

# LIFEBOAT

ISSUE 615 | SPRING 2016



THE RNLI IS THE  
CHARITY THAT  
SAVES LIVES AT SEA

## SAFETY NET

How your support helps fishing crews to come home safely

PLUS:

## READ REMARKABLE RESCUES

Flood teams and lifeboat crews battle the elements

## FATHER OF FORECAST

The RNLI supporter who made meteorological and maritime history



# Welcome

The weather was especially unforgiving back in the Winter, whether it caused inland flooding or offshore accidents. As you'll read in our rescue pages, it led to challenging times for our Flood Rescue Team and lifeboat crews.

They headed to all sorts of emergencies – from people trapped in their homes to fishermen in danger out at sea. We may have reached the warmer months now, but our lifesavers continue to prevent tragedies in challenging conditions. Many incidents are also avoided because people take precautions. Where would we be, for example, without accurate forecasting to warn us of extreme weather? Our heritage feature pays tribute to the father of forecast and former RNLI committee member, Admiral FitzRoy, whose

barometers kept many a fisherman safe. And on page 30, we explore how this charity is helping to make commercial fishing safer today. There are also tips on getting into sailing, an interview with a bestselling author and lots of RNLI news to catch up on. So I hope you enjoy the magazine – whatever the weather!

  
**Editor:** Rory Stamp  
@LifeboatRory



RORY STAMP  
LIFEBOAT EDITOR



Photo: RNLI/Flood Rescue Team

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**Chairman:** Charles Hunter-Pease  
**Chief Executive:** Paul Boissier  
**Lifeboat Editor:** Rory Stamp  
**Lifeboat Design:** Jon Lotriet  
**Offshore Editor:** Bethany Hope  
**Offshore Design:** Andy Perryman  
**Front cover photo:** RNLI/Nigel Millard



**PICTURED:** The RNLI Flood Rescue Team check homes in Cumbria during the December floods. Photo: RNLI

**CONTACT US**  
For all enquiries, please contact our Supporter Care Team by phone on **0300 300 9990**, email [supporter\\_care@rnli.org.uk](mailto: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.



## In this issue



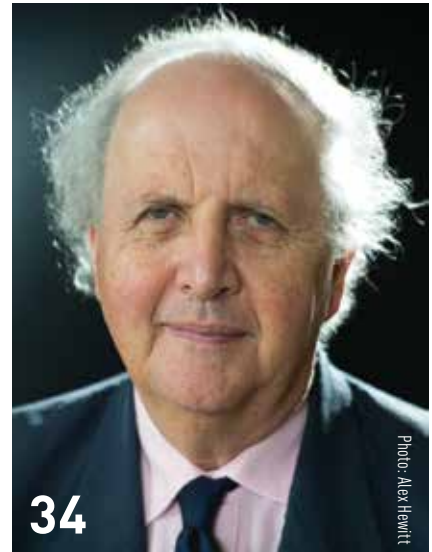
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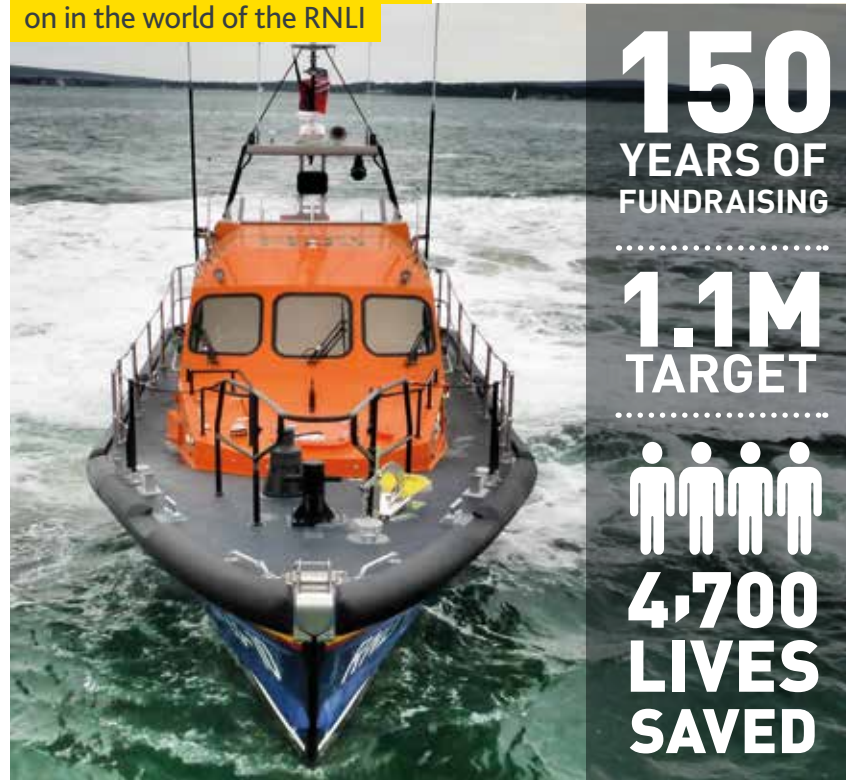
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# News

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



## FROM OARS TO WATERJETS

What has a 25-knot all-weather craft powered with waterjets got in common with a £300 wooden boat with 10 oars? They're both fundraising targets set by The Lifeboat Fund – the UK civil service charity set up in aid of the RNLI. When the fund was set up in 1866, the first lifeboat funded was *Civil Service*, which was stationed in Co Wexford and saved 122 lives. Now, after funding 52 lifeboats, the civil service is going further than ever in aid of the charity – in celebration of 150 years of support.

The Lifeboat Fund has set its sights on raising £1.1M towards a new Shannon class lifeboat at Wells, Norfolk. 'This is a

remarkable target, set by a remarkable organisation,' says Paul Boissier, RNLI Chief Executive. 'Our volunteer crew members have saved thousands of lives thanks to the kindness and hard work of civil servants over the years. The Shannon they aim to fund is our most capable and advanced class of lifeboat yet – and the volunteers at Wells deserve nothing less. It will replace their Mersey class lifeboat, which has to be taken nearly 1.5 miles to launch when the tide is out. The 25-knot Shannon can be launched in shallow waters, straight from the station. This all reduces the time to reach those in need.'

## VIEW OUR AGM

(IN POOLE, DUBLIN, LONDON OR PERTH)

Would you like to come along to the RNLI Annual General Meeting? This year, as reported in previous editions of the magazine, it's in a new venue. Our AGM has been held at the Barbican in London for the past 14 years but 2016 heralds a fresh format. We're moving it out of the city to be by the sea – and much closer to our headquarters in Poole. All RNLI supporters are welcome.



Thursday 19 May 2016, 2pm

**The Lighthouse**, Poole's Centre for the Arts, 21 Kingland Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1UG.

We will also be showing a live video stream of the event at: RNLI **Perth** Office, Unit 3, Ruthvenfield Grove, Inveralmond Industrial Estate, Perth, PH1 3GL RNLI **Dublin** Office, Airside, Swords, Co Dublin

**London:** Hill Dickinson, The Broadgate Tower, 20 Primrose Street, London, EC2A 2EW

Spaces are limited, so tickets will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis. Please call 0300 300 9995 (with your supporter number to hand) or email [events@rnli.org.uk](mailto:events@rnli.org.uk) for availability.

## HONOURS FOR LIFESAVERS

Congratulations to the RNLI volunteers and staff who were recognised in this year's New Year Honours, for their contribution to saving lives at sea.

### MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire):

**Richard Spindler**  
a volunteer of 50 years at Weston-super-Mare Lifeboat Station

**Ray Chapman**  
Coxswain at Skegness Lifeboat Station

**Lady Rose Crossman**  
President of Berwick-upon-Tweed Fundraising Guild

**Janet Kelly**  
former Station Manager at Tower Lifeboat Station

**Dr Reginald Carr**  
Blyth Lifeboat Medical Adviser

### BEM (British Empire Medal):

**David Whiteley** (pictured)  
Coxswain at Hoylake Lifeboat Station



Are you ready to give it some welly this Mayday? Our crews' iconic boots are the inspiration behind our fundraising campaign, which this year runs from 26 April to 2 May.

When they rush to the lifeboat station and pull those wellies on, many volunteers miss out on time with loved ones. Redcar RNLI volunteer Dave Cocks recalls how he was teaching his son Robert to ride a bike near his home when his pager went off. Dave asked his wife to look after Robert while he dashed to the station. When Dave returned from the shout, Robert was riding his bike without stabilisers, shouting 'Daddy, Daddy, look what I can do.'

RNLI lifesavers miss moments like that every day. So we're asking people to show their support for our crews this Mayday, and help give them everything they need to save lives at sea. To register your interest, volunteer to help or find a Mayday event taking place near you, visit: [RNLI.org/Mayday](http://RNLI.org/Mayday).

## WELCOMING THE RNLI'S NEW VICE-CHAIR



Stuart Popham has been appointed as the RNLI's new Vice-Chair. 'I'm honoured to be given such a fantastic opportunity – to be Vice-Chair for such an amazing charity and important lifesaving service,' says Stuart, who has been on the RNLI Council since May 2011 and a Trustee since July 2013. After working as a solicitor for over

35 years, Stuart joined Citigroup in July 2011 as Vice-Chairman of EMEA Banking. 'As a lifelong sailor with family who recognise the real value of the RNLI, I really feel I can do my bit to help,' adds Stuart.

'I look forward to getting to know even more about the RNLI and meeting so many more of the staff and volunteers.'



SCOTLAND

Words: Philly Byrde, Bethany Hope

COMMUNITY NEWS

Eyemouth

REPRESENTING THE RNLI

Three members of Eyemouth Lifeboat Station represented the RNLI at the Annual National Service for Seafarers held at the end of 2015 at St Paul's Cathedral, London.

Each year, the RNLI nominates a different regional division to attend and the Scottish Division was picked, who in turn nominated Eyemouth.

The three members from Eyemouth – John Purvis, Jim Dougal and Andrew Jamieson (pictured left to right) – commented that it was a huge honour to attend the service on behalf of the RNLI.



Photo: RNLI/Eyemouth

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](http://RNLI.org/NewsCentre)

Dailly | Ballater | Peebles

CREWS HEAD INLAND

Lifeboat crew never quite know what to expect when they're called out. But even they must have been surprised to be deployed away from the coast.

On 30 December, Girvan lifeboat crew members went to the aid of 12 people stranded on a bus in a raging flood near Dailly, South Ayrshire, 15 miles inland. On scene, the Royal Navy helicopter had to refuel after airlifting 10 people from the bus. So Girvan crew and police officers climbed into the bus through a window and rescued the two remaining casualties.

The next day, more RNLI volunteers stepped up as the Flood Rescue Team

helped evacuate residents from a flooded care home in Peebles.

Then, on 2 January, lifeboat volunteers from Aberdeen travelled 40 miles inland to help restore power to the village of Ballater. The residents had been without electricity for 4 days.

In heavy winds and driving rain, the Aberdeen crew members used rocket line throwers to get a power line 60m across the River Dee, where Scottish Hydro workers started to restore power to the area. (Rocket line throwers, pictured above, are usually used by RNLI crews to pass ropes to a vessel to assist in rescues.)



Photo: RNLI

Not your typical RNLI rescue – Girvan crew help rescue two people from a bus stuck in floods

Longhope

£3,000 raised from three islands tour

Keeping fundraising going after the Summer is no mean feat, but for some communities it can be even trickier. With residents across Orkney keen to support their local crew, Longhope Lifeboat Guild volunteers toured their bazaar and auction across three islands.

Sales of items, ranging from giant cabbages to a

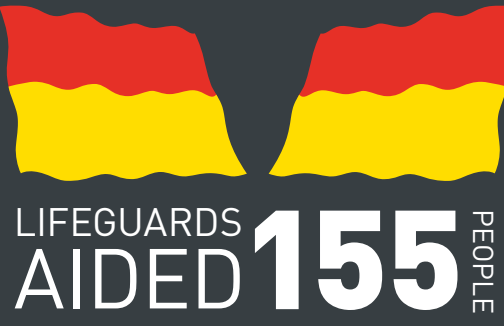
chaise longue, raised an incredible £3,000. 'The logistics can be quite problematic what with forecasted hurricanes and clashing events,' explains Lifeboat Press Officer Mary Harris. 'Although Longhope is the main sale, the trips to our neighbouring isles are just as important to us.'



Photo: RNLI/Mary Harris

Mascot Hector the Scottie dog helps bring in the pounds on Flotta

Scotland: 2015 in numbers



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](http://RNLI.org/events).

BOAT JUMBLE/CHOIR CONCERT

North Church Hall, Ardrishaig

23 April, 10am–2pm/7.30pm

Get all your boating kit for the season, followed by an evening concert in aid of the RNLI with the Dalriada Choir. Admission to boat jumble £2, including a soup and roll lunch. Contact [lynsey\\_anderson@rnli.org.uk](mailto:lynsey_anderson@rnli.org.uk) / 07557 191865 for details.

MAYDAY

26 April–2 May

Fun, welly-themed events across Scotland to mark the RNLI's annual fundraising campaign. Includes a Grangemouth coffee morning, Arbroath's welly walk, a Crieff ceilidh and a concert in Kirkcaldy. See [RNLI.org/mayday](http://RNLI.org/mayday) or contact [rachel\\_stewart@rnli.org.uk](mailto:rachel_stewart@rnli.org.uk) / 07767 382336 for details.

BURNMOUTH BRAE RACES

1 May, from midday

There's only one road out of Burnmouth, and you'll be tackling its 20% incline on foot, bike or both! Register at [rnli-burnmouth-brae-race.weebly.com](http://rnli-burnmouth-brae-race.weebly.com) or [burnmouthbraeraces@gmail.com](mailto:burnmouthbraeraces@gmail.com).

OPEN DAYS

28 May, Anstruther

19 June, Queensferry

Your chance to get up close to the action throughout the Summer. At Anstruther, catch the announcement of the winning name for their new D class lifeboat. Please check with your local station for more dates and details.



# RESCUE

Our lifeboat crews and lifeguards carry out thousands of rescues every year (see launches on page 20). Here are just some of those caught on camera, and see the list below for more reports:

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- 7 BANTHAM** | PAGE 12
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You can also watch and read the latest rescues online at [RNLI.org/NewsCentre](http://RNLI.org/NewsCentre).



## 1 KAYAKERS CAUGHT IN ROUGH SEAS

**PORTAFERRY** | 12 NOVEMBER 2015

At 12.38pm, the volunteer lifeboat crew at Portaferry launched to the aid of three kayakers caught in force 7 winds and rough seas. When they arrived on scene, the crew found the three kayakers huddled together and clinging to a makeshift raft made of their three kayaks as they were beaten around by the sea. The RNLI crew pulled the three men and their kayaks aboard the lifeboat and took them back to shore safe and unscathed.



## 2 YACHT IN DISTRESS

**YARMOUTH** | 10 DECEMBER

The all-weather lifeboat crew based at Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, headed to the aid of two sailors whose yacht was in danger of losing its mast. The yacht had serious rigging failure, leaving the sailors at the mercy of rough seas in Christchurch Bay. A south westerly wind was gusting to 35 knots, the sea was very rough and visibility was poor. But the lifeboat volunteers managed to get close enough to pass a tow rope. It then took 2 hours to take the yacht to safety.



## 4 SWEEPED FROM A BREAKWATER

**PORHCRAWL** | 16 DECEMBER

A fisherman was knocked off his feet and dragged into the sea after a large wave swept over a breakwater. Within minutes the crew of Porthcawl's inshore lifeboat were on their way, and found him drifting a quarter of a mile offshore. Lifeboat Helm Ross Purchase said: 'He was cold and floating in and out of consciousness.' Crew Member Simon Emms helped the man aboard the lifeboat (pictured) and the crew took him back to the lifeboat station, where an ambulance was waiting.



## 3 EVACUATION IN FORCE 8 GALE

**CLIFDEN** | 15 NOVEMBER

When a woman from Inishbofin Island suffered severe abdominal pain, she needed to reach medical help fast. Clifden RNLI volunteers responded in the early hours of the morning, launching into a force 8 gale, a 6m swell and darkness. They took the woman to Cleggan, where an ambulance was waiting to take her to hospital. Coxswain Alan Pryce described the conditions as 'extremely challenging and the most severe weather we've experienced'.



## 5 DIVE BOAT SINKS

**KYLE OF LOCHALSH** | 15 NOVEMBER

When a dive boat with three divers ran aground, the Kyle of Lochalsh crew rushed to the rescue. Finding the divers safe on the rocks, the crew decided to wait for the tide to flood before towing the boat away. But as they towed the boat it began to list – the rocks had caused significant damage to the underside of the boat and there was nothing the crew could do to prevent it from sinking. Thankfully, the three divers were already aboard the lifeboat and were returned to land safely.

# SINKING IN THE DARK

When Angle crew members were jolted awake by the beeping of pagers at 2am, they faced a race against time to rescue the crew of a sinking fishing boat

Waking to a direct page from the Coastguard on that chilly morning on 28 October, the Angle volunteers knew immediately that the situation was serious. Unless the shout is a matter of life or death, the crew are paged by the Lifeboat Operations Manager.

Coxswain Lewis Creese sped along the 3-mile dirt track that leads to Angle Lifeboat Station, in the station's Land Rover. He picked up the crew along the way from the ends of their drives.

In the Land Rover, the crew found out a fishing boat was sinking rapidly off Rat Island. Having hit a rock, the skipper had tried to ground the vessel so that it could be salvaged but, half a mile from shore, had fouled a propeller. He and his four-strong crew were now stranded aboard a sinking vessel.

Reaching the lifeboat station, the RNLI volunteers threw on their gear and jumped aboard their Tamar class lifeboat *Mark Mason*.

For Assistant Mechanic Dave Dillane, this shout was particularly worrying – he had worked on the same fishing vessel before becoming an RNLI crew member. 'I knew the best thing to do was to stay calm and do my job so we could get there and rescue them quickly,' says Dave, who entered the vessel's reported position into the lifeboat's navigation system to help them locate it in the darkness.

The lifeboat volunteers found the fishing boat in shallow waters, taking on water rapidly. Most of the fishing crew were still onboard, but the boat was listing heavily and the deck was

already flooded. Knowing the situation could take a turn for the worse at any moment, the skipper had deployed the liferaft. Now some of the crew were already abandoning ship.

**'You don't think about it – you just get on'**

Aware he had to act fast if they had any chance of saving the vessel, Coxswain Lewis brought the *Mark Mason* alongside. As soon as they were next to the boat, Crew Members Nigel Berry and Adam Stringer climbed aboard with the salvage pump to begin pumping the water out to prevent it from sinking. Adam says: 'It goes against all of your natural instincts to get on a boat listing to that extent and

**'I've got nothing but praise for all of the crew'**

**LEWIS CREESE**  
**COXSAIN | ANGLE**

On a shout like this, when the crew has been woken up in the early hours of the morning and they're tired, it helps that everything is already second nature to them. For Jordan (Tuckwell, Crew Member), the training was incredibly helpful – this was his first urgent shout and he did incredibly well, especially considering the conditions and the circumstances. In fact, I've got nothing but praise for all of the crew; it was a real team effort and a great outcome in the circumstances.



Footage from the all-weather lifeboat shows the RNLI crew ...



... getting alongside the liferaft and pulling the fishermen aboard



BELOW: The fishing boat at low tide the next day



has taken on that much water! But in this situation, you don't even think about it – you just get on with doing your job, trying to keep the crew safe and save the boat.'

However, by the time the salvage pump was set up, the boat was taking on water quicker than the pump could expel it. The vessel, despite the volunteers' best efforts, was beyond saving. The skipper ordered everybody to abandon ship.

The salvage pump had already been fully submerged. Making sure everybody was off the boat, Adam and Nigel jumped into the liferaft and to safety. After making sure everybody was safe, they paddled the liferaft alongside the *Mark Mason* and helped the cold, wet and disheartened fishermen aboard to warm up.

While Dave sat with the fishermen, chatting with them, Adam and Nigel were not ready to leave their pump behind. They launched the daughter craft – a powered inflatable Y boat – from a compartment at the back of the lifeboat, and went back to the stranded vessel. Unfortunately, she had taken on too much water. Trying to recover the pump would be too dangerous.

At 3.35am, the Tamar class returned to Angle station with the Y boat following close by. Stepping onto land, the grateful but heavily disappointed fishermen were met by Milford Haven Port Authority, while the lifeboat crew washed their craft down. They returned home to bed – just a few hours before they had to get up again for work.

Words: Jack Barclay  
Photos: Gavin Dando, RNLI/Lewis Creese



# BROTHERS IN ARMS

On a popular Devon beach, unseasonably warm weather tempted people into the delights of the surf – and the dangers of the rip current ...

While many families spent the afternoon carving Halloween pumpkins on 31 October 2015, others flocked to the seaside to make the most of the mild weather. At Bantham Beach, the sea was filled with surfers and bodyboarders enjoying the waves. It was the penultimate day of the beach's 2015 RNLI lifeguard season, and brothers Isaac and Theo Stopard were on duty.

'There was an incoming tide, so I was very conscious about moving the kit up the beach and trying to maintain a safe bathing zone,' recalls Isaac, who was on duty at the water's edge as his shift drew to a close. He had spent the afternoon warning beach goers about the rip before they entered the water and monitoring surfers who were using the rip to paddle out.

'At about 4pm there was a strong glare from the sun, but I noticed a number of bodyboarders further out to sea drifting towards the rip. I started

walking towards the rip to advise them to swim back across. But by the time I was halfway there, they were already in trouble.'

Meanwhile Theo was just returning to the lifeguard hut from his foot patrol of the beach when another lifeguard pointed to the bodyboarders in trouble. Five people, including two children, were caught in the rip and drifting out to sea. They were surrounded by submerged rocks and buffeted by large waves.

Isaac and Theo rushed to launch their inshore rescue boat. It was a race against the clock but, despite the growing danger, the brothers kept clear heads. 'I have carried out numerous rescues and know this beach very well, so I was pretty calm and knew where I had to drive and what hazards to avoid in order to safely pick up the

bodyboarders,' Isaac recalls. 'I knew that, as long as they remained calm and held onto their bodyboards, we would be able to get to them in time.'

Out in the surf, the bodyboarders had split into two groups: two women and a girl were the furthest out and shouting for help, while a man and a girl were closer in. The brothers decided to prioritise those furthest out. 'As we drove past the two closest in, we told them to stay calm, hold onto their bodyboards and swim parallel to the beach – we would be back soon.'

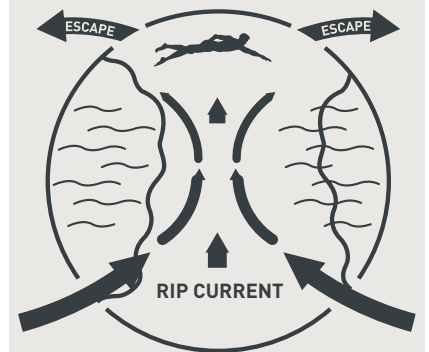
Carefully manoeuvring through the rough surf and treacherous rocks,

Isaac and Theo reached the group further out to sea. They dragged both women and the child from the perilous rip and returned them safely to shore, before racing straight out again to reach the man and child still in danger. 'By the time we got back to the other two, they were among the breaking waves,' says Isaac, who helped the girl aboard. After swiftly dropping her off at the beach, the lifeguards powered back to the remaining bodyboarder. He had managed to swim into waist-deep water, and gratefully accepted a ride back to shore. After checking the bodyboarders were not suffering any

ill-effects after their ordeal – and that no one else was in trouble, the lifeguards prepared to pack up their gear and looked back on a successful rescue.

'Isaac and I rarely have the chance to work together and that day was the first time we had done a rescue together in the boat,' Theo says. 'I really like working with my brother because we each know how the other works. I am very confident in his ability and judgement.'

Words: Nikki McMullen  
Photo: Alex Williams



## What are rip currents?

They're fast-flowing bodies of water that can drag people and debris away from the shoreline and out to deeper water. A rip can reach up to 4.5mph – that's faster than an Olympic swimmer. It's not surprising that these dangerous currents are a major cause of accidental drowning across the world and account for many RNLI lifeguard incidents.

So if you're hitting the waves, choose a lifeguarded beach and swim or bodyboard between the red and yellow flags. That way, if you get into trouble, our lifeguards can spot you and reach you quickly. If you get caught in a rip, remember: don't try to swim against it. Swim parallel to shore until you're free of the rip – then head for the beach. Raise your hand and shout for help. For more information, see: [RNLI.org/safety](http://RNLI.org/safety).



# FROM FESTIVITIES TO FLOOD WATERS

Our Flood Rescue Team went to the aid of hundreds of people during Winter floods – including a stranded family

It should have been an exciting, festive family stay in Cumbria. But when young brothers Sebastian and Jacob Holmes huddled together on a bunk bed on the night of 6 December, they watched rising floodwater sweep through the bungalow where they were staying. Meanwhile their grandparents – who were babysitting the pair – frantically waved

**'The pregnant woman and her partner were on the kitchen worktop and the water was about 3 inches from the top'**

flashlights in the hope of rescue, knowing that floodwaters like this had hit homes across the county. Could anyone come to their aid?

The two boys were staying with their grandparents, Kevin and Mary, along with their cousin Haydn and his pregnant girlfriend Samara in a remote bungalow in the Levens area. Fast-flowing

floodwater had stranded the family for hours. And then it began to rise. Mary consoled Sebastian (5) and Jacob (3), while Haydn and Samara climbed onto tables to escape the water. Kevin continued to call for help.

Volunteers from the RNLI's Flood Rescue Team (FRT) were deployed in Cumbria with crews heading to the aid of people in the Kendal, Cockermouth, and Carlisle areas. After being alerted to the stranded family near Kendal, a team of five FRT volunteers, all hailing from Welsh lifeboat stations, drove to the area in their flood rescue vehicle, hoping they could launch a rescue boat. But the conditions and terrain were working against them.

'Other emergency services had struggled to launch around there because, where the water was shallow enough to launch a boat, it was still dangerously fast,' explains FRT Member Elissa Thursfield, who is also on the Abersoch lifeboat

## 'Awesome human beings'

'When we heard the RNLI team had managed to get them out safely we were so relieved,' says Alan, Sebastian and Jacob's dad. 'It's amazing that a team of volunteers are willing to drop everything to come and help.'

The boys' mum Helen added: 'In order to get my terrified children onto the rescue sled the volunteers promised the boys their helmets.' True to their word, the team headed to the Holmes's household in Lytham St Annes on 23 December to deliver the helmets to the boys – who are pictured with rescuers Elissa and Guy. 'I am indebted to the RNLI – not only for putting their lives at risk to rescue my family,' adds Helen, 'but for being awesome human beings.'



The boys were transferred into a tractor that powered through the floodwater to safety

RESCUE  
Flood Rescue Team members helped the family out of the bungalow, onto a rescue sled

crew. 'That, together with the darkness and the water still rising, would have put us and our gear at risk. But while we were assessing the situation, a farmer passing in a tractor asked if he could be of help.'

With its powerful, big wheels, the tractor was able to make slow but steady progress through the water. So the farmer ferried Moelfre lifeboat Mechanic Vince Jones and Rhyl Crew Member Martin Jones to the front door of the bungalow.

'You could see the family were so relieved to see us entering the house,' recalls Vince. 'The pregnant woman and her partner were on the kitchen worktop and the water was about 3 inches from the top of it. The grandmother and the children were on the top bunk bed with a bag of Christmas presents.'

While Vince and Martin reassured the family, the farmer drove clear of the waters to collect Elissa and Beaumaris Crew Member Guy Williams, who had inflated a rescue sled. They tied the sled – which works like a large, floating stretcher – to the back of the tractor and headed towards the bungalow.

Vince and Martin were waiting at the front door, where they helped 3-year-old Jacob and

his grandmother onto the sled. 'Speed was of the essence,' says Vince. 'The water level inside rose a foot or so in the time we were there, so it was a really challenging situation for the team – but this is what we go through extensive training for.'

While the pair were ferried to safety, the team prepared Jacob's older brother Sebastian and Samara for rescue – and they too were safely ferried to safety. 'The boys had initially been terrified but when we told them they were getting a ride on a tractor they seemed to be quite excited,' recalls Elissa, who helped Kevin and Haydn to safety while the rest of the team retrieved the remaining occupants in the bungalow: Kevin and Mary's two dogs.

With all six people and the pets now rescued from the bungalow, they were taken to a pub nearby where they were soon warm and dry. With the casualties safe, the FRT members had time to think about the rescue. 'During the job you don't think about it but afterwards, when you reflect on the conditions, it was incredible,' says Elissa. 'I can't believe I was part of that.'

Words: Rory Stamp  
Photos: RNLI/Danielle Rush

This screengrab is from footage taken on Flood Rescue Team Member Guy Williams's helmet camera



# AT A STORM'S MERCY

Caught in the path of Storm Abigail, the crew of a broken-down shellfish trawler needed RNLI volunteers to come to their aid – quickly



LEFT: A screengrab taken from the Bridlington lifeboat shows both fishing boats struggling in the sea

RIGHT: Neil Robson (far right) returns to the station to thank the lifeboat crew

As the storm passed over them on 12 November 2015, the 12 men onboard trawlers *Genesis Rose* and *Genesis Enigma* knew they had to head for the safety of Bridlington Harbour. Experienced skipper Neil Robson was in charge of *Genesis Enigma*, his son George at the helm of *Genesis Rose* for the first time in bad weather.

But as they began their return journey, still some 70 miles away from shelter, the propeller of *Genesis Enigma* was fouled on some rope. Fortunately, *Genesis Rose* was just a few miles away and George began a tow. However, with the 15m *Genesis Enigma* weighing around 100 tonnes, the Robsons faced a difficult and potentially dangerous

task: manoeuvring the vessels into Bridlington's narrow harbour mouth. Neil knew they would need help and called the Coastguard.

By now it was 5.45pm, the pair of trawlers were 2 miles from the harbour and the storm was at its peak.

## STRUGGLE FOR SAFE HARBOUR

Meanwhile the volunteers of RNLI Bridlington's Mersey class lifeboat *Marine Engineer* were heading out to the rescue. Coxswain Stuart Tibbett says: 'When I'd picked my son up from football earlier in the day, I'd rung the harbour watch officer to find out who was at sea. I knew the *Genesis* boats were out there, but they're fine new

vessels and Neil is a very experienced skipper. I thought nothing more of it until teatime, when I was sat at the table listening to the wind building up outside. My pager went off and as I raced off, I told my wife, as I always do, that I'd call her as soon as I knew what the shout was going to be. It turned out to be the Robsons, rapidly approaching the harbour.'

Stuart picked his most experienced crew for the lifeboat that night – he knew it would be a tough challenge to help both large fishing boats negotiate the harbour mouth. Onboard were Second Coxswain Steve Emmerson, Mechanic Chris Brompton, Relief Mechanics Jason Stevenson and Andy

Rogers, trainee Coxswain and Navigator Grant Walkington, and Crew Member Andy Webber.

The volunteers quickly reached the two vessels and secured a rope to *Genesis Enigma*'s stern. This would allow them to provide extra braking power while *Genesis Rose* continued to tow. Shackled together, the three boats made their way to the harbour entrance but the powerful waves pushed them precariously towards the north pier. They had to abandon the approach, head back to sea and try again.

As the boats neared the harbour a second time, the RNLI crew fired eight white flares to illuminate their difficult path. It was at this point the rope between *Genesis Enigma* and the lifeboat snapped, and the trawler struck the north pier.

Second Coxswain Steve Emmerson fished the tow rope out of the water, and Coxswain Tibbett and his crew

fought to regain the tow. Meanwhile the skipper of *Genesis Rose* pulled *Genesis Enigma* further into the harbour – skilfully manoeuvring the huge trawler to safety. Soon, both fishing boats had reached the inner harbour, where their crews secured them. *Genesis Enigma* was scratched from her brush with the pier, but more worryingly, the cry 'I can't breathe' now came from inside the trawler. Neil's son John Robson was in need of casualty care after the stressful ordeal.

Lifeboat Crew Members Andy Rogers and Andy Webber treated John with oxygen, and his breathing quickly returned to normal.

'I'm pretty sure he was panicking about his dad, his brother and their new boats,' remembers Stuart, 'but everyone was okay in the end. In fact, once we'd all calmed down, the *Genesis* crews were even able to unload their catch that night.'

The RNLI lifeboat crew congratulated *Genesis Rose* skipper George on his seamanship during the ordeal. Second Coxswain Steve wrote: 'George is a young skipper, and has only been at the helm for a couple of months. Last night he was faced with the conditions that nobody would envy – a 70-mile tow, southerly force 7–8 winds, an ebbing tide, pitch black dark night and his father's brand new, 100-tonne *Genesis Enigma* behind him on a single piece of rope. We believe that he executed the tow extremely well ... this was a huge ask for anybody, let alone a new skipper.'

See dramatic footage from the rescue at [RNLI.org/BridRescue](http://RNLI.org/BridRescue).

Words: Laura Rainbow  
Photos: RNLI/(Bridlington, Nathan Williams)



NEIL ROBSON

SKIPPER OF *GENESIS ENIGMA* | FORMER CREW MEMBER AT RNLI FLAMBOROUGH

## 'So grateful they were there'

It was a rough tow back towards Bridlington Harbour and when we were about an hour away, I decided we'd need the lifeboat, just in case. I didn't want to bother the RNLI crew, but I'm really glad I did – it was a real weight off my mind to have them there. Fortunately, it's the first time I've needed them in the 30 years I've been at this, but they did a great job for us that evening. We're all so grateful that they were – and hopefully always will be – there if we need them.



# AEGEAN SUPPORT

The narrow channels between Turkey and Greece have been busy over the past year, as desperate people attempt to cross the Aegean into Europe. More than 700 are believed to have drowned. How can the RNLI help?

Just 4 miles by sea from the Turkish coast, Lesbos has become the entryway to Europe for thousands of migrants – every day. At the time of writing, volunteers from the Hellenic Rescue Team (HRT), a Greek search-and-rescue charity, were struggling to cope.

As a member of the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF), HRT asked for help.

'The HRT volunteers had been doing incredible work in extremely testing conditions, but they were facing an overwhelming task and we wanted to help,' says the RNLI's Simon Ling.

So earlier this year, a four-strong RNLI team spent 2 weeks on the Greek island of Lesbos, helping HRT volunteers

with sea-based search and rescue techniques. Over 10 days, the team trained 16 volunteers in search patterns, rough weather handling and more.

They also brought with them an Atlantic 75 lifeboat, which the RNLI has donated to the HRT. The lifeboat was part of the RNLI relief fleet, nearing the end of its operational life and just about to be decommissioned when the call for help came in.

HRT Vice President Nikos Priporas said: 'We are grateful. It's a very very good boat and very reliable – a proper rescue boat. We provide help to the people in need in the sea. But also, it's safer for our crew to have a proper and reliable boat to use.'

Simon adds: 'Our aim was to make HRT as self-sufficient as possible. To that end, we also worked to provide local suppliers with engineering drawings to allow them to create covers and other accessories for the lifeboat.'

RNLI volunteers have been saving lives for nearly 200 years – so we're glad to support our international lifesaving colleagues.

RNLI International Director James Vaughan says: 'I'm really pleased that we can join forces with other European rescue organisations to help our fellow volunteers who are working round the clock in desperate conditions trying to handle this drowning crisis.'

With no end to the crisis in sight, people are still coming in from Turkey in flimsy vessels with little to no safety equipment.

Now, the HRT's lifesavers are being given more of a chance to save more lives – at less risk to themselves.

## Funding

The total value of the boat and training package is likely to be around £100,000, and will be funded as part of the RNLI's international work, which is entirely separate to our work in the UK and Ireland.

Our international work is funded by donations given specifically for international projects, and by a small proportion of the money we make on our investments.

Words: Mairéad Dwane  
Photos: RNLI/Simon Ling, Oliver Mallinson



Clockwise from top: Trainer Adam Lewis gives some tips on veering down; Trainer Alex Evans demonstrates the RNLI's casualty care check cards; the team are briefed onboard; HRT volunteers proudly fly the Greek flag while practising a tow.



**OLIVER MALLINSON**  
**OPERATIONS MANAGER**

'The training has been very successful. We have been able to customise the training that we normally offer RNLI students and make it appropriate to the environment and the HRT volunteers.'

'They're already a rescue service in their own right. But they operate mainly on single-engine vessels so we had to get them familiar with the twin-engined Atlantic 75. We also worked on some of the more complex drills the RNLI use, such as veering down, where you anchor the vessel and reverse into an inaccessible space, and towing, which they think they'll be doing a lot of with the boats coming over from Turkey. We also covered search patterns and rough weather handling.'



# 1,261 RNLI RESCUE CRAFT LAUNCHES

## 1 October 2015–31 December 2015

Behind every launch, new lifeboat and naming ceremony listed in this section is a community of volunteers, fundraisers and supporters. Whatever you do to keep our crews ready to rescue, **thank you**.

The launches listed here are those for which returns had been received at RNLI Headquarters and processed by 1 January 2016

**ABERDEEN**  
ON-1248(17-24):Oct26, Nov9,14,17,Dec29,30  
D-694:Nov9,14,17  
**ABERDOVEY**  
B-758:Oct2  
**ABERSOCH**  
B-886:Nov26  
**ABERYSTWYTH**  
A-78:Oct11,26(x2)  
B-822:Oct11(x2),26,Dec13  
**ACHILL ISLAND**  
ON-1240(14-28):Oct14,15, 24,27,29,Nov15,Dec18  
**ALDERNEY**  
ON-1199(14-04):Nov11  
**AMBLE**  
ON-1176(12-19):Oct27, Nov18,30,Dec18,25  
D-736:Oct27,Nov18,Dec25  
**ANGLE**  
ON-1291(16-11):Oct4,9,11, 16,17,28,Dec6,18  
**ANSTRUTHER**  
ON-1174(12-17):Oct13,20, Dec19  
D-667:Dec19  
D-715:Oct13,24  
**APPLEDORE**  
B-861:Oct10(x2),19,26, Nov28(x2)  
BB-546:Oct19,22  
**ARAN ISLANDS**  
ON-1217(17-06):Oct14,23, 30,31,Nov7,24,26,Dec4,10, 18,25  
**ARBROATH**  
ON-1194(12-35):Oct8,10, Nov3,Dec2,12  
D-759:Oct8,10,Nov3, Dec2,12  
**ARKLOW**  
ON-1223(14-19):Nov22, 23,27  
**ARRAN (LAMLASH)**  
B-876:Oct1,Dec5,12

**ARRANMORE**  
ON-1244(17-22):Oct8, Nov13,14,21  
**BALLYCOTTON**  
ON-1233(14-25):Oct8,10, 18,Nov2  
BB-051:Nov2  
**BALLYGLASS**  
ON-1235(17-15):Oct10,11(x2)  
**BALTIMORE**  
ON-1302(16-22):Oct6, Nov15,Dec9  
**BANGOR**  
B-805:Nov28,Dec12,26  
B-850:Oct17,27(x2),Nov20  
**BARMOUTH**  
ON-1185(12-26):Oct7  
**BARRA ISLAND**  
ON-1230(17-12):Oct4  
**BARROW**  
ON-1288(16-08):Oct3,18, Nov2,9  
D-733:Nov2(x2),9(x2),Dec19  
**BARRY DOCK**  
ON-1245(14-29):Oct12  
**BEAUMARIS**  
B-838:Oct3,5,26,27,Dec21  
**BEMBRIDGE**  
ON-1286(16-06):Oct10(x2), 31,Nov1  
**BERWICK-UPON-TWEED**  
ON-1191(12-32):Oct16, Dec13,28  
D-777:Oct16,Dec28  
**BLACKPOOL**  
B-867:Oct4,Nov25, Dec3(x2),16  
D-729:Oct4(x2),15,Nov25, Dec3,16  
D-732:Oct4,15,Nov25,Dec3  
**BLYTH**  
D-746:Oct26,Dec2  
**BRIDLINGTON**  
ON-1163(12-005):Oct1  
ON-1169(12-12):Nov12, 24,27  
D-721:Nov26,Dec25

**BRIGHTON**  
B-815:Dec6,18,23,29  
B-852:Oct3,25  
**BROUGHTY FERRY**  
ON-1252(14-31):Oct6,8,11, Nov15,Dec12,14(x2)  
D-698:Oct6,8,11,Nov15, Dec12,14(x2),21  
**BUCKIE**  
ON-1268(17-37):Oct5,6, Nov9,15,26,Dec7,20  
**BUDE**  
D-756:Oct2  
**BUNDORAN**  
B-834:Oct28  
**BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH**  
B-849:Oct8,11,Nov8,10,11, 23,28,Dec6  
D-755:Nov23  
**BURNHAM-ON-SEA**  
B-795:Oct10,Dec4,30  
D-664:Dec4  
**BURRY PORT**  
B-777:Oct4,11,Dec8  
D-749:Oct4,12,13,22, Nov11,Dec6,8,9,11  
**CALSHOT**  
B-860:Oct13,19,Nov4,27, Dec2,8,10,19,26  
D-748:Oct13,Nov4, Dec10,23,27,31  
**CAMPBELTOWN**  
D-737:Oct18  
**CARDIGAN**  
B-871:Nov1,6,Dec29  
D-709:Oct9,Nov6,7  
**CASTLETOWNBERE**  
ON-1277(17-44):Dec15(x2), 23  
**CHISWICK**  
E-005:Dec20  
E-08:Nov5,6,7(x2),8,10, 12(x2),19,20(x2),22,24,28, 29,Dec1,3,8,9,12,14,15,16, 17,18(x2),21,25,26,27(x3)  
E-09:Oct5,7,9,15,17,25,27, 28,29,31,Nov1(x2),2,4(x2), 7,8

**CLACTON-ON-SEA**  
B-863:Dec5  
D-710:Nov15  
**CLIFDEN**  
ON-1186(12-27):Oct3,24, Nov7,15,24,Dec29  
B-869:Oct3,Nov7,Dec12  
D-679:Nov8  
**CLOGHER HEAD**  
ON-1190(12-31):Oct11, Nov19  
**CONWY**  
D-765:Oct18,31  
**COURTMACSHERRY HARBOUR**  
ON-1205(14-07):Oct10, Nov16,Dec18  
**COWES**  
B-859:Oct11,16,22(x2), Nov4,5,29  
**CROMER**  
ON-1287(16-07):Nov5  
**CROSSHAVEN**  
B-782:Oct2,7,10,18(x2),19, Dec20  
**CULLERCOATS**  
B-811:Nov5,Dec21  
**DART**  
D-702:Oct20,26,Nov8  
**DONAGHADEE**  
ON-1267(14-36):Oct27, Nov23(x2),26,Dec20  
**DOUGLAS**  
ON-1147(47-032):Oct30, Nov17  
**DOVER**  
ON-1220(17-09):Oct16,17, Nov6,7  
**DUN LAOGHAIRE**  
ON-1200(14-05):Oct25  
D-731:Oct5,25,Nov14  
**DUNBAR**  
D-708:Oct11,19  
**DUNGENESS**  
ON-1309(13-02):Nov5  
**DUNMORE EAST**  
ON-1215(14-17):Nov6,14, Dec6

**EASTBOURNE**  
ON-1303(16-23):Oct11, Nov1,7(x2),Dec6  
D-744:Oct10,11,Nov1,4,20, 23,Dec14,23(x4)  
D-755:Oct1  
**ENNISKILLEN**  
B-773:Oct8,Dec5,6,9(x2)  
RWC-054:Oct8,Dec5  
**EXMOUTH**  
ON-1310(13-03):Oct28(x2), Dec11  
D-669:Oct17,18,23,28(x2), 30,31,Nov3,7,13,Dec6,28  
**EYEMOUTH**  
ON-1209(14-11):Oct2,3  
ON-1225(14-21):Oct14, Dec17  
D-745:Oct3,14  
**FALMOUTH**  
ON-1256(17-29):Oct2,9, Dec8  
B-756:Oct4,9,Nov23,Dec9  
**FENIT**  
ON-1239(14-27):Oct26  
**FETHARD**  
ON-1314(13-07):Nov1  
**FISHGUARD**  
ON-1198(14-03):Oct8,9, Dec25  
D-652:Oct1,18  
D-789:Dec22,23  
**FLAMBOROUGH**  
B-820:Oct4,8,Nov16,Dec3  
**FLEETWOOD**  
ON-1156(47-038):Oct31, Dec3  
D-719:Oct4,9,31,Nov20  
**FLINT**  
D-658:Oct4(x2),Dec29  
**FOWEY**  
ON-1222(14-18):Oct3,10,11  
D-681:Oct11,Dec20  
**FRASERBURGH**  
ON-1226(14-22):Oct4,31, Nov9  
ON-1259(14-34):Dec22

**GALWAY**  
B-865:Oct1,17,Nov28, Dec20  
**GIRVAN**  
ON-1196(12-37):Dec30(x2)  
**GRAVESEND**  
B-827:Oct3,8,10,14,17(x2), 27,31,Nov7,9,13,18,19,26, 27,30,Dec3,12,15  
**GREAT YARMOUTH AND GORLESTON**  
ON-1208(14-10):Dec6,12  
ON-1210(14-12):Oct17  
B-786:Oct11,Dec22  
**HAPPISBURGH**  
B-742:Oct31,Nov15  
D-607:Oct31  
**HARTLEPOOL**  
ON-1274(14-37):Oct25,27, Nov1,5,Dec13  
B-881:Oct13,16,Nov5, Dec13  
**HARWICH**  
ON-1202(17-03):Dec16  
B-789:Oct10,14,17,26, Nov24,Dec7,16,20  
**HASTINGS**  
D-699:Oct12,Nov26  
**HAYLING ISLAND**  
B-829:Oct24,25,Dec27  
D-779:Oct4,Dec27  
**HELENSBURGH**  
B-791:Oct29,Nov11,13, Dec6  
**HELVICK HEAD**  
B-874:Oct10,28  
**HOLYHEAD**  
ON-1272(17-41):Oct28, Nov1,Dec31  
D-654:Oct23,28,Dec31  
**HOWTH**  
ON-1204(14-06):Oct29,30, Nov13,14  
ON-1258(14-33):Dec28  
D-659:Nov13,27  
**HOYLAKE**  
ON-1316(13-07):Nov1  
**HUMBER**  
ON-1216(17-05):Oct19, Nov27,Dec7  
B-783:Dec27  
**HUNSTANTON**  
B-848:Nov7  
**ILFRACOMBE**  
ON-1316(13-09):Oct4,12, 15,18(x2),26,Nov9  
D-717:Oct4,15,18,23,Nov9  
**INLAND FLOODING**  
D-600:Dec5(x2)  
**INVERGORDON**  
ON-1206(14-08):Oct10,17, 20,24,Nov2,14  
**KILKEEL**  
B-812:Oct30  
**KILMORE QUAY**  
ON-1298(16-18):Oct1,2,3, 18,26,Dec2,3,12

**KILRUSH**  
B-844:Oct4,Dec22  
**KINGHORN**  
B-836:Oct1,Nov1,12,26, Dec14,29  
**KINSALE**  
B-796:Oct4,12,18,20,26  
**KIRKCUDBRIGHT**  
B-814:Nov6  
**KIRKWALL**  
ON-1231(17-13):Nov24,29  
**KYLE OF LOCHALSH**  
B-856:Oct17  
**LARGS**  
B-854:Oct9,17,25,Nov1(x2), 22,27,Dec28  
**LARNE**  
ON-1246(14-30):Oct27(x2)  
D-783:Nov25  
**LITTLE AND BROAD HAVEN**  
D-766:Oct29,Dec13  
**LITTLEHAMPTON**  
B-779:Oct4(x2),8,12,Nov2, Dec30  
D-769:Nov12,Dec10  
**LITTLESTONE-ON-SEA**  
B-785:Oct8,27  
**LLANDUDNO**  
ON-1164(12-006):Oct5,18  
D-656:Oct5,10,18,Nov1, Dec7  
**LOCH NESS**  
B-763:Oct2,Nov6,19  
**LOCHINVER**  
ON-1271(17-40):Oct19, Dec13  
**LOOE**  
B-771:Nov13,23,Dec25  
D-741:Dec25  
**LOUGH DERG**  
B-747:Oct4  
**LOUGH SWILLY**  
B-819:Dec16  
**LOWESTOFT**  
ON-1312(13-05):Nov11,12  
**LYME REGIS**  
B-857:Oct2,3,26,Nov25, Dec6,12(x2)  
**LYMINGTON**  
B-882:Oct3,13,23,Nov8  
**LYTHAM ST ANNES**  
ON-1189(12-30):Oct31, Dec3  
D-657:Oct16,31,Dec3  
**MABLETHORPE**  
B-778:Nov17  
**MACDUFF**  
B-804:Oct3,26,Nov6,15, Dec9,10  
**MALLAIG**  
ON-1250(17-26):Oct3,19, Nov11,19(x2),Dec5,29  
**MARGATE**  
D-706:Oct25,Nov6,Dec21  
**MINEHEAD**  
B-824:Oct1,Dec6  
D-712:Oct2

**MOELFRE**  
ON-1305(16-25):Oct5  
D-689:Oct7,Dec11  
**MORECAMBE**  
D-722:Oct27,Nov19, Dec5(x3),13(x2),15  
H-002:Oct4,14,17,27, 28(x2),Dec13  
**MUDEFORD**  
B-806:Oct9,11,Nov5,7  
B-825:Nov23,26,Dec13, 20,28(x2)  
**NEW BRIGHTON**  
B-837:Dec20,31  
H-005:Oct4,11,23,26,Dec31  
**NEW QUAY**  
D-750:Oct19  
D-754:Dec25  
**NEWBIGGIN**  
B-864:Nov18  
**NEWCASTLE**  
ON-1188(12-29):Oct31  
**NEWHAVEN**  
ON-1243(17-21):Nov16, Dec11,30  
B-1269(17-38):Oct3,4,8, 9,25(x2),Nov13  
**NEWQUAY**  
B-821:Oct11,20,25(x2), 29(x2),Nov1,29  
D-773:Oct11,25(x2),29(x2), Nov15  
**NORTH BERWICK**  
D-758:Oct6,8,Nov28  
**OBAN**  
ON-1213(14-15):Oct29  
ON-1227(14-23):Dec7,8,22  
**PADSTOW**  
ON-1283(16-04):Oct4  
**PEEL**  
ON-1181(12-22):Oct17  
**PENARTH**  
B-839:Oct4,23,Dec28  
D-692:Nov18  
**PENLEE**  
ON-1265(17-36):Oct2,9,31, Nov11,14,15,19,Dec19(x2)  
B-787:Oct24,Nov19,Dec13  
**PETERHEAD**  
ON-1282(16-03):Oct31, Nov6,7,15,19(x2)  
**PLYMOUTH**  
ON-1264(17-35):Oct2,13, 21,Nov3,Dec27(x2)  
B-775:Oct19,Nov3,23, Dec2,27,29  
**POOLE**  
ON-1131(47-023): Oct11(x2),Nov15,17  
B-826:Oct11,15,25,28, Nov6,7,8,9(x2),10,12,17,19, Dec25  
**POOLE CREW TRAINING CENTRE**  
D-655:Nov19  
**PORT ISAAC**

## LAUNCHES



ON-####(17-##)  
Severn class  
last built: 2004



ON-####(16-##)  
Tamar class  
last built: 2013



ON-####(47-###)  
Tyne class  
last built: 1990



ON-####(14-##)  
Trent class  
last built: 2003



ON-####(13-##)  
Shannon class  
introduced 2014  
new cost: £2.1M



ON-####(12-##)  
Mersey class  
last built: 1993



E-##  
E class (MK1 or) 2  
new cost: £530,000



B-###  
B class (Atlantic 75, 85)  
new cost: £214,000



D-###  
D class  
new cost: £48,000



H-###  
Inshore rescue hovercraft  
new cost: £400,000



A-##  
Inshore rescue boat  
new cost: £13,000



RWC-###  
Rescue watercraft  
new cost: £10,000

Additional rescue craft:

BB-###	Boarding boat
Y-###	Y boat
X-###	X boat
XP-###	XP boat
FR-###	and
RR-###	Flood Rescue Team boat



LAUNCHES

D-707:Oct14,28,Dec29  
**PORT ST MARY**  
ON-1234(14-26):Oct31  
D-742:Nov26  
**PORT TALBOT**  
D-713:Oct1,31,Nov12  
D-768:Oct13,16,Dec15  
**PORTAFERRY**  
B-833:Nov12,23(x2),30  
**PORTHCAWL**  
B-832:Oct1,31,Dec11,16  
D-714:Oct1,31,Dec11,13  
**PORTISHEAD**  
B-884:Oct11,13,Nov8,Dec28  
**PORTPATRICK**  
ON-1301(16-21):Dec12,16  
**PORTREE**  
ON-1214(14-16):Oct19,24,Nov7,Dec1,29  
**PORTRUSH**  
ON-1257(17-30):Dec30  
D-738:Oct5,30,31,Dec30  
**PORTSMOUTH**  
B-846:Oct10,Nov13,21,26,29,Dec2,27  
D-716:Oct8,Dec2  
**PWLLHELI**  
ON-1168(12-010):Oct15,Nov22  
D-676:Oct15,Nov21  
**QUEENSFERRY**  
B-851:Oct9,16(x2),Nov7,10,12(x3),13(x2),Dec29  
**RAMSGATE**  
ON-1197(14-02):Oct28,Nov11,Dec13,28  
B-878:Dec7  
**RED BAY**  
B-843:Oct2,20,Nov1,4,5  
**REDCAR**  
B-858:Oct4,11,Nov14,Dec6,7  
D-786:Oct11,Nov14,26,Dec6,7  
**RHYL**  
ON-1178(12-21):Oct7  
ON-1183(12-24):Dec8  
D-770:Nov26,Dec8  
**ROCK**  
D-772:Oct27,29,Nov14,Dec7  
**ROSSLARE HARBOUR**  
ON-1276(17-43):Oct15,25,Nov26,Dec2  
**RYE HARBOUR**  
B-875:Oct30,Nov6  
**SCARBOROUGH**  
ON-1175(12-18):Nov11,17,Dec19,29  
D-724:Oct11,Nov11,Dec19,29  
**SEAHOUSES**  
ON-1173(12-16):Oct3,Nov18  
**SELSEY**  
ON-1146(47-031):Oct4

D-691:Oct23  
**SENNEN COVE**  
ON-1294(16-14):Oct9,12,17,Nov1,11  
D-763:Dec28  
**SHEERNESS**  
ON-1211(14-13):Oct3,Nov1,28(x2),Dec8,25  
D-662:Oct4,13,19,Nov6,12,28,Dec25  
**SHERINGHAM**  
B-818:Dec15  
B-835:Nov11  
**SHOREHAM HARBOUR**  
ON-1295(16-15):Oct28,Nov15  
D-784:Oct21  
**SILLOTH**  
B-828:Nov22  
**SKEGNESS**  
ON-1166(12-008):Nov17,Dec7  
D-665:Oct4  
D-739:Nov17  
**SLIGO BAY**  
B-781:Oct12,24,31  
B-888:Dec10,13  
**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA**  
B-755:Nov8,28,29(x2),Dec25  
D-771:Oct10,Nov13,23,29,Dec10,25  
H-006:Dec14  
**ST AGNES**  
D-787:Nov15,23,Dec27  
**ST BEES**  
B-831:Nov1  
**ST CATHERINE**  
B-841:Oct1,4,29,Nov21  
**ST DAVIDS**  
ON-1306(16-26):Oct4,17,31  
D-704:Oct4  
**ST HELIER**  
ON-1292(16-12):Dec3,4,13  
B-816:Oct18,Dec3  
**ST IVES**  
ON-1167(12-09):Oct24,Nov17,21  
D-668:Oct23,Nov1,17,Dec12,20  
**ST MARY’S**  
ON-1229(17-11):Oct16(x2)  
ON-1263(17-34):Dec4  
**ST PETER PORT**  
ON-1203(17-04):Oct24(x2),Nov1,22,25,Dec22  
**STONEHAVEN**  
B-762:Oct9  
**STORNOWAY**  
ON-1238(17-18):Oct5,24,Dec18  
**STRANRAER**  
D-697:Dec16  
**STROMNESS**  
ON-1236(17-16):Oct5,

Nov24,29  
**SUNDERLAND**  
B-817:Oct19,Nov26,29,Dec15  
B-825:Oct6  
D-747:Oct13,Nov14,17,26,Dec26,27(x2)  
**SWANAGE**  
ON-1182(12-23):Oct9,11,Nov4,15,22  
D-752:Oct11,18,Nov4,15,23  
**TEDDINGTON**  
D-743:Oct3,8,13,14,19,20,Nov16  
D-785:Oct21,24,29,Nov10(x2),16(x2),25,28,Dec3,4,19,27  
**TEIGNMOUTH**  
A-67:Oct29  
B-809:Oct9,11,29,31,Nov24,Dec17,20  
**TENBY**  
ON-1281(16-02):Oct4,11,16,26,29,Nov2,14,Dec25  
D-727:Oct16,24,Nov13  
**THE LIZARD**  
ON-1300(16-20):Oct3,Nov5  
**THE MUMBLES**  
ON-1307(16-27):Oct12(x3),13,Nov1,7(x2),12,19,20,Dec6  
D-675:Oct1,10,13,Nov1,7,8,19  
**THURSO**  
ON-1273(17-42):Nov27  
**TIGHNABRUAICH**  
B-862:Oct4,Nov21  
**TORBAY**  
ON-1255(17-28):Oct3,15,Nov21,Dec21  
D-651:Oct31,Nov7,21(x2)  
**TOWER**  
E-005:Dec19,20  
E-07:Oct1,2(x2),3(x4),5,6,7(x2),8,10(x2),12(x2),13,15,17(x3),18(x2),20,21,22,23(x2),24,25(x2),26,27(x3),28,29,30(x4),31,Nov2(x2),5(x2),6(x3),7(x4),8(x2),9,10,11,12,13,14(x2),Dec13,15,17,18,23,25(x2),30,31(x2)  
E-09:Nov16(x2),19,20(x3),23,25,26,29(x2),Dec1,2,3(x3),6,9(x2),10,21(x2),22,28(x2),29,31  
**TRAMORE**  
D-781:Oct17  
**TREARDUR BAY**  
B-847:Oct31  
D-753:Oct31,Nov29  
**TROON**  
ON-1213(14-15):Dec31  
ON-1275(14-38):Oct4,15,22(x2),24,Nov17

D-684:Oct4,15,17,24,Dec19  
**TYNEMOUTH**  
ON-1242(17-20):Oct10,28,Nov26,29(x2),Dec4,5,24  
D-693:Nov26,29,Dec1,4,24  
**UNION HALL**  
B-767:Oct15,Nov2,15(x2),Dec2  
**VALENTIA**  
ON-1218(17-07):Dec16  
**WALMER**  
B-808:Nov29(x2),30  
B-835:Dec13  
D-663:Nov8,29(x2)  
**WALTON AND FRINTON**  
ON-1299(16-19):Nov29  
**WELLS**  
ON-1161(12-003):Oct7  
D-661:Oct8,12,25  
**WEST KIRBY**  
D-751:Oct30(x2),Nov15,Dec23,29  
D-780:Oct3  
**WEST MERSEA**  
B-879:Oct10,11,27,28,Nov28,Dec26  
**WESTON-SUPER-MARE**  
B-769:Oct5,17,22,Nov20,21,Dec29,30  
D-696:Oct5,17,22,Nov21,

Dec29,30  
**WEYMOUTH**  
ON-1261(17-32):Oct3,17,Nov4,17,Dec7,20  
B-774:Nov4,Dec7  
**WHITBY**  
ON-1212(14-14):Oct4,7,23,Nov8,17,Dec24  
D-674:Oct18,Nov8  
**WHITSTABLE**  
B-877:Oct3,4,17,Dec12  
**WICK**  
ON-1224(14-20):Oct1,Nov15,27  
**WICKLOW**  
ON-1145(47-030):Nov22  
D-671:Oct7  
**WITHERNSEA**  
D-701:Oct2  
**WORKINGTON**  
ON-1141(47-028):Oct15  
**YARMOUTH**  
ON-1254(17-27):Oct10,17,Nov1,28,Dec10,21  
**YOUGHAL**  
B-780:Oct24,26

**ON STATION**  
B-888, *Sheila & Dennis Tongue*, Sligo Bay, 19 November 2015 (B-781 withdrawn)  
D-788, *Leslie & Mary Daws*, Torbay, 25 November 2015 (D-765 withdrawn)  
ON-1318, *Nora Stachura*, St Ives, 26 November 2015 (ON-1167 withdrawn)  
B-889, *Elizabeth And Margaret Milligan*, Relief, 2 December 2015  
B-887, *Jacqueline Saville*, Mablethorpe, 3 December 2015 (B-778 withdrawn)  
D-789, *Edward Arthur Richardson*, Fishguard, 8 December 2015 (D-652 withdrawn)  
D-790, *Stanley Whiteley Chadwick*, Mablethorpe, 15 December 2015 (D-653 withdrawn)

**NAMING CEREMONIES**  
B-883, *Roy Snewin*, relief fleet, 25 November 2015

**LAUNCH ALERTS ON YOUR MOBILE**  
Follow the action wherever you are by signing up for our lifeboat launch SMS alerts. You choose which stations to follow, the charge for each message and your maximum weekly spend. You'll be one of the first to know when our volunteers have launched and you'll be supporting them at the same time!  
**RNLI.org/sms**

# A LIFESAVING TICKET

YOUR SUPPORT  
FOR THE LAST  
LOTTERY HELPED  
US RAISE OVER



THAT'S ENOUGH TO FUND  
THE RUNNING COSTS  
AT 5 ALL-WEATHER  
LIFEBOAT STATIONS



OUR LIFEBOAT  
CREWS LAUNCH  
AN AVERAGE OF  
23 TIMES A DAY



Photo: RNLI/Nathan Williams

## WINTER 2015 LOTTERY RESULTS

Congratulations to Mrs M Croain from Hampshire, who won the £5,000 first prize in our Winter Lifeboat Lottery.

**The other winners were:**  
**2ND PRIZE: £2,000**  
Mr LG Powell, Norfolk

**3RD PRIZE: £500**  
Mrs J Palmer, Richmond

**4TH PRIZE: £250**  
Mr W Milligan, Ayrshire

**FIVE PRIZES OF £100 EACH:**  
Mr EF Kingston, East Sussex  
Mr T Smith, South Yorkshire  
Mrs A Bishop, Dorset  
Dr EW Baxter, North Yorkshire  
Mr T Andrew, Glasgow.

We'll report the winner of the Spring Lifeboat Lottery in our Summer 2016 issue

We have temporarily paused our lottery programme while we ask our supporters if they are happy to 'opt in' so we can stay in touch.

If you'd like us to keep you informed about the lottery and other opportunities to support the RNLI, please contact our Supporter Care team by phone on 0300 300 9918 (UK) or 0044 1202 663234 (non-UK) weekdays between 8am–6pm, or by email at [optin@rnli.org.uk](mailto:optin@rnli.org.uk).

Pictured: The Lizard Lifeboat Station



Charles Darwin's fame obscures the lifetime's work of an equally gifted pioneer. Robert FitzRoy, captain of HMS *Beagle* on *that* legendary voyage, was an extraordinary scholar, scientist and philanthropist – and a force behind the RNLI's earliest safety work

# Father of forecast

Vice Admiral FitzRoy, painted at the height of his fame by Samuel Lane

It's 26 October 1859 and a hurricane is tearing up the Irish Sea. The steam clipper *Royal Charter* breaks up off Anglesey and – despite desperate rescue attempts by villagers – 450 men, women and children perish. The storm rages for days, hundreds more ships are wrecked and the death toll almost doubles. Charles Dickens is so moved by the emotional aftermath that he devotes an entire chapter to it in *The Uncommercial Traveller*.

The tragedy has a profound effect on a certain government official too: Vice Admiral FitzRoy, member of the RNLI's Committee of Management and head of a fledgling Meteorological Department (later the Met Office). FitzRoy is convinced that many of these lives could have been saved and demonstrates this by showing how storms can be predicted using data collected simultaneously from around the UK. A little more than a year later, he is breaking new ground – telegraphing shipping forecasts, installing storm warning systems and, with his RNLI colleagues, supplying barometers to get coastal communities weather-wise.

FitzRoy's work would go on to prevent countless tragedies. But to better understand this enigmatic figure, and the full reach of his efforts, we need to rewind to a few months before the Battle of Trafalgar ...

## Rising star

Robert FitzRoy, fourth great-grandson of Charles II, was born into the upper echelons of the British aristocracy and destined for public service. He joined Royal Naval Academy, Portsmouth at 12 and entered the navy the following year. Young FitzRoy proved to be an outstanding officer and rapidly climbed the ranks. He was also growing passionate about the science of weather and keen to debunk the dubious

The *Royal Charter* wreck inspired FitzRoy to develop the weather forecast



soothsaying devices on offer at the time.

FitzRoy's passion came to the fore when he was appointed meteorologist aboard the hydrographic survey vessel HMS *Beagle* in 1826. Exploring the coasts of southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego was a harsh science lesson. They were in uncharted territory and plagued by dangerous tides, storms and blizzards. Two years in and his captain, Pringle Stokes, had had enough. Gripped by depression, he shot himself – and FitzRoy, now a Lieutenant, was entrusted with command, aged just 23.

**'He was not only an excellent navigator and surveyor but an observant man of science as well. In some ways, his scientific technique exceeded Darwin's ...'**

Stanley A Rice, *Encyclopedia of Evolution*

## Darwin and the *Beagle*

FitzRoy did a remarkable job of handling *Beagle* and charting the second leg of the expedition. He returned home in 1830 and his achievements had impressed Francis Beaufort, creator of the ubiquitous Beaufort wind force scale. Beaufort made FitzRoy his protégé and they became firm friends.





Many of the RNLI's 19th-century barometers are still in perfect working order today. Malcolm Gray MBE, former Coxswain of St David's lifeboat, records changes in theirs every morning before raising the RNLI flag



Wetterfrosch im Glas (Weatherfrog in a glass), 1887. Before forecasting was an established science, many mariners relied on the behaviour of a certain tree frog to predict storms. Needless to say, it wasn't terribly reliable and, even today, Germans use wetterfrosch colloquially to refer to meteorologists.

He saw to it that his understudy was given command of *Beagle's* now legendary second voyage, charting South America and the Galapagos Islands. He even found him a companion for the trip: a young chap by the name of Charles Darwin.

Hot Coffee

Darwin, as ship's naturalist, formed a deep respect for FitzRoy. They got on well for the most part of their 5-year excursion but Darwin later remarked how their arguments sometimes 'bordered on insanity' and explained how the captain earned the nickname Hot Coffee: 'FitzRoy's temper was a most unfortunate one. This was shown not only by passion but by fits of long-continued moroseness ... [The junior officers] used to ask whether "much hot coffee had been served out this morning" which meant how was the captain's temper?'

Today, FitzRoy would probably be diagnosed as bipolar – and it would go some way to explain his bursts of drive and brilliance, as well as the tantrums and melancholy. Nevertheless, their voyage was a game-changer. The young captain dipped into his own pockets to fit *Beagle* with the cutting-edge technology of the day. This included 22 chronometers (to help him accurately calculate longitude) and the latest in weather forecasting devices, including his new and improved storm glass. This would also be the first voyage to officially use Beaufort's scale for wind observations.

As Darwin gathered the threads of what would later become his 'dangerous idea', FitzRoy guided them safely through treacherous waters, measured tides, studied weather systems, surveyed new territory, corrected existing charts and, for the first time, established a series of reference points around the globe that others would calibrate their instruments by.

Soon after *Beagle's* return in 1836, FitzRoy was awarded a Gold Medal by the Royal Geographical Society. Three years later he published the narrative of his voyages in four volumes, with Darwin contributing the third. The result was a trailblazing scientific journal and vibrant travel memoir in one, popular with readers from all walks of life.

In 1841 FitzRoy was elected as MP for Durham and pushed through legislation to improve the safety of merchant vessels. Later, he sailed halfway back around the globe to be Governor of New Zealand. Satisfying the land hunger of the new settlers, while protecting the Māori, was an impossible task without government backing. Eventually, the settlement fell into bankruptcy and exploded into war. FitzRoy was removed at the behest of the New Zealand Company for, essentially, defending human rights.

Storm warning

Retired from active service and elected to the Royal Society, FitzRoy's meteorological expertise was in demand. He was appointed chief

1805	1819	1824	1828	1831	1839	1841	1843	1854	1859	1861	1863	1865
FitzRoy born 5 July. Beaufort publishes his wind force scale.	Joins navy.	Commissioned to Lieutenant. RNLI founded.	Assumes command of HMS <i>Beagle</i> , aged 23.	<i>Beagle's</i> second voyage with Charles Darwin	Publishes narrative of <i>Beagle's</i> voyage.	Elected as MP for Durham.	Appointed Governor of New Zealand.	Appointed Director of the Met Office. Supplies marine barometers to the navy.	Supplies barometers to fishing villages. Elected to RNLI Committee of Management. Royal Charter Storm. Darwin publishes <i>On the Origin of Species</i> .	Launches storm warning system. Issues first public weather forecast. RNLI supplies barometers to lifeboat stations.	Publishes <i>Weather Book</i> .	Dies aged 59. Anstruther's first lifeboat named <i>Admiral FitzRoy</i> . RNLI launches first lifejacket campaign to fishermen.









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**RNLI LIFEBOAT LAUNCHES  
TO COMMERCIAL FISHING  
VESSELS IN 2015**

## SAFETY NET

Thanks to your support, the RNLI is helping to make the seas a safer place for the people who put fish on our tables

Commercial fishing in the cold, rough seas around the UK and Republic of Ireland is a hazardous profession. Pushing their boats ever further out in search of a catch, the men and women who supply us with freshly caught seafood risk accident and injury every time they do their jobs. For many commercial fishermen, tragedies at sea seem inevitable – but are they?

RNLI analysis shows time and time again that many of the common causes of death and injury – including fires, equipment failure, man overboards, leaks and swamping – need not have occurred.

Sheryll Murray is MP for South East Cornwall, and knows all too well that changes – some of them pretty simple – are needed to make the industry safer. In March 2011, her husband Neil didn't come home from his fishing trip. His body was eventually discovered onboard his boat *Our Boy Andrew*, where he had been crushed to death by machinery.



**'Safety is a massive issue  
in this industry'**

Sheryll Murray MP

'A toggle on Neil's oilskin jacket got snagged in a hydraulic net drum, and he couldn't turn the mechanism off,' explains Sheryll. 'If Neil had had a safety stop button within reach, or if fishermen's jackets didn't come with toggles, maybe things would have been different. >>>



'Safety is a massive issue in this industry and it's getting a little better. But with complacency comes an increased rate of accidents, so we need to keep the reminders coming. You may do something onboard your boat 100 times with no problems, but if you're not paying attention, that 101st time could be a completely different outcome.'

This year, reducing deck machinery incidents is an all-important part of the RNLI's target – to halve the number of coastal deaths by 2024. It's one of many several ways that we are working with commercial fishing crews to make changes.

Frankie Horne (pictured right) is the RNLI's fishing safety manager, and a volunteer crew member at Peel Lifeboat Station. He helped deliver our new deck machinery safety campaign to the Fisheries All-Party Parliamentary Group in January. A day later he was reminded why the campaign is so vital: 'What happened really shows why we're running this safety initiative,' says Frankie, pictured left. 'We launched the campaign on Monday, and on Wednesday I was at the House of Commons presenting the campaign to politicians, who were so impressed and supportive. Less than 24 hours later, I was at a fishing port giving first aid to a fisherman who had suffered a deck machinery injury.'

'It is an incredible coincidence – but it shows how important our campaign is, trying to reduce incidents just like this one.'

Words: Laura Rainbow  
Photos: RNLI/Nigel Millard

## PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFDs)

**PROBLEM:** A shocking 76% of fishermen who died between 2010 and 2013 weren't wearing a lifejacket or buoyancy aid – it's just not common practice on a lot of boats. In many cases, wearing a PFD could have saved the victim's life.

**SOLUTION:** The RNLI's Community Safety team have started training fishermen on how to use the free personal flotation devices (PFDs) being given out by Seafish's Sea You Home Safe campaign – a collaboration between major industry bodies. The shared aim is to equip all 12,500+ fishermen in the UK with a PFD and training that covers how and why they should wear the devices, and how to maintain them.



## BOAT STABILITY

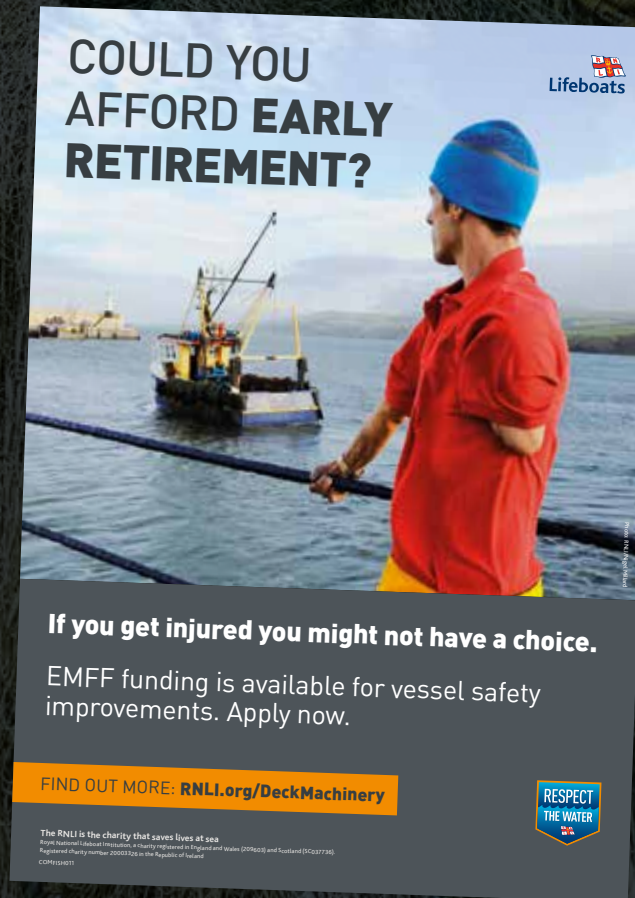
**PROBLEM:** Of the 49 commercial fishermen who died at work between 2009 to 2012, 34% were killed when their vessel capsized. These disastrous events are often caused by leaking or swamping. By promoting greater awareness of these hazards, and how to avoid them, more fishing crews will make it home this year and in the future.

**SOLUTION:** We produced a series of five short films providing practical, easy-to-follow advice on how to make fishing boats more stable. This covered topics like how to haul in a catch without unbalancing a boat, and how to check that everything onboard is watertight. The campaign hit the media in Winter 2015, and at the time of writing, the films (including the one pictured above) had been watched more than 6,000 times. For more information, and to see the films, visit [RNLI.org/stability](http://RNLI.org/stability).

## DECK MACHINERY

**PROBLEM:** The kit onboard a fishing vessel is expensive, and many crews 'make do', mend, or replace their broken machinery with kit that's not always in line with modern safety standards. On top of that, crew training isn't always as comprehensive as it could be. In fact, 88 people have been injured or killed in deck machinery incidents on fishing vessels in UK waters in the past 5 years.

**SOLUTION:** We're working together with other organisations, including Seafish in the UK, to make it easier for commercial fishing crews to apply for new EU funding that could help them buy safer equipment. As part of a safety campaign, we've also produced a 6-minute safety video to get important information across to them. It features advice from a range of fishing safety experts and an interview with Jamie Griffin (pictured below) from the Isle of Man. In 2013 the former fisherman severed his arm, punctured a lung and broke eight ribs in a horrific deck machinery accident. Commercial fisherman who'd like to find out more, and watch the safety video, can visit [RNLI.org/DeckMachinery](http://RNLI.org/DeckMachinery).



'Deck machinery can be really dangerous, especially older equipment. Extra care should be taken while operating it and I'd encourage all fishermen to watch this new safety film.'

Jamie Griffin, former fisherman  
(pictured in poster below)



# The RNLI and me: Alexander McCall Smith

When bestselling author Alexander McCall Smith isn't penning adventures set in Scotland and Botswana, he plots his own dramatic course on the water ...

## You published five books in 2015 alone – how do you manage to be so prolific?

I always have more than one book going at once. I get in the mood for writing them with different pieces of music that suit each series. For the *Isabel Dalhousie* series, for example it's Mozart. The deadlines tend to focus the mind – 44 *Scotland Street* books always start out in *The Scotsman* newspaper as a series of chapters. I have to write five chapters a week! I manage to write when I travel – on aeroplanes and so on. That's important because I do a lot of touring. At the end of 2015 I gave talks about my books across the US and Canada.

## Does all this writing and touring mean no time for hobbies?

I love sailing and get out whenever I can. I got into it about 15 years ago and now I have a Fisher 34 – a lovely sloop that I sail on the west coast of Scotland. We have a house in Argyll, and my shopping trip is a 45-minute trip by boat to Tobermory. That's what inspired my new series *School Ship Tobermory* (see page 38). Many sailors love the Patrick O'Brien books and I thought I should write something like that for children of 9 or over, which had that shared love of sailing.

## We're suggesting sailing as something for readers to have a go at this issue [see page 36]. Why do you recommend it?

It's the sheer pleasure of being close to the elements. You're on the water, taken out of the cocoon of comfort that modern life can provide

and back to nature ... a reconnection with reality. Of course, the water can be dangerous, and people who go to sea have to accept that. But being prepared for it and minimising the risks is part of the activity.

## Have you ever fallen foul of those dangers?

No, but I have seen what the sea is capable of. A few years ago I was sailing with friends when a mayday came over the radio, and we were the nearest vessel to the casualty – he was just around the corner. So we headed to the scene and this poor chap had holed his boat on a

hidden rock. A workboat had reached him before us so I watched as they helped the sailor, and then a passing dive boat arrived and they assessed the damage. And

then I saw the heroic sight of the Tobermory lifeboat and I knew the chap would be fine.

## Is that why you're an RNLI member?

I think all sailors are grateful that the RNLI exists, because they think 'my goodness, one day I might need them'. And the safety work the charity is doing is vital too – such as reminding us of the importance of lifejackets. I've always been a fan of the lifeboat crews even before sailing, though, because it's a wonderful example of service to the community in an age where people are so concerned with themselves.

Interview: Rory Stamp  
Photo: Alex Hewitt

## MY FAVOURITE ...

### INSTRUMENT:

'I play wind instruments. I'm really bad. In fact, my wife and I started The Really Terrible Orchestra 20 years ago. We have performed shows in Edinburgh, New York and New Zealand!'

### CHARACTER:

'In the 44 *Scotland Street* books there's a boy called Bertie, who has a very pushy mother. In all those books, he is the only person who tells the truth.'

### AWARD:

'I was touched when I got the Botswana Presidential Award of Merit. I was honoured that they should do this and I'm a great fan of Botswana [the setting for *The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency*].'

## WHO IS ALEXANDER MCCALL SMITH?

After working as a professor of medical law for many years, Alexander wrote the first of his highly successful *The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series, which has now sold over 20M copies. Since then his various series of books have been translated into over 40 languages and become bestsellers through the world. Alexander lives in Edinburgh, is married to a doctor and has two daughters.



# SAIL AWAY

Ever dreamed of sailing away to exotic shores? In a few easy steps you could be well on your way. To help convince you, we've enlisted solo circumnavigator and RNLI Governor Jeanne Socrates

## BENEFITS OF CRUISING

- Explore the UK, Republic of Ireland and see the world.
- Take up a mentally challenging outdoor sport, accessible to all.
- Meet like-minded people from different backgrounds.
- Feel free and get satisfaction from self-reliance.
- Get close to nature, with no one else around.
- Enjoy the home comforts of an offshore sailboat, with a shower and space to cook.



## 'Sailing's for everyone – all ages, couples, even families'

... so says Jeanne Socrates, who is the oldest woman (70) to solo circumnavigate the world. She's originally from London, but now you're more likely to find her exploring the world in her 12m yacht *Nereida*. So how do you get started?

### It's never too late

There's hope for all of us – Jeanne was a latecomer to sailing, having taken it up when she was nearing retirement. Age isn't a barrier, as long as you're reasonably fit, well and up for a challenge. Jeanne got hooked on cruising at an RYA Competent Crew course in the Solent. 'There was so much more to sailing than I thought. So many things to learn. I was taken.'

### Enjoy the training

Whether you've never set foot in a yacht before, whether you're a lapsed sailor or day-tripper, Jeanne recommends that a competent crew course is a good place to start. The hands-on training gives you the experience of living onboard for 5 days, either in one block or at weekends, or you could try a shorter taster course. You'll also meet up with crew from different backgrounds.

### Start off close to home

The UK and Republic of Ireland are fantastic places for learning to sail, with super training courses and miles and miles of coastline to explore. 'What's more,' adds Jeanne, 'we've got all the hazards – tides, rocks, shipping lanes – all the skills you need to learn for going further afield.' If you're miles from the coast, there are plenty of clubs that sail on lakes, to give it a try.

### Keep within your budget

If you thought the cruising lifestyle is beyond your budget, you may be surprised. You can hire foul-weather gear rather than buy it, or search second-hand shops for bargains. If you do love it and decide you want a boat, there are options, as Jeanne stresses: 'It doesn't have to be brand spanking new. A lot of people buy a second-hand boat and do it up, bit by bit.'

When Jeanne was learning, she took advantage of cheaper weekend sessions in Winter. If you haven't got a boat, the good news is that those with yachts are often looking for crew.

### Don't give up the day job

Make the most of long holidays with cruising holidays – with or without kids – or see if a sabbatical is an option. Jeanne even meets some people who manage to hold down a job, working remotely online. If this isn't an option, be aware that you won't meet many cruisers around the world who regret escaping the rat race.

### What you need to give it a go

**Training**, at [RYA.org.uk](http://RYA.org.uk) or [sailing.ie](http://sailing.ie).

**A safety plan**. Find out the boat's man overboard recovery plan and practise it. In Jeanne's words: 'Think of the worst possible scenario and be ready for it.'

**Correct safety equipment** including a lifejacket with harness (keep it on when in your tender) and a means of calling for help.

**Weather forecast checks and tide times**.

Look before you go but make sure you know how to get up-to-date information while you are afloat as well.

**Someone ashore** who knows where you are going and who to call if you don't return on time.

Words: Bethany Hope | Photos: RNLI/Nigel Millard

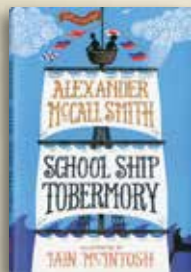
## FIND OUT MORE

- [RNLI.org/RespectTheWater](http://RNLI.org/RespectTheWater)
- [Sailing.ie](http://Sailing.ie)
- [RYA.org.uk](http://RYA.org.uk)
- [Sailing.org/disabled](http://Sailing.org/disabled)
- [www.rya.org.uk/sailability](http://www.rya.org.uk/sailability)
- [svnereida.com](http://svnereida.com) for more on Jeanne



# Books for Spring

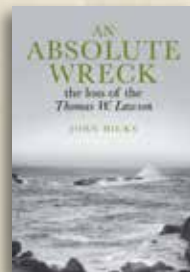
SIX OF THE BEST



**For the young adventurer**  
*School Ship Tobermory*  
by Alexander McCall Smith

Twins Ben and Fee MacTavish, who are nearly 13, are all set to join the school ship *Tobermory*, where youngsters from all over the world learn to become sailors. With a new team of shipmates (including Henry the dog, who once caught a mermaid) everything's going swimmingly until a film crew arrives on scene and Ben lands a role as an extra. As you'd expect from McCall Smith, author of the hugely popular *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series, a suspicious plot soon begins to emerge. Will our young friends get to the bottom of a sinister scheme? An exciting nautical adventure for youngsters aged 7+.

Published by BC Books  
Hardback ISBN 9781780273334  
Price: £9.99



**For the maritime historian**  
*An Absolute Wreck – the loss of the Thomas W. Lawson*  
by John Hicks  
Review by Alex Doig, Vice Chair of the City of Manchester Branch

On 13 September 1907 after a stormy crossing from America, the *Thomas W. Lawson* found itself in treacherous waters just off the Isles of Scilly and dropped anchor. During the night there was a severe storm and by the morning the *Lawson* was a wreck. This book studies the events leading up to the disaster and what happened during the attempts to help, as well as the aftermath. From the author, a direct descendant of many of those involved in the wreck, we also learn about the families of the Isles of Scilly, ships and seamanship and the islands themselves. A must if you enjoy seafaring history.

Published by Scotforth Books  
Hardback ISBN 9781909817258  
Price: £15  
Available from the author at Flat 13,  
17 Montagu Square, London, W12 2LE



**For survival experts**  
*438 Days – An Extraordinary True Story of Survival at Sea*  
by Jonathan Franklin  
Review by Debbie Kelly, volunteer at Shoreham Harbour Lifeboat Station

Experienced fisherman José Salvador Alvarenga launched his small fibreglass boat from the shores of Chiapas, Mexico, in December 2012, heading out for a short fishing trip with Ezequiel Cordoba. He didn't see land again until 30 January 2014, 13 months later.

Blown off course, the two drifted back and forth with never a sight of land for 6,000+ miles. They learned to collect raw fish, turtles, birds, sharks and rainwater, using every ounce of their wits to survive. The emotions are tangible as they go from euphoria to despair. At times, only Alvarenga's sheer determination to survive kept him going. Author Jonathan Franklin wrote this account after spending a year by his side. It's an amazing tale that highlights just how much the human body, mind and spirit can endure.

Published by Macmillan  
Hardback ISBN 9781509800179  
Price: £16.99  
Paperback available June 2016



**For the royal heritage enthusiast**  
*HRH The Duke of Kent – A Life of Service*  
by Celia and John Lee

At the time of his 80th birthday in October 2015, His Royal Highness Prince Edward The Duke of Kent remained one of the busiest members of the royal family, dedicating a large proportion of his time and efforts to good causes. Chapter 12 of this volume deals with the Duke's involvement with the RNLI, having become the charity's President in March 1969. It documents his attendance at various RNLI ceremonies and visits to lifeboat stations, and also contains the author's own perspective on the scope and history of our lifesaving work. Exhaustively thorough, diligently researched and a top choice for any royal history buff.

Published by Seymour Books  
Softback ISBN 9781517220600  
Price: £20



**For the morbidly curious**  
*Ate the Dog Yesterday – Maritime casualties, calamities and catastrophes*  
by Graham Faiella

The 19th and 20th centuries were hazardous times for shipping, and no shortage of original narrative exists from the period. These accounts – taken mostly from the casualties columns and pages of Lloyd's List – provide an eye-watering record of stranding, injury, mutiny, disease, murder, disaster and various other calamities from the heyday of deep-sea commercial sail. As engrossing as it is slightly icky, the comprehensive volume also provides a few interesting snapshots into the day-to-day life of sailors, including what they ate and what they encountered on reaching their exotic destinations.

Published by Whittles Publishing  
Softback ISBN 9781849950893  
Price: £30



**For lighthouse lovers**  
*Scottish and Manx Lighthouses – A Photographic Journey in the Footsteps of the Stevensons*  
by Ian Cowe

The formation of the Northern Lighthouse Board in 1786 heralded a unified approach to lighting Scotland's shores. A young Robert Stevenson soon entered the picture, and went on to establish a dynasty of lighthouse engineers that spanned generations.

Author Ian Cowe visits some of the remotest islands in the British Isles and marvels at the many engineering wonders the Stevensons created, including towers at Bell Rock, Skerryvore and Dubh Artach. Gorgeous scenery and wildlife are also captured in his pictures. Proceeds from the sale of this book will benefit the Northern Lighthouse Heritage Trust.

Published by Whittles Publishing  
Softback ISBN 9780956720917  
Price: £20

Buy these books online via [RNLI.org/amazon](http://RNLI.org/amazon) and Amazon will donate a minimum of 5% of the value to the RNLI. Please note that postage and packing charges will apply.

Reviews: Laura Rainbow (unless otherwise stated) | Photos: Simon Moss



# SPECIAL DELIVERY

Including a legacy of gratitude, a tall story and an update on an epic RNLI walk

## 'HE NEVER FORGOT THE RESCUE'

I recently saw on your news centre a 'thank you' item to donors from a crew member named Barry Gourlay (pictured) from Anstruther lifeboat crew.

This made me recall the rescue story my father told me of when the predecessors of that crew saved him. He and 17 colleagues were Royal Navy apprentices from Rosyth on a 4-day exercise on seamanship in two whalers and a cutter in August 1949. Dad (Henry Anthony Harris) served in the Royal Navy at various bases and on various ships of the fleet for more than 30 years, achieving the rank of lieutenant commander on retirement.

Searching some of his old papers I found the articles and photographs of the event. I would ask that this letter and the articles are forwarded to the current crew at Anstruther as my 'thank you' to them and their colleagues for what they bravely do. Dad was always a regular supporter and donor and left a legacy in his Will to the RNLI. I continue to be a donor and will do the same in my Will – he never forgot the rescue and neither will I.

So, to Barry and his current colleagues at RNLI Anstruther, a big thank you for all that you do. And, to the 1949 crew, great work and our gratitude forever.

SW Harris, Kent



Photo: RNLI/Mike Lavis

Thank you for your kind words Mr Harris – we've passed your letter and articles to Anstruther Lifeboat Station. Six out of ten lifeboat launches are only made possible thanks to people who remember the RNLI in their Will, just as you and your father have. Readers who would like information on RNLI gifts in Wills can find out more at [RNLI.org/legacy](http://RNLI.org/legacy) or speaking to our team on 0300 300 0124.



## FORMER GLORY

Thank you for printing the photograph I took of the former Ramsgate lifeboat that was involved in the Dunkirk evacuation (Autumn 2015 edition, p38, pictured). If any readers would like to buy a postcard featuring the image, it's on sale at Ramsgate RNLI Shop. All in aid of saving lives at sea of course!

Chris Andrews  
Station Mechanic, Margate

## FROM OUR FACEBOOK PAGE



As a lifeboat crew member, being tall isn't a requirement – but it certainly helps. The volunteers at Criccieth in north Wales have staked their claim as the tallest ever lifeboat crew, with a combined height of 7.7m – just centimetres short of the length of their 8.44m Atlantic 85 lifeboat. Lofty crew member David, who stands at 1.96m (6'5), even had to get a made-to-measure drysuit as none of the regular-sized ones would fit.



No rest on New Year's Day for Lough Derg RNLI when they were called to rescue a horse trapped in a flooded river. Using the lifeboat and a tow rope, the distressed steed was encouraged into the shallows, where a person with a bucket of oats coaxed the horse from the water.

## TWEETS FROM SUPPORTERS



'Retired rescue dog, Ben rescued by volunteers from @NewBrightonRNLI' (From @RNLI)

'Great to represent @RNLI as community heroes and place the match ball at Norwich vs Liverpool – match of the season?' (From @LOWESTOFTRNLI)



'4000+ miles of coast walked for the RNLI and I've found 1 of my favourites here @VisitSheepsHead' (From Alex@ELLISROSWELL, in Cork, while walking the coasts of the UK and Republic of Ireland)

Write to us using the contact details at the bottom of page 2 or share your stories at [twitter.com/RNLI](https://twitter.com/RNLI) or [facebook.com/RNLI](https://facebook.com/RNLI)



# RNLI FAMILY: THE LIFE OF THE CHARITY

Celebrating the RNLI family, past and present

## New addition to close-knit crew

He may only be a few centimetres tall but Aberdeen lifeboat's new crew member – Wilson – is the mascot the volunteers have been waiting for.

The doll was knitted by RNLI supporter Eileen Leslie for her hospitalised friend Mrs Wilson, who sadly died before she could receive her handmade gift. Eileen named the little crew member in honour of her lifeboat-loving friend, and donated him to the station as a raffle prize.

Says Aberdeen station Mechanic Cal Reed: 'I'd always been slightly jealous that just about every other all-weather lifeboat had a wee knitted mascot in the wheelhouse and we didn't, so I jumped at the chance to take him. Give him a few months onboard, and he'll have some stories to tell.'



## Clovelly couple to tie the knot



Clovelly @ClovellyRNLI Dec 12  
Volunteer Crew Jamie Dawkins proposing to Gemma Marsden today. She said Yes! #best\_wishes\_from\_the\_station

Congratulations to RNLI Clovelly volunteer Crew Member Jamie Dawkins, whose lifeboat proposal to partner Gemma Marsden made the right kind of splash.

Jamie, an electrician by day, popped the question to accountant Gemma, with help from his fellow crew members onboard the B class *Toby Rundle*. The initial message was a bit lost on Gemma, who wasn't wearing her glasses, but 'as soon as she realised what the sign said, she was pretty surprised,' says Jamie.

As you'd expect from the first lifeboat proposal in Clovelly's history, she said yes, and the couple hope to head down the aisle next year.

## Celebrating life

# Farewell to Frances: fundraising stalwart



The Plymouth RNLI community is mourning the loss of one of their most valued members, Frances Zisimides.

With her team of volunteers, Frances raised money for the lifeboat for 48 years, working tirelessly to ensure 'her boys' (as she called the crew) had everything they needed. Frances received various awards for her charity work, including the coveted The Pride of Plymouth. She also organised the opening of the local RNLI shop.

## 'He will be missed by all who knew him'

It is with great sadness that the volunteers of Poole Lifeboat Station announce the death of Dr Robert Wilson Adam, who gave more than 6 decades of service to the RNLI.

His first role was as the station's Honorary Medical Advisor, a position he held from around 1950 to 1983 while also serving as Chairman from 1969 onwards. Concurrently, he was a member of the Medical and Survival Committee, which he

became Deputy Chairman of from 1984 to 1992. In 1980, Dr Adam was awarded an RNLI Gold Badge in recognition of his dedication to the RNLI over some 30 years, and in 1990 he was appointed a Vice President (Life Vice President from 1992 onwards).

He is remembered by his friends and colleagues as a man with an endless store of hilarious stories, and will be missed by all who knew him.

### Edgar Atkinson – October 2015

Lifeboat Treasurer at Hartlepool Lifeboat Station

### Archibald Campbell – January 2016

Former Mechanic at Islay Lifeboat Station

### Ken Jeffs – November 2015

Former Coxswain/Assistant Mechanic at Barmouth Lifeboat Station

### Paul Leleu – January 2016

Former Coxswain/Mechanic at The Mumbles Lifeboat Station

### Dr Lorna Lilly – February 2015

Former Chairman at Finchley and Friern Barnet Fundraising Branch

### Alexander (Alex) Muir Ingram – December 2015

Former Crew Member, Radio Operator, Mechanic and Second Coxswain at Girvan Lifeboat Station

### Pam Norman – October 2015

Former Assistant Supervisor in the Fundraising Support Centre at Poole Headquarters

### Dr Sam Simpson – February 2016

Education Presenter at Ballymena Branch

### Hugh Scott – November 2015

Former Second Coxswain at Broughty Ferry Lifeboat Station

### Robert Stewart – August 2015

Deputy Launching Authority at Bude Lifeboat Station

### Vince Thomas – December 2015

Deputy Launching Authority and former Head Launcher/Tractor Driver at New Quay Lifeboat Station

### May Thornton – December 2015

Chairman of Knaresborough Guild

### Martin Wale – January 2016

Technical Author and Illustrator

### Tom Wakenshaw – October 2015

Lifeboat Operations Manager at Berwick-upon-Tweed Lifeboat Station

Words: Laura Rainbow, Carol Waterkeyn and Helen McHugh | Photos: RNLI/ Aberdeen, Clovelly, Barry Perrins



**FLOOD RESCUE TEAM:**

**74**  
people  
rescued



**337**  
people  
assisted



**LIFEBOAT CREWS:**

**8,228**  
lifeboat  
launches



**142**  
launches at Southend,  
our busiest coastal station

**465**  
lifeboat launches by  
our busiest crew at  
Tower Lifeboat Station



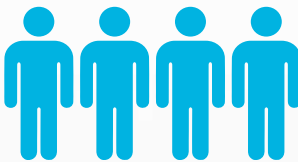
**LIFEGUARDS:**

**94** lives  
saved by  
lifeguards



 **18,181**  
people helped

 **348**  
lives saved

 **7,973**  
people  
rescued

