launched in response to statistics showing that children from inland areas are much more likely to get into trouble in the water than those who live by the coast.





## Never too early ...

Christmas is still a couple of months away, but *the Lifeboat* would like to remind you of the cards and gifts that are available from the RNLI Sales catalogue and website, and from RNLI shops around the UK and RoI.

The RNLI's exclusive Christmas cards are always popular – whether you'd like to show your support with a lifeboat design or stick to the more traditional robins and holly, you can be sure you're sending something special. There are also decorations, wrapping paper, festive napkins, and jigsaws.

Of course it wouldn't be Christmas without lots of nice things to eat. This year, as well as the usual mix of confectionery, preserves and hampers, RNLI Sales has an exclusive sweet set comprising chocolate, fudge, mints, jelly lifeboats and a mystery RNLI gift!

A new range of toys will appeal to children of all ages, while the usual mix of clothes, gadgets, books and ornaments are sure to provide inspiration for the rest of your seasonal shopping.

Looking further ahead, 2009 calendars and diaries are now available, with



themes such as sailing, lighthouses and, of course, lifeboats in action.

Call 0845 126 6999 to request a catalogue, or visit [rnliishop.org.uk](http://rnliishop.org.uk). You can

also buy a selection of virtual gifts. For more information, see [rnli.org.uk/splashout](http://rnli.org.uk/splashout) and the address sheet with some copies of this magazine. All profits go to the RNLI.

## GETTING THE MOST FROM *giftaid*

Most of the RNLI's UK supporters boost their donations by using Gift Aid, which allows the charity to claim back the basic rate tax that donors have already paid on donations. This brings in a very large amount indeed (about £4M annually) – but this year's Budget brought unexpected bad news for donors and charities alike.

A reduction in the basic rate of tax meant that charities would be able to claim only 25p

for every pound donated, rather than the 28p they could claim previously.

However, following tireless lobbying from the Charity Tax Group (CTG), of which the RNLI is a founding member, the Government has agreed to pay the difference until the end of the 2010–11 tax year. This decision means a saving for the RNLI of £400,000 a year for the next 3 years – and you thought tax

law was boring!

RNLI Head of Financial Management Darren Spivey says: 'The RNLI processes around 55,000 Gift Aid forms each year, which costs both time and money. Meanwhile, donors who would be more than happy to allow charities to reclaim their tax may be put off by the administration. We are lobbying for a simpler opt-out scheme, rather than an opt-in,

whereby donors would only complete a form if they did *not* wish the charity to reclaim the tax on their donation. This would increase income for the RNLI and reduce costs for charities *and* HM Revenue and Customs, which is what Gift Aid should be all about.'

If you are one of the few who has not signed up for Gift Aid yet or has a covenant instead, please telephone Supporter Care on 0845 121 4999.

### Birthday Honours

RNLI Patron HM The Queen has honoured the following with Member, Order of the British Empire (MBE) for voluntary service to maritime safety:

- Joel Grunnill (Chairman, Skegness Lifeboat Management Group)
- Patrick Wood (Chairman, Harpenden fundraising branch)
- Robert Wright (Coxswain, Pwllheli lifeboat station).



### Ringing the changes

Have you ever recycled an old mobile phone or used printer cartridge in aid of the RNLI? Many of you have but the charity has made some changes to its recycling scheme, to improve the service and encourage more supporters to take part. The RNLI is now working with two new partners: ShP for Charity (phones) and Johnson Recycling Ltd (cartridges). More details are available on page 1 and at [rnli.org.uk](http://rnli.org.uk).

# TOP GEAR

Walk into any lifeboat station or lifeguard unit and you will see row upon row of brightly coloured clothing. But, as Anne Millman discovers, for over 4,500 crew members and 530 lifeguards this is more than just a uniform. One day it might just save their lives



A drysuit and helmet will protect this volunteer against the elements  
Photo: Darren Britton, Wales News Service

In February 1858, the oar-powered Southwold lifeboat capsized in heavy surf. The 15 crew wearing lifebelts were all saved but records show 'three unfortunate gentlemen who had ... neglected to put on lifebelts, lost their lives'. Technology develops but the sea remains as awesome: in 1993, Robbie Maiden (now Coxswain at Hartlepool) was also washed overboard in a lifeboat capsize. As he stared death in the face he recalls: 'I was only a small dot in the waves but my gear kept me alive during the longest 35 minutes of my life.' The light on his lifejacket was eventually seen by an RAF helicopter crew.

#### Cork, hair, rushes, air

The RNLi's development of personal protective equipment (PPE) began early. In 1852 the *Life-boat Regulations* stated that lifeboats should have 'a cork lifebelt for each of the crew'. RNLi Inspector Captain Ross Ward had carried out detailed tests to find the best materials for making lifebelts. The results showed that the most suitable design was of narrow strips of cork strung together and sewn to a strong linen or canvas belt so that the lifebelt moved with the wearer's body. These remained in use for over 50 years.

Lifebelts made of hair, rushes and even an air case enclosed in a waterproof covering were all tested. The air models were rejected as, if punctured, there would be no residual buoyancy, which 'would be fatal'. It took until 1992 for the RNLi and manufacturer Crewsaver to come up with a lifejacket design in which three layers of tough fabric were joined to make two parallel stoles, inflated by CO<sub>2</sub>.

#### Defining the need

Designing any piece of marine gear that really works starts with understanding what is required in the first place. Operational specifications are crucial for all types of PPE and one of the first still on record, from 1877, is for the lifebelt. Today's lifejacket fulfils the same functions: enough buoyancy to support the crew member and another person; little restriction of movement; hard wearing; comfortable; and quick and simple to put on.

Requirements have inevitably changed over the years. First only the cork lifebelt was de rigueur. In 1946, a boy's essay in *the Life-Boat War Bulletin* stated: 'a Life-boatman must possess great courage, a spirit of self-sacrifice and a water-proof!' The 21st century *Regulations of the RNLi* (the 'Green Book') upholds the central role of the lifejacket but also addresses many more items of equipment now available to crews and lifeguards.

There are many reasons for introducing or improving PPE: a new venture (such as bringing hovercraft to the fleet); a change in operational procedure (full-time

Thames lifeboat crews can wear PPE for 12 hours at a time); one piece of equipment becoming incompatible with another (kit being too bulky to wear in enclosed wheelhouses); technology moving on (synthetic textiles becoming available); a supplier dropping out of the chain; or feedback from the crews and lifeguards themselves.

After consultation with coastal volunteers, staff and various working groups, the Operations department produces a specification to include every desired property down to 'look' and 'feel'. The Engineering and Supply department

then draws up a technical specification, which Purchasing uses to approach potential suppliers to produce a sample.

#### Groundbreaking products

Much of the RNLi's PPE is off-the-shelf or developed from manufacturers' existing designs. Inshore crew drysuits were derived from an existing commercially available drysuit but steel toe-capped safety boots were added to meet the RNLi's specification. Following feedback from the crews, pockets have been added to carry a waterproof notebook, an option now available to the mass market too.

Should no commercial product suit the exacting needs of the RNLi, the charity has to break new ground to find the right answer. For example, the inshore lifeboat lifejackets are an unusual combination of permanent foam buoyancy aid and manually triggered inflatable lifejacket, designed with the high likelihood in mind of these crew entering the water.

All PPE kit has to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of current legislation including the Personal Protective Equipment Directive. Lifejackets must meet the requirements of the RNLi, British Standard BS3595 and European CEN standards but, until the RNLi got involved, there was no British Standard for marine helmets. Working with Gecko, a small Cornish manufacturer of surfing equipment, the new design of crew helmet provided a first for the RNLi and a first in the world.

Ten versions have been developed since 1995: 1-4 were prototype and developmental stages, mark 5 was issued to crew, 6-9 were adaptations and mark 10, with an inflatable liner, is currently in use. Developed to achieve energy absorption and penetration resistance, the mark 10 version is tested to the PS 028:2002 standard by the British Standards Institute and is CE marked for use by persons with a head circumference of 57-62cm, the average size range for an adult male. Work is continuing to achieve a similar standard for sizes beyond this range.

**'I was only a small dot in the waves but my gear kept me alive during the longest 35 minutes of my life.'**





1852 cork lifebelt



Inshore lifeboat kit

From gloves £7  
to drysuit £350



All-weather lifeboat kit

From boots £36  
to lifejacket £385

### → Trials and testing

Much time is required for testing and trials by lifeguards, crews and other coastal and training staff and volunteers before any new PPE is approved for official use. Several sets of kit can be tried by groups of people both within and without the Institution to check that its purpose, durability and even colourfast properties match the specification. Feedback even helps to shape the final specification. In the late 1980s, when the then familiar orange foul-weather clothing was replaced by new kit in 'traffic yellow', this had undergone independent testing and evaluation by the RAF's Institute of Aviation Medicine, at Farnborough.

As fabrics and garment engineering develop ever more quickly, the RNLI is engaged in a continuous research programme, working with manufacturers and other professionals across the worldwide maritime industry. Together they ensure all new advances, designs and materials have been proven in a range of climatic conditions.

### Vendor evaluation

Once potential suppliers have been identified it's not always the cheapest product that seals the deal. Marc Pautz, RNLI Buyer says: 'Where more than one supplier can provide the required product, a competitive tender is carried out taking into account price, lead times, quality, reliability, capacity, willingness to do business and more. The Purchasing department regularly visits suppliers, both old and new, to assess, audit and keep abreast of manufacturing changes and technical advances.'

### Operating procedures

Once a particular item of PPE is formally adopted, a standard operating procedure is produced before that PPE is introduced to the 'front line'. This describes the item, how to operate, adjust, wear and use it, when it must be worn, storage, inspection and maintenance of it and any specific safety precautions. (With items of kit that require no specialist operating procedure, for example jackets and trousers, the manufacturers' instructions are generally adequate.)

All new crew members and lifeguards need to show they can 'select and use protective safety equipment'. This forms part of their competence-based training at the start of their probationary period and covers the importance of correctly wearing PPE and their personal role in maintaining it.

### Lessons learned

It is hoped that crews will never have to test products to their absolute limits but, when they do, lessons are learned from their experiences. In 2004, three crew and two divisional assessor-trainers carried out an onboard exercise including emergency stops and high speed turns.

One of the assessors lost his grip, went overboard and was struck on the head by the propeller. His helmet split and he suffered a hairline fracture of the skull and a scalp wound that required 30 stitches. But his helmet had worked. Without its protection his injuries would have been far worse. The detailed investigation into this incident provided valuable 'lessons learned' that were issued to all lifeboat stations and lifeguard units.

This approach has been used for over 100 years. In the early 1900s, following the tragic loss of 17 crew at Rye Harbour, a Board of Trade inquiry was set up. Exhaustive investigations concluded that the kapok lifebelts had fulfilled the purpose for which they were designed. (See more about this incident on page 52.)

### Maintain or replace

Maintenance has always been recognised as 'indispensable to secure the permanent efficiency' of the equipment. In 1877, three lives were lost, attributable it is believed to the breaking of the strings of lifebelts. The RNLI Committee requested that coxswains would 'severally impress the great importance of their frequent examination of the strings of the life-belts ... and if much worn, or of having suffered injury from damp, it should at once be replaced ... being careful to sew on the new string in the strongest manner.'

Today, a stringent programme of planned maintenance is carried out on all PPE that includes post-recovery, 2-weekly, monthly, 3-monthly and annual checks. Lifejackets have a major service annually and a proportion is tested monthly to assess the consistency of rate of inflation in a joint project with Crewsaver and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

PPE may need to be replaced due to biological or chemical contamination, damage, natural wear and tear, and the ageing effects of UV radiation and salt water affecting both its functionality and the image portrayed to the public – shabby gear does not inspire confidence!

Although not the overriding factor in all cases, costs do have a bearing on decisions to purchase new or refurbish. Sadly it is often economically unviable to refurbish kit rather than replace it but a 'through-life management plan' is being developed that will properly assess the economies, maintenance and servicing costs, and end-of-shelf life for each new bit of kit.

### Fashion statement?



Photo: Nathan Williams

The RNLI has been criticised from time to time, even by its own crews, for being slow in adopting modern designs and techniques. The leisure sailing market will see kit change every year with fashion playing a big part, but lifeboat crews have more important concerns. In 1881 the Ramsgate Coxswain said: 'A cork jacket, even when a man stands upright, isn't calculated to improve his figure, and ... you may guess ... what a rum heap of odds and ends we looked.'

Any decision to change clearly entails a major

**'A cork jacket, even when a man stands upright, isn't calculated to improve his figure ...'**

undertaking and will be expensive due to the quantities involved and the logistics of resupply. The safety of crews and lifeguards is of paramount importance, both morally and legally, which means that no new design or equipment can be adopted until it has been proven. Reaching quantity production can therefore take 4–5 years.

Head of Prevention and Lifeguards, Peter Dawes, says: 'The introduction of lifeguards into the RNLI only 7 years ago brought with it new challenges including finding new PPE.' 'Slip, slap, sloop and wrap' is the order of the day to reduce the risk of exposure to the Sun (that's shirt, hat, sunblock and sunglasses); wetsuits, rash vests and swimwear protect against the wet environment; and jackets, hats and tracksuits protect against the cold. Buoyancy aids and the same helmets

**Left and above: Personal protective equipment has developed with new materials and technology, from woollen sweater and cork lifebelt in 1852 to specialised kit for lifeboat crews and lifeguards. (You can help keep the kit new with a virtual gift. See [rnli.org.uk/splashout](http://rnli.org.uk/splashout))**

as used on lifeboats are also provided for operating some craft and vehicles.

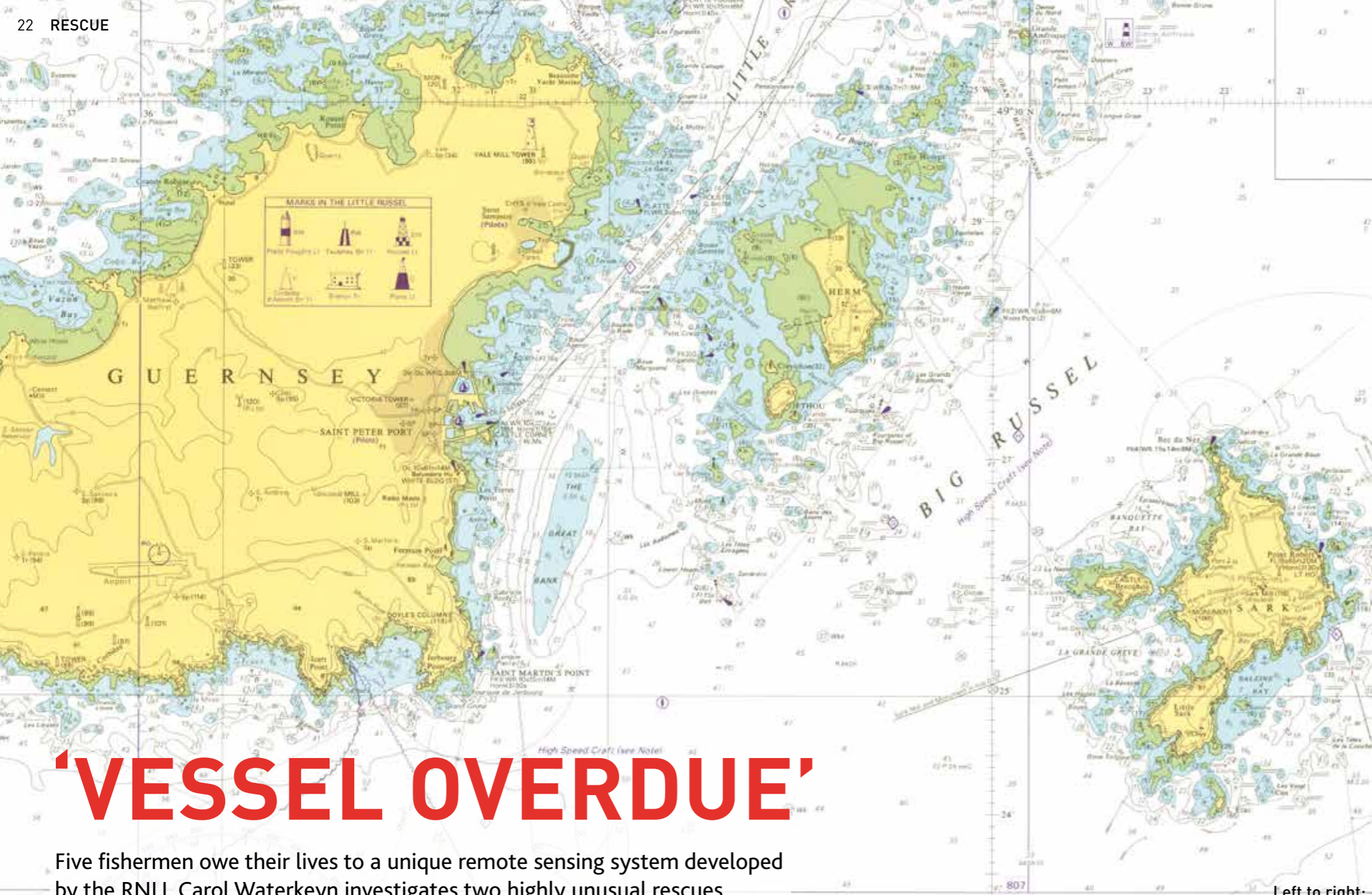
An artificial surf reef at Boscombe, Dorset, planned for completion by the end of 2008, will place greater demands on the lifeguard service locally. The season might extend from 5 months to an all-year service thereby introducing the need for Winter PPE.

### Challenging convention

Major advances in technology can challenge convention but the RNLI is unafraid, regularly reviewing what is best for its lifesaving volunteers and staff. Purchasing will always be looking for improvements and better deals and, when appropriate, new specifications are drawn up. Currently, inshore drysuits and inshore and all-weather lifejackets, which have been part of PPE for over 15 years, are under review, as are the still relatively new Tamar class internal intercom system and cordless headsets.

But the essential task that PPE performs is the same today as it was in 1877, 'when every care and precaution have been taken that human forethought can suggest, the work of the lifeboat crews [and the lifeguards] must still too often be one of extreme peril'. Hugh Fogarty, Head of Fleet Operations, concludes: 'Ours is a business with inherent risks but through the wearing and correct use and maintenance of protective equipment we can eliminate those risks that are unnecessary and limit the potential of those we cannot escape.'





# ‘VESSEL OVERDUE’

Five fishermen owe their lives to a unique remote sensing system developed by the RNLI. Carol Waterkeyn investigates two highly unusual rescues



Left to right: Fishermen Leo Piper, Tristan Northway and David McMurdo back in Brixham with Torbay's lifeboat; fellow rescues Daniel Gummow and Joe Rothwell with their MOB Guardian fobs.

Photos: RNLI/Tony Roddam

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On Tuesday 24 June, Julie Maskell had just arrived for duty in the RNLI Operations room at Poole. She settled into her chair and hoped for a quiet evening. Moments later, at 6pm, she received a call from Arqiva's control room. As well as providing the RNLI's crew pager infrastructure, Arqiva helps the RNLI monitor MOB Guardian, a remote sensing system designed by the RNLI to help protect fishermen. Now, there was a 'vessel overdue' alert and Arqiva had already tried to contact the skipper of the Brixham-based scallop fishing boat *Guyona* but without success.

Julie checked her screen to try to pinpoint the location of the overdue vessel herself. It wasn't recorded as in port so she knew this wasn't a potential false alarm. She attempted to ring the skipper's mobile number but it was switched off. Julie immediately rang the Coastguard, giving the vessel's name, port of registry and its last known position just off the Channel Island of Sark, backing up this call electronically via the MOB Guardian system. Then it hit her – this might be the first ever MOB Guardian-initiated rescue.

Falmouth Coastguard tasked the RNLI's St Peter Port Severn class lifeboat with tracking down the scalloper. Her crew were able to narrow the search to a small area using the last transmitted position report of the MOB Guardian unit onboard the *Guyona* and calculating from there. By chance, the lifeboat had been out on exercise only 12 miles from this predicted position. The crew spotted a hand flare in the distance and got to the survivors at 6.50pm. There was no sign of the *Guyona* but the fishermen were sitting in her liferaft looking very relieved to see the *Spirit of Guernsey* coming to their rescue.

Julie, at her post in Poole, soon heard from St Peter Port that the lifeboat had been successful and she was straight on the phone letting the rest of the Operations team know the good news.

### A sinking feeling

The three fishermen had been dredging with their scallop gear on what they thought was a routine passage. One minute they were proceeding as normal, the next, the gear caught in rocks, pulling the 13m *Guyona* over at a sharp angle. They frantically tried to cut the wire holding the cage to free themselves but then the shackle caught in a block and they knew they were going down.

David McMurdo of Annan in Dumfries and Galloway explained afterwards that there was no time to radio for help, to press the alarm button on the MOB Guardian base unit or to grab lifejackets. They struggled to deploy the liferaft but abandoned it to go down with the vessel as they jumped overboard.

Thankfully the raft later came free and popped back up to the surface but they had been treading water for about 20 minutes before they were able to climb in, weak and feeling sick from the diesel in the water. David adds: 'I was worried we were going to die ... but once we got to the liferaft I knew we were 90% safe ... We knew we were getting saved.'

'It was so scary bobbing up and down in the water watching the boat go down, thinking we were on it only a moment earlier,' says fellow fisherman Leo Piper. 'MOB Guardian saved our lives; we wouldn't be here without it.'

The shocked fishermen were transferred to the lifeboat and given thermal suits to warm them up on the journey back to St Peter Port. They were safely brought ashore where they received medical attention from local ambulance paramedics before being accommodated overnight by Coxswain Anthony White in his home. Next morning they were handed over to The Mission to Seafarers and were able to return to their home port of Brixham later that day.

### A real comfort

The *Guyona's* owner, Russell Passmore, was working 8,500 miles away in Papua New Guinea at the time. His wife Fiona says: 'I heard about the incident 2 hours after the fishing boat sank. I had the unenviable task of telling my husband over the phone that his boat had sunk but because of MOB Guardian I was very glad to be able to tell him that all three crew had been saved.'

'Not only does MOB Guardian make the crews feel safe; it brings confidence to those left on the shore. We know what a dangerous industry fishing is – I've been married to a fisherman for 26 years – and it has been a real comfort for all the families to know that MOB Guardian is there protecting them.'

Russell adds: 'I was involved in the initial trials of MOB Guardian and I realised it would work well in the fishing industry. I jumped at the chance to have it fitted and could see what a great piece of kit it was. I would definitely advise others to buy it. →

→ 'On the day the vessel sank the sea was as flat as a millpond. The crew were not wearing their personal safety devices for that reason but they were still picked up. Now, of course, we will always wear them, whatever the conditions.'

Tristan Northway was skipper of the *Guyona* on the day of the sinking. He is very glad that Russell had invested in MOB Guardian. 'Accidents happen and it's better to be safe than sorry. Obviously it does work – we are here!'

It may be some time before the four will go fishing again. Russell explains: 'As soon as I got back to the UK I spoke to the guys. They were still shaken up and not sure about going back to sea. But I was so glad they were safe. The boat sank so fast. Without MOB Guardian things could have been very different.'

#### Repeat performance

A month later on 23 July the Operations room at RNLI Headquarters received another alert. This time the *Levan Mor of Looe* had missed a scheduled report. The vessel's last known position was given to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and Falmouth Coastguard requested the Penlee RNLI all-weather lifeboat *Ivan Ellen* and a Royal Navy helicopter.

Nearing the scene, the helicopter crew spotted smoke from a flare and located the fishing boat's liferaft and two occupants, Skipper Joe Rothwell and Daniel Gummow. Both fishermen were winched onboard and taken to hospital as they were suffering from mild hypothermia. The lifeboat crew meanwhile recovered the raft and debris

from the fishing boat, to avoid any hazard to shipping or future false alarms.

Joe explains: 'It all happened really quickly. In less than a minute the boat had capsized and we were in the water. We didn't have time to put out a distress call so when we got in the liferaft we didn't know if the emergency services had been alerted. We weren't due into Newlyn until the next day so it could have been many hours before anyone missed us.'

'It was such a relief to see the helicopter coming and at that moment we knew the MOB Guardian had done its job. We hope to get another fishing boat and head out to sea as soon as possible, and the first items of equipment we'll buy will be a new MOB Guardian unit and a liferaft!'

#### Penlee's *Ivan Ellen* recovered debris from the sea

Photo: Nicholas Leach



## MOB Guardian

More than 20 commercial fishermen die in UK and RoI waters each year. The RNLI and commercial partners Signature Industries, Arqiva, AST and AWS have worked hard to develop the MOB Guardian system to help save fishermen's lives.

This new equipment gives an early alert to an emergency, helps reduce search times and provides rescuers with an up-to-date position for the vessel or man overboard via satellite. It means search and rescue agencies including

RNLI volunteer crews on lifeboats have a much better idea of where to look. The system records the vessel's location but does so confidentially, protecting a fisherman's commercial interests. The MOB Guardian unit is turned on by the fishing boat's skipper when going out of port and is shut down on docking. An overdue alert will be raised automatically if a regular report has not occurred.

Fishermen can also manually raise the alarm from the base unit in the wheelhouse or wear a fob (a personal safety device or PSD) incorporating a panic button in case they become ill or caught in machinery. If they fall

overboard with the PSD on, an alarm is triggered automatically.

The RNLI advises fishermen to use MOB Guardian as one of a number of safety measures, to include liferafts, lifejackets and GMDSS communications equipment. For more information on MOB Guardian, its cost and the grants available to fishermen please call the in-house team on 01202 663142 or visit [mobguardian.com](http://mobguardian.com). Offshore members can read more in their supplement.

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# Up close and very personal

From the comfort of a sofa, cosy cuppa in hand, we can grow immune to the reality of dramatic news stories. Chris Boundy and Claire Vandvik will never make that mistake again

## The Lifeguard

'It was high tide on the afternoon of 28 June and I had just come on duty at Trebarwith Strand, north Cornwall. The surf was rough and we were flying the red flag. I chatted with a couple of anglers, a dad and his stepson on holiday, explaining where it would be safe to go. Then I went to get on my wetsuit. Suddenly, I heard hysterical screaming. With the wetsuit still only half on I followed the shouting at full speed.

'The "washing machine" is the one place you don't go. The waves converge from all directions to bounce up the cliff and down, creating a swirl that drags you under. But there was the man I had spoken to just moments before, lying submerged, face down. I yelled to my colleague, John Dugard, to call for back up.

'I checked the surf. A set of waves was coming. I had to get to the man before they did or he would be at their mercy and smashed against the rocks. I grabbed my rescue tube and went in, placing myself as his protection. I got cuts and bruises but, amazingly, we didn't receive any major blows to the head.

'To be honest, I was nearly drowning myself. There was no way I could get the rescue tube around him – there was too much water and I kept going under. One second I was on a rock and then off it and onto another. I knew I could get out by myself but to get out with the man, who was considerably bigger than me and a dead weight, would be very, very difficult.

'Worse, there was 10m of fishing line in the swell and it made its way around the man's neck. I put my arm between his neck and armpit to stop it strangling him but then we got tangled together and he was acting as an anchor. We were getting smashed against the rocks.

'Now John was with us and I managed to get free. The man was grey and apparently stone dead but somehow we managed to give him one good rescue breath. Then the right waves came to help wash us all onto the rocks. With the man's legs still submerged I started mouth-to-nose, while John rushed to get the

defibrillator. It was the first time in my life I had given CPR for real. I had to keep clearing his airways.

'An ambulance was on its way but ETA was 37 minutes and it felt like we were very alone until a local nurse arrived on scene. We found out the man's name and, holding onto every bit of faith and hope, put everything we had into trying to revive him.

'The man needed to be fully out of the water to start defibrillation. All that water in his body made him incredibly heavy. As we set up the defib, we felt a pulse. His eyes were still not reacting but there was a very faint breath. It was such a relief when the paramedics arrived about 10 minutes earlier than expected, followed closely by a rescue helicopter.

'I had been on autopilot, carried by adrenaline and training, but as soon as the winch went up, my knees started to wobble and I nearly fainted with exhaustion and shock. I realised what we had done – it was amazing but it had been so scary. How can he have come back from that?

'I had three sleepless nights until, with a wave of relief, I met the man and his family again. He remembered me from our chat. He joked it was the last time he was going fishing and gave me what was left of his rod as a gesture of thanks. That evening I slept.

'The rescue has really brought home the importance of giving something back. The RNLI has given me expert training and equipment. Local knowledge is vital too, especially here with all the blind spots and such a swift tidal change. I came up through the Tintagel surf lifesaving club and thank them for that knowledge. I've now started helping with their training.

'I am so thankful too that John also knows the rocks and surf inside out. Without that, I don't believe he would have been able to help me as



he did. I'm not sure this rescue would have had the same outcome for any of us ...'

## The Witness

'The family all whooped with delight. It had been a long drive from Dorset and we were in need of a break from incessant rounds of *Old Macdonald*.

We rushed to admire our holiday view – Trebarwith Strand was glorious, devastatingly beautiful in its wildness – the tide was high and the sea crashed with great booms and fabulous gusts of spray off the rocks.

'Suddenly my eye was drawn down to a small cluster of people at the water's edge and I knew in my stomach that something was wrong. Focusing, I saw what looked like a dead man. I've done a first aid course, I've seen *Casualty* on TV, but to witness CPR in real life was truly horrifying. It went on and on. Then we saw them bring the defibrillator and I despaired. With tears streaming, I clung to my son, thinking how precious and precarious life is.

'How had the man got there? His skin colour seemed so unnatural – had he been washed up? Had the lifeguards rescued him? To do battle in that sea – was it possible? As I realised they had sensed a pulse, the woman who had been rather helplessly standing by was hugged and taken to sit down. Only then did I feel it appropriate to take some photos.

'I gasped as the helicopter was skilfully piloted into such a narrow strip. It hovered just metres in front of us. The sound of the blades roared in our ears and I held my breath while we watched the winch down and up. It was impressive.

'A woman who had been helping the lifeguards approached with a weak smile. Her husband gave her a big hug and said: "You deserve a drink." She certainly did. I suddenly felt so inadequate: she and the lifeguards had, at least for now, saved a life. All I could do was report on what I'd seen. Over the next few days my family wondered aloud: "How is he?" So it was wonderful when my father-in-law bounced in to say he'd heard that the man had survived.

'During our trip from Falmouth to Mousehole, Padstow to St Ives, there seemed to be no car or building that didn't have some show of support for our incredible Institution. I was so proud to be part of it and came back revived and roaring to do my bit at Headquarters to help those on the (water) front line continue to save lives.'

L-R: Twenty-year-old Lifeguards Chris Boundy and John Dugard put their own lives in peril to save a man – literally bringing him back to life

Photo: Bobby Renaud

Above: RNLI Assistant Editor Claire Vandvik stumbled across the shocking scene while on holiday

Photo: Claire Vandvik

# A long trawl

An 18-hour passage to rescue a stricken trawler requires endurance and attention to detail. Luckily, the Humber lifeboat crew have both. Valerie French reports

Photo: Les Stubbs

Humber lifeboat station sits at the end of Spurn Point, an extremely narrow spit jutting into the North Sea from the coast of Yorkshire. Volunteers based elsewhere would find it impossible to respond to an emergency quickly enough so, uniquely in the RNLI, Humber crew members and their families live full-time on site, ready to launch at a moment's notice

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Second Coxswain Martyn Hagan was just sitting down to his tea on 26 June when a call came through from Humber Coastguard. 'We have a little job for you,' the Coastguard said. The 'little' job involved rescuing the 18m Hartlepool-registered trawler *Lindisfarne* and her crew of three, who were in trouble 95 miles east of Flamborough Head.

RNLI lifeboats provide cover to 100 nautical miles out from the coast of the UK and RoI so this shout was very close to that limit. It would be testing the crew's navigational skills. 'One small error in a distance that far can put you miles out,' explains Martyn, who had never before been in command on a mission of this scale. Despite the initially benign conditions, Martyn and his crew (Colin Fisk, Christopher Allen, Stephen Purvis and Shaun Gander) knew they all faced a challenge.

The crew launched the all-weather lifeboat *Pride of the Humber* at 4.30pm and, with a steady run out at their maximum 25 knots, took 4½ hours to reach the casualty vessel. A former fisherman, Martyn describes himself as a stickler for accuracy, a quality that paid off since, despite rain and visibility of less than 1 mile, the ailing trawler was successfully located.

*Lindisfarne* was a very uncomfortable place to be, powerless with a seized gearbox. This was beyond repair at sea so there was no alternative but to tow

her to safety. Setting up a tow begins with the age-old art of throwing a heaving line between vessels, often a frustrating and time-consuming task when both parties are bobbing around in increasingly angry seas. But on this occasion the throw (and catch) were successful first time and in less than 10 minutes the pair were starting their long return journey.

To minimise the strain on the tow and prevent it breaking, Martyn kept their speed to around 7 knots. In a 3m swell the crew had to constantly work to balance the length of the tow rope to ensure the two boats were hitting the peaks and dropping into the troughs at the same time, otherwise the *Lindisfarne* would jar and pull like a bucking horse. As they made their slow and bumpy passage homewards the weather deteriorated, the winds reaching force 7.

'It was the furthest I've had to go on a shout and 18 hours is the longest this station has done in 15 years,' Martyn comments. 'One of the hardest things was to keep morale going and keep everyone alert.' The crew of five managed to drink 90 litres of water and empty the lifeboat's food store during their long stint.

The *Pride of the Humber* transferred the tow to Bridlington lifeboat at 8.55am on 27 June, finally arriving back at Spurn Point at 10.30am.

**Pictures below:  
Lindisfarne after  
18 hours of towing**

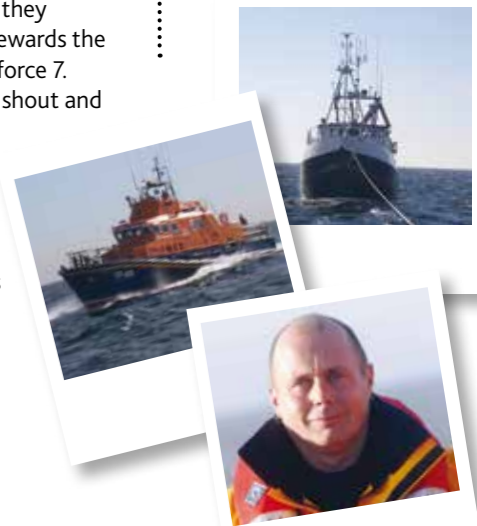
Photo: RNLI/Bridlington

**Humber's powerful  
Severn class lifeboat**

Photo: RNLI/Bridlington

**Second Coxswain  
Martyn Hagan, 43,  
whose tenacity  
won the day**

Photo: Tom Collins





# REVIEW

This issue, *the Lifeboat* goes beyond the printed word to include audio and music CDs



## Poor man's heaven

by Seth Lakeman

Review by Rory Stamp

Seth Lakeman isn't alone in being a successful modern musician inspired by classic rock and 1990s dance music, but few fuse such influences in the way he has on *Poor man's heaven*. He's a foot-stomping folk frontman at heart, but the fiddled riffs, powerful acoustic guitar and huge bass drums occasionally bring Led Zeppelin and superstar DJs to mind.

There's no bragging of rock'n'roll excess here, though. Seth's songs have regional, traditional roots and there's a

strong sea breeze blowing through the album. *I'll haunt you* is a banjo-spun yarn from a jealous mariner seeking revenge, and *Feather in a storm* is a bluesy number cursing the wreckers who once lured ships onto rocks in vicious seas. But the most compelling sea story recalls real events only too fresh in the memory. Named after the Penlee lifeboat so tragically lost with all hands in 1981, *Solomon Browne* tells of the lifeboat crew's 'constant courage'. It's not a ballad, though; there is an upbeat, appealing guitar melody here that suggests this is a tribute to brave volunteers as well as a mourning of their passing.

The darkest sounds are reserved for *Sound of a drum*, the final song: a mournful, lovelorn folk ballad. It's in stark contrast to the album's title track, with its funky verse and punchy vocals: 'In a poor man's heaven we'll have our way / We won't have nothing to fear, no / With real feather beds we'll rest our heads / We'll all have one of our own.' (See page 46 for an exclusive interview with Seth Lakeman.)

Music CD

Published by Relentless Records under licence to Virgin Records, ©EMI Records Ltd  
ISBN 5099921700323

Price: £7.98



advert



→ **The Thames – a journey from source to sea**  
by **Derek Pratt**  
Review by Carol Waterkeyn

Having lived close to the Thames for several years, it is hardly surprising that I was drawn to this mainly visual account of England's greatest river. From its tiny source at Thames Head near Kemble to its spectacular meeting of the sea near Gravesend, I was able to recognise many much-loved haunts in Derek Pratt's coffee-table book. He intersperses fascinating facts and anecdotes among the many appealing photographic images. To give a flavour, there are mentions of Dick Turpin, Henry VIII and Lord Nelson as well as the traditions of swan upping, the Oxford and Cambridge boat race and Henley regatta that continue to this day. RNLI lifeboats on the Thames are not mentioned however!

Hardback book  
Published by Adlard Coles Nautical  
ISBN 9780713688320  
Price: £19.99

**Three men in a boat**  
by **Jerome K Jerome**  
Review by Carol Waterkeyn

From fact to pure fiction. *Three men in a boat* was written in the 1880s, but has travelled well into the 2000s and is surely just as hilarious today. Three friends plus dog decide to travel the length of the Thames in a small boat as an adventure. Their hapless preparations, their penchant for fine food and their precarious voyage are all recorded in detail, alongside many reminiscences of previous excursions. Although the Victorian language is a little hard to follow in places, it's worth the effort. Don't read this book in public, though, unless you are prepared for onlookers to think you are a little strange as you will certainly laugh out loud!

Paperback book  
Published by Penguin  
ISBN 9780141441214  
Price: £5.99



### Authentic narrative of the death of Lord Nelson

by **William Beatty MD, adapted by Grant Eustace**

Review by Mairéad Dwane

Sir William Beatty was the surgeon onboard HMS *Victory* during the battle of Trafalgar when 55 of the *Victory's* crew were killed, including the now legendary Horatio Nelson.

The first half of this audiobook, read by Edward Kelsey (who has voiced characters in such diverse productions as *The Archers* and *Dangermouse*), describes movements of the British fleet leading up to and during the battle. Much of the detail has been recorded elsewhere, and at times it was difficult to keep up with the technical naval terms as the narrative progressed. However, the highlights come in the second half, as his physician comments on the Admiral's lifestyle. We are told that his favourite meal was 'the wing and liver of some fowl, and a plate of macaroni', and that his excellent health could be put down to walking the deck for 3 hours a day and 'rarely exceeding four glasses of wine after dinner'!

As this is a contemporary account, the language is quite archaic. In fact, I felt more transported to 1805 than to the Straits of Gibraltar. This is not an overview of the battle, the man, his demise and subsequent preservation, but rather an insider's account for the true history buff.

Audiobook CD  
Published by Crimson Cats  
ISBN 9780955139444  
Price £9.99 plus postage  
Available from: Crimson Cats Audio Books, The Red Cottage, The Street, Starston, Norfolk, IP20 9NN or from crimsoncats.co.uk where excerpts can be heard.

Unless other ordering details are stated, all products reviewed in *the Lifeboat* are available from good book and music shops 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.

# THE CALL OF THE SEA

Many of us feel drawn to experience the water, only to be thwarted by age, illness or disability. Here *the Lifeboat* investigates how such barriers can be overcome – and safety maintained



Geoff Holt onboard *Freethinker*  
Photo: Personal Everest

## Climbing Everest

On 14 May 2007, yachtsman and powerboater Geoff Holt was leaving the Hamble river in Hampshire in his aptly named trimaran *Freethinker*. After months of planning, he had begun the public phase of climbing his 'personal Everest' – being the first quadriplegic person to sail single-handedly around Great Britain.

He was so much in the public eye that in the crowded waters, just 10 minutes from launch, a press boat cut across his path. He broached and was thrown into the water. Floating face down for more than a minute – his lifejacket didn't turn him over – he almost drowned before his support team pulled him to safety. But somehow far worse for him was the shame and humiliation – letting everyone down who had put so much into the project and apparently proving his many detractors right.

Life as a teenager had been good. From age 16–18 Geoff had clocked up 30,000 miles at sea and had crossed the Atlantic three times.

An enjoyable and lucrative career as a charter boat captain in the Caribbean lay before him. Moreover, he knew, and was known and respected by, all the 'in crowd' – Tracy Edwards, Sir Robin Knox-Johnston. The sea was his world.

On 5 September 1984, everything changed. In that same Caribbean paradise,

**'THE CHAIR IS PART OF ME NOW – IT'S ODD TO SEE IT BACK THERE ON THE QUAY. SAILING IS FREEDOM!'**

Geoff broke his neck, diving for a swim into too-shallow water. He was brought back to the UK and spent a year in Odstock hospital in Wiltshire, working hard to rehabilitate but he was irreversibly paralysed from the chest down and dependent on a wheelchair. He was a young man whose life and aspirations had been thrown into total disarray. There would surely be no more sailing.

Against the statistical odds, Geoff found

good employment (in the finance sector) and a happy family life but it was 7 years before he ventured back onto the water after a chance encounter led to the discovery of a new type of boat that he could sail, on his own. Seawater was in his blood and would not be ignored.

Only a year on, he managed to sail around the Isle of Wight – though it took him 14 hours. He

had to get fitter, get clever: pressure sores and exposure were his enemy. In 1997 he did it again, but in less than 8 hours.

By 1995, the newly formed charity RYA Sailability invited Geoff to be its Chair, then representing just half a dozen clubs and 60–70 people. Geoff was rare in his experience of knowing the sea from both able-bodied and disabled perspectives and proved a skilful translator between these two worlds. He is

now Sailability's Ambassador and an RYA Council member.

As watersports providers opened their doors to more people generally, growing disability awareness brought confidence to an even-wider section of society who wouldn't formerly have had the opportunity to leave terra firma. Demand grew rapidly and, by 2007, Sailability represented 200+ clubs and 20,000 people with diverse disabilities, from physical to mental, genetic to acquired.

A structure had come into being that promoted and enabled specialist boat design,



And what of the future? Geoff has announced his next goal: to become the first quadriplegic to sail unassisted across the Atlantic Ocean, an adventure planned for November next year. Geoff's inspirational autobiography *Walking on water – A voyage around Britain and through life* is just out. His website is [personaleverest.com](http://personaleverest.com). He will be guest speaker at the Lifeboat College in Poole, Dorset, on 6 December 2008. Phone 0870 833 2000 or email [tlc\\_reception@rnli.org.uk](mailto:tlc_reception@rnli.org.uk) for more information. Geoff spoke to Liz Cook for this article.

equipment and training suitable for this new and enthusiastic market. And Geoff benefited from this in more ways than one – he was able to introduce his 2-year-old son to sailing himself, instead of literally sitting on the sidelines watching other adults share physical pursuits with the boy.

Now came the biggest challenge of Geoff's life. His personal Everest. Having 'done' the Isle of Wight, could he manage the whole of the British coastline in a succession of 40-mile day-sails? It wouldn't just be physically demanding – the logistics and infrastructure behind such a bid would be mammoth. He'd need his own boat, a safety boat, a 4x4 and trailer, navigation and safety equipment, clothing, food, a motor home or two – where would he and his team stay overnight? How could they all afford so much time off work? Passage planning and risk assessments would need expert input and weather forecasting was key: a force 4 wind would be his limit.

After a highly creative campaign, Geoff got the sponsorship he needed from both large and small donors and, after much more hard work, reached launch day via a boat naming by HRH The Princess Royal, Sailability's Patron. It was after all this that he found himself almost dead in the water, seemingly having failed utterly.

After 5 days of intensive work with the lifejacket manufacturer Crewsaver to adapt their standard products to something that would compensate for his heavily padded and very buoyant leg wear, Geoff relaunched. The river was somewhat quieter this time but progress was greater and so began 109 days of extraordinary endeavour.

A highlight was sailing out of Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire, at sunrise with dolphins alongside, while the hospitality of lifeboating communities all along the route astounded Geoff and his team. In particular, a lifeboat station and its adjoining land was often the only place to park safely and legally each night and the volunteers could give invaluable advice on local hazards. Near disasters included an all-day battle with heavy conditions to Portpatrick, Dumfries and Galloway, after



Geoff arrives at Fishguard  
Photo: Alan Thomas

which Geoff's hands and gums were bleeding (he uses his teeth as well as hands to hold and pull on lines) and he passed out with exhaustion.

Having to hole up at Abersoch, Gwynedd, for 25 days due to bad weather brought near defeat – but despair turned to wonder when Geoff looked at his website. He'd been writing a daily diary but had no idea that anyone was taking any notice. He now discovered 30,000 hits a day and ecstatic emails from unknown supporters. His sole-minded selfish ambition to achieve a near-impossible goal had in fact turned into a powerful inspiration for others.

On his final stage, Geoff was virtually blown home by HM Coastguard's helicopter *Whisky Bravo*, unbeknown to him 23 years almost to the minute since his disabling accident. He felt reaffirmed as a yachtsman at last but he'd also become a living example for others to follow. →



### Getting started

Tony Wafer, RNLI Sea Safety Programmes Manager, agrees with Geoff Holt that preparation is everything. Tony was a sailing instructor for

people with and without disabilities prior to working for the RNLI. He says: 'All sea goers should follow our five safety tips but, with a disability, it is important to take extra precautions. You should pay even more attention to the weather forecast and the type of boat you're using. If you have difficulties in moving around on dry land it is going to be even more tricky on a rolling boat and the worse the conditions, the more difficult the challenge.'

On dry land, adaptations to the physical environment or the use of specialised equipment can bring safety and independence for a disabled person, and so too onboard. Tony prompts: 'Will you need a hoist to lift you on and off the vessel? Are there locks to secure a wheelchair? Launching ramps, extra lighting or adapted changing facilities might be necessary onshore. Looking ahead, how are you going to maintain your craft – will you have to pay someone else?'

He continues: 'For your personal protective equipment, take into consideration what range (or lack) of movement you have in case you need a higher level of buoyancy in a lifejacket than recommended for your weight.'

Geoff Holt's terrifying experience with a lifejacket that *didn't* perform as expected has proved invaluable since. The RNLI's sea survival and sea safety experts, researchers at the University of Portsmouth, the UK Government's Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the RYA (including Geoff) and lifejacket manufacturers are all discussing the issue.

'But,' Tony emphasises: 'it's not just gear and gadgets; it's techniques too. Whether you've paralysed or weak muscles, or a visual impairment, learning the right skills is vital. That's where expert training comes in.' RYA Sailability offers people who think they can't even get on a boat the chance to achieve the self-reliance and exhilaration of being on the water. It does not provide instruction itself but it can advise on suitable courses and providers, while other specialist groups provide similar support for disabled would-be sea goers in pursuits as diverse as angling, waterskiing and surfing. →



Hilary Lister says sailing feels like flying  
Photo: anthonyupton.com

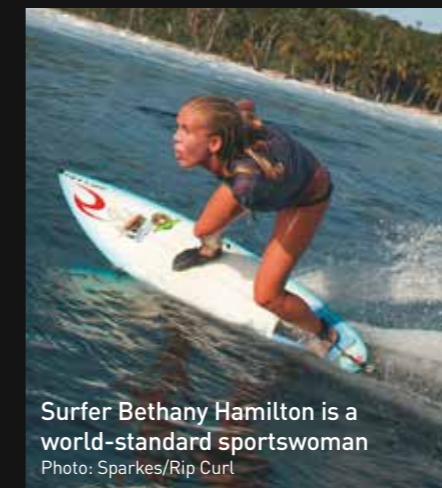
## ADVANCED STEPS

RYA Sailability is now very much 'for all' but it originates from the merger of the RYA Seamanship Foundation, which looked after the interest of blind sailors, and the original Sailability for elite sporting disabled yachtspeople. The recently competing Paralympic sailing, rowing and swimming teams showed just what high performance is possible.

Hilary Lister is another record-breaking sailor. Paralysed now from the neck down by a progressive neurological disease, Hilary operates her craft via a series of 'sip and puff' straws – and a lot of electronics. She only started sailing in 2003 and says it has given her life 'new meaning and purpose'. She has already sailed the Channel and around the Isle of Wight single-handedly.

Her most recent quest is, like Geoff Holt, to circumnavigate Britain. Hilary set off from Dover on 16 June but was beset with bad weather that proved too much for the highly technical equipment onboard. She reluctantly suspended her attempt 2 months later having reached Newlyn in Cornwall. Hilary says: 'I am obviously extremely disappointed and incredibly frustrated that we have not been able to complete the sail this year; it seems that the fates have conspired against us but I am now determined to go again next year.'

Moving from hi-tech to low: 'disabled' professional surfer Bethany Hamilton beat most of her able-bodied rivals earlier this year by coming third in her first top-level competition. The 18-year-old lost an arm 5 years ago in a shark attack but is admired for her grace and strength in what is one of the most physically challenging of sports.



Surfer Bethany Hamilton is a world-standard sportswoman  
Photo: Sparkes/Rip Curl



→ Chris Refoy is a structural engineer and RNLI Shoreworks Construction Manager. He manages many of the charity's civil engineering projects for lifeboat stations and other buildings. Chris was a keen sailor before he developed a progressive disease causing peripheral neuropathy. He still sails, if less frequently, as he explains: 'I've had an 11ft Gull dinghy for 25 years but over the last few years getting the boat into the water down a slipway has become impossible without help. I have lost sensation in my hands, so fiddly things like getting a lifejacket on and doing up the buckles or undoing the boat's cover takes a long time. Also putting protective clothing on and doing up zips is really hard. Velcro or oversized ties are much easier.'

'When I go out sailing the feeling is great and it gives me a sense of achievement although I am more aware that if I get into trouble and capsize, for example, I could have trouble getting back in.' Chris has been out sailing locally with a club but would really like a new boat that is more stable and requires less maintenance than his current craft. He describes how the industry is now responding to the needs of disabled sailors: 'They are producing some really exciting designs, with joysticks for steering, different rigging ... Access dinghies have deeper cockpits with much steeper sides and are adaptable to suit different requirements. They are also practically unsinkable!'

### USEFUL CONTACTS

**British Disabled Water Ski Association:**  
bdwsa.org, tel. 01784 483664

**Jubilee Sailing Trust (tall ships):**  
jst.org.uk, tel. 02380 449108

**National Federation of Anglers:**  
www.nfadirect.com, tel. 0115 981 3535

**RYA Sailability:**  
www.ryasailability.org, tel. 0845 345 0403

**Irish Disabled Sailing Association/Sailforce:**  
www.sailforce.ie, tel. 021 438 3228

**Sailing for the Disabled, Isle of Man:**  
www.sftd-iom.com, tel. 01624 620376

**Surf Relief's Surfable project:**  
www.surfrelief.org.uk  
enquiries@surfrelief.org.uk

# Lifeboat LOTTERY

## WINTER 2008 PRIZES

First prize in the next Lifeboat Lottery is a 5-door Citroën C1 car.

Second prize is a 14-night cruise for two adults along the Iberian coast and east into the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas onboard *Quest for Adventure*.

*Quest for Adventure* is a small and intimate ship with a wide range of itineraries designed to discover many ports of call that are impossible to access by super liner. Excursions and lectures offer the chance to really experience each destination. For more details call free on 0800 300 432 or visit [www.spiritofadventure.co.uk](http://www.spiritofadventure.co.uk).

For your chance to win this cruise, while supporting the RNLI too, Lifeboat Lottery tickets will be available to supporters from



17 October 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 tax and gaming laws, tickets are not available in the RoI or Northern Ireland.)

## SUMMER 2008 WINNERS

1st prize: Vauxhall Corsa Life, Mrs El Byrne, Lancashire (pictured on her VIP tour of Fleetwood lifeboat station with her son Martin (right) and volunteer John Hayes (centre))  
 2nd prize: 13-night Canary Islands cruise generously donated by Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, Mr DY Lee, Cumbria  
 3rd prize: £500, Mrs J Thorpe, Gwynedd  
 4th prize: £250, Mrs M Macphail, Mid Glamorgan  
 5th prizes: £100 each, Mrs A Duckworth, Leicestershire; Mr D Parry, Devon; Mr and Mrs PA Leonard, London; Mr JA Gordon, Inverness-shire; Mrs PJM Turner, West Yorkshire



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# LAUNCHES 1,035 LIFEBOAT AND HOVERCRAFT LAUNCHES APRIL-JUNE 2008

**ABERDEEN**  
ON-1248(17-24):Jun14, 18,27  
D-694:Jun15,18  
**ABERDOVEY**  
B-722:Apr18,19,27,May6, 24(x2),Jun8  
**ABERSOCH**  
B-790:Apr11,12(x2),14,26, May2,3,4,15,18,24(x2),26, Jun7,10,13,17,26  
**ABERYSTWYTH**  
B-822:Apr17,20, May5,6,8(x4),13(x3), 21(x2),24,Jun4,8,16  
**ACHILL ISLAND**  
ON-1240(14-28): Apr9,10,28,May14,18  
**AITH**  
ON-1232(17-14):Apr6, May10  
**ALDEBURGH**  
ON-1193(12-34):Apr10, Jun15  
D-673:Apr26,May31,Jun15  
**ALDERNEY**  
ON-1199(14-04):Apr9, May4,21,25,Jun1  
**AMBLE**  
ON-1176(12-19):May2,14, 24,25  
D-530:May2,14(x2),24  
**ANGLE**  
ON-1112(47-010):May6,13, Jun10,18,21  
D-638:Apr14,May10,31, Jun7  
**ANSTRUTHER**  
ON-1174(12-17):May7,Jun7  
ON-1184(12-25):Apr23  
D-667:Apr23,May7,Jun6  
**APPLEDORE**  
ON-1140(47-027):Apr4, May14,31,Jun4,7,14,21  
B-742:Apr6,19(x2), May20,27,Jun3,14,15,20,21  
BB-060:May3,5,7,11,27, Jun15  
**ARAN ISLANDS**  
ON-1217(17-06):May5,8, 13,26,Jun3,7,17,21  
**ARBROATH**  
ON-1194(12-35):Apr17, 26(x2),May3,Jun8,21,27,28  
D-621:Apr17,26(x2),May3, Jun8,21,23,27,28  
**ARKLOW**  
ON-1223(14-19):May4,10, 11,16,Jun17,21  
**ARRAN (LAMLASH)**  
B-770:May19,25,Jun9  
**ARRANMORE**  
ON-1244(17-22):Apr3,11, May10,11,26,Jun8,21  
**ATLANTIC COLLEGE**  
B-763:May14  
B-774:Jun15  
**BALLYCOTTON**  
ON-1233(14-25):May10, Jun3  
**BALLYGLASS**  
ON-1262(17-33):Apr28, May28  
D-687:May10  
**BALTIMORE**  
B-708:Jun7  
**BANGOR**  
B-805:Apr11, May2,3,5,11,13,31(x2),Jun22

**BARMOUTH**  
ON-1185(12-26):Jun17  
D-678:May8,11,24, Jun21  
**BARRA ISLAND**  
ON-1230(17-12):Jun10, 29(x2)  
**BARROW**  
ON-1286(16-06):May25  
D-567:Apr12,May7,25, Jun19,22  
**BARRY DOCK**  
ON-1245(14-29):Apr3,13, May3,4(x2),18,20,21, Jun1,10,15  
**BEAUMARIS**  
B-768:Apr26, May4(x2),5,14,24,25(x3)  
**BEMBRIDGE**  
ON-1126(47-018):Apr6,14, 15,May15,18,21,24,Jun7,8, 9(x2),10  
D-649:Apr15,May6,18, Jun15,19  
**BERWICK-UPON-TWEED**  
D-639:Jun23  
**BLACKPOOL**  
B-748:Apr22,25,May14  
D-558:Apr22,24,25, May14,31,Jun6  
D-566:Apr24,Jun6  
**BLYTH**  
D-606:Apr29,May18, Jun9,12  
**BORTH**  
D-622:Apr19,27, May8,12,24(x2),31,Jun4,16  
**BRIDLINGTON**  
ON-1169(12-12):Apr21(x2), 23,May4  
D-557:Apr1,21,26, May11,20(x2),Jun4,7  
**BRIGHTON**  
B-737:Apr5,24, May2,3,4,5(x5),10,11(x2), 12(x2),16(x2),24(x2),30, Jun4(x2),5,8,9,11  
**BROUGHY FERRY**  
ON-1252(14-31):Apr9,10, 14,25,May5,24,25,Jun8,20, 25,28  
D-539:Apr9,10,14,25, May5,23,24,25,26, Jun1,8,17,20,25,28  
**BUCKIE**  
ON-1268(17-37):May13, Jun7,21  
**BUDE**  
D-617:May21,Jun21  
**BUNDORAN**  
B-711:May9,31,Jun6  
**BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH**  
B-733:Apr9,25,26,May10, Jun7  
D-672:Apr10,25  
**BURNHAM-ON-SEA**  
B-717:Apr10,11(x2),12  
D-603:Apr11(x2),12, May5,19  
**BURRY PORT**  
D-611:Apr15,25,May4(x2), 5,18,30,Jun3,8,25  
May28  
D-687:May10  
**BALTIMORE**  
B-708:Jun7  
**BANGOR**  
B-805:Apr11, May2,3,5,11,13,31(x2),Jun22

**CARDIGAN**  
B-752:May5,11,27,29, Jun18  
D-547:May21,29,Jun18  
**CASTLETOWNBERE**  
ON-1277(17-44):May24,25  
May3,13  
**EASTBOURNE**  
ON-1195(12-36):Apr17, 18,21,28(x2),May5,11(x3), 16,18,23,26,Jun5,15  
D-602:Apr18,21,28,May5  
D-605:May10,11,18(x2), 23,24,Jun5,9  
**ENNISKILLEN**  
B-702:Apr8,May8,12,30, Jun5,7,21,22  
B-703:May25(x3),31(x2), Jun16,22,28  
**EXMOUTH**  
ON-1178(12-21):May1(x3), 5,7,8(x2),18,21,31,Jun4,8, 22,27  
ON-1210(14-12):Apr13  
D-615:Apr18,May18, 21(x2),24(x3),26,29,30,31, Jun3,4(x2),6,8,11,22,27  
D-669:Apr13,14,25, May8(x4),11  
**EYEMOUTH**  
ON-1253(14-32):Apr26,27, May6,18,30,Jun25  
**FALMOUTH**  
ON-1269(17-38):May10(x2), 25,26,Jun4,12(x2),27  
B-756:Apr4,15,17(x3),24, May10,11,13,19,25,26,27,31, Jun3,9,10(x2),12(x2),15,16, 20,21,24  
**FENIT**  
ON-1239(14-27):May5(x2), 6,7,Jun2(x3),6,7,16,19,23,26  
D-513:Jun2(x2),7,16,19,26  
**FETHARD**  
D-683:Apr22,May3,31,Jun2  
**FILEY**  
ON-1170(12-13):May5,19  
D-563:Apr5(x2),22,May17, Jun10,16,19(x2)  
**FISHGUARD**  
ON-1198(14-03):Apr7, May16,29,Jun21,23  
D-652:Apr7,Jun14  
**FLAMBOROUGH**  
B-811:May10,11(x3), Jun7,10,13  
**DART**  
D-520:Apr18  
D-523:May14  
**DONAGHADEE**  
ON-1228(14-24):May9,25,31  
**DOUGLAS**  
ON-1109(47-007):Apr27, May5,6,17  
ON-1147(47-032):Jun6,21,23  
**DOVER**  
ON-1220(17-09):Apr20,27, May10(x2),11,22,26,30(x3), Jun3,20,29  
**DUN LAOGHAIRE**  
ON-1200(14-05):Apr16,23, 26,May5,15,18,23,25, Jun2(x3),9,20,22,24  
D-519:Apr16,17, May10,11,30,Jun2(x2),10, 14,16(x2),22  
**DUNBAR**  
ON-1204(14-06):Apr25  
ON-1266(14-35):May21, Jun20,25(x2)  
D-544:May21,Jun14,20, 25(x2)  
D-571:May15

**DUNGENESS**  
ON-1186(12-27):Apr23, May2,28,Jun6,14  
**DUNMORE EAST**  
ON-1215(14-17):Apr22, May3,13  
**GREAT YARMOUTH AND GORLESTON**  
ON-1208(14-10):Apr1, Jun22  
B-786:Apr1,19, May10,11,18,19,26,Jun8,22  
HAPPISBURGH  
D-607:Apr5  
**HARTLEPOOL**  
ON-1274(14-37):Apr17,29, May11,Jun7(x2)  
B-766:Apr13,17,May11, Jun10  
**HARWICH**  
ON-1202(17-03):May31, Jun7,20,29  
ON-1237(17-17):Apr7,10,20  
B-789:Apr20,27, May1,4,10,13,16,20,24,26,31, Jun2,7(x2),11,29(x2)  
**HASTINGS**  
ON-1125(12-002):Apr27, May12,23,24,Jun23  
D-699:Apr28(x2), May4,5,10,12(x2),13,14, 17,24  
**HAYLING ISLAND**  
B-712:Apr8,16,May14,18, 19(x2),25(x3),Jun7,8(x2)  
D-642:Apr8,16, May19,Jun8,9,25  
**HELENSBURGH**  
B-791:Apr2,5,13,May3,5, 15,26(x2),Jun16  
**HELVICK HEAD**  
B-754:May12,31,Jun8,22  
**HOLYHEAD**  
ON-1272(17-41):Apr12, May25,31,Jun29  
D-654:May24,29,Jun4,7  
**HORTON AND PORT EYNON**  
D-688:Apr3,27,May11, Jun6,24  
**HOWTH**  
ON-1258(14-33):Jun10,14  
D-659:Apr22,May6,8,11(x2), 15,19,29,Jun2,9,28(x2)  
**HOYLAKE**  
ON-1163(12-005):Apr18, Jun9  
**HUMBER**  
ON-1216(17-05):May1,3, 20,Jun2,5,6,8,13(x2),26  
ON-1263(17-34):Apr5,23,28  
**HUNSTANTON**  
B-749:May6,24,25,28, Jun18  
H-003:Apr20,May5,19  
**ILFRACOMBE**  
ON-1165(12-007):Apr3, May9,Jun14  
D-525:Jun8,18,21  
D-555:May9  
**INVERGORDON**  
ON-1206(14-08):May13, Jun1  
**ISLAY**  
ON-1254(17-27):May28(x2), Jun7,19  
**KESSOCK**  
B-771:Apr8,22,27,May15,21  
**KILKEEL**  
B-713:May5,10

**KILMORE QUAY**  
ON-1133(47-021):Apr12, May16,Jun9,14,17  
**KILRUSH**  
B-729:Jun7  
**KINGHORN**  
B-720:Apr27,May10,25, 31(x2),Jun4,7,8,19,28(x2),29  
**KINSALE**  
B-723:Apr11,30,May7,14  
B-796:Jun22  
**KIPPFORD**  
D-553:May27  
**KIRKCUDBRIGHT**  
B-814:Apr20,May30  
**KIRKWALL**  
ON-1231(17-13):Jun2(x2)  
**KYLE OF LOCHALSH**  
B-740:Apr26,May19, Jun15,17  
**LARGS**  
B-739:Apr17,21,27(x2), May3(x2),10,12,Jun7,21  
**LARNE**  
ON-1246(14-30):Apr23  
D-646:Apr23,May30(x2)  
**LERWICK**  
ON-1221(17-10):May11, Jun4,19,20  
**LITTLE AND BROAD HAVEN**  
D-628:Jun21  
D-685:May13,26  
**LITTLEHAMPTON**  
B-779:Apr17,20,26,May1,7, 8,13,18,22,24,28,30, Jun1,3,9,21,27  
D-631:May8,11,18,23,Jun1, 4(x2),8(x2),12,19(x3),22,27  
D-635:Apr17,26  
**LITTLESTONE-ON-SEA**  
B-785:Apr1,May5,10,30  
**LLANDUDNO**  
ON-1164(12-006):May24  
D-656:May3(x2),11(x2), Jun9  
**LOCH NESS**  
B-707:Apr1,May24,Jun9,20  
**LOCHINVER**  
ON-1271(17-40):Apr21,May5, Jun15  
**LONGHOPE**  
ON-1278(17-45):Apr5  
**LOOE**  
B-793:Apr12,13,16, May1,25,28,29,Jun22,26,28  
D-528:Apr13  
D-574:May1,25,26,Jun6,22  
**LOUGH DERG**  
B-705:Apr13,16,24,May31, Jun22  
**LOUGH SWILLY**  
ON-1142(47-029):Apr21  
**PADSTOW**  
ON-1283(16-04):Apr10,May2  
**PEEL**  
ON-1181(12-22):Jun1  
**PENARTH**  
B-725:May3  
B-773:Apr3,4(x2)  
D-692:Apr25,May18  
**PENLEE**  
ON-1265(17-36):Apr2,10, 16,20,25,May20,22,Jun15, 16,19,23  
**LYMINGTON**  
B-784:Apr4,23(x2),May18, 29,Jun8(x2),19,23,27  
**LYTHAM ST ANNES**  
ON-1189(12-30):May4  
D-657:Apr10,May17,25, Jun8(x2),17

**MABLETHORPE**  
D-653:Apr24  
**MACDUFF**  
B-804:Apr20,26,May18,Jun2  
**MALLAIG**  
ON-1250(17-26):Jun19,20, 25,28  
**MARGATE**  
ON-1177(12-20):Apr24, May16,21,Jun27  
D-545:Apr24, May10,11,21,28,Jun9,12  
**MINEHEAD**  
B-824:Apr9,13,May18, Jun8  
D-549:Apr9,May11,Jun14  
**MOELFRE**  
ON-1116(47-013):Apr12, 26(x2),May5,18,24(x2),Jun6, 21,Jun2,8,15,16,22,28(x2)  
**MONTROSE**  
ON-1152(47-034):Apr26, Jun11,20,23  
D-601:Apr26,Jun20,23  
**MORECAMBE**  
D-564:Apr10,May7,27, Jun15,22  
H-002:Apr15,May27, Jun15,29  
**MUDEFORD**  
B-806:Apr6,11,21, May8,Jun11,17  
B-807:May21,24,Jun1,6,7  
**NEW BRIGHTON**  
B-721:Apr2,6,29,May3,9,10, 14,26,Jun7,14,15,19,28(x2)  
H-005:Apr2,15,May7,26  
**NEW QUAY (CARDIGANSHIRE)**  
ON-1172(12-15):Apr2,12, 13,17,May5  
D-616:Apr12,13  
**NEWBIGGIN**  
B-745:May4,Jun1(x2)  
**NEWCASTLE**  
D-637:May3  
**NEWHAVEN**  
ON-1243(17-21):Apr1,6, May10(x2),31, Jun4,8,12(x2),17,22  
ON-1256(17-29):Apr15,20, May2,5  
**NEWQUAY (CORNWALL)**  
B-801:Apr3  
B-821:May4,11,22,Jun6,14  
D-636:Apr3,May4,6,11  
D-640:May19,Jun6,28(x2)  
**NORTH BERWICK**  
D-619:May4  
D-620:Jun18,21  
**OBAN**  
ON-1227(14-23):Apr3,6,7, 10,11,23,27,28, May13,18,Jun1,3(x2),4  
**ON PASSAGE**  
ON-1142(47-029):Apr21  
**PADSTOW**  
ON-1283(16-04):Apr10,May2  
**PEEL**  
ON-1181(12-22):Jun1  
**PENARTH**  
B-725:May3  
B-773:Apr3,4(x2)  
D-692:Apr25,May18  
**PENLEE**  
ON-1265(17-36):Apr2,10, 16,20,25,May20,22,Jun15, 16,19,23  
**LYMINGTON**  
B-784:Apr4,23(x2),May18, 29,Jun8(x2),19,23,27  
**LYTHAM ST ANNES**  
ON-1189(12-30):May4  
D-657:Apr10,May17,25, Jun8(x2),17

**PLYMOUTH**  
ON-1264(17-35):Apr2,14, 17,May2,4,5,13,23,24,25, 26(x2),Jun3,7(x2),8  
B-775:Apr8,10,17(x2), May6,12,23(x2),24,26, 28(x2),31,Jun7,13,14,25  
**POOLE**  
ON-1115(47-012):Apr6, 11(x2),16,20,May5,8,26  
B-710:Apr2,4,6,11,14(x2), 16,20(x2),30,May2,6,8, Jun21,22(x2)  
**PORT ERIN**  
B-813:May20  
**PORT ISAAC**  
D-546:Apr28  
**PORT ST MARY**  
ON-1234(14-26):May28  
D-575:May29,31  
**PORT TALBOT**  
D-550:Apr8,May5,9,10,13, Jun5,7  
**PORTAFERRY**  
B-706:Apr28, May2,4,11,12,31(x2),Jun5,7  
**PORTRCRAWL**  
B-726:Apr26,May3(x2),11(x2), 18,23,24(x3),25,Jun1(x2), 4(x2),15,24  
**PORTRHODDINLLAEN**  
ON-1114(47-011):Apr28,29, May4,14,31,Jun13,15  
**PORTPATRICK**  
ON-1151(47-033):Apr17  
**PORTREE**  
ON-1214(14-16):Apr10, May16,18,Jun4,15  
**PORTRUSH**  
ON-1257(17-30):Apr30,Jun4  
D-572:Apr27,May17,25,Jun4  
**PORTSMOUTH**  
B-730:Apr9,17,22,24(x2), May5,10,11,13,14,24,25,31, Jun7,8,19  
D-554:Apr9,10,May11,22,25, Jun12  
**PWLLHELLI**  
ON-1168(12-010):Apr9, May26  
D-676:May25,26,Jun1  
**QUEENSFERRY**  
B-735:Apr5,9(x2),10,14,15,20, 25,26,May5,7(x2),10,21,25,26, Jun5,28  
**RAMSEY**  
ON-1148(12-11):Apr4,20, May11,17,24  
**RAMSGATE**  
ON-1197(14-02):Apr8,13,16, May1,14(x2),22,27,30,31, Jun7,14,24,28  
B-765:Apr3,14,26, May1,3,4,5(x2),9,11,14,30, Jun1,4,8(x2),12,20,24  
**RED BAY**  
B-728:May10,18,26,30, Jun9(x2)  
**REDCAR**  
B-777:Apr26,May11,24, Jun8(x2),21,22  
D-677:Apr17,Jun1,8,21,22  
**RHVL**  
ON-1124(12-001):Apr11, May9,29,Jun6  
D-632:Apr9,11,May3,25,29, 30(x3),31,Jun8(x2),9(x2)  
**ROSSLARE HARBOUR**  
ON-1276(17-43):Apr17, May15,Jun9  
**RYE HARBOUR**  
B-727:Apr11,17,27,28, May1(x2),8,10,11,24  
**SALCOMBE**  
ON-1130(47-022):May3  
ON-1289(16-09):May25, Jun3,6,28  
B-794:Apr4,29,May3,26, Jun5,18

**SCARBOROUGH**  
D-560:Apr5,Jun8  
**SEAHOUSES**  
ON-1173(12-16):Apr1, May18,Jun8,22(x2),25  
D-686:Apr1,May9,18(x3), Jun8,10,22  
**SELSEY**  
ON-1146(47-031):Apr12, May26,Jun14(x2),17  
D-691:Apr2,13,14,May6,7, 12,15,24,Jun2,9,13,14(x2), 28,29  
**SENNEN COVE**  
ON-1121(47-016):Apr3, May11,17,29,Jun9,15  
D-624:Apr3  
**SHEERNES**  
ON-1226(14-22):Apr24,29, May5(x2),21,24(x2),26(x2), Jun2  
D-650:Jun21,25,27,29  
D-662:Apr26,27,May3(x3), 11,24(x4),26,Jun5,7  
**SHERRINGHAM**  
B-818:Apr1,11  
**SHOREHAM HARBOUR**  
ON-1117(47-014):Apr26, May10,17,18,22,26,30, Jun4,9  
ON-1158(47-040):Apr6(x2), Jun2,27  
D-647:Apr4,6,17,28,May4,6, 10(x2),11,12(x2),18,24(x2), 26,31,Jun1,2,4(x2),7,10,29  
**SKEGNESS**  
ON-1166(12-008):May9, Jun8,28  
D-573:Apr13,May11,29, Jun8,9,17,28(x3)  
**SKERRIES**  
B-747:Apr4,9,26,27(x2), May13,20,31,Jun2(x2), 12,19  
**SLIGO BAY**  
B-781:May5,7,8,11,13, Jun18,20  
**SOUTH BROADS**  
D-514:May26  
**SOUTHELD-ON-SEA**  
B-776:Apr1(x2),26,May3, 10,24(x4)  
D-655:May8(x2),27,Jun3  
D-682:Apr1,3,26,May5,11, 24,31,Jun8  
H-004:Apr20,May5(x2), 8(x3),9,11,12  
**SOUTHWOOD**  
B-750:May9,22,Jun5  
**ST ABBES**  
B-783:May30  
**ST AGNES**  
D-641:May17  
**ST BEES**  
B-719:Apr14,19,May25, Jun16  
**ST CATHERINE**  
B-772:Apr19,22,Jun7,14(x2)  
**ST DAVIDS**  
ON-1139(47-026):Apr12, May24  
D-543:May24,Jun14  
**ST HELIER**  
ON-1130(47-022):Apr13  
ON-1157(47-039):Apr17, Jun1  
B-816:Apr13,14,22,26, May11(x2),Jun1  
**ST IVES**  
ON-1167(12-009):Jun18  
D-668:Apr7,May5,8,22,27, Jun23  
**ST PETER PORT**  
ON-1260(17-31):Jun24  
**STAITHES AND RUNSWICK**  
B-788:May6,11

**STORNOWAY**  
ON-1238(17-18):Apr3, May17,26,Jun5  
ON-1278(17-45):Jun9,19  
**STRANRAER**  
D-538:May7  
**STROMNESS**  
ON-1236(17-16):Apr5,23, 25,May14  
**SUNDERLAND**  
B-817:Apr2,10,13,May5,6, 13,Jun6,8(x3),11,29  
D-665:Apr26,May6,Jun19  
**SWANAGE**  
ON-1182(12- 23):Apr9,30, May7(x2),11,Jun8,12,17, 19,20  
D-613:Apr4,8,9,May4,7,11, 30,31  
**TEDDINGTON**  
D-648:Apr2,29,May3,5(x2), 7(x2),8,9,11,20,31,Jun1,4,6,7  
**TEIGNMOUTH**  
B-809:Apr12,14,16,18, May2,4,6(x2),26,Jun5,6,8, 10,21,22(x2),29  
**TENBY**  
ON-1281(16-02):May16 Jun17,20,25(x2)  
D-562:Apr17,May5,14,30, 31,Jun8,9,25  
**THE LIZARD**  
ON-1145(47-030):Apr8, Jun1,24  
**THE MUMBLES**  
ON-1127(47-019):May4  
ON-1130(47-022):Jun22  
D-623:Apr13,16,22, May3(x2),4,18,31, Jun8,10,22,25  
**THURSO**  
ON-1273(17-42):Apr19, Jun3,10,21  
**TIGNHABRUAIICH**  
B-743:Apr20(x3),May16,27, Jun7,20  
**TOBERMORY**  
ON-1270(17-39):Apr13, May26,Jun15

**TORBAY**  
ON-1255(17-28):Apr11,24, May12(x2),14,25,Jun5,18, 19,21,22  
D-651:Apr3,6,23,May16, 17,18,Jun3,7,10,19,21  
**TOWER**  
E-001:Apr1,3(x2),4(x2),7,8, 9,10(x2),12,13(x2),14,19(x2), 20(x4),22,23,25(x2),26(x3), 27(x3),30,May2,20,22(x3), 23,24(x4),27,Jun15(x3),18, 21(x2),22(x3)  
E-005:Apr12,May3(x3),5(x2),6, 8(x4),9(x2),10(x3),11(x2), 12(x2),13(x3),15,16,17,25, 26(x2),27,28(x2),30,31(x2), Jun1(x2),2(x2),4(x2),5,6(x2), 7,9(x5),10,13,19,20,27(x2), 28,29  
E-006:Jun5  
**TRAMORE**  
D-643:May4,7,11,25,Jun8  
**TREARDUR BAY**  
B-731:Apr18,19,27,28, May4(x2),12(x2),18,24(x2), 25(x2),26,29,30,Jun1,3  
D-614:May12,24,30  
**TROON**  
ON-1275(14-38):Apr17, May9,10,23,24,Jun1,5,14, 15,21,23,24,29  
D-684:May9,10,23,24, Jun5,14,15,21,23,24,29  
**TYNEMOUTH**  
ON-1242(17-20):Apr7,25, May1,11,17,30,Jun20  
ON-1263(17-34):Jun7,9  
BB-050:June 24  
D-535:Apr8  
D-693:May16,25,29, Jun15,24  
**VALENTIA**  
ON-1218(17-07):Apr14,15, May8,14,19,Jun6,20  
**WALMER**  
B-808:May3(x2),13,Jun1  
D-663:Apr4,14,25,May11,13, Jun8

**WALTON AND FRINTON**  
ON-1154(47-036):Apr10, 18,May16,Jun9,14  
**WELLS**  
ON-1161(12-003):Apr1, May4  
D-661:May3,4,5,25,Jun8, 10,25  
**WEST KIRBY**  
D-612:Jun10  
**WEST MERSEA**  
B-761:Apr1,5,26(x2), May4(x2),6,19,23,25(x2), 28,Jun20,22(x2),28,29(x2)  
**WESTON-SUPER-MARE**  
B-736:May18,Jun4,15  
D-512:Apr8,24  
D-696:May6,11,18,22, Jun4,15  
**WEXFORD**  
D-644:Jun7,24  
**WEYMOUTH**  
ON-1237(17-17):May16,18  
ON-1261(17-32):Apr5,16, 26,28,May7,11,14, Jun7,14,22  
BB-053:May16  
**WHITBY**  
ON-1212(14-14):Apr25, May5,Jun15,18  
D-674:Apr8,10,26,27,May8, 22,28,Jun11,13,28  
**WHITSTABLE**  
B-764:Apr5,6,26,May3,12, 18,Jun7,15,24,26  
**WICK**  
ON-1224(14-20):Apr26, Jun2,11  
**WICKLOW**  
ON-1153(47-035):Apr10, Jun1  
**D-671**:Apr20  
**WITHERNSEA**  
D-541:May28  
**YARMOUTH**  
ON-1249(17-25):Apr14, May3,Jun1,3,11,12,16  
**YOUGHAL**  
B-780:Apr16

**ON STATION**  
D-696, **Annie Stock II**, Weston-super-Mare, 7 May 2008  
(D-537 has been withdrawn)  
B-708, **Bessie**, Baltimore, 27 June 2008  
ON-1266 [14-35], **John Neville Taylor**, Dunbar, 8 May 2008  
(ON-1207 [14-09] has been withdrawn)  
ON-1178 [12-21], **Margaret Jean**, Exmouth, 1 May 2008  
(ON-1210 [14-12] has been withdrawn to the relief fleet)  
B-825, **Norma Ethel Vinall**, relief fleet, 29 May 2008  
D-697, **Stranraer Saviour**, Stranraer, 5 June 2008  
(D-538 has been withdrawn)  
B-810, **Tabbycat**, Cowes, 1 July 2008

advert

advert

advert



# One of the good folk

He may be a chart-topping star but RNLI supporter Seth Lakeman remains tied to his roots, as Rory Stamp discovers

As he restrings his tenor guitar, Seth Lakeman can't help but have a smile on his face. He's backstage at a music festival, enjoying the calm before another whirlwind performance. A few days earlier, his new album was propelled into the top ten of the UK album charts. Did he ever think that, one day, thousands of people would be listening to his west country folk songs? 'No – it's amazing!' he grins.

Such success is a far cry from the 31-year-old's early days as a struggling folk musician in Devon, when his versatility (it seems he can turn his hand to anything with strings) and powerful singing voice barely paid the rent. 'I was playing in all sorts of bands, performing in dodgy pubs, country and western festivals, you name it,' recalls Seth, who spent years playing second fiddle – sometimes literally – to other folk artists.

'But it's important to earn your stripes,' he points out, 'because it gives you a foundation. If I'd had success when I was 21 I'd probably have got carried away with it all, but I can appreciate what I've got now and things are growing at a rate I feel I can control. Put it this way: when I smile on stage it's genuine.'

Sharing the onstage smiles is his brother Sean, a regular member of Seth's band. Seth, Sean and third sibling Sam learned to play folk instruments at a young age, going on to form The Lakeman Brothers. In the years that followed, Seth performed with various line-ups, honing his fiddle and singing skills, until he began to record his own work.

Dartmoor, where Seth now lives, inspired his second solo album, *Kitty Jay*, named after a servant girl whose grave is a well-known spot on the moors. The album was nominated for the prestigious Mercury Music Prize in 2005 – he shared the shortlist with huge bands such as Coldplay and the Kaiser Chiefs. It was a breakthrough that led the music press to credit him with bringing folk to a whole new audience.

While his fellow best-selling artists sing of nightclub romance, street crime and drug abuse, Seth continues to follow his rural roots. His latest album, *Poor man's heaven*

(see review on page 31), is inspired by both fictional and real-life sea tales from south west England – including the loss of the Penlee lifeboat and her crew in 1981. Seth's father, a national newspaper journalist, covered the story at the time.

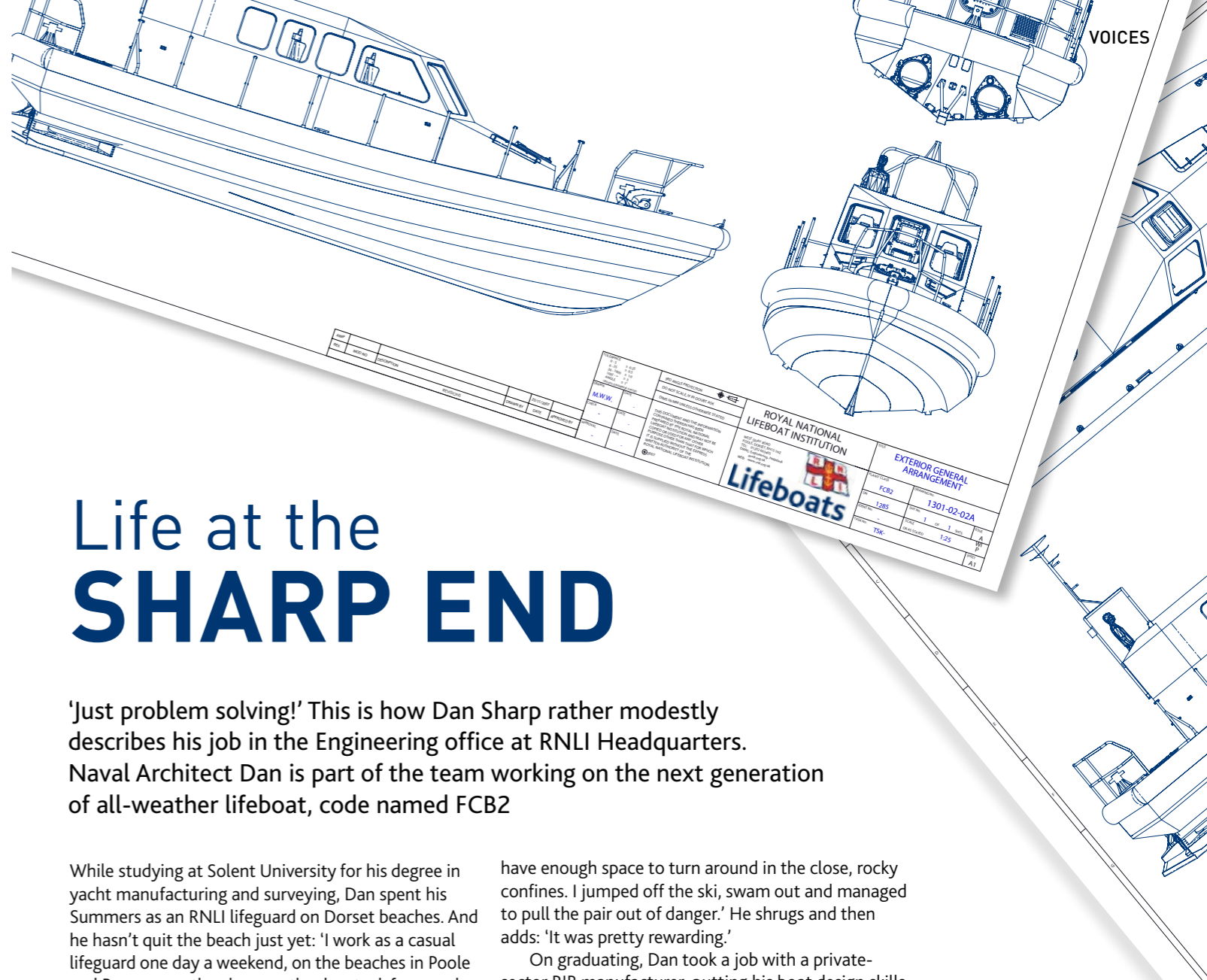
'It was the 25th anniversary of the Penlee disaster while I was setting to work on the new album,' says Seth. 'I was obviously only a kid when it happened but I got to know the sons of one of the lost crew members. And reading up about it inspired me to write the song *Solomon Browne* [the name of the lost lifeboat] as a way to remember those men.'

If Seth was too young to understand the tragedy of Penlee at the time, the loss of a close friend to the sea 15 years later was felt only too keenly. 'When I was 19 one of my best friends died while surfing at Polzeath,' says Seth. 'My brothers and I wanted to do something in his memory, so we played a concert to raise money to improve the local surf lifesaving facilities.'

The concert funded a new surf lifesaving unit at the beach, which is now patrolled by RNLI lifeguards. Seth adds: 'A lot of my friends are lifeguards now and I'm glad we could make a difference back then. When you lose someone you want to do something, otherwise you feel helpless. That was our way of helping.'

This Summer, Seth's music raised more funds in aid of saving life at sea. 'I wanted to try and do something positive when I launched the album, rather than just another gig, and raising money for the RNLI felt appropriate as the songs have such a strong coastal theme,' explains Seth. His support included a concert at Perranporth beach.

So, with albums themed around Dartmoor folklore and sagas from the sea under his belt, what's next for Seth – urban myths? 'There's no part of me at the moment that wants to sing about urban things,' asserts Seth, who admits he'd rather be camping in Cornwall than frequenting towns and cities. 'I'm just enjoying playing these songs at the moment – this is the most powerful thing I've done.'



# Life at the SHARP END

advert

'Just problem solving!' This is how Dan Sharp rather modestly describes his job in the Engineering office at RNLI Headquarters. Naval Architect Dan is part of the team working on the next generation of all-weather lifeboat, code named FCB2

While studying at Solent University for his degree in yacht manufacturing and surveying, Dan spent his Summers as an RNLI lifeguard on Dorset beaches. And he hasn't quit the beach just yet: 'I work as a casual lifeguard one day a weekend, on the beaches in Poole and Bournemouth, wherever they're stuck for guards. I still really enjoy it, and it keeps me in touch with the guys on the beach.'

'Some of the things I work on in the Engineering office I can see actually in use down on the beach. Quite a few jobs are not necessarily just for lifeboats, but for lifeguard equipment as well.' One recent task for Dan was fixing a slight defect in the mechanism attaching the sled to the lifeguard rescue watercraft or RWC, more commonly known by the trademark name 'jetski'.

Dan's lifeguard work means he's no stranger to operating the RWC himself, as he explains in the story of his most memorable rescue: 'It was a nice sunny day down at Sandbanks, but with enough wind to create problems. I was out patrolling on the ski and I saw two young children, a boy and a girl, get sucked into a rip and start panicking. Just as I came in to try and grab one of their hands they disappeared under the water. They were trying to hold onto each other.'

'I drove the ski straight to the beach, as I didn't

have enough space to turn around in the close, rocky confines. I jumped off the ski, swam out and managed to pull the pair out of danger.' He shrugs and then adds: 'It was pretty rewarding.'

On graduating, Dan took a job with a private-sector RIB manufacturer, putting his boat design skills to use. But something was missing – something that he had become used to in his Summer job: 'When I left the beach and went to work at the boatyard I didn't really enjoy working just to make money, or perhaps I should say to make other people money! I saw a post with the RNLI Engineering office and I applied for it, because I just wasn't getting the same satisfaction. I said in my interview that even though I would be working in an office I would still feel that link back to the coast. I find it very rewarding to be a part of the team that delivers the boats and equipment.'

Whether the issues are stability, performance or basic wear and tear, the charity's engineers deal with all operational equipment, from the fleet to crew lifejackets. Dan feels pride in the fact that his 9-5 job makes a difference. He really does help save lives every day from behind his desk. What does he miss most from his full-time lifeguard days? 'Well, the beach was a nice office! But I'm very happy where I am.'

• Dan is both an RNLI lifeguard and naval architect

• Photos: Simon Gator and Jon Lotriet



# youishout

## Dear Editor

On Friday 30 May at about 3pm I was bodyboarding with my son at Croyde beach in Devon when a rip current dragged us, and five others, out of the flagged area.

A lifeguard came out to us on his surfboard. The other people involved were 12 or 13-year-old boys and they were having trouble swimming against the current so he ferried them in, having checked that my son and I were able to make it on our own. Several times he checked we were both OK.

I have mild asthma and I soon started to struggle. I was not making any headway and was getting tired. I signalled that I needed help and the lifeguard told me to stay on my board. He started to come back for me when some other children needed help and, as they were closer to him, he sorted them out. But unbeknown to me the lifeguard jetski had launched and it came to rescue me.

The whole rescue was carried out in a quick (even if it felt like hours), calm and low-key manner. I felt confident that there was always someone looking out for me even if I could not see them. I was able to thank the two lifeguards but I am sure that the entire team deserve the praise.

Tim Lloyd  
New Milton, Hampshire  
by email



## Star letter!

As writer of the letter of the quarter, Mr Lloyd wins a year's free subscription to *The Sea* magazine, 'a voyage of discovery and inspiration for everyone who is drawn to the sea'.

*The Sea* is a corporate partner of the RNLI, providing exclusive subscription discounts to RNLI members and donating up to 10% of the subscription price to the RNLI, fundraising for a new lifeguard inshore rescue boat. It is also an excellent read! To find out more, call the subscriptions hotline on 01442 879097, email [info@signaturepl.co.uk](mailto:info@signaturepl.co.uk), or see [theseamagazine.com](http://theseamagazine.com).



## Dear Editor

I recently repeated the joke often seen in cartoons and old films: how do you stop a boat sinking? Drill a hole in the bottom to let the water out. This was greeted by the usual: 'Pull the other one!'

I visited a maritime museum where they had an old wooden lifeboat with a large hole in the bottom to let the water out in heavy seas. The boat was constructed with airtight chambers to make it unsinkable even if full of water, hence the hole to drain the boat as it rose to its normal level. So the old joke does have some truth after all!

Malcolm Perry  
Kidderminster, Worcestershire

[Former Coxswain Pete Thomson, Curator of Whitby museum, has told us of their Ruby class lifeboat of 1918 that has just this design (pictured above). Indeed, most of the rowing lifeboats of the 19th and 20th centuries had such 'scuppers'. Our cover photo shows decorated lifeboatman Henry Freeman who also features in the museum. Ed].

## Dear Editor

I did a 'double take' when I reached page 36 of the Summer 2008 issue of *the Lifeboat* and saw the face of [Gold Gallantry Medal awardee] Dic Evans staring into my eyes.

It was April last year when I stood in front of the statue while on a visit to Moelfre with my daughter. Dic Evans was a cousin of my mother, whose parents came from Moelfre. My grandmother and grandfather were Catherine Mathews and William Pritchard, both family names often appearing on the list of crew posted in the station. The last time I saw Dic in the flesh was when he attended my grandfather's funeral. I am proud to have family connections to such a brave and distinguished gentleman.

John Woodgates  
Oakham, Rutland

## Dear Editor

I agree with the idea of a tribute memorial being erected at RNLI Headquarters for all the brave crew members but I do not consider the material to be used by the artist as very appropriate. I wonder if she thought that stainless steel would reflect the 'steeliness' of those who go out and save lives but surely it is rather soulless. I consider that a carving in a more solid material, such as the same sculptor used to portray Dic Evans, would better show to people what the memorial is about. I wonder what other people think?

Yours Sincerely  
Joan Jones  
Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire



Photo: Studio 11

The RNLI's Howard Richings explains the background: 'We members of the memorial panel were keen to find a truly timeless design that brought alive the spirit of saving lives at sea. Sam Holland's concept does that. It is powerful, full of action and yet simple, with no reference to gender, age or era, representing that moment when one individual saves another. Once we chose that form, the nature of the material was a given: malleable, resilient and alive. Stainless steel meets these criteria as well as being ideal for displaying names robustly and permanently.'

Sam herself adds: 'The metal also works differently in natural and artificial light. Having a very bright appearance even on the dullest day it changes completely at night to a dramatic glowing effect with the use of appropriate lighting.'

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. Letters may be edited for length or clarity.



Barra's Solent class Hugh William Viscount Gough with 15 rescuees from the survey ship Geotek Alpha ablaze in 1984. Fishing vessel Daisy Christiana stands by. Photo: RAOC/Peter Richards

## Dear Editor

I am afraid that I am guilty as charged. I am the ex-retained fireman who in 1981 quoted my son saying: 'Gosh, Dad, what a shout!' after having seen a lifeboat launch and recovery [as referenced in the Summer 2008 issue].

The Fire and Lifeboat services share a lot of history. Sailors were called to blow up houses to stop fire spreading during the Great Fire of London. Insurance company firemen wore a badge on their arm to indicate their profession and were all ex-sailors, exempt from being taken by the press gang. They were used to discipline, could work in a team or independently, were not afraid to work aloft and had mastered the use of knots and lines. Fire is of course an ever-present threat at sea too.

The salute used by the Fire service is the same as the Navy, the palm being turned downwards, so the hand blackened with pitch, tar and burnt debris is not seen.

I had no intention of creating new vocabulary, but language develops. If I may add another – a fond farewell to another firefighter is to: 'Keep making plenty!' That is, to respond as many times as you are called upon and may your health support you.

This information came from the late Geoffrey Chapman, who for many years assisted at the Kent Fire Brigade museum.

Yours faithfully  
David Hunter  
Cheadle, Cheshire

# The kapok enquiry

**Kapok played as important a role in the 20th century as did cork in the 19th, as *the Lifeboat* journal recalled in 1929 ...**

Kapok offers great advantages over cork as regards weight, buoyancy, the ease with which it can be adjusted to any shape, and the protection which it affords against cold. Kapok is a vegetable fibre found chiefly in the East Indies, the best quality coming from Java. It looks very like cotton, but its follicles, have a natural oil which makes them entirely non-absorbent. In 1904 Kapok belts were issued to two stations for trial. In 1906 the belts were adopted and distributed to all stations. In 1908 the Board of Trade began to sanction their use.

'In 1916 it was found that the Institution's pattern would not support an unconscious man so that he floated with his face upwards. The Institution carried out exhaustive experiments and designed a belt which fulfilled the conditions. But the new belt was condemned as being so cumbersome that men could not use their arms freely; it interfered with the breathing, while the "collar" at the back prevented the sou'wester from covering the neck, pouring water down the men's backs!

'The RNLI asked the Board to recognise the fundamental difference between Life-boatmen and passengers. The men go through the strenuous exertion of pulling heavy oars, hoisting and lowering sails, and should have complete freedom. The Board agreed on the understanding that the crews were informed of the additional buoyancy afforded by its belt, and be given the choice. An overwhelming majority expressed their preference for the Institution's belt; some elected to retain the Board's. The Institution's technical Officers once more tackled the question, producing the No. 5 belt, now in use all round the coast.

'The Rye Harbour crew was one who chose the Board of Trade pattern, and wore it when overwhelmed by disaster on the 15th November last. Experiments made by the Board and the Institution proved that, even after tremendous pounding in the surf, the belts still provided sufficient buoyancy. The bodies, were supported with heads above water, though the unfortunate men had probably been beaten to death before they were swept ashore. No belt ever designed would have saved men subject to these conditions. However, while the belt gave the additional chance of survival aimed at, the same qualities made any attempt to swim extremely difficult, whereas the Institution's pattern does afford not only the required buoyancy, but ease of movement and power to swim.

Kapok provided excellent buoyancy in the 1920s but new materials have allowed increasingly compact designs since. Also see the feature on page 16



Photo: H Jenkins



Photo: Laura Wilshire



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