

LIFEBOAT



THE RNLI IS THE
CHARITY THAT
SAVES LIVES AT SEA

ISSUE 614 | WINTER 2015

'THE MOST DIFFICULT RESCUE'

A true tale of gallantry and
tragedy in Scarborough

PLUS:

VOLUNTEER POWER

Five very different volunteers
reveal how they help save lives

63-HOUR MISSION

Read how Ballycotton volunteers
gave everything to rescue a crew



Welcome

It takes all sorts of people to power this lifesaving charity. This issue we meet a variety of volunteers who all help to save lives in their own way – just as you do, by lending your support.

Everyone has their own personal reasons for giving time or donations to the RNLI, but I think there's something we all have in common. We can't bear the thought of people being left at the mercy of the sea – or the thought of lifesavers going without everything they need to respond safely.

All the rescue stories you'll read in these pages remind us of how unpredictable our coastal waters can be

– none more so than the article on how Scarborough lifeboat crew launched to a man in the sea just under a year ago. You'll also hear how our lifesavers rescued the crew of a stricken fishing trawler, a family on a sinking speedboat and a father and son stranded on rocks.

In 2016 we want to do more than ever to keep our lifesavers ready to respond, and make our coasts safer. With your continued support, we will.

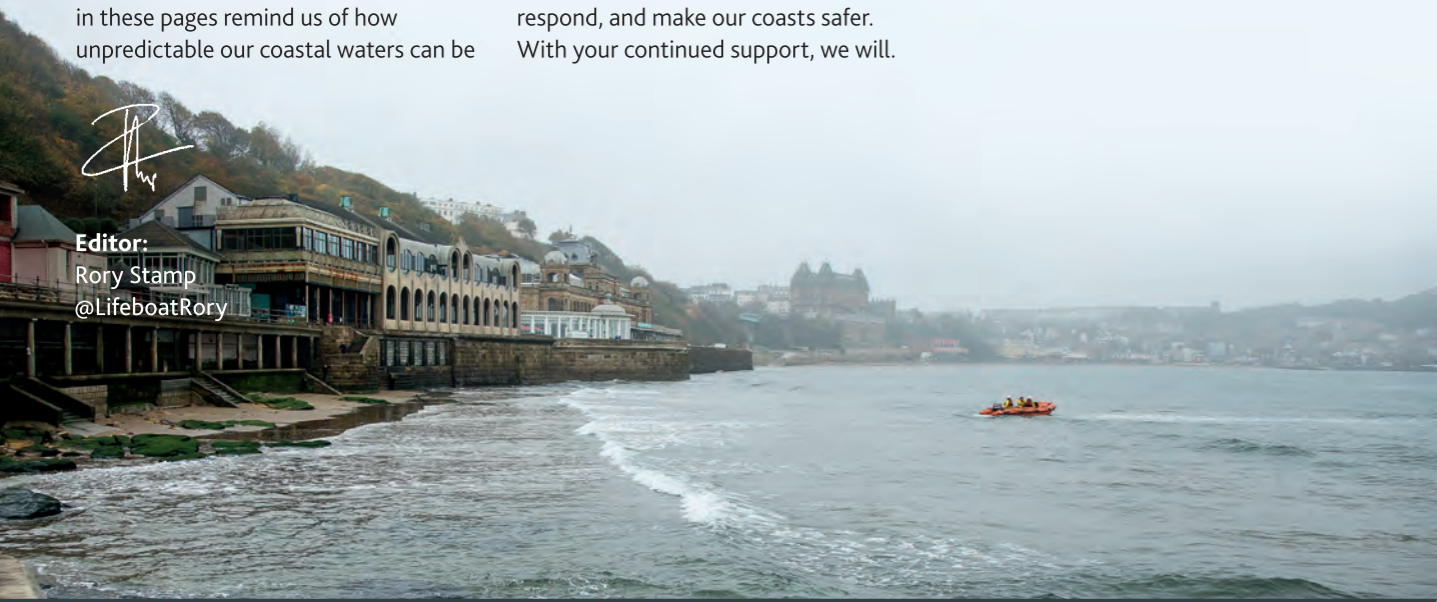


RORY STAMP
LIFEBOAT EDITOR

AGM: WHERE AND WHEN?
The RNLI AGM will take place on Thursday 19 May at The Lighthouse Theatre in Poole, Dorset. Details will be mailed to Governor members of the RNLI in February and more information will also feature in the next edition of *Lifeboat*.

RS

Editor:
Rory Stamp
@LifeboatRory



WINTER 2015/16 ISSUE 614

© RNLI 2016. All rights reserved. Reproduction is permitted with the prior consent of the RNLI. Opinions expressed by authors are not necessarily those of the publishers. Care is taken to ensure that editorial information is correct at the time of going to press but is subject to change.

Chairman: Charles Hunter-Pease
Chief Executive: Paul Boissier
Lifeboat Editor: Rory Stamp
Offshore Editor: Bethany Hope
Art Direction: Andry Kirlappou-Fry
Lifeboat Design: Jonathan Lotriet
Offshore Design: Andrew Perryman
Front cover photo: RNLI/Nathan Williams

CONTACT US

For all enquiries, please contact our Supporter Care Team by phone on **0300 300 9990** (we're open 8am–6pm weekdays), email supporter_care@rnli.org.uk or post c/o RNLI Headquarters, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ.

The RNLI was founded in 1824. Today it provides a 24-hour search and rescue service out to 100 nautical miles from the coast of the UK, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man and Channel Islands; on the tidal reaches of the River Thames; and on selected inland waterways. It also provides a seasonal lifeguard service on appropriate beaches in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Channel Islands; and flood rescue. The RNLI is independent from Government and relies on voluntary contributions and gifts in Wills for its income. It is a charity registered in England and Wales (209603) and Scotland (SC037736). Registered charity number 20003326 in the Republic of Ireland.



INF001-16

In this issue



12



41



10



4



24



20



28

REGULARS

- 4 **NEWS**
Including a new RNLI TV series, *Star Wars*, AGM and more
- 20 **GIVE IT A GO**
Give it some pedal power
- 22 **LIFEBOAT LOTTERY**
- 23 **PUZZLE TIME**
- 34 **SIX OF THE BEST**
Great Winter reads for all
- 40 **SPECIAL DELIVERY**
Your letters, posts and tweets
- 41 **RNLI FAMILY**
Catch up with RNLI people

IN DEPTH

- 24 **OBJECTS OF THEIR AFFECTION**
Five very different volunteers – and their crucial items
 - 28 **DANGER AT DAUNT ROCK**
A 63-hour rescue remembered
 - 32 **THE RNLI AND ME**
Simon Gregson on his relationship with soap and water
- 'I have so much respect for the supporters'
Simon Gregson

RESCUE

- 8 **SNAPSHOTS**
Including a couple stuck in mud, stricken sailors and kayakers
- 10 **ON THE ROCKS**
Daughter boat launched to father and son stuck below cliffs
- 12 **FROM ANGLING TO SINKING**
Courtmacsherry crew head to family aboard sinking boat
- 14 **COURAGE AND LOSS**
Emotional shout in Scarborough
- 18 **STRANDED IN A STORM**
Troon and Girvan volunteers team up to rescue fishermen



News

Your guide to what's been going on in the world of the RNLI

TOP AWARD FOR POLZEATH FIVE

Sunny days at the beach may seem like a distant memory, but the bravery and skill of five RNLI lifeguards last Summer has recently been recognised with the Alison Saunders Lifeguarding Award – one of our top honours.

Lifeguards Christian Parker, Chris Rowlands, Ben Miskowicz, Craig O'Rourke and Phil Bartlett received the award for the rescue of two women and their children, caught in a strong rip current at Polzeath beach in August 2014. The team had stayed late

due to a high spring tide, and spotted the group struggling in the water, two on surfboards. They used rescue boards, tubes and fins to bring the casualties safely to shore.

Says RNLI Lifeguard Supervisor Chris Wafer: 'I'm incredibly proud of the lifeguards for these rescues in what were extremely tough conditions ... They put their own lives at risk to save the families that evening, and it's great to see their bravery and skills commended with this award.'



Mayday returns for 2016



Our annual yellow welly-themed fundraising campaign, Mayday, will return from 26 April to 2 May 2016. Throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland, RNLI supporters will host activities and events to show their appreciation

for our brave volunteer lifeboat crews.

At the time of print, activities were still being confirmed, so keep an eye on Facebook.com/RNLI or follow us on Twitter @RNLI to keep up to date. You can also find out more on the back page.

LIFEBOATS HEADING TO TV SCREENS

Always gripping, often dramatic – it's no wonder the BBC will soon be airing a new documentary about the work of our volunteer lifesavers.

The forthcoming series – *Saving Lives At Sea* – tells the story of volunteers at a variety of UK lifeboat stations.

Using a combination of specially designed boat-mounted cameras, helmet cameras and documentary footage from inside the stations, the series promises to take viewers right into the heart of the action. It will also explore the lives and motivations of our lifeboat volunteers, uncover the stories of those they rescue, and explore our ever-changing relationship with the seas that surround us.

Saving Lives At Sea will be broadcast on BBC One in 2016.

The producers of legendary movie franchise *Star Wars* have shown their support of lifesavers – not lightsabers – by making a sizeable donation to Co Kerry's Valentia Lifeboat Station.

While filming the latest instalment, *Episode VIII*, at nearby island Skellig Michael, the Lucasfilm team contacted the lifeboat station to offer a generous sum of €10,000.

Volunteer Lifeboat Operations Manager Richard Foran suggests the moviemakers may have thought of lifeboats as they tackled rough seas on location. 'They didn't ask for publicity – they simply wanted to make a donation,' he says.



Photo: Gwynedd Council

'A loyal, committed and strong personality'



It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Robert Wright MBE, Second Coxswain at Pwllheli Lifeboat Station. Robert was taken ill during a lifeboat launch in September and, despite the best efforts of his fellow crew and other emergency services, did not recover.

Cliff Thomas, Lifeboat Operations Manager at Pwllheli station, says: 'Bob was a loyal, committed and strong personality at Pwllheli Lifeboat Station. His father and grandfather both served

before him and his great uncle was Coxswain at the beginning of the 1900s. The sea was in his blood.'

Matt Crofts, RNLI Lifesaving Delivery Manager, adds: 'He was a tremendously dedicated coxswain for many years and his excellence in seamanship, and helping others, was acknowledged nationally with the award of his MBE. Everyone at the station is extremely saddened by what has happened, and he will be greatly missed.'

How would you like us to contact you?

In the coming 12 months we'll be asking supporters like you if you're happy for us to stay in touch – and how you'd prefer to hear from us.

We've been reviewing the way we communicate with supporters for some time. And last Summer's media scrutiny of fundraising practices has made it clear that change is overdue in the charity sector. So we're moving to a new 'opt-in' way of keeping you up to date: from 1 January 2017, we'll only be contacting you if you give us permission to do so.

While these changes take place during 2016, we may contact you in a different way. Please bear with us – we'll be working hard to keep you informed of any further changes and give you the opportunity to opt in.

If you would like to opt in straight away you can do so by phone. Please call our Supporter Care team on 0300 300 9918 (UK) or 0044 1202 663234 (non-UK) weekdays between 8am–6pm. Alternatively, contact the team by email at optin@rnli.org.uk quoting your supporter number.

Thank you for your continued support.

FLOOD RESCUERS IN ACTION

As *Lifeboat* magazine went to print, RNLI Flood Rescue Team members were returning home after going to the aid of those affected by floods in Cumbria. The team, working alongside other emergency services from 6–8 December, helped more than 360 people.

SCOTLAND

Words: Rory Stamp

COMMUNITY NEWS



Photo: RNLI/Steve Lowe

550 SHOUTS AND COUNTING

Oban volunteer Crew Member – and local GP – Colin Wilson can look back on a momentous year after he clocked up his 550th call out.

On 23 August Colin and the crew were called on but, on this occasion, not needed after the casualty vessel was assisted by a nearby fishing boat. While Colin has 24 years of lifeboating under his belt, it was the first launch in earnest for Deputy Mechanic Andrew Mead.

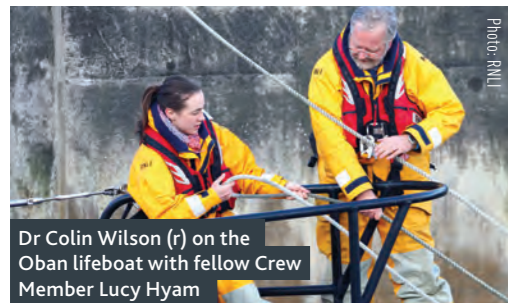


Photo: RNLI

Dr Colin Wilson (r) on the Oban lifeboat with fellow Crew Member Lucy Hyam

 **550**
CALL OUTS

24 YEARS
OF VOLUNTEERING
10,000+ MILES
TRAVELLED AFLOAT



Welcome to your selection of community news for Scotland. For all the latest rescue and fundraising stories from where you are, head to RNLI.org/NewsCentre

'WE COULDN'T HAVE A BETTER LIFEBOAT'

Lifeboat volunteers at Montrose have been putting their new all-weather lifeboat through its paces over Christmas, after they became the first Scottish crew to operate a Shannon class. 'The new boat is faster and more manoeuvrable ... the way it handles is very impressive. All this means that we'll be able to reach casualties more quickly,' said Coxswain Scott Murray. 'This is a huge leap forward in lifeboat design and will allow us to continue to do our work knowing that we couldn't have a better lifeboat to go to sea with.' The cost of the lifeboat, named *Ian Grant Smith* (pictured below), was generously bequeathed to the RNLI by supporter Ruth Grant Smith. Ruth passed away in 2005 and had left funds for a Scottish-based all-weather lifeboat to be named after her husband.



Photo: RNLI/Richard Smith

VOLUNTEERS SAY: 'THANKS JOAN!'

Tobermory lifeboat crew members gathered to celebrate 30 years of voluntary fundraising by Mull and Iona Branch Treasurer Joan Knight – who has retired from the role. Joan (pictured centre right) was presented with an engraved crystal vase by Branch Secretary Sheila Campbell (also pictured).

Both set up the branch in 1985, vowing to raise £1,500 for navigation equipment needed by Oban lifeboat. In the 3 decades since, the branch has raised over £340,000 from all sorts of events and activities – ranging from Christmas card sales to the Uisken Beach Games.



Photo: RNLI

Anstruther

READ ANSTRUTHER'S LIFESAVING HISTORY

Volunteers at Anstruther have shown their research and authoring skills after writing a book on the lifeboat station's fascinating 150-year history. Writer Tony Kingsbury has teamed up with researcher – and station/shop volunteer – Roger Grundy to trace the crew's lifesaving heritage. It takes in everything from the formation of the lifeboat station and remarkable rescues since, to the craft and volunteers that have ensured the crew has been ready to save lives over the years. It's the latest in a series of station history books priced £8.95, available from lifeboat station shops or the RNLIshop sales website at RNLIshop.org.uk.

WHAT'S ON

Details might have changed since going to print, so please check in advance to avoid disappointment. To find out what else is on near you, see RNLI.org/events.

SOUP AND SWEET
North Church Hall, Cluny Square, Buckie
30 January, midday–2pm
Whether you're after sweet or savoury, a tasty lunchtime treat to help our crews this Winter.

SOS SOUP LUNCH
Old and Abbey Church Hall, Arbroath
3 February, midday–2pm
Support your local crew and join the Arbroath Fundraising Guild for a warming Winter soup. Contact rachel_stewart@rnli.org.uk or call 0300 300 9902 for details.

COUNTRY DANCE
Queensferry
19 February
Please contact Rachel Stewart on the details above for more information.



RESCUE

Our lifeboat crews and lifeguards carry out thousands of rescues every year (see launches on page 36). Here are just some of those caught on camera, and see the list below for more reports:

- 6 PETERHEAD** | PAGE 10
- 7 COURTMACSHERRY** | PAGE 12
- 8 SCARBOROUGH** | PAGE 14
- 9 TROON/GIRVAN** | PAGE 18

You can also watch and read the latest rescues online at RNLI.org/NewsCentre.



Photo: Bay Search and Rescue

1 TRAPPED UP TO THEIR WAISTS MORECAMBE | 4 SEPTEMBER

When an elderly couple got trapped up to their waists in mud – with the tide coming in – Morecambe RNLI’s hovercraft crew flew to the scene. Arriving at the sands near Flookburgh, the hovercraft volunteers pulled the couple to safety using specialist mud rescue equipment. The RNLI crew then worked with other emergency services to assess the couple, transfer them to the Bay Rescue all-terrain vehicle and on to a waiting ambulance. Morecambe volunteer Lifeboat Operations Manager, Kevin Jackson, says: ‘The outcome could have been disastrous but, with ourselves, Bay Rescue, local coastguard, air ambulance and ambulance crews all working together, we achieved a successful outcome.’



Photo: RNLI/Naiala McAloon

2 BROACHING YACHT RED BAY AND LARNE | 25 AUGUST

A 10m yacht was broaching in heavy seas off Torr Head on the north Antrim coast, and was in danger of being dismantled. Her crew of four needed urgent assistance. Battling a 3m swell and a force 6 wind, two crew members from Red Bay’s B class inshore lifeboat jumped aboard the yacht to cut the rigging and make her safe. That done, Red Bay’s crew and the crew of Larne’s all-weather lifeboat escorted the yacht back to the safe haven of Glenarm Marina.

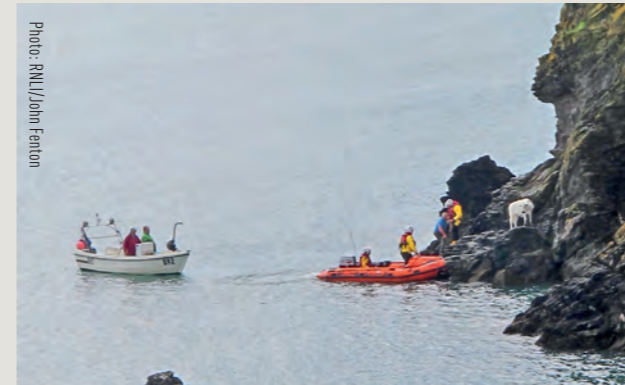


Photo: RNLI/John Fenton

4 STEER ME HOME DART | 2 SEPTEMBER

Walkers on the South West Coast Path got front-row seats for an unusual type of rescue when the crew of Dart’s inshore lifeboat went to help a calf. The animal had become wedged in a cave after falling 20m down cliffs, west of Compass Cove in Devon. The crew pulled the British White steer out of the cave and, with the help of a local farmer, secured it to a fishing boat for an assisted 200m swim back to the cove. The calf’s ordeal wasn’t quite over however, as crew and farmer then had to coax it up a very steep flight of wooden steps to return it to its field.



Photo: RNLI/James Oxley

3 STRUGGLING IN A RIP BROADSTAIRS | 6 SEPTEMBER

Four girls were rescued at a busy Kent beach after they were spotted struggling against a rip current. RNLI Lifeguard Alex Baxter was patrolling the water’s edge at Broadstairs, when he noticed them being dragged out of their depth. Alex signalled to fellow Lifeguards Cameron Foreman (pictured) and Dominic Matthews – who were already in the water on their rescue boards – to help the girls. The lifeguards brought them safely back to shore.



Photo: RNLI/St Davids

5 STRANDED KAYAKERS ST DAVIDS | 26 AUGUST

Crew members on St Davids RNLI’s Tamar class all-weather lifeboat were looking forward to putting their feet up at the end of a busy day at the Solva Regatta. All such thoughts evaporated however when a report came in of two kayakers in difficulty on rocks east of Abercastle. The Tamar is equipped with a Y boat (a small inflatable craft), ideal for operating in confined waters close to the shore. Using this craft, the crew swiftly picked the kayakers up before depositing them unharmed on Abercastle Beach.

'THEIR HEARTS MUST HAVE SUNK AS THEY WATCHED US PASS THEM'



It was an overcast morning on 26 August when a father and son began their fishing holiday in Cruden Bay, Aberdeen – a trip that gave them more drama than they bargained for

RNLI Peterhead Coxswain Andy Brown and Crew Member George Watt were among the Peterhead volunteers starting their working day when their pagers sprang to life at 9.30am. Within minutes, they and five other crew members were aboard the all-weather Tamar lifeboat *The Misses Robertson of Kintail*, powering towards Slains Castle in Cruden Bay.

The Coastguard had tasked the crew to find a red and white fishing boat – her crew reported engine failure. Battling against force 6 winds and rough waves, the volunteers headed down the east coast. There was no trace of

the boat. 'But when we were coming back on ourselves we suddenly saw something in the distance. I thought:

"What's that over there?" Andy remembers. Two anglers were at the foot of the

cliffs, waving a flag they had cobbled together using their fishing rod and a lifejacket. They were waving it frantically for help.

'The fishermen were dressed all in black, so it was hard to see them

'The fishermen were dressed all in black, so it was hard to see them against the cliffs'

against the cliffs,' recalls George. 'Their hearts must have sunk as they watched us pass them the first time,' adds Andy. 'As they waved the flag, we saw their boat bobbing up and down nearby, but it was underwater.'

The lifeboat crew realised the fishermen's boat had been driven onto rocks near the cliff base after their engine failed.

The force of the collision had severely damaged the boat, leaving the father and son no choice but

to step onto the rocks as their vessel sank. Stranded on a rock that was battered by waves, they were becoming increasingly wet, cold and anxious.

'Straight away, I knew we were going to have to launch our daughter

boat – the Y boat,' says Andy, referring to the small powered inflatable carried aboard the Tamar and used to access shallow and rocky waters. 'There was just a perfect V-shape opening under the cliff for it to go into and rescue the fishermen.'

George and his fellow Crew Member Robert Geary volunteered to launch the daughter boat from the Tamar. 'It was my first shout going out in the Y boat. All of the training we've had suddenly came into play and we managed to drive the bow of the boat nose onto the rocks. I knew I had to get those guys off the cliffs. That was my priority,' George recalls. 'It must be a horrible feeling to have all that water around you with no way of getting out.'

Thanks to Robert's excellent helmsmanship, George was able to help the father and son aboard.



ANDY BROWN
ELECTRICAL TEAM LEADER
COXSAIN | PETERHEAD

'Everybody here gives 100% to their training'

I've been on the crew for 28 years and my priority is to always keep the crew and our lifeboat safe. I knew the Y boat was ideal for this rescue – it's a great little boat for manoeuvring around the rocks here. When we need to launch it, I don't say: 'Right, you're going out on the Y boat!' I like the crew to volunteer, which George did. It was beneficial for him to be in the Y boat so he could watch what was going on and see how it's driven. It was great to see him in action after all the nights of training during the Summer and the Winter, especially as it's voluntary time. I think this was a really good shout.

The volunteers took the pair back to the larger Tamar class, which Andy powered back to shore. The anglers were handed over to waiting paramedics and on to hospital, but they were released later with no serious injuries.

Andy says: 'The crew train every Monday night so that when it comes down to the crunch, we can get the job done. For me, teamwork is the best part

of being on the crew.' 'It's the same for me,' George agrees. 'At the end of the day we're saving lives at sea. And that's why I joined the RNLI.'

Watch the dramatic rescue unfold at RNLI.org/PeterheadRescue.

Words: Jasmin Downs
Photos: RNLI/Nathan Williams

FROM ANGLING TO SINKING

When a group of four adults and a child discovered their speedboat was taking on water in choppy seas off Cork's Wild Atlantic Way, they desperately needed a lifeboat crew's help



With its crew safely onboard the lifeboat, RNLI volunteers begin to pump out the speedboat

'When we got to the casualties, one of the men was lying on his stomach using his fingers to plug up holes in the hull, which was rapidly filling with water,' recalls Sean O'Farrell, Courtmacsherry Harbour's lifeboat Coxswain. 'If we'd taken 3 minutes longer to get to them, we would have been looking at five people in the water, in serious danger.'

The launch to the group of five – which included a young girl aged about 9 – took place on a cloudy and choppy day in August. The group had taken their 7m speedboat out for a spot of angling near the Old Head of Kinsale in Co Cork, with a costly new engine recently fitted to their vessel. While the new engine had been fixed in place securely, the boat's owner had forgotten a critical step – to seal the holes left by the old motor's mount. In 1.5m swell, it wasn't long before the boat was taking in water. With no VHF radio to call for help, and no bailing equipment to tackle the leak, the group made a desperate call on a mobile phone.

'They were lucky to have gotten a signal out there at all. They phoned the Coast Guard and we launched within 6 minutes of the call,' says Deputy Coxswain Mark Gannon, who responded to the call for the Courtmacsherry Harbour Trent class all-weather lifeboat, along with Sean

'Any wave of any size could have capsized that boat in a moment'

and three fellow volunteers. 'But the actual position of the casualty was unclear in the midst of things. The people on the sinking speedboat actually saw our bright orange boat in the distance, headed the wrong way, and called the Coast Guard back to tell the lifeboat to alter course.'

As the volunteers drew their lifeboat – the *Frederick Storey Cockburn* – alongside the speedboat, it became clear that the small vessel was on borrowed time. Fortunately, the Trent's

sloping cutaway made it easy for the five casualties to step onboard to safety. Volunteer Gearoid O'Donovan (one of the crew's emergency mechanics) stepped aboard and began pumping out the water. 'I reckon it took about 15 minutes to get enough water out so that the speedboat was in a fit state to tow back to safety. They had been trying to bail with just their hands,' says Gearoid.

'They'd been keeping it together for the little girl, trying not to worry her, but any wave of any size could have capsized that boat in a moment,' adds Sean. 'The speedboat crew had three lifejackets between them, but they didn't seem to be of sufficient quality to do the job if they'd ended up in the open water. They were extremely happy to see us, and I think the gravity of their situation really dawned once they were safe and dry on the lifeboat.'

Words: Laura Rainbow
Photos: RNLI/Courtmacsherry, Laura Rainbow



'I didn't expect a serious shout so soon'

**EVAN O'SULLIVAN, 17
YOUNGEST CREW MEMBER
COURTMACSHERRY
HARBOUR (CENTRE)**

I joined the crew back in Spring 2015 and am also studying full time for my Leaving Certificate in various subjects. When I finish school, I'd like to join the Naval Service and train to be an officer. I'm pretty sure my experience on the lifeboats will help with my application.

I've been around boats since I was about 5 years old. My dad used to be a skipper on an angling vessel. I was surprised to see such a serious incident on my second ever lifeboat shout, but that's why I joined – to help people in trouble. And as someone who loves boats, a 25-knot Trent class is a pretty cool piece of kit!

COURAGE AND LOSS

When a well-known Scarborough man ended up in the dark surf last Winter, the community did everything they could to help him – and his memory – live on



In the early evening of Sunday 22 February, Andrew McGeown (32) did what he usually did at this time of day – take Arnold, his 2-year-old Staffordshire bull terrier, for a walk by the Spa on Scarborough's South Bay. What happened next sparked a train of events that would severely test the crew of Scarborough's inshore lifeboat, and would become a defining moment for this close-knit seaside community.

As they made their way along the prom, Arnold, who'd been running off his lead, vanished over the sea wall. Instinctively, Andrew went in after his dog. A spring tide and 2m swell were sending waves crashing over the prom, making it all but impossible to

climb back up. The conditions meant he couldn't be reached from the shore either. Andrew was now in real danger.

The launch

The 999 call came in to the Coastguard shortly before 6pm prompting a priority launch message for the crew of Scarborough's inshore lifeboat. At 6.10pm, Senior Helm Rudi Barman and Crew Members Craig Burnett and Adam Beston were kitted up and on their way. As they emerged from the harbour into the teeth of a force 7 near gale, they still didn't know how many people were in the water.

Minutes later, the crew were on scene, and only then did the true scale

of the problem hit them. It was 20 minutes before high tide and waves were smashing into the sea wall and rebounding to create a seething cauldron of water and foam. 'We were being battered,' recalls Rudi, who skilfully manoeuvred the lifeboat – an inflatable D class designed for rescues in surf – as close to the wall as he dared go. But in the blackness there was no sign of Andrew.

A difficult manoeuvre

The backwash from the ground swell made it impossible to veer down – a technique where the lifeboat anchors and then approaches the shore stern first. This would have put them at the >>



RUDI BARMAN
SENIOR HELM | TOURIST
ATTRACTION MANAGER
RNLI BRONZE MEDAL

'The most difficult rescue I've been on'

I don't think anything can ever prepare you for a rescue like that. The fact we managed to get him made it a little bit easier for us to deal with.

It was the most difficult rescue I've been on. But it's something we train for day in, day out. To be recognised with an award like this is a great honour. It's not just me. There are many different wheels that work in this station down to the people who have trained me and the crew over the years. It's not a one-person thing by any means.

One message I'd be very keen to promote is just be aware of the conditions, particularly spring tides, high tides, with any swell.

If you are around the shoreline, keep your dog on a lead. And if your dog does get into difficulty then call us, don't just jump in and try to save it. Dogs are pretty tough swimmers and they can deal with the cold better than we can.

» mercy of incoming waves and in danger of capsizing: 'We were being hit from all directions,' says Rudi. 'We didn't want to be tethered to a rope when we knew we maybe had to escape.' Guided by signals from the shore, Rudi repositioned and reversed in a second time, head to sea. With the waves rolling in off the North Sea four or five at a time, it took exceptional boathandling skills to power through the waves as they broke to avoid being slammed into the wall. 'The wave sets were followed by a 2-3 minute lull, which allowed us time to go into the impact zone and have a good look for Andrew. Each time a new set of waves came in we had to retreat out past the surf.'

On their next approach Rudi glimpsed the casualty pinned against the sea wall, face down in the water. 'It didn't look good to be honest,' says Rudi, 'Although the D class can get into all sorts of nooks and crannies, I knew I couldn't get the boat into that position.' As the next set of waves came in Andrew disappeared from view.

The crew repeated this same difficult manoeuvre time and time

again, working the boat hard, moving systematically along the shoreline, north to south. Shouting to each other to make themselves heard over the din of the engine, wind and waves, they

'We couldn't see the waves until seconds before they were on top of us'

worked as a team – Rudi controlling the boat, Adam scouring the sea behind them for signs of Andrew, and Craig keeping a vigilant look out for the next wave while running radio communications with the shore. 'We couldn't see the waves until seconds before they were on top of us,' explains Rudi, 'So we really had to be on our game.'

Then their engine stalled. Rudi admits: 'It was the scariest thing. It felt like minutes, but it was only seconds.' I screamed: "Look guys, the engine's gone on us, we could be swimming here." I checked we were in neutral and hit the green restart button, and luckily it just sprang into life and we were off again.'

A calculated risk

The arrival of the Sea King helicopter from RAF Leconfield proved a turning point. While the helicopter covered the area adjacent to the sea wall, the crew of the lifeboat switched to a parallel shoreline search to widen the search area. This was a calculated risk. It made them vulnerable to the incoming waves but, because they were now moving, the boat was more stable. On one of these passes, Adam picked out the glow of the casualty's reflective belt in the water off to their port side.

Rudi realised that the quickest and safest way of getting Andrew to the shore was in the lifeboat. 'It would take all three of us to heave him into the boat but I couldn't risk letting go of the tiller.' With Adam and Craig clinging on to Andrew's clothing, Rudi carefully steered them into calmer water. They lifted the casualty aboard. He wasn't breathing. Craig – a trained paramedic – began chest compressions while the lifeboat headed for shore.

Once ashore, the lifeboat volunteers continued with resuscitation attempts until the ambulance arrived, aided by the waiting shore crew – some of whom



were close friends of Andrew. They did all they could but, sadly, he was beyond help.

Gallantry and loss

For his leadership, boathandling skills and bravery, Helm Rudi Barman is awarded the RNLI's Bronze Medal (see page 15 to read more from Rudi).

An RNLI Letter of Thanks from the Chairman goes to Crew Members Craig Burnett and Adam Beston, for their teamwork, courage and perseverance. Dr Peter Billingsley and Jason Hedges also receive a Letter of Appreciation from the RNLI's Operations Director for their contribution to the resuscitation efforts ashore.

Andrew's family now look after his dog, which survived. They have been instrumental in setting up a fundraising branch dedicated to making the seaside at Scarborough a safer place for everyone.

Words: Robin Westcott
Photos: RNLI/(Nathan Williams, Rudi Barman)



DONNA LOVELAND
ANDREW'S SISTER |
FUNDRAISER

'What happened has been life-changing'

I was at home getting the kids ready for bed. I heard the helicopter go over my house, and I said to the kids – because you could hear the weather – 'I'm glad we're inside'. When I think about it now, it's a bit daft really because I must have known – partly – that it was Andrew.

Hundreds of people turned up to walk Andrew to the funeral. It was sad but it was probably the funniest funeral that anyone's been to. I don't know another one that's had a face painter and a bouncy castle. Andrew was a big fan of fancy dress.

One of his cousins came in a Woody costume (from the film *Toy Story*) – it had 'Andy' on the sole of his foot.

What's happened to Andrew has been life-changing for us. But if we can raise enough money to help other families – even if it's making children aware, adults, families who come to the seaside, people who live here, anything. If people say that's the Andrew McGeown legacy – that's what it brought to this town – I'd love that. That's all that we want – a better, safer place.



JOHN PEARSON
FORMER SENIOR HELM
EYEWITNESS

'They did all they could'

On a night like that, and in that type of weather, the area around the Spa is a very unforgiving place. It was amazing they managed to find the casualty at all – it was pitch black. At one point the lifeboat was trapped behind two waves, 15ft high. The boat handling was second to none.

It was the whole package – the search, the recovery and the casualty care. The crew did all they could to save him. They must have been exhausted. There's nothing more they could have done.

WATCH THE FILM

Hear more about the Scarborough crew's actions and Andrew's legacy online at [Youtube.com/rnli](https://www.youtube.com/rnli).

SAFETY ADVICE

Avoid putting yourself in danger while trying to help a pet. Dial 999 or 112 and ask for the Coastguard.

Tips on how to stay safe when walking your dog at the seaside can be found at [RNLI.org/topdog](https://www.rnli.org/topdog).

STRANDED IN A STORM

When a trawler hit propeller problems in force 9 winds and high seas, it took the skill and bravery of two lifeboat crews to bring the fishermen back to safety

On the belts, in the pockets and on the tables of the Girvan and Troon lifeboat crews, pagers buzzed madly at 2.05pm on 14 January 2015. Lunches were abandoned, frantic calls to pick up the children made and – in the case of Girvan Crew Member John Tait – a shopping trolley left in a supermarket aisle, in the rush to get to the lifeboat.

The 140-tonne trawler *Spes Bona* had fouled its propeller 6 miles off Troon, Ayrshire, and was now at the mercy of rapidly deteriorating weather conditions. With the crew struggling to free the propeller as huge waves broke over the stern, Skipper Robin Gibson knew that he and his crew needed the help of the RNLI to make it back to shore.

Having left Girvan in a hurry, the town's lifeboat *Sylvia Burrell* arrived at the scene at 2.45pm under the command of Second Coxswain Gary McGarvie. Gary recalls the trawler skipper's reaction to seeing the Mersey class lifeboat: 'Because he's based in Troon and he's used to seeing their bigger lifeboat, he saw us coming over

the top of the wave and thought: "What the hell is that wee boat going to be able to do?"'

Troon's Trent class lifeboat was still fighting to get to the scene. Heading into the worst conditions he'd been out in, the last thing that veteran Coxswain Joe Millar wanted to hear was that one of his crew was unwell. But Mechanic Andrew Alston had fallen ill and was deteriorating rapidly. With no nearby harbour and the conditions too dangerous to risk a boat-to-boat

'All three boats were relentlessly thrown around by the sea'

transfer, Joe was left with no option but to request a helicopter evacuation.


A Royal Navy search and rescue helicopter arrived shortly after, but the huge swell violently throwing the boat around made it extremely difficult for the winchman to get aboard. He hit the deck and narrowly missed

serious injury – it was going to be too dangerous to make another attempt in the conditions. So Joe headed towards slightly calmer waters. This time, the winchman managed to reach the deck safely. He helped Andrew aboard the aircraft and on to hospital. Joe and the crew were now able to continue towards the trawler – but they were a crew member down and faced mountainous seas.

Meanwhile, the Girvan crew had attached a tow to the trawler and, despite weighing just 14.3 tonnes, the 'wee' Mersey class began to tow the trawler towards land. But then the tow rope snapped under the strain. The crew replaced it, knowing that there was every chance it could happen again. So they breathed a sigh of relief when an orange flash appeared on the horizon: Troon lifeboat crew had arrived to take over the tow.

While Troon volunteers attached a tow rope, the Girvan crew's work wasn't done for the day. With conditions still deteriorating, Girvan lifeboat acted as a drogue (a device attached to the stern


**140
TONNE
TRAWLER**


**91^{MPH}
WINDS**


**4½
HOUR RESCUE**

to slow and prevent the trawler from broaching or excessively speeding into oncoming waves). All three boats were relentlessly thrown around by the sea on the way back to Troon Harbour. 'At one point on the way back, I thought: "Have we bitten off more than we can chew here?"' says Coxswain Joe Millar.

When Troon Harbour came into view, Joe and Gary were relieved – but knew that the hardest part of the rescue was yet to come. The crews had to enter the harbour at speed while maintaining control of the trawler in powerful waves. With the walls either side of them, they only had one chance to get it right. 'Out at sea, if anything went wrong, we had time to sort it out and fix it,' says Joe. 'In the harbour, if we made a wrong move, it would have ended in tragedy.'

Despite the physical and mental challenges they had already faced offshore, the lifeboat crews kept their concentration and safely brought the trawler in. With the stricken fishing

vessel safely tied up, the relieved mariners all stepped onto dry land at 6.30pm, after a gruelling 4½ hours at sea. Other Troon RNLI volunteers were waiting for them with chips and tea at the ready. The local volunteers enjoyed short journeys home, but the Girvan crew members faced another arduous stretch at sea. After warming up, they headed back into the rough swell, 91mph winds and falling darkness for a 3-hour trip back to their home town.

For their boathandling, leadership and courage, Coxswain Joe Millar and Second Coxswain Gary McGarvie are awarded the Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on Vellum. Allan Craig, Paul Morledge and Trevor Boyes from Troon, and Barry Hubbard, Ian McClymont, Henry McMaster, Keith Woods and John Tait from Girvan also receive a Framed Letter of Thanks from the RNLI Chairman.

Words: Jack Barclay

Photos: Richard Whitson and Jack Barclay

'He said that they were the worst conditions he'd ever been out in'



**JOE MILLAR
TROON COXSRAIN**

I was very relieved to see the trawler tied up. We'd been in the boathouse for about 20 minutes when the skipper of the *Spes Bona* came around to thank us. He's a very well respected and experienced fisherman, and he said that they were the worst conditions he'd ever been out in. It wasn't bad going considering what potentially could have happened. The skipper wrote to us afterwards to say thank you. He wrote: 'It is not until you face these circumstances yourself that you appreciate the enormity of what your service does – and means – to all the fishermen from this area. Thank you.'

ON YOUR BIKE!

Millions of people use their bicycles each week in the UK and Republic of Ireland, many for commuting. But it's also a great way to challenge yourself, get fitter and even raise charity funds. Lifeboat volunteer Chris Speers, who recently completed a Cornwall to Caithness cycle of almost 1,000 miles, makes the case for taking your two wheels further

CHRIS'S BIG BIKE RIDE

975.5
MILES
CYCLED IN TOTAL



9,926
METRES
TOTAL CLIMBED

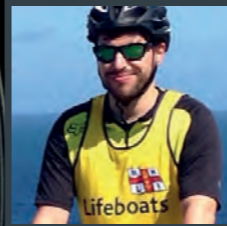


457M
HIGHEST POINT (NEAR THE
SCHLODT SUMMIT IN THE
SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS)

83.7 MILES COVERED ON THE LONGEST DAY

According to the NHS, cycling is the UK's third most popular recreational activity. It's little wonder when you consider the relatively low cost of starting up, and the health benefits. It's a gentle cardio exercise with muscle toning and low impact on your joints – plus an average-sized adult burns about 650 calories in an hour's moderate cycling.

Poole lifeboat volunteer Chris Speers, who's also a digital designer at RNLI Headquarters, took his two-wheeled hobby to the extreme with a 975.5-mile cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats in June 2015. Travelling with RNLI colleague Luke Williams, the pair carried about 20kg of camping, cooking and waterproof kit each. They used National Cycle Network



'You appreciate the landscape so much more when you're not being sped around it by an engine'

paths where possible, taking them along canal towpaths, disused railway lines and quiet B roads (as well as the odd detour along a white-knuckle main road). Chris raised £1,250 for the RNLI, with Luke's total of £1,783.42 going to mental health charity CALM.

'I wanted a real mental and physical challenge, something I'd be proud of,' says Chris. 'Plus it was Poole Lifeboat Station's 150th anniversary, so I had an extra incentive to raise RNLI funds and awareness.'

'Despite the training beforehand, on the second day we could hardly walk. By the end, we were so much fitter – burning through the Cairngorms and able to enjoy the stunning surroundings. You appreciate the landscape much more when you're not being sped around it by an engine. You suddenly realise that seemingly flat places are really not, and you have time to notice the little details of your surroundings.'

TOP TIPS

Follow Chris's top five tips to make your long-distance cycle more comfortable and enjoyable:

- 1 If you don't have to carry all your own kit, don't: 'If I could do it again, I'd stay in B&Bs whenever possible so I didn't have to deal with tents and cooking, or all those excess kilos of weight.'
- 2 Schedule stops: 'We planned for three stints of 25 miles each day, punctuated with breaks for meals. It gives you a clear target, and something to look forward to.'
- 3 Buy the bike that suits your route: 'I opted for a cycle cross, which is half road bike and half all-terrain. It was ideal for semi-rough bridleways, lanes and so on.'
- 4 Get a professional to measure you and your bike: 'If the handlebars and saddle aren't the right height, you may get back problems and joint pain.'
- 5 Have a back-up plan to your map: 'My phone's GPS, along with a cradle for it and a solar charger, were indispensable in built-up urban areas and when it was too windy for a paper map.'

FIND OUT MORE

- For the National Cycle Network, trip inspiration, technical information, starting-out guides and much more, check out sustrans.org.uk.
- Visit Chris and Luke's blog at lejog947.co.uk.

If you're planning a sponsored cycle or other event for the RNLI, we've got lots of free resources – including sponsorship forms and printable materials – to help you make the most of it. Visit RNLI.org/fundraising to find out more.

Words: Laura Rainbow and Chris Speers
Photos: Shutterstock, Luke Williams

A LIFESAVING TICKET

HELP RAISE

£1M

THAT'S ENOUGH TO TRAIN

650

LIFEBOAT VOLUNTEERS



In 2014, OUR LIFEBOAT CREWS RESCUED

8,727 PEOPLE



LEFT: Lifeboat crew members attempt to right a D class lifeboat during capsizing training at the RNLI College

AUTUMN 2015 LOTTERY RESULTS

Congratulations to Mrs AH Baker from Cheshire, who won the £5,000 first prize in our Autumn Lifeboat Lottery.

THE OTHER WINNERS WERE:

2ND PRIZE: £2,000

Mrs TV Weeks, Hampshire

3RD PRIZE: £500

Mr and Mrs W Thomson, Surrey

4TH PRIZE: £250

Mr MJ Jordan, West Sussex

FIVE PRIZES OF £100 EACH:

Mr H Nicholas, Mid Glamorgan

Mrs R Maudslay, Northumberland

Mr MJ Lovell, Cumbria

Mr KA Paine, West Sussex

Miss JM Flute, West Midlands

We'll report the winners of the Winter Lifeboat Lottery in our Spring 2016 issue. The Spring lottery will mail on 21 January 2016. The closing date is 11 March 2016 and the draw date is 24 March 2016.

About 95% of RNLI people are volunteers, and very few of those who offer their services as lifeboat crew have professional seafaring experience. So crew training is essential.

On average, our lifeboat crews rescue 24 people a day. Those rescues are only possible thanks to the training that turns an ordinary person into a lifesaver.

We report on the previous quarter's lottery results in every issue of *Lifeboat*, while the next lottery is underway, and give you notice of the draw to follow.

TO TAKE PART, PLEASE CALL 0300 300 9990 OR EMAIL LOTTERY@RNLI.ORG. UK AND REQUEST A LOTTERY MAILING

Please note that due to tax and gaming laws, Lifeboat Lottery tickets are only available in England, Scotland and Wales. For full details (including terms and conditions) please go to RNLI.org/lottery or see your lottery letter.

OFFSHORE



LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL AT THE COAST



BRACE FOR IMPACT

P2 WITH THE RNLI'S ZAPCAT CHAMP

| P2 COOL TOOLS | P4 SAILING IN FOG | P8 AMBLE TO SEAHOUSES

| P12 HOW TO SPOT HYPOTHERMIA EARLY | P15 WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT OFFSHORE | P15

EXPERTS ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS

| P16 CAUGHT OUT BY THE TIDE – PLAN YOUR ESCAPE

1 IN 8
SAILORS FALL
OVERBOARD
–FACT?
OPINION **P14**

WELCOME



BETHANY HOPE
OFFSHORE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

What a pleasure it was to get to the Southampton Boat Show this year! It was great to meet some of you on the RNLI stand and share some practical tips and your stories. It was super to get your thoughts on the RNLI man-overboard campaign, which got some sailors hot under the collar – see p14.

Thank you to all of you (395 supporters) who completed the *Offshore* survey in July. I'm thrilled that so many rated *Offshore* as good or very good (76%). There's always room for improvement though. See p15.

One of the things you told us you liked was practical advice, so in this issue we've included: three handy tools (bottom of this page), how to stay safe in fog (p4), spotting hypothermia early (p12), lifejacket and lifebuoy advice (p15) and what to do if you're cut off by the tide (p16). Also, on p8 the Northumberland lifeboat crews help you plan a trip, revealing some local hidden gems.

Ever been disoriented in fog? Turn the page to find out how two sailors got caught out in thick fog, and the unconventional way the lifeboat crew came to the rescue.

Thanks for all your feedback and your loyal support.

Bethany

@BethanyRHope
offshore@rnli.org.uk

ON THE RADAR

RNLI Flood Rescue Team Member and Zapcat Champion Kelly Allen gives us a high-speed introduction to her favourite extreme sport

A Zapcat is a 4m dual hull, lightweight two-person powerboat with impressive stats: power-to-weight ratio 340bhp/tonne, top speed 50mph, and racing around the course the boat can pull up to 3G in corners. With Zapcat racing, no engine modifications are allowed on the Tohatsu 50hp outboard motor, so there's an even playing field. In Kelly's words it's 'simply awesome'.

When Kelly started racing Zapcats, her experience of challenging surf conditions in the Portrush D class lifeboat came in handy.

The pilot and co-pilot need to be experienced, fit and agile for flat water and surf location races. Kelly warns: 'With fast, close racing, accidents happen and capsizes are common, especially in the surf.'

'Simply awesome'

Each zapcat has a propeller guard to protect the crews. Every event is covered by a rescue team, and rescue boats and sometimes RNLI lifeguards provide safety cover at surf venues.

Watching from shore is a real spectacle, as Kelly enthuses: 'In the surf, the home straight runs parallel to the shore in as little as 50cm of water and when negotiating the waves, the boats are airborne in excess of 4m.'

FUN FACTOR: ★★★★★

RISK: ★★★★★

AVAILABILITY: ★★★★★

COST: ★★★★★

GADGETS WE WISH WE'D GOT FOR CHRISTMAS

LED Lenser D14 Frogman LED Torch

Tough torch for sailors or divers. Bright 150 lumens, beam distance 180m, waterproof to 60m. Length 161mm.

Around £45/€62



Gill Marine Tool MT007

For onboard maintenance and emergencies, with wet and dry grip and titanium-coated stainless steel.

£25/€35



Spinlock Pylon Lifejacket Light

This 23cm-tall antenna light deploys on inflation of lifejacket, helps with 360° visibility and can be retrofitted to inflatable lifejackets.

Around £35/€48



Photo: Gary Bray/Unicom Photography

MEET OUR EXPERTS

In this issue of *Offshore*, practical advice and lifesaving tips are brought to you by:



LINDA ROBERTSON

SEA SAFETY OFFICER
BROUGHTY FERRY LIFEBOAT
STATION, DUNDEE

Linda's part of a sailing racing team, owns her own powerboat and has helped keep others safe for the past 10 years.



ALAN DOE

COASTAL SAFETY OFFICER
BEMBRIDGE LIFEBOAT
STATION, ISLE OF WIGHT

Alan grew up on the water. Lifeboat crew for 25 years, he now sails a Westerly 22 and a Bembridge Scow.



PIP HARE

OCEAN SAILOR AND RNLI
COMMUNITY SAFETY
PRODUCT MANAGER
POOLE, DORSET

Pip has a wealth of ocean sailing experience to share with readers and is a regular contributor to *Offshore*.



RICHARD FAULKNER

CASUALTY CARE TRAINER
POOLE, DORSET

A paramedic with expertise working in hazardous areas, Richard enjoys seeing the crew put their training into action, saving lives.



Offshore is published by the RNLI,
West Quay Road, Poole,
Dorset, BH15 1HZ

Cover image:
Gary Bray/Unicom Photography

Clearing up a grey area

Words: Laura Rainbow | Photos: RNLI/(Steve Lowe, Nigel Millard, Nathan Williams)

Launching into thick fog, Torbay's Severn class lifeboat

What causes fog at sea, and how can you prepare for it?

It was around lunchtime on a calm day in early April when Ilfracombe's all-weather lifeboat crew were called to the rescue of two sailors, whose yacht had suffered engine and electrical faults. The casualties had no idea of their location because thick fog had reduced their visibility to about 10m. On the phone they simply reported that they could hear the sound of the sea on rocks, so must be close to shore.

Coxswain Andrew Benguey recalls: 'We had to launch our D class, which is equipped with a compass and chart plotter, just to locate the all-weather lifeboat in the harbour – visibility was so poor, we would have had real difficulty finding it using the boarding boat.'

'Once out to sea, we used radar to pick our way from boat to boat along the coast, as the casualties had no VHF or clue about their location.'

Thanks to Andrew and the crew's skill and their specialist fog training, the casualties were located and towed

safely back to shore. One part of their training challenges the navigator to get a boat from harbour to harbour with blacked-out windows, using onboard AIS, chartplotter and radar.

Andrew adds: 'Fog is my least favourite sea condition – it distorts sound and light, and makes all the familiar features of the coast look completely different. Lobster pot buoys, for example, suddenly seem huge. Very small vessels like dinghies don't always show up on the radar, so you've got to be extra careful.'

WHAT IS SEA FOG?

Fog forms at sea when humid air is blown over a cooler region of water. In the case of the UK and Republic of Ireland, it's often a tropical airmass from the Azores in the Atlantic, blowing over the UK's south-western approaches and the Irish Sea. As the air cools, it can't hold as much water vapour and advection fog forms. Most sea fog is of the advection kind, but a small amount of inland fog can drift out to sea too. The cold sea fog that occurs along the east coast of northern England and Scotland is sometimes known regionally as haar, or, further south, as fret.

Met Office Meteorologist Emma Sharples says: 'Anecdotally, the coast around the south west and south east of England seems to get more than its fair share of fog. There are some steep cliffs around there, which force the sea air to rise (and therefore cool) rapidly, condensing quickly. It's common all around the UK and Republic of Ireland though, mostly in Spring and Summer when the air temperature warms up but the sea is still relatively cold.'

She adds: 'Sea fog is tricky to predict with certainty. We measure the sea's surface temperature with buoys, map it and compare it to the air temperature of approaching fronts, which allows us to say when fog is likely to appear. But it's a fine art, and dramatic banks of fog can roll in without much warning on what started out as a clear day.'



Coxswain Andrew Benguey

HOW FOG FORMS



HOW TO COPE WITH FOG

Check the weather forecast throughout the day (not just the moment before you set off), especially if you notice a temperature change, and keep an ear on the shipping forecast while afloat. It's a common misconception that fog always gets 'burned off' by the sun as the day progresses; sea fog can still linger well into the afternoon.

If you find yourself out at sea with dwindling visibility, RNLI Community Safety Product Manager and Ocean Sailor Pip Hare recommends:

- When you see fog approaching, immediately do a position fix on your GPS and on your paper chart.
- Make yourself visible and help yourself see other vessels – switch on navigation lights, make sure your radar reflector's up, and use your radar and AIS (Automatic Identification System).
- Nominate extra crew for lookout duty and check all are wearing lifejackets.
- Listen on VHF Ch 16 and, in restricted waters, Ch 13. If entering a harbour, monitor ship movements on the port's working channel.
- At a safe speed and a steady course, head for shallower water where you

won't be in any busy shipping lanes. There, drop anchor and sit it out.

- Use the right fog signals and listen out for other vessels' signals. These sounds can be distorted in fog, but they're better than nothing.
- If you're really worried you're stuck in a dangerous place, use your VHF radio to call for help.

A final piece of advice if you find yourself at sea, surrounded by clammy grey fog, is to use your ears. Even low-cost radars these days can be fantastic pieces of kit, but they're even better with the additional back-up of your own senses. Don't be tempted to stick on the

radio while you're waiting for the fog to clear, or get distracted by conversation – keep listening out for engine noise, horns, voices and other signs of vessels nearby.

MYTHBUSTER

- According to the World Meteorological Organization, it's only defined as fog if water droplets in the air reduce visibility to less than 1km (0.62 miles), described as 'very poor' visibility in the inshore/shipping forecast.
- If it's mist or haze, visibility will be greater (about 1–2km or 0.62–1.2 miles), described as 'poor'.



Photo: Shutterstock.com

HOW DO LIFEBOAT CREWS COPE WITH FOG?

Through extensive theoretical and practical training at RNLI College and at station, crew members are trained on how to safely reach and recover casualties in reduced visibility.

They also have some of the best kit available:

- 1 AIS:** this tracking system allows the lifeboat crew to receive and transmit a signal to any other boat with AIS.

- 2 Radar:** spots objects you can't see with the naked eye, and tracks their speed and course.

- 3 Upper steering position:** on a foggy day, lifeboat crew may need to listen and look for other vessels and casualties in the water from here.

- 4 Lights:** navigation lights must be on in fog. *International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea* detail which lights should be displayed for different vessels.

- 5 Horn:** alerts other vessels to the lifeboat's presence.



FOG SIGNALS

When fog descends, normal practices regarding speed, lookout, sounds and avoiding collision change.

Section 19 of the International Maritime Organization's *International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea* sums up the rules.

FIND OUT MORE

Visit bit.ly/1WILL6t for some easily digestible RYA tips on seamanship in fog.

HIDDEN TREASURES OF NORTHUMBERLAND



We uncover the breathtaking coastline of Amble to Seahouses with its fine cruising, wild watersports – and more islands, castles and rare wildlife than you could shake a stick at ...

Words: Jon Jones
Photos: Alexbrn CC BY-SA 3.0, Frances Anderson, RNLi/Steve Read

The rugged Northumberland coast has so much to offer but is often overlooked by sea users. Those used to southern climes will find this part of the world somewhat fresh but it's not until you experience this Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with your own eyes that you realise the weather doesn't matter a jot.

ON AND AROUND THE WATER

If cruising is your thing, there are many anchorages and hidden beaches to explore. Amble, recently dubbed the seventh Coolest Seaside Town in the UK, has plenty of visitor berths. 'Avoid entering our harbour when there's a swell on though,' advises Rodney Burge, Amble Deputy Launching Authority. 'It gets dangerous with breakers.'

There's easy access to a huge stretch of North Sea coastline, including clean, sandy beaches and islands teeming with wildlife. Watersports in Northumberland are described as wet and wild and are fast becoming the county's worst-kept secret. Bamburgh is one of the north east's top surf spots and kayaking and kitesurfing are ever popular.

The Farne Islands, in spitting distance of Seahouses Lifeboat Station, offer some of the most magical diving

in the UK. There are plenty of wrecks to explore and rare sea creatures to find. 'We have lots of divers up at the weekends,' says Andrew Smith, Marine Mammal Medic for the British Divers Marine Life Rescue, who has been skippering boats out of Seahouses for 8 years. 'The grey seals are very friendly in the water and love to swim with snorkellers but I wouldn't approach them from the coastline. They can have a nasty bite!'

Sightseers can enjoy a huge range of lesser-spotted seabirds and wildlife on a Billy Sheil's boat trip. From April to June the Farnes are home to some 80,000 puffins (or Tommy Noddys as they're known locally).

[FIND OUT MORE](http://farne-islands.com) farne-islands.com

ON LAND

Northumberland is blessed with gorgeous countryside. You can walk for miles in meadows and rolling hills without seeing a soul. 'It's a lovely place to visit but we try to keep it a secret,' jokes Kev Brown, Craster Lifeboat Operations Manager. 'We're spoilt for golf courses and Dunstanburgh Castle is popular with tourists.'

Talking of castles, Northumberland has more than in any other English

INSIDER INFO

COLIN BANKS
SEAHOUSES DEPUTY
LAUNCHING AUTHORITY



'There are miles of unspoilt beaches to explore and they're all dog-friendly. Seahouses is a great place to escape the mobile phone and there is always a breeze so it's great for kitesurfing.'

RODNEY BURGE
AMBLE DEPUTY
LAUNCHING AUTHORITY



'Amble has a thriving marina and is an ideal base for cruising and sea angling trips. If you want a proper pint in a proper pub, head for The Schooner Inn, which is 2 minutes from the harbour.'

PAUL STEWART
AMBLE CREW MEMBER



'We're very friendly here so ask the locals to point out the hidden gems. There are plenty of unique little shops and restaurants but fish and chips on Amble Pier is hard to beat.'

SUN OUT
WIND OFFSHORE
WAVES PUMPING
THIS IS WHY WE LOVE
THE NORTH EAST



Photo: Frances Peacock



Grace Darling memorial window, St Aidan's



county – a legacy of the ancient Border Wars. South is Alnwick (rhymes with panic) Castle, where Harry Potter fans will recognise the setting for the Whomping Willow. Far north is the iconic Bamburgh Castle – the sheer scale of which never ceases to amaze. This ancient battlement has provided the dramatic backdrop for many films and the inspiration for nostalgic TV shows with Robson Green and Sir Tony Robinson.

No visit to this part of the coast would be complete without visiting the RNLI's Grace Darling Museum, just 10 minutes from the castle. Be sure to check out

the cottage where she was born and the 12th-century church opposite. A guided walk by Mick McCarthy, Shore Crew for Seahouses lifeboat, is a must.



Craster kipper – recommended

SAFETY TIPS

Our local crews advise:

- Seahouses has a tidal harbour so beware its effects, particularly on the Farne Islands.
- A lifejacket and low-cost flare could save your life. And bring a VHF radio – we'll find you quicker.
- When walking, check the safe crossing times for Lindisfarne and allow an extra 30 minutes for weather changes.
- Wear something warm!

BEST BITS

Sun out, wind offshore, waves pumping. This is why we love the north east. #surfing #freedom @jamescmedia

Not many better views in the UK than walking towards Bamburgh Castle with the Farne Islands out to sea. @a_mcdermott

Forget chain gastro-pubs – there's a variety of local restaurants with an emphasis on local catches. Zecca in Amble serves traditional Italian cuisine with a modern, seafood twist. And Spurreli's boutique ice cream should not be missed. 'I'd definitely recommend the world-famous Craster Kipper,' says Kev Brown. Seahouses crew heartily approve the fish and chips and Indian restaurants in town – and lovers of a friendly pub atmosphere should sample a pint of Farne Island bitter at the Olde Ship Inn.

FIND OUT MORE visitsouthnorthumberland.com/villages-in-time.co.uk

WHERE NEXT?

Which area would you like us to cover in a future *Offshore*? Your home town or your favourite sailing destination? Tweet @BethanyRHope or email offshore@rnli.org.uk.



Jane HARDY

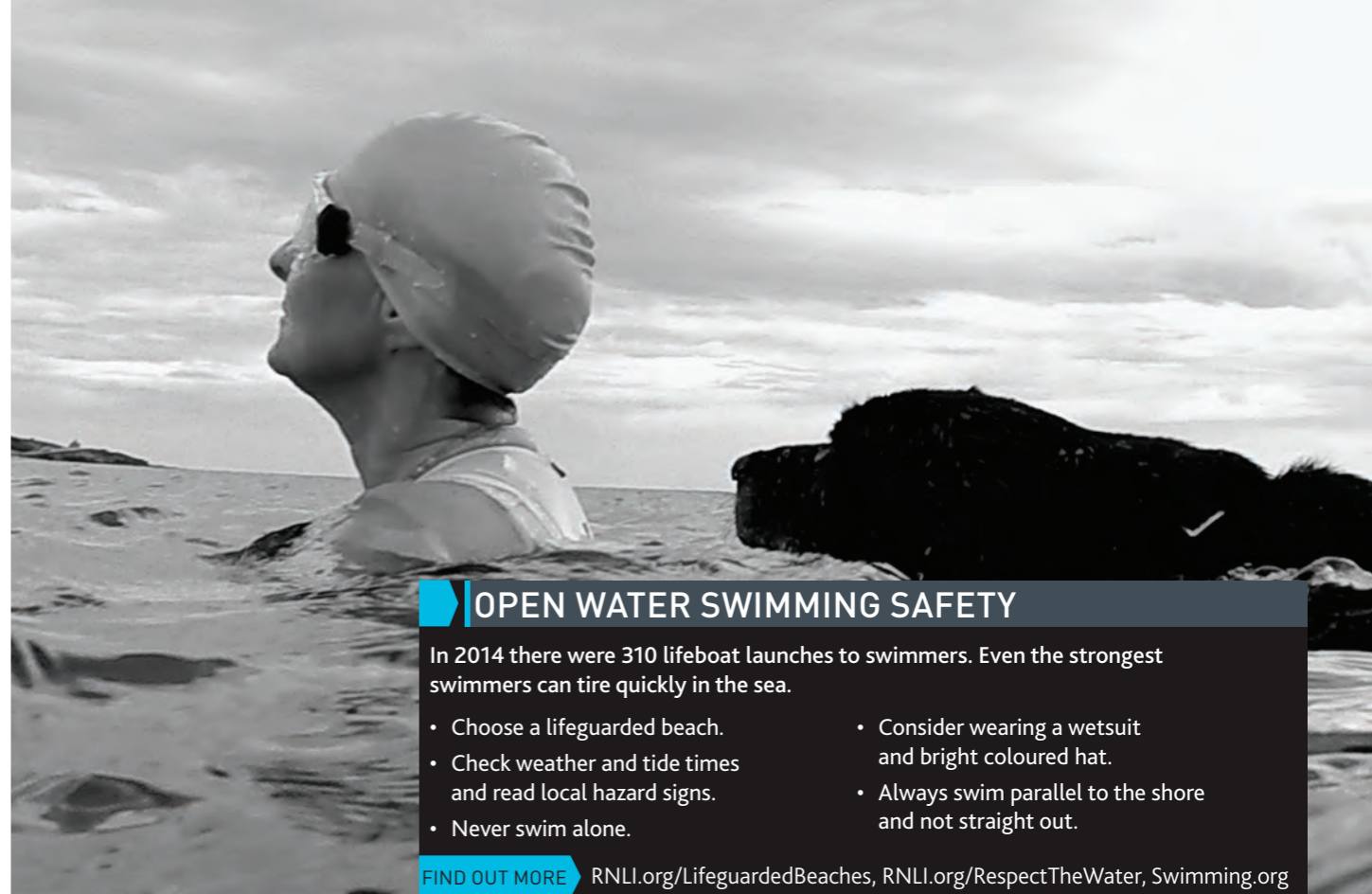
'Some people get a fix from tobacco or alcohol. I get my fix from swimming in the North Sea all year round with no wetsuit.

'I'm an open water swimmer. I train in the pool and in the sea. Given a choice I would ditch the chlorine pit. In the sea, there is total freedom. The cold water is invigorating and the location here's stunning.

'Every time you swim in the North Sea it is a different experience. Some days it's flat and crystal clear. Other days it's churned up with huge waves and resembles liquidised kelp.

'With Active Northumberland I took a group of young women open water swimming. Boulmer lifeboat [independent station] provided safety cover.

'The girls developed confidence in the open water, made new friends and I educated them about cold water shock, tides and rips. The highlight was a trip to swim with the seals off the Farne Islands. Seals are agile creatures in the water with the youngsters being most curious and playful. They swim all around you and look straight into your eyes. What an unforgettable experience for these young women. They were squealing with delight and loved every moment.'



OPEN WATER SWIMMING SAFETY

In 2014 there were 310 lifeboat launches to swimmers. Even the strongest swimmers can tire quickly in the sea.

- Choose a lifeguarded beach.
- Check weather and tide times and read local hazard signs.
- Never swim alone.
- Consider wearing a wetsuit and bright coloured hat.
- Always swim parallel to the shore and not straight out.

FIND OUT MORE RNLI.org/LifeguardedBeaches, RNLI.org/RespectTheWater, Swimming.org

HOW TO HANDLE HYPOTHERMIA

We're all familiar with the term hypothermia, but many misunderstand the condition.

Regular readers of *Offshore* will know that if you fall into cold water, your immediate battle will be with cold water shock rather than hypothermia. In our coastal waters, it will take over 30 minutes of immersion for a person wearing normal clothes to become hypothermic.

RNLI Casualty Care Trainer Richard Faulkner describes hypothermia: 'It's a condition where the body's core temperature has fallen below 35°C (95°F). Normal body temperature is around 37°C (98.6°F).' Hypothermia can strike whether you're in the water, on it, indoors or outdoors, at any time of year in our part of the world.

At the Firth of Forth, near Dunfermline, late one April, Matt Nightingale and Lee Green were struggling in the water after the speedboat they were on broke down. In a 1.5m swell and winds gusting to force 5, Queensferry lifeboat crew came to the rescue and hauled them aboard.

Lee, suffering from hypothermia, said: 'I thought I'd had it.' Then Matt and Lee told the crew there was another man missing – Richard Yanitsaro – who wasn't wearing a lifejacket. Thankfully, the RNLI crew found Richard in the nick of time, just as he was disappearing under the water, debilitated by hypothermia.

Whether you're on dry land, or out on the water, knowing the early signs of hypothermia and how to treat it can be a lifesaver. Follow Richard's expert advice opposite.

HOW LONG HAVE I GOT?

If you're stuck in the cold water and you've called for help, to stave off hypothermia:


- adopt HELP (heat escape lessening posture), with arms tucked across your body and legs pulled up in front of you
- keep movement to a minimum
- if there's a few of you, huddle side to side in the water
- if there are children in the group, put them in the middle as they'll lose body heat quicker than you.


For advice on how to recover a man overboard, go to RNLI.org/overboard.


Photo: Shutterstock.com





A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FROM RNLI CASUALTY CARE TRAINER RICHARD FAULKNER


- **1 GETTING COLD**

As a person gets cold, they start to shiver but are aware of their surroundings. Hypothermia hasn't set in, so help them warm up and give them a warm drink.
- **2 FIRST SIGNS**

As their temperature drops, signs of hypothermia include confusion, loss of coordination, stopping shivering, and becoming rigid, sometimes in the foetal position.
- **3 FURTHER HELP**

Call for medical help and consider evacuating the person with hypothermia to safety.
- **4 DON'T**

Don't actively warm up a hypothermic person with warm drinks or a warm shower. Don't give them whisky or similar, as alcohol lowers their core body temperature.
- **5 WET CLOTHES**

Treat the person with hypothermia gently and remove any outer layers of wet clothing.
- **6 COVER UP**

Wrap them in blankets and a waterproof cover. Also cover their head.

DOES THIS RING TRUE?



Did the RNLI go overboard on this headline? Does this statistic ring true to you?

Some yacht sailors on Facebook wouldn't believe it. The aim of the advert was to draw people into doing a short quiz to help improve their safety, but they couldn't get past the headline:

'This sensationalist headline is just distracting from a very important message.'

'Sorry, but in my 40+ years of sailing I have not gone overboard unintentionally from a yacht – and can think of no one who has done so.'

Others took a more facetious approach: '1 in 8!!!! Must be bl**dy chaos on a cruise liner!!!!'

**'1 in 8!!!!
Must be
bl**dy chaos
on a cruise
liner!!!!'**

Several people suggested that the 'gone overboard' question in the research survey could have been interpreted as falling from any vessel, such as dinghies, not just from yachts.

The charity considered that misinterpretation of the question was 'on the whole unlikely', as the survey made clear that it 'was aimed specifically at yacht sailors'. The survey was completed by 5,000 yacht sailors, not a small sample.

'But there are lessons to be learned,' RNLI Research Manager Tom Walters tells *Offshore*.

'We want to assure supporters that our campaigns are based on sound evidence as soon as campaigns launch.'



And he adds: 'I don't think we made it clear enough that the statistic relates to experience of man overboard (MOB) during your sailing lifetime.'

On social media, many people sprang to the RNLI's defence. Then something unexpected happened: the MOB stories started coming in. First a trickle on Facebook and then at the Southampton Boat Show where the 1 in 8 statistic was used to help draw people into an RNLI interactive MOB stand.

I joined sailor and RNLI Community Safety's Pip Hare at the show, who told me: 'Initially, there were a few raised eyebrows but, after a chat, most people consider the statistic was probably about right.'

One man told us about his wife falling in in the middle of the Atlantic. He had to get the spinnaker down, keep the kids safe, go back to find his wife and get her out.

It's obvious that MOB is more common than most of us like to admit. Hopefully, by giving people the facts and talking to them, yacht sailors will consider practising the MOB drill and be safer as a result. That's not sensationalist; it's part of saving lives at sea.

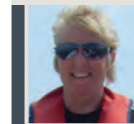
Could you recover a man overboard?

Do the quiz at RNLI.org/overboard or look out for the RNLI at events near you at RNLI.org/events.

For a summary of the yacht sailing research, go to RNLI.org/aboutus/aboutthernli/Pages/research.

QUICKFIRE Q&A

ANSWERED BY OUR SAFETY EXPERTS



Do you do any safety talks for clubs?

Linda answers:

Winter is a good time for boat users to ask their club to request safety presentations. As well as lifejacket checks and calling for help talks, we now also have angling boat safety presentations.

Contact the Coastal Safety Officer through your nearest lifeboat station (RNLI.org/FindMyNearest).



How should I look after my lifejacket over Winter?

Alan replies:

First of all store it in a dry place. I bring my lifejackets off the boat, take out the gas bottle and blow them up gently using my inflatable dinghy pump until it's firm to the touch. Leave them inflated for 24 hours to check for any leaks. It's worth checking the expiry date on the automatic capsules – replace if necessary. I always carefully check for wear and tear of the bladder and outer cover. I then get them serviced as recommended by the manufacturer.

Is there anything I need to add to my lifebuoy?

Alan recommends:

Add a whistle, retro-reflective tape, a drogue, a light and your boat's name or call sign to your lifebuoy.



FEEDBACK

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT OFFSHORE

395

Offshore members did the survey

76%

rated Offshore as good or very good

HOW YOU DESCRIBED OFFSHORE

'Compact, wide range of stories, info and tips'

'Useful, practical advice'

'Well presented and good to read'

'You call it offshore and print articles about dinghies'

'Area of sea beyond 12 mile off coast, defined by HMCG'

The majority of feedback was positive. While many of you liked the more inshore/coastal articles, a significant number of you didn't feel there was enough in the magazine for offshore sailors.

We have a broad audience of sailors, motorboaters and other watersports enthusiasts who enjoy *Offshore*, but we'll make sure that future editions have more for offshore sailors.

Thanks again for your feedback.

Please keep it coming.

Email offshore@rnli.org.uk or tweet @BethanyRHope.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO NEXT?

You're out walking along the beach on a crisp Winter's day and think you can make it round the headland for lunch in the waterside cafe.

But you're caught out by the tide and pushed towards the base of a cliff, with no mobile phone reception.

DO YOU?

- A** Move quickly – wade or swim back to shore.
- B** Shout and wave to help someone spot you.
- C** Climb up the cliff.

EXPERT ANSWER



LINDA ROBERTSON
RNLI SEA SAFETY OFFICER

A lot depends on the terrain, but the no-no is A. Even if it looks like you could wade to safety, you could get swept away.

So shout, wave your arms or anything else to attract attention from anyone at sea or on land (B). Keep trying your mobile phone.

To avoid getting cut off by the tide in the first place:

- look at an OS map for high tide
- find out exactly when high water and low water are
- check for exit points that would enable you to escape from a rising tide, mark them on your map and consider you might need to turn back
- tell someone where you are going and what time you plan to be back. If you're overdue, they should ring the Coastguard on 999/112
- enjoy your beautiful coastal walk, keeping a keen eye on the weather and tide!



TRUE STORY

Just as this issue of *Offshore* was being written, Newquay RNLI lifeguards and volunteer lifeboat crews came to the aid of a couple who were cut off by the tide.

The couple, who were on holiday in Watergate Bay, had been walking along the beach when they were quickly cut off.

Lifeguards launched the rescue watercraft and reached the couple within minutes. They were metres from the incoming tide. Georges Tickner, RNLI Lifeguard at Watergate Bay, says: 'They were both really relieved and thankful when we arrived. They were cold but unharmed.'

Lifeguards took the woman back to the beach at Watergate Bay, and the lifeboat crews picked up the man.

Photo: Shutterstock.com

Over 200 people die accidentally in British and Irish waters each year. Half of those who drown never even expected to get wet. RNLI.org/RespectTheWater

Friends of the RNLI

These corporate partners offer discounts to you and fundraising benefits for our charity



Coastal Spring

Look out for the Coastal Spring range of Cornish bottled water in your local shops, bars and restaurants. 1p per bottle will go to the RNLI.

Giveacar

Giveacar is a not-for-profit social enterprise that can turn your old car into cash for the RNLI. They will arrange free collection, then either sell your car at auction or scrap it with 70% of all recycling or auction revenue being paid in support of the RNLI. To find out more call 020 7736 4242 or email support@giveacar.co.uk.



Amazon

The RNLI receives at least 5% of your order value only via RNLI.org/amazon.

Interflora

The flower experts Interflora will donate 10% of spend every time our supporters shop with them. Simply visit interflora.co.uk to choose your flowers, and enter 'RNLI' at the promotional code section in the checkout page.



Furness Building Society

This mutual has launched an affinity savings account with the RNLI. Please go to furnessbs.co.uk/community/affinity-accounts.

Puzzle time

Quick Wordsearch:

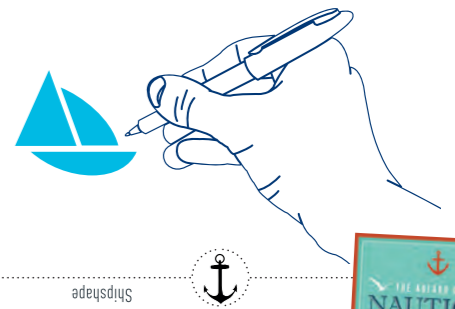
Can you find the long lifeboat station names?

W E S T O N S U P E R M A R E
C V F X T M H D P A B R M Y L
A G H F I A C K O I N T K C I
S I B I G B V I R R C O L W T
T F Z H H L L R T R M S H C T
L L X K N E K K H T I F A A L
E A Z R A T H C D L L B P I E
T M Z S B H V U I T F X P K H
O B I H R O W D N H R H I N A
W O W Q U R A B L Z A I S W M
N R K V A P L R L D C P B H P
B O B G I E D I A O O A U Q T
E U Q D C X R G E M M N R V O
R G Q V H R J H N S B Q G A N
E H Q A H G H T H Z E E H P U

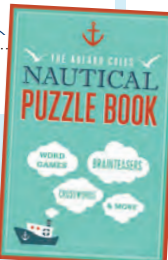
ILFRACOMBE
LITTLEHAMPTON
HAPPISBURGH
FLAMBOROUGH
TIGHNABRUAICH
KIRKCUDBRIGHT
CASTLETOWNBERE
MAPLETHORPE
PORTHDINLLAEN
WESTONSUPERMARE

NAUTICAL PUZZLES

What well-known term does this picture represent?



Answer: Shipshape



From *The Adlard Coles Nautical Puzzle Book* published by Bloomsbury and reproduced with their kind permission.

Objects of their affection

Around 95% of our people are volunteers, generously giving up their time while juggling family life, work, hobbies and other commitments. The ways they help are as diverse as they are essential, so we asked four very different people about their labours of love for the charity – and the objects they can't do without ...

College Tour Guide Gerald Beddard has been showing visitors behind the scenes at the home of RNLI training since 2011, and does it all for one reason: the lifeboat crew.

'When I was 5 I was allowed to shake the RNLI collection tins while my mum pinned badges to people's lapels. That was my first memory of the charity and I've supported the lifeboats ever since. I also have happy memories of going on holiday to Llandudno as a child, where the lifeboat would be sat out on the prom ready to launch. I was allowed to climb on it and play, my imagination running wild about the daring rescue I was about to do.

'The people who come on RNLI College tours are a mix of supporters who already know about the charity, and people who just happen to be in the area. Those that don't know about us are amazed that so many of the people in this organisation are volunteers. They're also surprised at how much the kit and equipment costs. But, as I tell them, you can't skimp on costs when it's people's lives on the line.

'I'd say the lifeboat crews are what make my role – and everybody else's here – possible. I'm also a volunteer boatswain: all the kit and equipment and training aids I look after are for the crews. The crews are what inspire visitors on the tours to support us. If we were a family, and we sort of are, the lifesavers would be at the centre, and people like me would be the cousins, aunts and uncles who make sure they're OK. There are roles for everybody, so many different skills are needed.'

Find out how our crews and lifeguards are trained with a behind the scenes RNLI College tour. Tours last 90 minutes and cost £7.50 for adults or £2.50 for children (free to RNLI College Hotel guests). They take place every morning and afternoon from Monday to Friday, and on Saturday mornings. Booking is strongly recommended – visit RNLI.org/college or call 0870 833 2000 to reserve your place.



'I like to think that sometimes Grace would have worn it and had a nice time'

Gwyn Jackson is a volunteer at the RNLI Grace Darling Museum in Bamburgh, Northumberland. She uses her skills as a former teacher to bring the collections to life for young visitors. Her favourite object shows a different side to one of our greatest heroines.

'I helped fundraise for the Grace Darling Museum before it was built and I've been a volunteer at the museum since 2008. I'm old enough to remember being inspired by names like Darling, Nightingale and Browning, and now I enjoy educating children. Here, they're usually aged 7–11 and come to learn about the Victorians.

'I love one exhibit in particular – a dress that belonged to both Grace and her sister. It has two sets of fastenings, so either of them could wear it (I guess there weren't many opportunities for them to go out). I like how it's pink, girly and tiny – a bit frivolous; not too serious and sensible like the rest of her life. Women who lived by the sea in the Victorian era often had to work hard. It was mainly women who pulled the lifeboats to launch. I like to think that sometimes Grace would have worn the dress and had a nice time.

'The RNLI Grace Darling Museum attracts people from all over the world. I've met Prince Charles, who was keen to watch the Grace Darling video, and I've had lunch with the Duke of Kent. I told him about Queen Victoria sending money to Grace and about another gift that Grace was sent – the very latest in waterproof clothing: a mackintosh.

'A real highlight of my time here was meeting two visitors descended from the crew Grace and her father saved. They wouldn't have existed if the rescue had ended differently.'

'We checked 100 lifejackets: about 60 didn't work'

Sarah-Louise Rossiter is a volunteer RNLI Sea Safety Officer, and works for the Irish Sailing Association in between teaching powerboat and sailing skills at her boat club in Wexford. But what's the tiny lifesaving object that plays a key part of her safety role?

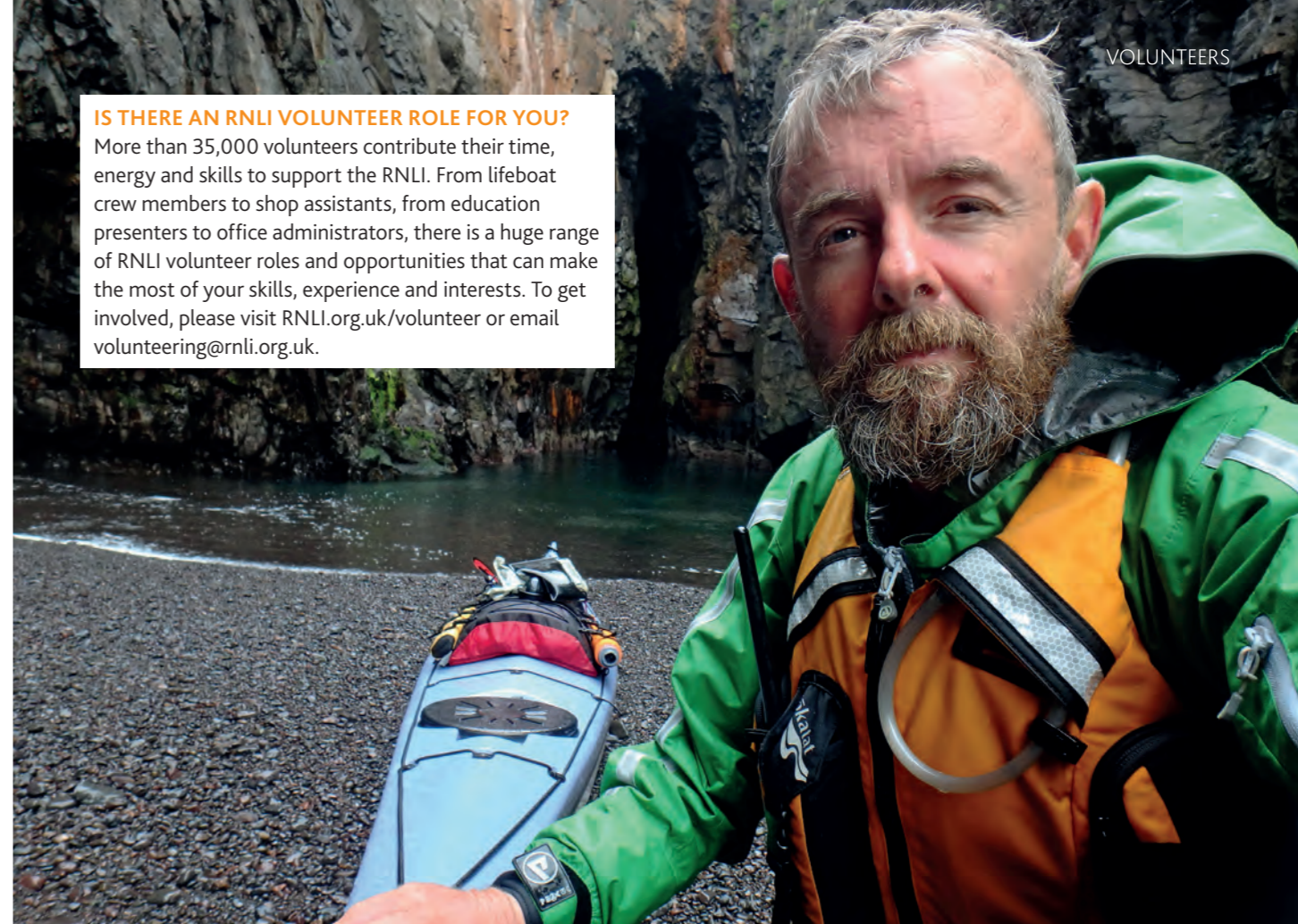
'Lifejacket checks are a huge part of my role. People don't always know that you have to check them often, unpack them, and make sure you've got the right sort for what you're doing. I met one man at a safety talk who was very proud to know all about lifejackets, and had kept the same one on him for 60 years. I asked if I could have a look so he opened it up for me. As he did, several bits fell off, before it half inflated, then deflated again with a sort of wheeze. I'm so glad he wasn't in the sea when he discovered the state it was in.

'The object that is surprisingly useful for me, given its size, is a firing head. It's a little nugget of compressed salt (like a dishwasher tablet) that dissolves when you hit water, triggering the lifejacket inflation mechanism. It's the best way to show people how their self-inflating lifejackets work – they have components that need replacing. One guy came to my safety stand at a fishing event, absolutely soaked from having fallen in, complaining his lifejacket hadn't worked when he hit the water. Turns out he'd got a manual inflation one but didn't realise. At the same event, we checked 100 lifejackets and about 60 didn't work properly – they would have been pretty useless in the water. There are often eye-openers like that. They make you realise that you are making a huge difference.'



IS THERE AN RNLI VOLUNTEER ROLE FOR YOU?

More than 35,000 volunteers contribute their time, energy and skills to support the RNLI. From lifeboat crew members to shop assistants, from education presenters to office administrators, there is a huge range of RNLI volunteer roles and opportunities that can make the most of your skills, experience and interests. To get involved, please visit RNLI.org.uk/volunteer or email volunteering@rnli.org.uk.



'My kayak never failed me'

In Summer 2015, fundraiser Nick Ray travelled 2,015 miles around all our 47 Scottish lifeboat stations. He's raised more than £5,000 to date. His solo trip started at Kippford on the Solway Firth, travelling clockwise before finishing in Eyemouth 4 months later – all under his own steam, using his trusty kayak.

'I read Nicholas Leach's excellent book *The Lifeboat Service in Scotland: Station by Station* and it occurred to me that a similar trip would be a good excuse to fulfil my ambition of circumnavigating the Scottish coastline.

'On average, I covered about 20 miles a day but my longest stint was 45 miles. There was an initial bit of doubt about whether the trip would be possible, but my kayak never failed me, even in awful conditions like 2m swell around the west coast of the Orkneys. She's a Nigel Dennis-designed Explore, and I've named her *Sahwira*, which means 'lifelong friend' in Shona (I'm from Zimbabwe). By the end, I was actually talking to her, congratulating her on tackling tough bits and greeting her every morning. She's the object I've

chosen, but the supporting safety kit was essential too – I had a VHF, personal locator beacon, flares and a satellite tracker.

'Sometimes it was lonely out there. Even with the best planning in the world you think "what if ..." but you have to trust your kit and push on when you can. There were many highlights too though, like rounding Cape Wrath on a sunny day. It's this hugely iconic, majestic headland just looming out into the ocean. The Vikings used it to navigate and there I was with my little kayak, doing the same.

'Towards the end of my trip, the lifeboat stations had begun tracking my progress and actually coming out to meet me. Beers were bought for me, dinners were cooked, places to crash for the night offered – it was all hugely touching. I have infinite admiration for the lifeboat volunteers, who never judge people who get into trouble, and for the extended network of families, shore crews, fundraisers, support teams and so on. I was glad to know they were all there for me.'

Words: Laura Rainbow, Photos: RNLI/Nathan Williams, Adrian Don, Connor Thomas, Micheline Murphy, Nick Ray

'Every person that comes through the door signs the book'

Sid Wilkins is the Shop and Visitor Experience Manager at The Mumbles Lifeboat Station, and is also involved in sea safety. His chosen object reminds him of all the visitors and supporters he's encountered in almost 2 decades as a volunteer with the RNLI.

'When I retired and came to The Mumbles, I went straight to the lifeboat station to see how I could get involved in some way. I became a sea safety volunteer – visiting boat clubs and marinas to do demonstrations, talks, lifejacket checks and so on. I just wanted to help with the RNLI – I think the lifeboats are a wonderful thing and that the people who crew and support them are really something to be proud of.

'Nowadays, I'm also involved in recruiting and coordinating all the volunteers (about 48) who look after the retail and visitor side of things. They're a fantastic team and that's what I love about the role – the people. The object I'd say exemplifies it is the visitor book (pictured inset). Every person that comes through the door signs the book. We've had visitors from China, Australia and all over Europe, as well as locals, and they all say the same: it's the lifeboat crews and volunteers that make them want to support the charity. Sometimes you hear a sad story about why somebody supports the lifeboats, but each person in that book has their own reason.

'In March 2015, I was invited to attend a special St David's Day reception at 10 Downing Street, where I met David Cameron. He'd already heard a lot about The Mumbles Station from the Secretary of State for Wales, who'd visited us before. It was an honour to be there, but really the whole team deserved that honour.'

DANGER AT DAUNT ROCK

In hurricane force winds, Ballycotton lifeboat crew launched to the aid of eight men on a lightship near Daunt Rock. 70 years on, it's a feat of courage and endurance still seen as one of the most demanding rescues in RNLi history



Ballycotton lifeboat crew

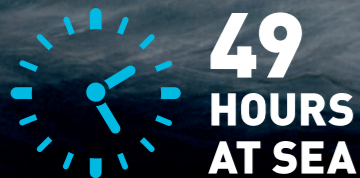
At midnight on Monday 10 February 1936 'it was blowing a hurricane force never before experienced by the oldest inhabitant in Ballycotton ... the harbour was a seething cauldron ... stones, a ton in weight, were torn from the quay and flung about like sugar lumps.'

So wrote Ballycotton RNLi's Honorary Secretary Robert Mahoney in his account of a 63-hour shout to the lightship *Comet*, which had broken her moorings and started drifting towards the coast. In those conditions, it was almost unthinkable that the volunteer crew of Ballycotton's lifeboat – a 15.5m motor vessel named *Mary Stanford* – would be able to launch, let alone save those onboard the stricken vessel.

But, to Mahoney's amazement, Coxswain Patrick Sliney and his crew were heading across the storm-tossed harbour within minutes of the alert. The coxswain 'had not fired the maroons, for he did not want to alarm the village,' recalled Mahoney. 'Without a word they had slipped away.'

By now it was the morning of Tuesday 11 February. Heading out to sea, the lifeboat volunteers were repeatedly knocked off their feet by waves crashing over their vessel. Word had got around that the lifeboat crew were out. Mahoney's records note: 'People watching her left the quay to go to church and pray.'

With visibility severely impeded by sleet and spray, the stricken lightship was eventually located near Daunt Rock. Her crew would not abandon their heavy vessel to become a shipping hazard. With help from the Royal Navy destroyer HMS *Tenedos*, the Ballycotton lifeboat crew attempted to establish a tow but each attempt was thwarted by strong waves, which snapped the steel cables like string.



**FORCE 12
HURRICANE**





'Patrick must have had a good idea what was to come over the next hours, but would have had a lot of faith in the *Mary Stanford's* abilities'

Colm Sliney, Ballycotton Deputy Launching Authority and grandson of Patrick Sliney (below)



By nightfall, the lifeboat volunteers were exhausted, cold and famished. But after an all-too-brief night in Cobh, where Robert Mahoney brought fresh clothes and supplies, they set off again in the early hours of Wednesday 12 February.

ANOTHER DAY AT SEA

When the lifeboat arrived back at the scene, HMS *Tenedos* had already left. Thick fog now covered the area and the crew of *Mary Stanford* stood-by alone all day. It must have been with a heavy heart that Coxswain Sliney agreed, at 6pm, to stay through the night too.

By the morning of 13 February the RNLI crew members were hungry, frozen, soaked, and burnt by salt water and wind. They headed back to Cobh again to refuel themselves and their lifeboat, and at dusk returned to the *Comet*, joined by *Isolda*, a vessel of the Commissioners of Irish Lights.

It was around 9.30pm, with the wind and sea conditions worsening, that the lightship started losing her battle with the sea. She was on course to collide with Daunt Rock, with her starboard bow increasingly below the water, plunging and rolling in the waves. Coxswain Sliney decided it was time for action: 'The only thing was to get

astern and make quick runs on her port side,' wrote Mahoney, adding that the lightship's crew would have to jump for the lifeboat when they could.

LEAPS OF FAITH

Despite the weather and risk, Patrick managed to pass the lifeboat alongside the *Comet* five times. Urged by the RNLI volunteers, six sailors jumped aboard. On a sixth run, the two remaining lightship crew members – too exhausted and injured to jump – were seized and dragged onboard the lifeboat, with Patrick remarking that it was no time for 'by your leave'. With the entire *Comet* crew now onboard, the *Mary Stanford* began her journey back to Cobh, where she arrived at 11pm on the night of Thursday 13 February. It was not until 12.45pm on Friday 14, the fourth day since they set out, that the crew of Ballycotton lifeboat reached home. All in all, the sea had completely engulfed their vessel 12 times, and for one 25.5-hour stint, they had gone without food, shelter or rest.

An RNLI Gold Medal was awarded to Coxswain Patrick Sliney for his bravery and fortitude in the rescue, with Second Coxswain John Lane Walsh and Motor Mechanic Thomas Sliney both receiving Silver Medals. Crew Members Michael Coffey Walsh, John Shea Sliney, William Sliney and Thomas Walsh were also awarded Bronze Medals for their service and Patrick Mahoney, whose records have immortalised the bravery of Ballycotton lifeboat's volunteer crew, received binoculars.

Words: Laura Rainbow

Photos: RNLI/Nigel Millard, Colm Sliney

Painting: Tim Thompson

MARY STANFORD TODAY

Ballycotton's Deputy Launching Authority Colm Sliney is the grandson of Coxswain Patrick Sliney, and his father, William Sliney, was just 20 years old when he assisted with the rescue of the *Comet*.

Colm says: 'After the call came, Patrick must have had a good idea what was to come over the next hours, but would have had a lot of faith in the *Mary Stanford's* abilities. As a motorboat, she was seen as safer, faster and more agile than the earlier pulling and sailing vessels. That said, compared to our Trent class, which has a covered cabin, is manoeuvrable and can do 25 knots, it was a real feat of endurance.'

The *Mary Stanford* was returned to Ballycotton in 2014 after falling into dilapidation, and Colm has been heavily involved in her restoration (pictured below).

'This lifeboat put our small fishing village on the map and carried those crews safely to many a dangerous rescue,' Colm says. 'All that's left now is a few finishing touches and she'll be back to her former glory.'



Tuesday 11 February

8am: Robert Mahoney receives a call to say that the *Comet* had broken her moorings.

3.30pm: The lifeboat *Mary Stanford* and Royal Navy Destroyer HMS *Tenedos* attempt to establish a tow, but heavy seas make it impossible.

9.30pm: Ballycotton's volunteers return to Cobh Harbour to rest.

Wednesday 12 February

The lifeboat stands by the *Comet* all day. At 6pm, Coxswain Patrick Sliney accepts the request to stand-by all night too.

Thursday 13 February

9am: The lifeboat reaches Cobh Harbour to refuel after almost 26 hours at sea.

4pm: *Mary Stanford's* crew head out again. By evening, the lightship is in imminent danger of crashing into Daunt Rock, so evacuation begins.

11pm: Crew disembark with the casualties at Cobh. All are suffering saltwater burns, cold, exhaustion and hunger.

Friday 14 February

12.45pm: After a night in Cobh, the lifeboat arrives back at Ballycotton.



'It's a genuine honour to be a part of the shore crew, and I have so much respect for the supporters, fundraisers, lifeboat crew and all the other volunteers who are involved in any way'

The RNLI and me: Simon Gregson

He's spent 26 years living on the UK's best-known street – but, this father and lifeboat station volunteer is as much about water as he is soap

You've been on *Coronation Street* since you were about 15 – what's it been like to grow up in the spotlight?

It's got some amazing elements but I don't think I can explain exactly how odd it is too. Now I'm a dad, I'd probably caution my own children about some aspects of being in show business. When I started, I had no acting experience. I'd snuck into school assembly late one day, just in time to hear about this unusual chance to be on a TV show. These days there are so many chances to have a brush with fame, but back then it was a big deal for a kid. Some of the other actors took me under their wings a bit, but mostly the advice was 'learn your lines and say them like you mean them – go!' so I learnt on the job. I certainly didn't think I'd still be on the show 26 years later.

What's your connection with Trearddur Bay – it's pretty far from the fictional town of 'Weatherford' near Manchester isn't it?

As a kid, I used to go on family holidays to Salcombe in Devon with our little pram dinghy and later our 19ft yacht, which dad kitted out himself. After my first pay cheques started coming in from *Coronation Street*, I bought a little speedboat, and eventually a motor yacht. In fact, when I was a teenager, I used to spend all Summer in the Lake District on a sports boat, then pop off an hour down the road to film the show, and come right back to the lake. I've always loved boats, water and speed and when I went to stay with friends in Anglesey as an adult, I just fell in love with it. It's unbelievably beautiful – almost like the Mediterranean when the weather's right.

You're a member of the Trearddur Bay lifeboat shore crew, how did that happen?

I'm good friends with a crew member on the lifeboat, and he showed me round the station. They asked me to be a sort of ambassador or patron, but I wanted to do more than that and it escalated. I'm not there to help as often as I'd like, but when I am, my role is to help get the lifeboat in and out of the water, wash it down and help keep it in good nick. Of course I'd love to be actual lifeboat crew but I'm mostly based in Manchester, so that important role needs to go to somebody much closer to the station.

Why do you support the lifeboats?

I see the RNLI crews as comparable to the emergency services – even the military – in terms of their courage and their selflessness. Except the lifeboat crews are almost all volunteers. I've been to the Holyhead Maritime Museum a few times now, and it's just unbelievable: the conditions those guys used to row out in in these little, fragile looking boats! It's a genuine honour to be a part of the shore crew, and I have so much respect for the supporters, fundraisers, lifeboat crew and all the other volunteers who are involved in any way with such a valuable organisation. Particularly around Anglesey where I've spent so many happy holidays, the seas can be really dangerous – we're so much better off knowing that the RNLI's lifesaving service is there.

Interview: Laura Rainbow
Photo: ITV

MY FAVOURITE ...

Acting side project

I played myself in an episode of the cult sci-fi comedy *Red Dwarf: Back to Earth*. I was stood outside the Rovers Return with the cast and we realised we were all huge fans of each other's shows. It was surreal but fun.

Corrie plot

I like it when it's a bit 'Carry On'. You see a twinkle in the director's eye and you think 'yep, I can have fun with this today!'

Place by the sea

Nowadays it's Anglesey. You have those incredible views over Snowdonia, the beaches and the amazing wildlife. I go with my family, and we've seen dolphins, seals, even a mako shark on the beach.

Dramatic Winter tales

When it's cold outside and the storms are a-raging at sea, there's nothing like cosying up with a good book in the warmth of home

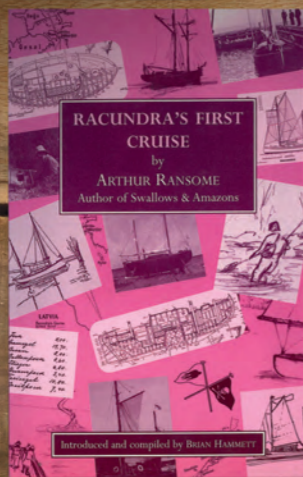


For inspiration

Song of the Sea
by Jane Dolby

Singing with the Fishwives Choir helped Jane through the heartbreak of losing her husband Colin – a commercial fisherman – to the sea. Here, she shares the choir's story. We also get a real-life romance, as Colin moves from being Jane's quiet new neighbour to the love of her life. It's a sweet story, cut suddenly short. For Jane, a widow in her 30s with four children, life had to go on. But how? A raw memoir, but full of hope, life and the promise of songs still to be sung.

Published by Orion
Paperback ISBN 9781409153474
(also available for Kindle)
Price: £7.99



For nostalgia lovers

Racundra's First Cruise
by Arthur Ransome

Before penning *Swallows and Amazons*, Arthur Ransome documented his cruise across the Baltic on the *Racundra*. This fascinating account of life onboard and his adventures along the way is vividly detailed and utterly charming. You don't have to be a sailing expert to enjoy this nautical yarn, but you'll wish you were by the time you finish it.

Published by Fernhurst Books
Paperback ISBN 9781909911239
(also available for Kindle)
Price: £16.99



For lifeboat enthusiasts

Lifeboat Station History books*
Ramsgate by John and Vanessa Ray
Weston-super-Mare by John Crockford-Hawley
Wicklow by Ciarán Doyle
Anstruther by Tony Kingsbury

These four new lifeboat history books record the exploits of our lifeboat crews, and the magnificent support of their lifeboating and wider communities. There's also lots of fascinating information about the individual lifeboats that went to sea, the buildings needed to house them, and how they were funded by generous people and organisations.

Published by the RNLI
Paperback
Price: £8.95/€12

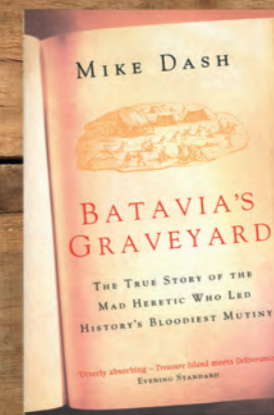


For younger readers

Listen to the Moon
by Michael Morpurgo

Against the backdrop of a raging First World War, Alfie and his fisherman father find a girl washed up on an uninhabited island in the Isles of Scilly. She is exhausted and has no memory of how she arrived – is she a mermaid, or even a German spy? The friendship that develops is blighted by the suspicion and fear of the times, but a bigger picture – one of a girl boarding a great ship for a perilous ocean voyage – begins to emerge. The author, a former children's laureate, describes this tear-jerking tale as 'a story of love and loss, of family and community fractured by war, of the power of hope, and above all of the will of the human spirit to survive.' Hankies at the ready ...

Published by Harper Collins
Children's Books
Paperback ISBN 9780007339655 (also available for Kindle and in hardback)
Price: £6.99



For history aficionados

Batavia's Graveyard: The True Story of The Mad Heretic Who Led History's Bloodiest Mutiny
by Mike Dash

On her maiden voyage to Java in 1628, loaded with a cargo of precious metals and stones, the Dutch East Indiaman *Batavia* ran aground near the coast of Australia. This is an account of the subsequent mutiny – one of the most bizarre and bloodthirsty in maritime history. More than 200 survivors of the wreck were left stranded at the mercy of a brutal religious zealot and his murderous supporters.

When the rescue ships arrived, fewer than 80 had survived. This gripping history offers more tension and horror than many thrillers, but it's not for the faint-hearted.

Published by W&N
Paperback ISBN 9780753816844 (also available for Kindle)
Price: £9.98



For Nelson fans

HMS Victory – Pocket Manual 1805
by Peter Goodwin

Like the vessel herself, this little book on Lord Nelson's flagship (and arguably Britain's most famous warship) is impressively put together. The author – technical and historical adviser to HMS *Victory* at Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard for over 20 years – skilfully mixes narrative with original documents.

It has everything from scale drawings to the mealtime allowances of the crew, from how to sail a Georgian warship to how much gunpowder was used at the Battle of Trafalgar. You don't have to be a military historian, boat builder or student of social history to enjoy this one.

Published by Conway
Hardback ISBN 9781844862603
Price: £8.99

* RNLI station history books are only available by mail order, from RNLISHOP.org, or at the individual lifeboat stations.

SPECIAL DELIVERY



YEARS OF THEIR LIVES – CORRECTION

Many thanks to reader Mark Harvey who contacted us about the main image for the Years of Their Lives feature in the last edition. According to our archive records, the image showed Harold Harvey on the right with crew members, coming ashore in central London ready to accept Gallantry Awards in March 1967. But Mark – Harold's son – spotted that this photo was actually taken during a later occasion ...

THE YEARS OF THEIR LIVES

Recognising our people's achievements – as well as reporting our progress – has always been at the heart of the RNLI's annual meetings. But how we do that has changed with the times, and is about to change again ...

From the RNLI's founders and first medallists to this year's governor's and honorary awards, our supporters and volunteers have gathered in London every year for the charity's annual general meeting and award ceremonies. And the venues, from the London Tavern to the Barbican, have hosted some historic moments. Here we share just a few of them – and reveal what the AGM and awards of the future will look like.

1967

Lifeguards are welcomed ashore in central London as they prepare to receive Medals for Gallantry at the RNLI's Annual Presentation of Awards. In December the previous year, the Moelfre crew rescued 10 and the Holyhead crew rescued five from the Greek motor vessel *Nafsiporos* in a hurricane. For their parts in the rescue, Master Coxswain Dick Evans (left) received a bar to his Gold Medal for Gallantry, Crew Member Evan Owens (middle) received a bar to his Silver Medal and Inspector of Lifeboats Harold Harvey (right) received a Gold Medal.

18 *Lifeboat* Autumn 2015



'Firstly the gentleman standing to the right of the picture on Evan Owens's left is Bill Sampson, the former technical manager of the RNLI's Depot at Borehamwood, and therefore is not my father Harold Harvey. Secondly the picture commemorates an entirely different event, which took place on the 9th November 1973, namely the 'Thames Cavalcade as Memorial to Coxswain Blogg of Cromer'.

'At the time, my father was Superintendent of Depot at Borehamwood and Bill Sampson was the technical manager of engineering works. The *H.F. Bailey*, currently on display at the Henry Blogg Museum in Cromer and arguably his most famous former lifeboat, was sold out of service in the Summer of 1973.

'My father handled *H.F. Bailey's* sale out of the Reserve Fleet in 1973. He skippered her across the Irish Sea from Crosshaven in Eire with Bill Sampson as engineer and me as an enthusiastic deck hand. The boat was craned out of the water in Bristol and taken by low loader to Holme Pierrepont near Nottingham where she was craned into the

rowing lake as Leisure Sport's centrepiece for the 1973 World Junior Rowing Championships, which they sponsored.

'In a future issue of *Lifeboat*, it would be fitting for all concerned if the record could be corrected regarding 'The Years of their Lives' article. In addition, as 2nd December 2016 marks the 50th anniversary of the *Nafsiporos* rescue, perhaps the Winter issue next year might feature an article to commemorate the service and heroism of all who took part. To the best of my knowledge, my father remains the only Inspector of Lifeboats in the history of the Institution to be awarded the Gold Medal for Gallantry.'

Mark Harvey, Preston

We're very grateful to Mark for setting the record straight and apologise for the error. Our Heritage team is in touch with him to help ensure our *HF Bailey* records are as accurate as possible – and we're planning a feature on the *Nafsiporos* rescue later in 2016.

YOUR POSTS ON FACEBOOK

As ever our supporters have kept our Facebook page full of pictures and stories – and something that cropped up again and again were their photos of this display of pumpkins in the West Sussex village of Slindon. Robin Upton's family has created stunning murals made from pumpkins and squashes for nearly 50 years. And this Autumn he showed his appreciation for the RNLI, celebrating 150 years of lifesaving at Shoreham.



'We started the ball rolling last night with the first of my three Fish Supper evenings (only a little early). Our menu was a bit over the top but I think it was worth it. We started with a prawn cocktail followed by halibut on a bed of kale with vine tomatoes and baby potatoes and a choice of sauces (orange and dill or dark soya and ginger). Dessert was a lemon cheesecake with cream followed with a cheese board, then coffee and mints. It was a great success, raising £100. We are looking forward to the next exciting evening's entertainment (but not the washing up afterwards).'

Jason Tamplin



'I am competing in an Ironman Triathlon in May 2016 after only starting to do running last year and completed a 1/2 marathon for my 50th birthday. I am doing this raise funds for the RNLI. Thank you.'

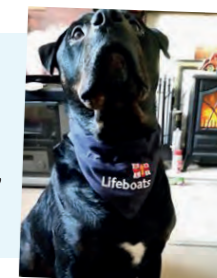
Tom Casey



'A very proud day for Abersoch RNLI - a new #lifeboat, a #royal visit and a long service #award!' **Abersoch RNLI**

'My dog Finn wearing his new bandana we got him while on holiday. He will wear it every time he goes to the beach with pride to show his support to all the lifeboat people.'

Lynda Chadwick



To all at RNLI College – just thought I'd take time out and say, even though I don't live by the coast, I try to pop to lifeboat stations all over the coastline, and if it wasn't for the amazing college in Poole we wouldn't have the courage and the bravery of the crew members of lifeboats.

Simon Gruszecky

Write to us using the contact details at the bottom of page 2 or share your stories at twitter.com/RNLI or facebook.com/RNLI.

RNLI FAMILY: THE LIFE OF THE CHARITY

Celebrating the RNLI family, past and present

Interrupted nuptials

When Littlestone-on-sea RNLI volunteers Matt and Heather Crittenden decided to hold their wedding ceremony at the lifeboat station, the possibility of a shout interrupting proceedings was a distinct possibility.

Sure enough, just after the ceremony, the pagers sounded, and the Littlestone crew sprang into action. The forward-thinking couple had designated an area for guests to stand in case of a launch – and they watched on as volunteers swapped their tea and cake for lifejackets, before heading out to sea.

Thankfully, the crew weren't needed for long and soon returned to the station to join the remaining guests.



Something in the water



Filey RNLI lifeboat crew had an extra special send-off when they launched on exercise on Sunday 13 September – six babies were on hand to watch.

In the past year Filey lifeboat crew members and their partners have welcomed many new arrivals, six of

whom were gathered to watch their first launch.

Our picture shows proud crew members (left to right): Paul Wilson, Paul Barnes, Tom Barkley, Dave Eblet, Richard Johnson and Jon Harrison with their offspring.

Barry Robson, Filey's Coxswain/Mechanic said afterwards: 'The dads can be called out at any time, so our thanks must go to all the partners of our volunteer crew here at Filey, who support us so much.'

Celebrating life and remembering our friends

'A hugely kind and giving man'

DR GARETH HUGHES-THOMAS



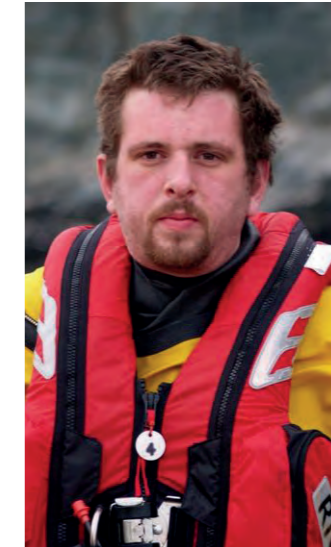
Tributes have been paid to RNLI Porthdinllaen volunteer Dr Gareth Hughes-Thomas, who gave almost 6 decades of dedicated service to the charity. Gareth became Deputy Honorary Medical Adviser at Porthdinllaen station in 1956;

Honorary Medical Adviser 10 years later and was station doctor until 1985, when he retired and travelled as a ship's medical officer with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. His commitment to the station was not limited to medical matters; from 1976 he also served as Lifeboat Station (now Lifeboat Management Group) Chairman – a role he fulfilled actively right up until his death. In 1985, for his tireless service to the RNLI, Dr Hughes-Thomas was awarded a Silver Badge. A Gold Badge followed in 2001, with a Bar to his Gold in 2007.

'Everybody loved him – from people who have been around for years like me to young and new members of the crew,' says Ken Fitzpatrick, Porthdinllaen Lifeboat Operations Manager. 'He was only small in stature but he was a hugely kind and giving man. He was always there to help whenever the station needed him.'

'He was one of our own'

CRAIG STEADMAN



Holyhead Crew Member Craig Steadman, who died on 24 August, had been a lifeboat volunteer since 2004. After a break, during which he taught sailing at a college in Salcombe, he rejoined in 2011 and began working hard to, one day, become the lifeboat's helm. Craig's father, Ray, is also a volunteer with RNLI Holyhead, and agreed that the station's late August open days should be held in Craig's memory. Hundreds attended.

Holyhead Coxswain Brian Thomson says: 'Craig was a popular member of the crew on both our lifeboats and will be sadly missed by everyone here. We are a close-knit station and he was one of our own.'

Jean Boyles – August 2015

Former President and long-serving member at Ifracombe Branch

Marco Brimacombe – October 2015

Former Coxswain at Salcombe

Dr Bill Clegg – June 2015

President and former Honorary Medical Adviser at Tobermory

Keith Drake – August 2015

DLA and former Second Coxswain at Tobermory

William Drake – August 2015

Former Supervisor, Fundraising at Poole Headquarters

Dorothy Eastwood – August 2015

Former Supervisor of the Typing Pool at Poole Headquarters

Lake Falconer – July 2015

Former Crew Member, DLA and Chairman at Oban Lifeboat Station

Bill Farquhar – October 2015

Lifeboat Operations Manager at Thurso, former Coxswain and Former DLA

Des Gregory – August 2015

President of Bude Fundraising Branch

Martha Hyland – August 2015

Former Clerk at Republic of Ireland Fundraising Office

Dawn Johnson – September 2015

Central Processing Unit

James Joyce – August 2015

Crew Member at Aran Islands

Jim Lyne – August 2015

Lifeboat Administration Officer at Ramsgate

James (Jim) Mitchell – October 2015

Former Coxswain at Macduff

Mary McEwen-Smith MBE – July 2015

President and long-serving member of Clevedon and Tickenham Branch

Jenny Robinson – September 2015

Souvenir Secretary and Committee Member of Locksheath Branch

Vera Robinson MBE – July 2015

President RNLI Redcar Guild and volunteer at Zetland Museum

Robert Scally – October 2015

Former Second Coxswain and Assistant Mechanic at Campbeltown

Christine van Doorn – August 2015

Long-serving member of Cupar Branch

Emlyn Williams – August 2015

Deputy Launching Authority at Criccieth

Robert 'Bob' Wright MBE – September 2015

Deputy Second Coxswain and former Coxswain at Pwllheli Lifeboat Station

Frances Zisimides – September 2015

Founder member of Plymouth Ladies' Guild and RNLI shop

A collection of yellow rubber boots with 'RNLI' printed on them, floating in a blue sky with light clouds. The boots are scattered around the central text boxes.

MAYDAY

26 April – 2 May 2016

MAYDAY IS COMING

SAVE THE DATE

GIVE IT SOME WELLY THIS MAYDAY

Mayday is our annual welly-themed fundraising campaign – and it's back for 2016 from 26 April to 2 May.

Show your support for the brave RNLI lifeboat crews by raising vital funds to help them save lives at sea.

To register your interest, volunteer to help or find a Mayday event taking place near you, visit: RNLI.org/Mayday