

The RNLI Dart Coast Review

The RNLI Coast Review delegation visited the Dart lifeboat station on Wednesday 16th June. Each station is visited by the team every five years. They had earlier visited the four stations in the Channel Islands and the stations at Exmouth, Teignmouth and Torbay before going on to Salcombe.

The team was led by Rear Admiral John Tolhurst, Chairman of the RNLI Operations Committee, and included Vice Admiral Tim Laurence, RNLI Trustee and Council Ambassador, Rear Admiral John Lang, RNLI Trustee and Council Ambassador, Mr. Michael Vincent, Chairman of the RNLI Technical Committee, Mr. Michael Vlasto RNLI Operations Director, Mr. Michael Dawe, RNLI Head of Lifeguards and Mr. Adrian Carey, RNLI Divisional Inspector of Lifeboats (South)

After their introduction they viewed the station and the crew were complimented on their turn out; "The best so far!"

Rear Admiral Tolhurst updated everyone on the state of the RNLI.

It was made clear that the institution is not in a crisis situation but there is clear evidence of a drop in income. He outlined how, through the 'Lean' process, the whole organisation was actively engaged in making every pound count. He highlighted the considerable spend recently on the updating of slipways and boathouses to



Photo by John Fenton

From left to right: Vice Admiral Tim Laurence, Michael Vlasto, Rear Admiral John Tolhurst, Chairman, and Mr Michael Vincent.

accommodate the latest generation of lifeboats and the development of new classes of lifeboat such as the Shannon Fast Carriage Boat which, if it passes its assessment trials, will be introduced at stations such as Exmouth.

The aim of the RNLI is to reach 90% of casualties within ten miles of the lifeboat station within 30 minutes and locally that is being achieved in 97% of launches.

Michael Vlasto, RNLI Operations Director, then went on to discuss the possibility of a small B class lifeboat being added to the D class boat already on station at Dart. Although we have received calls to craft that

required larger vessels to bring them safely to port there is excellent cover available from our flank stations at Torbay and Salcombe and the D class lifeboat has always been sufficient to achieve the primary aim of the RNLI which is to save lives.

Rear Admiral John Tolhurst was also leading the team five years ago when they gave Dartmouth the go ahead to introduce an RNLI station. He said, "You have all done a great job setting up the station and delivering the service from scratch." Michael Vlasto said, "The station has really taken off and you have done everything the RNLI would ask of you." ●

Dart crew take the RYDER home

The *Ryder* is one of only three fully restored pulling and sailing lifeboats left in the country and she is the only surviving Standard Self-Righting Lifeboat, the mainstay of the RNLI for over 80 years, to be displayed afloat. This year she will take part in the Great River Race in London, where she will be rowed by the RNLI Dart lifeboat crew. The start of the race is only a short distance from Bow Creek, where she was built in 1902 by the Thames Ironworks. Two years

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The Ryder during the reconstruction of the SS Suevic rescue by the Lizard lifeboat in 1907

Photo by Nigel Millard RNLI

Launches since February 2011

No.	Date	Assisted	Location / Search area.	Description
100	10/02/11 Thursday 08:34	2 adults	Scabbacombe Head Start Bay	Requested by HMCG to assist a broken down 26' Bayliner Motor cruiser with two persons on board near the Mewstone. The boat had a recurrent fuel fault. The crew were alerted by a Mayday call when the same boat was within 300m of the Mewstone when the same fault recurred 1 month later. She was towed to safety. Having run the engine as a test the owner attempted to make his passage again five hours later and broke down by the Mewstone. He was again towed back to Dartmouth Harbour.
106	12/04/11 Tuesday 13:50		Dart Estuary	
108	18:58	2 adults 2 adults	Dart Estuary	
103	27/03/11 Sunday 13:39	2 adults 2 children	Dart Estuary	The Coastguard tasked the Inshore Lifeboat to a 3m RIB whose engine had stopped close to rocks at Coombe Point on its way to Blackpool Sands. There were two adults on board with their two young children. The Rib was towed to the low water landing where the DLA found that the engine had stopped due to a blocked breather valve in the fuel line. The engine was restarted and the family continued on their way without further assistance.
105	11/04/11 Monday 13:02	2 adults	3.2 miles SSE of Dart Estuary. Start Bay	A small Sea Hog power boat with two persons on board developed engine and auxiliary failure. They attracted the lifeboat crew's attention with orange smoke. The craft was towed to the Dartmouth public landing slip and assistance was given returning the craft to her trailer.
107	12/04/11 Tuesday 15:15	2 adults	1.5 miles SSE of Homestone Buoy Start Bay	The Dart inshore lifeboat was tasked to assist a 12 metre yacht which had developed engine failure and difficulty making way under sail into Dartmouth harbour. As the lifeboat was just completing their previous task they refueled at the quayside before attending the yacht. In view of the size of the yacht it was decided that the survey vessel Sea Vigil would tow the yacht to the harbour mouth. There the lifeboat took over the tow and took her to the Kingswear Quay pontoon.
109	20/04/11 Wednesday 13:57	2 adults	Near the Skerries Buoy Start Bay	A 32 foot yacht was immobilised when the line from a crabber's dan buoy became entangled round her prop. One of the lifeboat crew entered the water and managed to free the line. They remained with the yacht to establish that they had full use of their engine. On their way back to Dartmouth the crew were hailed by a second craft requiring assistance.
111	24/04/11 Sunday 17:11	2 adults 1 child	Flat Owers mudbank River Dart	A Shetland dayboat had grounded on the Flat Owers mud bank on a falling tide and been left high and dry. A crewman reached them across the mud with a towline whilst the lifeboat remained in deeper water. By getting all the crew's weight forward it was possible to lift her stern and drag her into deep water. As the lifeboat was about to be recovered at the Dartmouth slip a Pan Pan call for help was received on the radio and the lifeboat crew were retasked.
114	31/05/11 Tuesday 12:57	3 adults	Offshore from Newfoundland Cove Dart Estuary	The Coastguard tasked the lifeboat when three sailors were thrown from their Coastal 17 gaff rigged day boat. They were picked up by a Dart Harbour Authority launch which was already on the water and taken back to the Royal Dart Yacht Club. There they were assessed by paramedics as they were suffering from hypothermia. The inshore lifeboat righted the semi submerged vessel and towed it back to the yacht club.

A fuller account of these launches, as well as those not mentioned above, can be found on the new Dart RNLI station web site.



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The RNLI Sea Safety RIB takes to the Dart

I spent a morning afloat with John Yunnie, Dart RNLI Sea Safety officer, during the Easter Bank Holiday weekend. We were on the Sea Safety RIB from Poole. The RNLI employs a Bosun who takes the RIB to various busy locations throughout the summer sailing season and it was last in Dartmouth during the 2010 regatta. Examples of most of the Sea safety equipment that the SSO is likely to talk about are kept on the RIB. There were lifejackets, first aid equipment, compasses, flares, VHF radio, GPS equipment, fire extinguishers and charts as well as laminated information sheets on subjects such as caring for your life jacket and how to perform simple engine checks.

John had worked for the Environment Agency for many years before his retirement. Although mainly involved with Fishery Protection on the rivers Dart and Tamar he also covered other environmental issues such as pollution. Part of his role was to ensure that the Agency craft and their employees were complying with sea safety issues themselves. From this role it was a



Cartoon by James Fenton

natural step to volunteer as an RNLI Sea Safety Adviser on his retirement and then becoming the Dart Sea Safety Officer some three years ago.

'Soft checks are very productive and raise awareness of the RNLI at the same time' he explained. They cover such issues as the use of lifejackets or sun cream. 'It would not help if one challenged everyone on the river who is not wearing a lifejacket. Sometimes a more productive approach is to praise them for wearing one, but to ask when it was last checked.' It was surprising to see how many families were on the water with the children all wearing buoyancy aids but there were no aids being worn by the adults. 'I wonder if the Father realises how quickly he would tire after an incident as he swam after all the children as they floated away on the tide. The water is especially cold early in the season and it takes away your strength very quickly.'

It is much more difficult to get people to sign up for the free RNLI Sea Safety checks. Until boat owners know more about it they are worried that it is like an examination with a pass or fail. John explained, 'It is more of a friendly chat going over the safety issues. I start at the bow looking at the anchor and mooring lines and finish at the stern with the engine.' If necessary he gently points out things that could be improved and can even provide a written list of enhancing recommendations if required. Often he has been on boats of the same class as the one that is being checked and can suggest how other people have tackled the same problems.

The new Dart station web site shown at the bottom of the page has an area for Sea Checks and boat owners can use the link provided to sign up for the free check. ●

John Fenton,
Volunteer Lifeboat Press Officer



Photo by John Fenton

John Yunnie, SSO, introduces himself at the Dart Marina.



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Local Dart RNLI contacts.

Lifeboat Operations Manager.

Rob Clements. Mobile 07917 514 948

Chairman Management Team.

Robin Shiffner. Tel 01803 835853

Chairman Fundraising Team.

Harry Escott. Tel 01803 834296

Secretary Fundraising Team.

Clare Thorp. Tel 01803 832123

Box Secretary.

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Colin Myers. Tel 01803 832674

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Souvenir Secretary.

Mrs. Jo Escott. Tel 01803 834296

Event Liaison.

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Boathouse Manager.

Bob Thomas. Mobile 07980 099 932

Administrator, Press Officer and Education Volunteer.

Editor Dart D Tales and web site.
John Fenton Tel. 01803 770761

Assistant Press Officer.

Janet Hall. Tel 01803 835718

Sea Safety Officer.

John Yunnie Mobile 07768 007 365

Dart Lifeboat Station.

Coronation Park, North Embankment,
DARTMOUTH, TQ6 9NL
Tel. 01803 839224

Please do not ring this number if you think a launch is in progress.

Do you have an idea for a feature article? Got something to say? Please send your views to John Fenton

Details of our last 119 launches, recent and forthcoming events, as well as information on the new IB1 D class lifeboat, can be found on the local RNLI web site. Notices are also posted on the Notice Boards in front of the toilets on North Embankment and on the Lifeboat Station.

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before that the Thames Ironworks Football Club turned professional, calling themselves the West Ham United F.C.; their nickname 'The Hammers,' and their badge depicting crossed riveting hammers, reflects this.

The *Ryder*, now restored and on display in Polperro Harbour, served as the Looe lifeboat until 1930. During her 28 years at Looe she was launched on twelve occasions, saving a total of 37 lives in the process. She was built at a cost of £835, funded by a legacy from Mr William Ryder of Brixton, London, and went on station at Looe in May 1902. She was crewed by a coxswain, second coxswain, bowman and ten oarsmen as well as being fitted with a lugsail and mizzen.

The *Ryder* will be towed from Polperro to Fowey to be lifted out and then transported to London for the race. The whole cost of the transport, some £1500, has been generously donated by David Rowlands of Fairground fame. The Great River Race is a similar charity fundraising event to the London Marathon. The entry fees from the crews of the 300 or so

boats are distributed to charities chosen by the organisers and the crews also raise money for their individual charities. Last year the Dart crew raised £2800 for the RNLI with their Source to the Sea Challenge when they ran, cycled and rowed from Dartmoor to Dartmouth.

They will be joining Dragon boats, coracles, gigs and normal sculls for the 21 mile handicap race from Bow to Richmond-on-Thames. The team, consisting of ten oarsmen, one bowman in reserve and the coxswain, will take some four hours to row the four ton lifeboat up the course.

There is already a JustGiving site in the name of Kevin John, Dart crewman in the team (www.justgiving.com/dartrnliriverrace) and each crewmen taking part will have sponsor forms. ●

Jim Brent is one of the tractor drivers for the launch crew. He is the publican of the Ship in Dock Inn and groundsman for the cricket league in Coronation Park.



Future Events

Dart RNLI Lifeboat Week
29 July to 4 August

For further details on all FR events below contact Harry Escott
Tel 01803 834296

Friday 29 July
RNLI Flag Day
Dartmouth
09.00 -13.00
(volunteers needed)

Sunday 31 July
Deep Sea Angling day
Contact Owen Mallier
On 07891 498023

Thursday 4 August
RNLI Fete
Royal Avenue Gardens
10.00 – 16.00
Stalls, Souvenirs, Tea Hut.
(volunteers needed)

Thursday 4 August
River trip on the Cardiff Castle
Town Pontoon 19.30
£15 including buffet from Jim Brent
01803 839614 or 07815 123306

Dartmouth Regatta
Thurs 25, Fri. 26 & Sat. 27 August

RNLI Souvenirs
will be on sale at:

Dittisham Regatta – 6 August
Stoke Fleming Horticultural & Sports show – 28 August 14:00
Dartmouth Food Festival
21 - 23 October

The Lifeboat Station will be open on Coronation Park
See the Inshore Lifeboat & Station
RNLI Souvenirs on sale 10.00 – 16.00
Thursday 26 August
Search & Rescue practice (tbc)
with RN Sea King from 771 Squadron
Culdrose (SAR displays are subject to operational availability)

Saturday 28 August
Search & Rescue display in Dartmouth Harbour
with RN Sea King from 771 Squadron
Culdrose at noon.

Saturday 28 August
Black Knight parachute Display team
at 13:00
RNLI ILB will assist with pick up

Saturday 17 September
(To be confirmed)
Great River Race, London
Dart Lifeboat crew will row the *Ryder*
Saturday 3 December
Choir 86 Christmas concert
Dartmouth Guildhall at 19.30