THE RNLI IS THE CharITY THAT SAVES LIVES AT SEA

PLUS:

‘WE’RE ALL INCREDIBLY GRATEFUL’
From stricken ships to the swimmer saved in seconds – read real lifesaving stories

THE RNLI AND ME
Fern Britton reveals her love for lifeboating communities

SUMMER WAVE
How you’re powering the mission to make our shores safer all round
Welcome

Who is the bravest person you know? Through this magazine, we regularly meet courageous people – often because they have risked their own life to rescue someone else. But Phil Bindon is showing a different sort of bravery to help save lives.

Phil, interviewed on page 18, lost his son to the sea. Now he has pledged his support for the RNLI’s Respect the Water campaign, which this year will reach more people than ever. It wasn’t easy for Phil to talk about the tragedy that has hit him and his family, but he is determined to help prevent other people from getting into danger.

That education work, coupled with the supervision and rescue provided by our crews and lifeguards, will undoubtedly save lives this Summer. As you’ll read, the lifeguard service has expanded to more beaches than ever. They are on hand with warnings and advice. And, if needed, lifeguards like Dominic Richard (pictured on the front cover) will speed to the rescue – see page 16 for more.

It’s all powered by support – from our royal patron (page 24) and admiring celebrities (page 30) to the generous person holding this magazine. Thank you – and I hope you enjoy it.

Editor: Rory Stamp
@LifeboatRory

REGULARS

IN DEPTH

NEWS

Gallantry medal, America’s Cup, Mayday and more

22

PUZZLE TIME

Get snapping on the coast

32

GIVE IT A GO

Six of the Best

Powerful reads for Summer days

34

SIX OF THE BEST

Powerful reads for Summer days

34

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Your letters on Admiral Fitzroy, plus Spring lottery results

40

RNLI FAMILY

Catch up with RNLI people

42

RESPECT THE WATER

Father helps launch our biggest safety campaign

24

64 YEARS WITH THE QUEEN

Majestic RNLI moments

28

AGM REPORT

The RNLI and me

30

THE RNLI AND ME

Meet Fern Britton

‘I can’t believe they put themselves through that’

Fern Britton

RESCUE

SNAPSHOTS

Including a lucky escape when a motor cruiser catches fire and a teen trapped in Morecambe mud

8

TRAWLER TROUBLE

Trawler drifts towards busy Dublin Bay shipping lanes

10

TOUCH AND GO

Appledore and Padstow crews tested to the limit

12

UNDER PRESSURE

Lifeguards power into action after swimmer is pushed under pier

16

© 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.
MAYDAY 2016: a prima response

Breakfast, lunch or dinner, RNLI crew leave their families at a moment’s notice to save lives at sea. And this October, we hope you’ll answer our rescue call over dinner too – by hosting a fundraising Fish Supper.

From 14–16 October, we need seasoned chefs and amateurs alike to dish up the fish for their friends and family in a fun, themed evening.

Every penny raised will help us to protect our courageous crew and the families who love them.

Sign up online to receive your free fundraising kit at RNLI.org/FishSupper.

Remember our rescue story in Spring 2015, reporting how Lochinver and Thurso crews aided a fish carrier during a 13-hour rescue in a gale?

Now the Lochinver Coxswain, David MacAskill (above right), is to be awarded an RNLI Bronze Medal for Gallantry in recognition of his selfless courage and determination during the arduous rescue.

‘The Lochinver crew faced appalling conditions during this service. When a lifeboat is pitching and rolling beneath you it takes a huge effort to also assess a hazardous situation and making difficult decisions is incredibly challenging,’ says George Rawlinson, RNLI Operations Director.

‘Coxswain MacAskill did all this while skilfully manoeuvring the lifeboat, ensuring that both his crew and his attention to the casualty vessel was to the highest standards of seamanship. The bravery and determination of Coxswain MacAskill and his crew saved the captain and crew of the Norholm. I’d like to thank them all for their commitment and dedication to saving lives at sea and congratulate them on their well-deserved awards.’

Read more on the rescue – and watch video footage – at RNLI.org/LochinverBronze.

THE RNLi FISH SUPPER

Photo: RNLI/Jeff Moore

Photo: RNLI/Nigel Millard

Photo: RNLI / Andrew Stewart

Photo: Shutterstock

Photo: Harry KH / Land Rover BAR

Photo: Lifeboat

Summer 2016

Lifeboat Summer 2016
Lifeboat
[Image 27x37 to 214x299]
£300 of her prize money to Oban RNLI, freelance journalist Moira Kerr has donated to save lives at sea. ’

‘On call 24/7, whatever the weather, and ready excellent work of the volunteer crew, who are seven pairs of specialist RNLI wellies for the Media Awards.

‘My donation will help with the cost of engine failure to the west of the Small Isles. An eventful day and successful in all respects – the crew even came back with a bucket load of fresh langoustines from some very grateful fishermen.’

Fond farewell to volunteering trio
Having given almost two-thirds of a century to the RNLI between them, three Scottish volunteers are retiring this year.

After clocking up 14 years (and 6,625 nautical miles), Peter ‘Ped’ McKinnon is retiring from his role as full-time Mechanic at Oban Lifeboat Station. Since he first volunteered as a crew member in 2002, he’s attended 385 shouts and spent a total of 681 hours aboard the lifeboat.

Queensferry Shop Volunteer Rose Ritchie has spent more than 30 years helping to raise lifesaving funds. In the early days she braved bitterly cold weather to sell products from a trolley outside the old lifeboat shed. In fact, Rose and her colleagues have only had the ‘luxury’ of a heated, properly equipped shop for the past 3 years.

And in Girvan, Bill Tait is hanging up his notepad and pen to retire from the role of Press Officer, a position he’s held since 1996. While he’s continuing his role as Treasurer, his ‘knack of finding other stories to ensure that RNLI Girvan remained at the forefront of the public’s mind’ will be missed, says Richard Smith, RNLI Public Relations Manager for Scotland.

Could you lend your skills and time to an RNLI role like lifeboat crew member, fundraiser or education volunteer? To see a variety of RNLI volunteer opportunities, visit RNLI.org/VolRoles.

Tobermory Lifeboat Station’s Sam Jones tells us what occurred minutes after this photo was taken:

‘A post rededication ceremony selfie with two coxswains and a chairman. Minutes later the pagers went off and the newly rededicated Tobermory lifeboat headed off on a 60-mile, 5-hour shout to a fishing vessel with engine failure to the west of the Small Isles. An eventful day and successful in all respects – the crew even came back with a bucket load of fresh langoustines from some very grateful fishermen.’

Epic cycle challenge
‘I hope I remember how to walk,’ says the saddlesore Steve McAllister after cycling a good chunk of his 8,000-mile route.

At the time of writing, Steve had just cycled through what he describes as ‘the unbelievably beautiful beaches and rocky rolling landscape of West Harris,’ only to be confronted by a ‘stark, mountainous’ climb over North Harris, including Clisham.

Steve started his epic journey at Penlee in Cornwall in September 2015 and aims to visit every single RNLI lifeboat station around the UK and Republic of Ireland. He’s hoping to raise £8,000 for the RNLI and meet lots of volunteer lifeboat crew along the way. You can follow Steve’s progress on his fundraising blog at rnlicoastalcycleride.com.
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 DUBLIN BAY | PAGE 10
7 PADSTOW | PAGE 12
8 BOSCOMBE | PAGE 16

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

---

1 MUD RESCUE
MORECAMBE | 18 MAY

A 14-year-old girl was rescued by Morecambe lifeboat crew after being trapped up to her waist in mud for 90 minutes. Morecambe’s inshore rescue hovercraft crew, accompanied by a Coastguard rescue helicopter, headed to the scene, locating the cold and distressed teenager at about 7.30pm. The volunteers dug her out of the mud using specialist equipment and, fearing complications associated with suspension trauma (due to the length of time she had been trapped), transferred her from the hovercraft to the helicopter, which took her to hospital. The girl’s mother later sent a message of thanks to the lifeboat crew, which they shared using Twitter (pictured).

---

2 HANDS TO THE PUMP
THURSO | 11 FEBRUARY

The two-man crew of a fishing boat called for help in the small hours when their engine room started filling with water off Dunnet Head. Thurso lifeboat crew reached the scene at 5am to transfer a salvage pump, with Shetland Coastguard helicopter arriving shortly after to lower a second and a winchman. With pump in action, the fishermen were escorted to Scrabster by lifeboat and helicopter – and all arrived safely by 8am.

---

3 CROSS-CHANNEL SERVICE
PENARTH AND PORTISHEAD | 13 MARCH

RNLI crews from both sides of the Bristol Channel worked together to help a yacht that was taking on water 2 miles off Cardiff. Penarth volunteers re-launched the grounded vessel and escorted her across the channel, into the care of RNLI Portishead. Then another mayday came in so Portishead put a crew member aboard the yacht while they steamed to the other, safely guiding both vessels into the marina and helping eight people in total.

---

4 TRAPPED IN AN INFERNO
EASTBOURNE | 22 MARCH

Two men in Eastbourne had a lucky escape when their motor cruiser went up in flames. Local fishermen pulled them to safety and used the cruiser’s anchor to prevent it from drifting towards the pier. There was a risk of onboard gas cylinders exploding, putting other vessels in danger. But the lifeboat crew got the men ashore and then returned to the scene to keep other vessels away while the fire burnt itself out.

---

5 TRAWLER TROUBLE
TYNEMOUTH | 30 MARCH

The skipper of a 28-tonne trawler radioed for help when its propeller fouled in fishing gear, leaving the three-man crew adrift 12 miles off Whitley Bay. Tynemouth’s Severn crew towed them to safety, arriving at North Shields Fish Quay 2 hours later. Adrian Don, station spokesman said: ‘It would have been dangerous for the fishermen to attempt to free the fouled prop at sea. They did the right thing in calling for help.’
BRINGING 200 TONNES OF TRAWLER HOME

Kieran had to work fast. In high winds, a trawler’s heaving line had got tangled around the lifeboat’s searchlight and radar. Someone had to climb up and cut it loose or the next big swell could bring the gear down ...

The call came at 2.50am on Wednesday 3 February. In a strong gale, a 25m trawler had suffered a fouled propeller while her six crew fished for scallops. She was disabled and drifting towards sandbanks outside Dublin Bay.

It was an untimely wake-up call for Dun Laoghaire Duty Coxswain David Branigan and his crew: ‘You’ve just fallen asleep and all’s good with the world,’ says David. ‘But when the pager goes off you’re focused on getting to the station and finding out what the job is.’

The crew left harbour just after 3am, and the Irish Sea grew rougher as they headed further out, with 4–5m waves.

The trawler, Argonaut, had reported a position around 8 miles offshore, and had drifted a further 2 miles. Within 45 minutes, the Trent class lifeboat Anna Livia was on scene.

A challenging set up
Setting up the tow wasn’t easy. In rough weather, it can be hazardous to take a lifeboat too close to the other vessel.

That means crews have to throw the line further, with more chance of it being taken by the wind. And strong winds can be loud, making communication difficult.

It took three attempts, and about an hour, to establish the tow. On one attempt, Argonaut’s heaving line got tangled around the lifeboat’s radar and searchlight and it was up to Mechanic Kieran O’Connell to climb up and cut it free. David recalls: ‘It only took 2 or 3 minutes, but to have somebody hanging onto the radar gantry in that sea state – well, it took determination.’

Towing teamwork
At around 4.45am, they headed for the port of Howth. A tight turn just inside Howth Harbour can be tricky for a 200-tonne vessel, even in good conditions, so David requested the launch of Howth lifeboat to help in the confined final stages. ‘You just don’t know how the wind is going to affect things when you’re coming into a harbour like that,’ he says, ‘and it’s always good to see our mates from Howth.’

But, at a towing pace of around 3 knots, it would be nearly 6 hours before they saw the other crew.

‘You just don’t know how the wind is going to affect things’

The tow parted three times, and each time both boats would drift backwards while the tow was reset. It was after 10am when they arrived outside Howth. Keeping the trawler in an astern tow, they headed for the harbour entrance, with Howth’s Trent class lifeboat Roy Barker III bringing up the rear.

Howth lifeboat crew had put their fenders out and would give Argonaut a nudge whenever she started to drift off course. Working together, the crews brought the trawler in and tied her up safely at around 10.40am.

Seven full Irish and 14 coffees
Kieran knew a café nearby, and a tired and hungry Dun Laoghaire crew went for a full Irish breakfast and two mugs of coffee each. They then got back onboard to return the lifeboat to Dun Laoghaire, ready for the next service.

Many of the volunteers had to go straight to work. And for Kieran, the climbing Mechanic, top of the to-do list was ordering a new tow rope – due to the wear and tear sustained on this long and arduous shout.

Words: Mairéad Dwane
Photos: RNLI/Dun Laoghaire, Noel Davidson, Nigel Millard

THE CREW

Duty Coxswain
David Branigan (49)
Photographer/Journalist
RNLI Mechanic
Kieran O’Connell (51)
Gary Hayes (31)
Marina Supervisor
Alan Keville (40)
Director
Gary Hayes (31)
Kieran O’Connell (51)
Boatman
Damian Payne (34)
Business Development Director
Jack Shanahan (44)
Props Buyer

STEPHEN WYNNE
LIFEBOAT OPERATIONS MANAGER | DUN LAOGHAIRE

I was picked up by a lifeboat in 1970 when I was 12 and I joined the crew in 1975, so that’s about 40 years. I try to attend most shoutings. It’s important to be there when the lads get back, to thank them. If there’s anything I can do to help shoreside, I’ll get involved. On that night I was liaising with my opposite number in Howth, Colm Newport, to make sure that our lifeboat would get the appropriate assistance.

The crew are trained for this, but it doesn’t make getting up at 3am any easier. What impresses me each time is that the crew don’t know what they’re assembling for, or how long they’re going to be out. They’ll turn up to do the job, and that’s been unchanged in all the time I’ve been around.

Words: Mairéad Dwane
Photos: RNLI/Dun Laoghaire, Noel Davidson, Nigel Millard
When a cargo ship lost power and started drifting towards danger, two lifeboat crews headed out on a rescue that would test their endurance to the limit.

'It's an unusual coincidence,' says Padstow Mechanic Mike England, 'that for the past 2 years, we've had an interesting shout in rough weather on almost exactly the same day at the end of January.' And this year, on 30 January, the lifeboat crew completed their hat trick.

The MV *Verity*, a 91m cargo ship carrying 3,000 tonnes of scrap metal, lost power to its engines, 25 miles offshore and began drifting towards the jagged rocks at Hartland Point.

Teaming up, Appledore and Padstow lifeboat crews went out to rescue it and – in a rather unusual turn of events – ended up enlisting the help of a Dutch naval warship.

At 11pm on the night on 29 January, Falmouth Coastguard requested the launch of Appledore’s all-weather lifeboat *Mollie Hunt*. Twenty-five miles west of Bude Haven, the MV *Verity* was adrift in a near gale and heavy seas. At the mercy of the sea, the vessel was slowly being pushed towards the jagged rocks at Hartland Point.

Although the engineer aboard the *Verity* was attempting to repair the engine, the Appledore crew knew that, if the engineer couldn’t fix the engine, they were going to need help. However, with wildly unpredictable tides near Appledore, there was the very real possibility that, when called upon, they wouldn’t be able to launch. Rather than risk leaving the *Verity* in danger, the crew decided to take no chances and head out to Bideford Bay overnight, to be near the vessel if anything went wrong while the tide was out.

Appledore Second Coxswain Owen Atkinson says: ‘If you’ve ever tried to sleep on a lifeboat, you’ll know that it’s not the most comfortable of places! One of us had the floor, the other two were squeezed into the relative comfort of the casualty cabin – but in those situations, you don’t really sleep anyway, because your senses are heightened and you’re constantly alert. You can cat nap and switch off though, and charge your batteries a bit before the shout.’

The next morning, back on land at Padstow Lifeboat Station, Alan Tarby was monitoring the situation. Knowing the situation was continuing to look worse, he called the Coastguard...
and convinced them to launch the Spirit of Padstow too – in these seas and with a vessel of that size, two lifeboats were going to be better than one. Once they reached the vessel, Padstow checked in with Appledore and they began to work out how to keep the vessel from drifting onto the jagged rocks at Hartland Point. They were now 8 miles from shore – drifting at a rate of 2 miles an hour – and the tug wasn’t due to arrive for over 12 hours. If they didn’t act quickly and prevent the vessel from drifting, it was going to be in trouble.

Owen recalls: ‘Between us and Padstow, we came up with the idea to have, essentially, a daisy-chain – with a lifeboat towing a lifeboat towing the vessel, which was an interesting idea; it’s something that none of us have ever done before.’

Once the daisy chain was established, the two crews tried to turn the bow of the boat. That way, if it drifted further ashore, it would avoid hitting Hartland Point. ‘We’d never done or practised it before,’ recalls Alan. ‘But it worked first time. It was actually even more effective than we thought – we’d asked the skipper to get his engine running [although the boat was stranded, the engine could run and give thrust for around 20 minutes before it cut out] to give us a bit more power and initially assumed that his engine was responsible for turning the boat. After we’d turned it around, we heard him over the radio say: “Shall I start my engine yet?” It turned out that the two little lifeboats had turned this 5,000-tonne boat out of harm’s way!‘

However, by this stage, the three vessels were just 3 miles off the coast. Towing the vessel and its 3,000 tonnes of scrap metal wasn’t an option – all the lifeboats could do was to hold it, stop it from drifting and hope that a tug arrived soon.

Luckily, a Dutch warship was nearby and responded to a call for help from the Coastguard, arriving on scene in the nick of time. After a few practice runs, the warship attached a tow rope and began to tow them to safety. Kevin Dowle, Captain of the Verity, remembers this moment well: ‘Each of those three runs took around 30 minutes, and by the time they got the rope aboard, we were getting dangerously close to the rocks. It was getting a bit touchy and if those boys hadn’t held us until it’d arrived, I dread to think how it could have gone – they gave us a bit of breathing time to get everything sorted. If they hadn’t, I think we’d have lost the old girl on the rocks.’

Luckily, now the tow had been attached, the crew aboard Appledore’s Mollie Hunt could return to shore and make a crew change. After 17 hours of being thrown around by a rough sea, they were all tired, exhausted and feeling a little worse-for-wear. Volunteers at Clovelly Lifeboat Station had heard the news too and had arranged for the Appledore crews to change over at Clovelly and use their kit. They’d also prepared hot food and drinks for the crew when they returned from their long shout.

Martin Cox, the Coxswain at Appledore, was on leave, but had been monitoring the situation. Knowing he’d probably be needed to relieve the crew, he’d pulled together a team who had just come back from a training course and told them to meet at Clovelly. The relief crew took it in turns to sleep as they waited by the vessel, staying in position until the tug arrived to pull the Verity to safety. The lifeboat was finally stood down, but Martin and his crew had to wait for the tide to turn before they could return to Appledore.

As Martin says: ‘We didn’t have the most difficult job to do, but after 17 hours of standing by and escorting duties – especially when the lads had been away on a course all week and had got straight back on the boat without returning home – we were all ready for bed!’

Words: Jack Barclay
Photos: RNLI/Padstow, Nigel Millard, Nathan Williams

‘We are so very grateful’

This letter from Faversham Ships Ltd was received by Padstow lifeboat crew:

‘To the Coxswain and Crew, Padstow lifeboat.

Many thanks for the incredible assistance given to our MV Verity yesterday, pleased to say the ship is just waiting to berth safely in Swansea for engine repairs. The calm, professional and very humbling assistance given by yourselves and the Appledore lifeboat have been fundamental to this. We now understand what the true traditions of the RNLI mean and are so very grateful.’

‘Thank you again.’
When a swimmer drew close to a pier at a Dorset beach, lifeguards moved quickly to warn him of the dangers – but they soon found he needed more than advice.

The waters off Boscombe beach looked deceptively calm on 5 May. Senior Lifeguard Dominic Richard was one of the RNLI team just days into their Summer patrol season, and took to the sea aboard a rescue watercraft (RWC) to practise his skills. It wasn’t long before he needed to call upon them for real.

‘One of the other lifeguards back on the beach had spotted a swimmer, on the other side of the pier from me, about 150m out to sea,’ recalls Dominic. ‘So I headed a bit nearer to advise him of the dangers round there – a bit of easterly wind and swell had picked up. After being pushed further out to sea than planned – and expending most of his energy – the man was now drifting underneath Boscombe Pier, with its concrete, barnacle-encrusted pillars and eddying waters.

To reach the man in the quickest time possible, Dominic decided to head underneath the pier rather than go around it. ‘This was a technically difficult rescue to carry out,’ says Mike Winter, Boscombe Lifeguard Supervisor. ‘It’s hard to drive a ski [RWC] in and around hazards like that.’ But Dominic safely negotiated the pier structure, drew alongside the swimmer and grabbed his hand at the first attempt.

‘He wasn’t saying much when I got him aboard – I think he was quite shaken up,’ adds Dominic, who pulled the man onto the craft’s rescue sled and radioed fellow Lifeguard Dan Miller to request medical help on the shore.

Powering onto the sand, Dominic helped the swimmer off the sled and into the care of Dan. ‘He was tired out, but medically okay. Thankfully he hadn’t bumped his head or swallowed any water,’ explains Mike. ‘It was a great job by Dominic – his training has obviously paid off and been put to good use. It’s another example of why people should choose a lifeguarded beach.’

Words: Rory Stamp
Photos: RNLI/Nathan Williams

‘He would have got more and more tired – and probably drowned’

DOMINIC RICHARD
SENIOR LIFEGUARD | BOSCOMBE

They weren’t the most dramatic conditions in terms of waves but the current under the pier is dangerous. My training and experience on the RWC helped so much – it was about using enough power to reach the casualty but not so much that I put him or myself in danger.

It was vital I got hold of him first time because, if I missed him, I would have had to do a fresh approach. And while you’re doing that, people can lose more energy, start going under and so on. He was on his own, so if we hadn’t been there he would have got more and more tired – and probably drowned.
Our lifesavers rescue thousands every Summer, but not everyone can be saved. That’s why the RNLI has launched its biggest-ever campaign – and why a father in mourning has bravely spoken about why everybody should Respect the Water.

‘Speaking at my son’s memorial ceremony is the hardest thing I’ve ever had to do,’ says Phil Bindon, trudging across a damp beach, flanked by his two daughters and the mother of his only son. ‘If I can do that, I can do this.’ The sand gets wetter as he approaches the water’s edge at Polzeath, Cornwall. Phil casts his eyes to the right, where grassy headland looms over dark rocks. It’s the last place that his son Mike was seen alive.

‘I don’t want anyone going through what we have’

Mike Bindon (pictured above) was lost while angling.

Later, Phil will visit Rock Lifeboat Station for the first time. The volunteers there worked with the crews at Padstow and Port Isaac to search for Mike after he was swept from a rock by a freak wave while angling. Along with a Coastguard helicopter, the lifeboat crews scoured the sea for hours on 22 January 2014. But Mike was never found.
Phil sits on a rock and takes a deep breath as a video camera trains on his face and a clapperboard snaps. He’s here to support Respect the Water, the RNLI’s biggest-ever safety campaign. It’s designed to raise awareness of the sea’s dangers among those most likely to succumb: men aged 16–39. ‘Mike was a 23-year-old lad,’ says Phil. ‘He was just full of life – he probably wouldn’t have thought it was a risk, getting washed out to sea. I have lost parents … but nobody expects to lose a child. I’ve never had such a sinking feeling.’

Mike was one of 168 coastal fatalities in 2015 (source: WAID). More than half of those lost don’t expect to ever get wet – they get caught out doing seemingly safe things like walking along the coast or fishing from rocks. So the RNLI’s focus this year is to highlight the risks of unexpectedly falling or slipping into the water – and reminding people how dangerous the sea can be.

‘A potentially fatal combination’

‘The sea can be so unpredictable,’ says Rock Lifeboat Helm Paul Hancock, one of the volunteers who spent hours searching for Mike. He and his fellow crew members have launched to many people who have fallen foul of the sea’s turbulence, tides and temperature. ‘It takes a very small wave to wash someone off rocks. Plus they forget it’s not a lake – it’s under the influence of the tides, which can catch people out. People also underestimate the temperature of the water and how energy sapping it can be. All these things combine to make a potentially fatal combination.’

This Summer more people than ever will hear about those dangers, thanks to the Respect the Water campaign. It’s all part of the RNLI’s aim to halve coastal drowning by 2024 – something that can’t be achieved through rescue alone. That’s a fact that Phil Bindon knows only too well.

‘They resumed the search the next day and it was very hard as a parent to know that he was out there and there was nothing you could do to get him back,’ recalls Phil. ‘And to this day we have still never got him back, which makes it hard for us as a family to get some sort of closure. I don’t want anyone going through what we have.’

Words: Rory Stamp
Photos: RNLI/Nathan Williams

Phil sits on a rock and takes a deep breath as a video camera trains on his face and a clapperboard snaps. He’s here to support Respect the Water, the RNLI’s biggest-ever safety campaign. It’s designed to raise awareness of the sea’s dangers among those most likely to succumb: men aged 16–39. ‘Mike was a 23-year-old lad,’ says Phil. ‘He was just full of life – he probably wouldn’t have thought it was a risk, getting washed out to sea. I have lost parents … but nobody expects to lose a child. I’ve never had such a sinking feeling.’

Mike was one of 168 coastal fatalities in 2015 (source: WAID). More than half of those lost don’t expect to even get wet – they get caught out doing seemingly safe things like walking along the coast or fishing from rocks. So the RNLI’s focus this year is to highlight the risks of unexpectedly falling or slipping into the water – and reminding people how dangerous the sea can be.

‘A potentially fatal combination’

‘The sea can be so unpredictable,’ says Rock Lifeboat Helm Paul Hancock, one of the volunteers who spent hours searching for Mike. He and his fellow crew members have launched to many people who have fallen foul of the sea’s turbulence, tides and temperature. ‘It takes a very small wave to wash someone off rocks. Plus they forget it’s not a lake – it’s under the influence of the tides, which can catch people out. People also underestimate the temperature of the water and how energy sapping it can be. All these things combine to make a potentially fatal combination.’

This Summer more people than ever will hear about those dangers, thanks to the Respect the Water campaign. It’s all part of the RNLI’s aim to halve coastal drowning by 2024 – something that can’t be achieved through rescue alone. That’s a fact that Phil Bindon knows only too well.

‘They resumed the search the next day and it was very hard as a parent to know that he was out there and there was nothing you could do to get him back,’ recalls Phil. ‘And to this day we have still never got him back, which makes it hard for us as a family to get some sort of closure. I don’t want anyone going through what we have.’

Words: Rory Stamp
Photos: RNLI/Nathan Williams

From tonnes of water that show the power of the sea, to pint glasses explaining how only a little liquid can cause drowning; the campaign prompts people to think differently about the risks when close to the water.
Friends of the RNLI

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

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

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

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.

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

Quick wordsearch
Can you find the hydrological terms?


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.

Liz Lander, who works at RNLI College’s Riggers Restaurant, set up the RNLI Cake Collaboration. She says: ‘The RNLI is a really interesting theme for us to work with – there have been so many different interpretations of the sea, lifeboats, heritage and so on.’

Liz Lander, who works at RNLI College’s Riggers Restaurant, set up the RNLI Cake Collaboration. She says: ‘The RNLI is a really interesting theme for us to work with – there have been so many different interpretations of the sea, lifeboats, heritage and so on.’

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.

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.

NEW LIFEBOAT FUND EBOOK

APS Group (Scotland) Ltd has launched an eBook in aid of The Lifeboat Fund. The book commemorates the Eyemouth disaster that killed over 180 fishermen in 1881 – see thelifeboatfund.publishingthefuture.info

Lifeboat Summer 2016
64 YEARS
WITH THE QUEEN

Sir William Hillary, founder of the RNLI, believed that sea rescue was ‘a cause which extends from the palace to the cottage … and which addresses itself with equal force to all the best feelings of every class in the state.’ So began our Institution’s close connection with the Royal family.
Some 128 years later, at the age of 25, Princess Elizabeth ascended to the throne, following her mother’s footsteps to become, as Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, patron of the RNLI.

Although she now supports more than 600 charities and organisations, Her Majesty has still found the time to take a very real interest in our lifeboats and their crews. To date, she has officially named five lifeboats, visited numerous lifeboat stations, invited hundreds of RNLI volunteers to the palace, and included many more RNLI people in her honours lists.

In July 2004, HM The Queen also opened the Lifeboat College, which any visitor to Poole Headquarters will recognise as the home of crew training (and home of the best view this side of a pint of lifeboat ale). 'If you look at any photos of The Queen’s visits to our stations, all the lifeboat crew and supporters she meets are beaming from ear to ear. It is a hugely special moment to have your hard work and dedication recognised in that way – the same for those volunteers who have been awarded medals and invited to Royal functions,' says RNLI Chairman Charles Hunter-Pease. 'Of course, anything The Queen does with us receives a lot of attention, so it’s a great opportunity to spread our safety messages and proudly show off the lifesaving work our people do each and every day.'

Our archive contains a treasure trove of royal photos and press cuttings – here are just a few in celebration of 64 years of royal support.

There’s always been a royal relationship at the heart of the RNLI and, since 1952, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has been the charity’s patron. During that time, our volunteers and supporters have shared a host of memorable moments with Her Majesty, who celebrated her 90th birthday in April.

Princess Elizabeth’s wedding present from the people of Kimberley, South Africa (she donated the sum to the RNLI)

£180

The number of RNLI lifeboats the Queen has named

5
17 July 1972. The boat had been funded by an appeal to mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Royal British Legion, and each member had been asked to "subscribe a sum of not less than 5p" towards the final total. The Queen said that it was 'an imaginative decision to bring the lifeboat up the Thames'.

The Mary Williams Pier in Newlyn was opened by HRH Queen Elizabeth in 1972. The boat had been funded by an appeal to mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Royal British Legion, and each member had been asked to "subscribe a sum of not less than 5p" towards the final total. The Queen said that it was 'an imaginative decision to bring the lifeboat up the Thames'.

The Mary Williams Pier in Newlyn was opened by HRH Queen Elizabeth in 1972. The boat had been funded by an appeal to mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Royal British Legion, and each member had been asked to "subscribe a sum of not less than 5p" towards the final total. The Queen said that it was 'an imaginative decision to bring the lifeboat up the Thames'.

A 10-year-old Robbie Maiden, who later became Coxswain of Hartlepool lifeboat, met The Queen in 1977.

A 10-year-old Robbie Maiden, who later became Coxswain of Hartlepool lifeboat, met The Queen in 1977.

As Princess Elizabeth, the future Queen makes her first official RNLI visit, meeting the crew at St Helier Lifeboat Station.

As Princess Elizabeth, the future Queen makes her first official RNLI visit, meeting the crew at St Helier Lifeboat Station.

1949
As Princess Elizabeth, the future Queen makes her first official RNLI visit, meeting the crew at St Helier Lifeboat Station.

1952
Her Majesty The Queen becomes patron of the RNLI, joining their Majesties Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother (patron 1937–52) and Queen Mary (patron 1911–37).

1962
The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh visit Newhaven and Brighton Lifeboat Stations.

1965
Yarmouth lifeboat crew welcome The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh during the Royal Tour of the Isle of Wight.

1972
The Queen becomes the first reigning monarch to name a lifeboat – the relief lifeboat The Royal British Legion Jubilee at a ceremony at Herne-on-Thames.

1992
The Queen tours Fraserburgh Lifeboat Station and, at Ramsgate, names a new relief lifeboat (a Mersey class) Her Majesty The Queen.

2002
On the first day of her Jubilee tour, The Queen meets the crew of Falmouth’s Severn class all-weather lifeboat Richard Cox Scott.

2003
Plymouth’s Severn class, Sybil Mullen Glover, is named at a special ceremony with The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh in attendance.

2012
RNLI lifeboat crews take part in The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee flotilla, with Eastbourne’s new Tamar class Diamond Jubilee.

2013
Chiswick lifeboat crew bring the royal barge Gloriana, wedged under Kew Road bridge, to safety. The Queen visits St Ives Lifeboat Station at the start of their appeal to raise funds for a Shannon class lifeboat.
Our courageous community

It was the last Annual General Meeting for our Chairman, but the event was also a day of firsts as RNLI supporters and staff came together at a new venue.

On 19 May, after 12 years at the Barbican in London, the AGM came home to Poole for the first time in our 192-year history. It was held in the more intimate theatre setting of Lighthouse, the town’s arts centre, meaning that local teams could run the event more easily – and at a greatly reduced cost. With the new addition of live broadcasts, voting and questions from satellite locations in Perth, Dublin and London, the stage was set for more supporters than ever to be included in future AGMs.

‘We’ve always been united by the common cause … to preserve human life’

‘That’s what makes us one courageous community.’

His speech also outlined the financial position of our charity, concluding that ‘the finances of the RNLI remain sound at a time when we are facing particular challenges around fundraising’. (See more in Money Matters, right.)

The Chairman introduced the audience to his successor onstage, Vice Chair Stuart Popham, and – in a surprise twist to the traditional vote of thanks – received a fond farewell on behalf of all our lifeboat crews from Kevin Riley, Exmouth Lifeboat Operations Manager. Kevin thanked him for more than 25 years of voluntary service, and reflected that Charles is known on the coast for being one of the crew, able to put people instantly at ease and inspire others to our cause.

Words: Philly Byrde
Photos: RNLI/Nathan Williams

£184.1M raised in 2015

- It cost £168.1M to run the RNLI in 2015 – that’s around £460,000 per day.
- A further £51.3M was spent on buildings (eg lifeboat stations) and equipment (eg lifeboats, launch and IT). This is reduced from last year as we completed work on the new All-weather Lifeboat Centre in February 2015.
- 10% of costs are support costs fundamental to the running of the RNLI (eg IT systems, HR, finance and general admin).

We raised £184.1M in 2015.
- 64% (£118.5M) of our income came from legacies.
- Another 31% (£56.5M) was raised through donations.
- £9.1M was raised through trading (eg RNLI shops, lifeguard income and investments).

FINANCIAL HEALTH
- We manage the generous donations entrusted to us very carefully.
- Our trustees manage the RNLI’s financial health by monitoring the free reserves – the funds available to run the RNLI in case of a short-term setback.
- The reserves are kept within a range that would allow the RNLI to run for 6–18 months if all other income stopped. We are currently at 11 months.
THE RNLI AND ME

Fern Britton

The TV presenter and author talks Cornwall, creativity and crabbing

What inspired someone who’s spent a lot of their life around London to write about a tiny Cornish fishing village?

I’ve loved Cornwall, especially Looe, since I was a little girl. My mother would always bring us to stay in the same holiday cottage (called The Dolphin) and I just felt so safe – I could walk along the beach on my own and paddle all day. There was a Punch and Judy man, speedboat rides, catching mackerel – I just loved it.

Since 1980 I’ve had a property of some sort down here, and I take my own children on the same kind of holidays. We had a caravan here for 10 years so it was all crabbing competitions, walking across Bodmin Moor in the rain and wind, pasties and more speedboats.

Crabbing competitions?

You have 1 hour to catch as many as you can, but I might award you a prize for the biggest one too. It’s always best with an incoming tide, which brings them in. Never bother if the tide’s going out.

You’ve danced on Strictly; greeted Britain every day for a decade on This Morning; and presented cookery, comedy, chat and awards – a pretty varied bag. What’s next?

I love television – it’s now my 36th year. The whole decade on This Morning was a huge highlight, there was so much variety, but I don’t think doing five mornings every week is for me at this stage in my life. I actually really enjoy doing political work (I interviewed Tony Blair about the Iraq war, for example), even though I know people don’t perceive me that way.

While Clare Balding is away covering the Olympics this Summer, I’ll do her Radio 2 show, and we’re also doing another series of the BBC antiques show For What it’s Worth. I’m no expert on the antiques, but it’s a treat to be around all those beautiful objects.

One of your early news reports was about the Penlee lifeboat disaster in December 1981. What was that like?

It was such a shock and disbelief, we all felt rather numbed by it, as if it was unreal. As the names came through of people that were lost, and we realised the impact on so many families and the community, it was the saddest thing ever. One thing I really remember though is the incredible warmth that came through, not just from Cornwall but the whole world. I think it was the sheer heroism of those volunteers, and the fact it was at Christmas too.

Last year you donned a pair of yellow RNLI wellies for our Mayday campaign. Why do you support our volunteer lifeboat crews?

Having spent so much time in Cornwall, I do meet a lot of people who just drop in that they’re on the crew and I’ll think ‘bloody hell – I know a hero!’

I went out on the Padstow lifeboat in the Summer of 2014 for one of their evening exercises and there was a bit of a swell, nothing much. The (now) Deputy Launching Authority Dave Flide said to me that when it’s a really rough night, of course they can get scared and seasick, but they just pass the bucket and get on with it. I can’t believe they put themselves through that, as volunteers, all for someone else’s safety. They’re incredible people.

Interview: Laura Rainbow

Photo: RNLI/Nigel Millard

WHO IS FERN BRITTON?

A household name among anyone who’s watched TV in the UK over the past 4 decades, Fern has been the smiling face of This Morning, Ready Steady Cook and Fern Britton Meets to name just a few. She lives in Buckinghamshire and Cornwall and, in between raising money for charity through international cycle challenges, she has written a series of novels about life in a small Cornish village. The sixth of these – The Postcard – came out in June.

MY FAVOURITE …

30 Lifeboat Summer 2016

31 Lifeboat Summer 2016
Nathan’s enthusiasm is infectious. He’s been part of the RNLI Film and Image Team for 9 years and has been taking photographs for longer. His work regularly appears on the pages of this magazine and promotes the RNLI to the general public.

So is there a knack to taking good photos at the coast? Nathan assures us that anybody can do it: ‘Trial and error – it’s the best way to learn. And it helps if you have a good eye for composition.’

If you do want some free training, Nathan strongly recommends going online: ‘YouTube’s absolutely brilliant for tutorials – from what kit to buy to more advanced skills like flash lighting.’

You can spend a fortune on cameras and gear, but you don’t have to. Some professionals are doing great things with mobile phones these days. One big benefit is that your photo can be online instantly. Other cheap options are point and shoot cameras, quality second-hand ones or an old film camera. ‘If you invest in one bit of extra kit, buy a tripod,’ Nathan advises. ‘It stabilises the camera – this is particularly useful when there’s less light, which would mean you need longer shutter speeds.

‘Work on your technique, get the basics right, and, to a certain degree, it won’t matter what you’re taking the photo on,’ asserts Nathan.

1. PLAN AHEAD Familiarise yourself with the location, think about what you’re trying to achieve and what kit you’ll need. Avoid taking risks when taking photos near cliffs or water – visit RNLI.org/RespectTheWater for safety advice.

2. TAKE YOUR TIME When you’re aiming for sunrise or sunset, get there early so you can set up carefully. Patience is key.

3. SNAP AWAY Try different compositions, move the camera around, try something that wasn’t planned.

4. LOOK AFTER YOUR LENS When changing a lens, shelter from the sand, salt and dirt.

5. EXPERIENCE THE MOMENT Have a little look up from the camera now and then.

6. RESIST OVER-EDITING Adjust contrast, brightness and sharpen, but don’t overdo it.

7. SHARE Don’t just store your photographs on your computer: share them, print some out, enter competitions or create a calendar.

Share your best coastal photos with us on Twitter or Instagram by including the hashtag #RNLIOffshore. Or email images@rnli.org.uk.

NATHAN’S STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

COASTAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Is your photography limited to snaps of birthday parties and holidays? For those who want to raise their game, we share inspiration and practical tips from Photographer Nathan Williams.
The power of the sea

Need some inspiration for your Summer reading list? Here’s a collection of books that celebrate the skills and endurance needed to master our planet’s expansive oceans.

For adventurers
Across the Arctic Ocean – Original Photographs from the Last Great Polar Journey by Sir Wally Herbert and Huw Lewis-Jones

Review by Chris Speers, Crew Member at RNLI Poole

‘What compels a man to risk everything on a dream?’ asks Sir Ranulph Fiennes, who introduces this inspiring story.

In February 1968, Wally Herbert and his team of three companions (and 40 huskies) set off from Alaska on an incredible 3,800-mile journey across the North Pole and the frozen Arctic Ocean. This volume documents the trip using the explorers’ own photographs and accounts. With the future of the frozen polar regions threatened by human activity, this journey through an austere and beautiful wilderness is unlikely to ever be repeated.

Published by Thames and Hudson
ISBN 9780500252147
Price: £24.95 (hardback)

For those on the light side
Light in the darkness – a history of lightships and the people who served on them by Liam Clarke

Illuminating the voyage home is a dangerous job but, since Roman times, lightship crews have been risking their lives to help seafarers traverse the night in safety. Author Liam Clarke comes from a family with a long history of lightship service, and uses his inside knowledge to explore this lonely and seldom-documented profession. It might not be the most uplifting Summer read, but it’s certainly an interesting and comprehensive history.

Published by Amberley
Paperback ISBN 9781445646589
Price: £15.99

For young ocean explorers
Ocean – a children’s encyclopedia by John Woodward

Dive into the depths of coral reefs, polar oceans, rugged coasts, mangrove swamps and much more, with this comprehensive, 256-page visual encyclopedia. Packed with gorgeous colour photos, easy-to-digest information and fantastic facts, it’s an ideal reference guide for junior scientists aged from about 8 to 12 years, although readers of all ages will be entranced by the images.

Published by Dorling Kindersley
Hardback ISBN 9780241185520
Price: £17.99 (hardback)

For armchair aviators
Rescue pilot – cheating the sea by Jerry Grayson AFC

Aged just 17, Jerry Grayson became the youngest helicopter pilot to ever serve in the Royal Navy. By 25, he was the most decorated peacetime naval pilot in history. Full of adventure, adrenalin, humour and sometimes tragedy, his career in maritime search and rescue is celebrated in this highly readable account.

Foreword by HRH The Duke of York, Prince Andrew.

Published by Adlard Coles Nautical
Paperback ISBN 9781472917942
Price: £8.99

For RNLI historians
The Salcombe Lifeboat Disaster – 27 October 1916 by Roger Barrett

This October marks 100 years since the tragic loss of 13 crew members aboard Salcombe’s lifeboat William and Emma. This detailed book, written by Salcombe Lifeboat Museum’s Curator, explains the events that led up to the fatal capsize, and the sad aftermath of the disaster. It contains illustrations and eyewitness accounts, and is a must for any RNLI supporters with an interest in this tragic event. We’ll also be featuring an article on the tragedy in our Autumn issue.

Available from Amazon, or email salcombebooks@rnli.org.uk.

Published by Salcombe RNLI
ISBN 9780993420900
Price: £7.99

For cartography buffs
Navigational Charts (2nd edition) by John Blake

The sea, as many RNLI supporters may have noted, is vast. About 2,000 years ago, maps and charts started to give shape to the world around the mariners of ancient Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, opening up trade and exploration routes. This hefty tome contains a fantastic geographical spread of maps and illustrations, along with clear, precise and incredibly informative background context. With a foreword by Sir Ben Ainslie, this is a truly magnificent addition to any seafarer’s coffee table.

Published by Bloomsbury
ISBN 9781844863143
Price: £25 (hardback)

Buy these books online via RNLI.org/amazon and Amazon will donate a minimum of 5% of the value to the RNLI. Please note that postage and packaging charges will apply. Reviews: Laura Rainbow (unless otherwise stated) | Photos: Simon Hogg
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B-849</th>
<th>Jan, 24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B-872</td>
<td>Jan, 10, 11, 15, Feb, 3, 15, 19, 21, 25, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULLERCOATS</td>
<td>B-811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLEW tY</td>
<td>B-871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLE DON-SEA</td>
<td>B-832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULLERCOATS</td>
<td>B-811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLEW tY</td>
<td>B-871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLE DON-SEA</td>
<td>B-832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULLERCOATS</td>
<td>B-811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLEW tY</td>
<td>B-871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLE DON-SEA</td>
<td>B-832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULLERCOATS</td>
<td>B-811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLEW tY</td>
<td>B-871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLE DON-SEA</td>
<td>B-832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULLERCOATS</td>
<td>B-811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLEW tY</td>
<td>B-871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLE DON-SEA</td>
<td>B-832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULLERCOATS</td>
<td>B-811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLEW tY</td>
<td>B-871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLE DON-SEA</td>
<td>B-832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULLERCOATS</td>
<td>B-811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLEW tY</td>
<td>B-871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLE DON-SEA</td>
<td>B-832</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The launches listed here are those for which returns had been received at RNLI Headquarters and processed by 1 April 2016.
The tale starts back in the 1960s, when two inspired RNLI volunteers were enjoying a friendly cruise...
I’m currently reading the book *This Thing of Darkness*, written by Harry Thompson, which describes very vividly the journeys that FitzRoy undertook with Darwin on the *Beagle*... it really is a fantastic read and your article only makes it all the more worthwhile.

John Maxwell

I was very interested to read the article about Robert FitzRoy, an unsung hero and a man decades ahead of his time. There is a phenomenally good book called *This Thing of Darkness*... a fictionalised account of the famous voyage and the relationship between FitzRoy and Darwin, and was long-listed for the Man Booker Prize. The title refers to his fight with depression and is a line from Prospero in *The Tempest*. You may like to recommend this to your readers.

Joy Allan

Thanks John and Joy – a review of *This Thing of Darkness* appeared in the *Lifeboat* back in 2006 and we agree it’s a great read. If readers order it via RNLI.org/amazon, Amazon will donate 5% of the value to the RNLI.

SPRING 2016 LOTTERY RESULTS

Congratulations to Mr M King from Hampshire, who won the £5,000 first prize in our Spring Lifeboat Lottery.

The other winners were:

2ND PRIZE: £2,000
Mr K Hope, Kent

3RD PRIZE: £500
Mr JD Evans, North Yorkshire

4TH PRIZE: £250
Mr J Leonard, Essex

FIVE PRIZES OF £100 EACH:
Mr R Way, Lanarkshire
Miss JE Tumbelty, Manchester
Mr DL Bray, Berkshire
Mr and Mrs M Ford, Dorset
Mr I Williams, Lancashire

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 00 44 1202 663234 (non-UK) weekdays 8am–6pm, or by email at optin@rnli.org.uk.

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.

Lewis Hobbs

Can any of our readers help Lewis get to the bottom of this mystery – what do the markings mean?

Robert Pallant

I thought you might be interested to know that the RNLI has another ex-Commanding Officer of HMS *Beagle* – an education volunteer. Obviously my *Beagle* is not FitzRoy’s! But the Royal Navy has a tradition of using old names for new ships. FitzRoy’s *Beagle* was the third. Mine was the ninth to bear the name and one of four Bulldog class coastal surveying vessels. She was built at Lowestoft and launched in 1967. She was paid off in 2002 after 35 years’ service, and was the first *Beagle* built specifically for hydrographic surveying.

I commanded *Beagle* for 2 years, during which we surveyed a huge swathe of the Celtic Sea, an area off Porthcawl, and Rosia Bay in Gibraltar, thus continuing the enormous task of keeping the seas and oceans for mariners to navigate safely. In that time we were involved in two search and rescue operations. During one we worked with an RNLI lifeboat from the Republic of Ireland in an unsuccessful search for the crew of a French fishing boat.

After 26 years in the Royal Navy and 16 years working in the property industry, I am now winding down to full retirement and spend as much time as I can working as an education volunteer. I am about to give two lectures to a St John Ambulance group. I am really looking forward to these as I feel it is important that we spread our message far and wide.

John Partington

Surrey

I thought I would send you a picture of a stormglass that I own. You will notice that there is what looks like the London Transport symbol, used as part of all the Underground station signs – also the Plimsoll mark. I am still trying to find out why.

Lewis Hobbs

I wanted to say how much I enjoyed the article. I had heard of him, naturally, but I hadn’t appreciated just what an extraordinary career he’d had and how great his achievements were, especially considering he appeared to have suffered serious mental health issues during his life. I found his story inspiring and moving – thank you for drawing attention to the life of this remarkable man.

Robert Pallant

Robert Pallant

I’m currently reading the book *This Thing of Darkness*, written by Harry Thompson, which describes very vividly the journeys that FitzRoy undertook with Darwin on the *Beagle*... it really is a fantastic read and your article only makes it all the more worthwhile.

John Maxwell

I was very interested to read the article about Robert FitzRoy, an unsung hero and a man decades ahead of his time. There is a phenomenally good book called *This Thing of Darkness*... a fictionalised account of the famous voyage and the relationship between FitzRoy and Darwin, and was long-listed for the Man Booker Prize. The title refers to his fight with depression and is a line from Prospero in *The Tempest*. You may like to recommend this to your readers.

Joy Allan

Thanks John and Joy – a review of *This Thing of Darkness* appeared in the *Lifeboat* back in 2006 and we agree it’s a great read. If readers order it via RNLI.org/amazon, Amazon will donate 5% of the value to the RNLI.

SPRING 2016 LOTTERY RESULTS

Congratulations to Mr M King from Hampshire, who won the £5,000 first prize in our Spring Lifeboat Lottery.

The other winners were:

2ND PRIZE: £2,000
Mr K Hope, Kent

3RD PRIZE: £500
Mr JD Evans, North Yorkshire

4TH PRIZE: £250
Mr J Leonard, Essex

FIVE PRIZES OF £100 EACH:
Mr R Way, Lanarkshire
Miss JE Tumbelty, Manchester
Mr DL Bray, Berkshire
Mr and Mrs M Ford, Dorset
Mr I Williams, Lancashire

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 00 44 1202 663234 (non-UK) weekdays 8am–6pm, or by email at optin@rnli.org.uk.

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.

Lewis Hobbs

Can any of our readers help Lewis get to the bottom of this mystery – what do the markings mean?

Robert Pallant

I thought I would send you a picture of a stormglass that I own. You will notice that there is what looks like the London Transport symbol, used as part of all the Underground station signs – also the Plimsoll mark. I am still trying to find out why.

Lewis Hobbs

I wanted to say how much I enjoyed the article. I had heard of him, naturally, but I hadn’t appreciated just what an extraordinary career he’d had and how great his achievements were, especially considering he appeared to have suffered serious mental health issues during his life. I found his story inspiring and moving – thank you for drawing attention to the life of this remarkable man.

Robert Pallant
Station to station

Lifeboat superfan Harry Mascall is celebrating an important milestone on his mission to visit every one of the RNLI’s 237 stations.

The 8-year-old Storm Force member from Cheshire enjoyed a special reception at Humber Lifeboat Station in February, as he notched up his 100th port of call. Along the way, Harry has been raising funds for the RNLI with a target of £2,500. At the time of print, with 137 more stations to go, the youngster had already clocked up an impressive £2,704.88.

He says: ‘I’ve met some amazing, brave volunteers and crew members. When I am old enough I want to be a volunteer crew member.’

You can follow Harry’s adventures on Twitter @HarryMascall1 or boost his fundraising at justgiving.com/harrymascall.

When Connie Richards, President of Redruth Ladies’ Lifeboat Guild, celebrated her 90th birthday, she requested donations to the RNLI instead of gifts. Together, they totalled £654 with Gift Aid.

Pictured here is Connie’s birthday cake, made by her daughter Anne, and eagle-eyed readers will notice that the hat resting on the bow of the lifeboat has a toilet on it.

Redruth’s Publicity Secretary Margaret Percival explains:

‘On a recent holiday to France, Connie was walking around a lake and decided to visit the ladies’ room. She approached a houseboat restaurant owner and in her schoolgirl French said: “Pardon monsieur, avez vous un toilette dans votre chapeau?” which translates as “Have you a toilet in your hat?”

“He replied “no madam, but I do have a toilet on my boat, which you are welcome to use.” Needless to say the family will not let her forget this faux pas.’

Birthday fundraiser is flush with donations

The Lifeboat Enthusiasts’ Society Handbook 2016 is now out. This complete guide to RNLI lifeboats past and present details every lifeboat in our fleet, plus the post-service names and locations of retired vessels.

To order your copy, send a cheque for £6.50 (payable to the RNLI) to the Society’s Honorary Treasurer AJ Denton, Dawn, Upper Battlefield, Shrewsbury, SY4 4AA.

‘The Lifeboat Enthusiasts’ Society Handbook 2016 is now out. This complete guide to RNLI lifeboats past and present details every lifeboat in our fleet, plus the post-service names and locations of retired vessels.’
For decades, brave volunteers launched their Watson class lifeboats to the rescue.

Now the blueprint for a well-loved lifeboat that saved many lives has inspired a new RNLI Shop range. Celebrate our lifeboat heritage in style with Blueprint – a set of homeware featuring the original designs for ON-971 Joseph Soar (Civil Service No. 34).

First stationed in St Davids in 1963, Joseph Soar had a distinguished service history, going on to serve at Dunbar and Shoreham Harbour until 1990. And, although the lifeboat was decommissioned in 1992, its design will continue to help save lives at sea into the future. Blueprint is just one of the RNLI collections available – take a look to see our full range.

100% of profit helps save lives at sea

THE BLUEPRINT RANGE: APRON £12, OVEN GLOVES £12, TEA TOWEL (SET OF TWO) £10, BONE CHINA MUG £10, NAPKINS £3

Visit our online shop today at: RNLISHOP.org.uk