

August 2012 Issue 15

 Masthead Design NICHOLAS SHILABEEM  
 Printing KINGFISHER  
 Production JEFF COOPER

## Monty Halls – Latest to join the Launch Crew

As the new boy in town, and particularly one who had just spent several months working with the crab fishermen out of Cadgwith, it seemed only right to volunteer for the Dart lifeboat crew. This was particularly apt as I can actually see the shed from my house. In fact, I can practically touch the shed from my house.

I've already written about the intense humiliation of realising that my life is effectively over as a vibrant, heroic male due to the fact that I'm 45. Information imparted to me with considerable glee by Rob as I swaggered into the station for the first time. Too old to go out on the boat! I may have sauntered across the grass of the park as a sprightly young buck in his prime, but I limped home feeling distinctly middle aged, with my only real concern being that I'd make it back without breaking a hip or wetting myself.

But Rob being the constructive fellow that he is, and indeed the essence of the station being to utilise and celebrate whatever skills are available locally, it wasn't long before he got in touch to ask if I wanted to be trained as a tractor driver. I certainly did, and soon was pumping the throttle vigorously under the patient tutelage of Jerry, the incumbent instructor and one of the four tractor drivers available in the town. I was duly issued with my RNLI gear, which was a proud moment. I haven't quite plucked up the courage to wear my jacket round town yet, but have of course put all the gear on in front of a full length mirror at home to practise my "staring flintily at a turbulent horizon" expression.

I mentioned to Nige Legge - my mentor in Cadgwith and a veteran of many a dark night with the Lizard boat - that I now had a jumper that was just like his, and his snort of laughter carried effortlessly down a hundred miles of phone line, neatly summarising the yawning gulf between



Filming on the Lizard RNLI lifeboat, June 2011

our expertise and experience. He then said - I hope - whatever one lifeboatman will say to another, regardless of what stage they are in their RNLI career.

"Well, good for you Mont. It all helps, and without the tractor driver there wouldn't be a launch would there? Good for you for having a go."

And so, here I am, tractor driver number four, on a hair trigger and ready to deploy at a moment's notice. I'm not quite sure what my priorities are in terms of trying to do the job properly, although Jerry, Hayden, and for that matter Rob himself have all said the same thing to me at one time or another.

"Look, no pressure. All you need to remember if there is a shout is get to the shed before Jim does. Because that'll really, really annoy him."

Jim is the senior tractor driver, and the only flaw in this plan is that - as the landlord of the Ship in Dock - he's







probably the only person in Dartmouth who is closer to the shed than I am. He is traditionally built is Jim, stout of timber and broad of beam, although rumour has it that he has startling acceleration when required, and considerable momentum on his side. I'm hoping that a snake hipped lanky type like myself can pip him to the post. We'll see.....

It's been a quiet summer so far in terms of shouts - only nine to date (now 14). For all but two of those I've been away from Dartmouth. One of the two was - bizarrely - a tree falling on the shed during high winds. I walked across, had a cup of tea with Rob, we looked wordlessly at the tree for a while, then I went home. But the second, ah yes, the second was high drama indeed.

I'd just got in from Brighton of all places, having spoken at a conference

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# Launches since April 2012

No.	Date	Assisted	Location / Search area.	Description	
144	20/05/12 Sunday 12:27pm	1 adult died	2 miles SE of Dartmouth Start Bay	<b>Search for missing diver.</b> A MayDay call was put out by a local Dive boat when one of their divers was not seen to surface. The dive had been to the wreck of the Benton Castle, an Admiralty trawler sunk by a mine in October 1916. The Coastguard at Brixham co-ordinated a search by the Torbay All Weather lifeboat, The Dart Inshore lifeboat, the Coastguard helicopter from Portland and local dive boats. HMS Mersey, the Fishery Patrol vessel, was also tasked to join the search. Coastguard cliff rescue teams from Dartmouth and Berry Head searched the foreshore. After the lifeboats and the other craft had thoroughly searched the area downstream of the wreck and the inshore areas twice the search was called off after five hours. The wreck was searched by police divers the next day and no one was found. The diver from Swansea unfortunately remains missing.	
145	22/05/12 Tuesday 03:51pm	1 adult	1 mile offshore from Slapton Sands. Start Bay	<b>Rescue from inflatable 1 mile offshore.</b> Two local youths rowed off in their inflatables from Slapton Sands in a strong offshore wind. A holidaymaker immediately realised that they would have difficulty returning to shore and called the Coastguard who then tasked the Dart inshore lifeboat. One youth managed to return but the other, with only one oar and no lifejacket, was rescued one mile offshore. The Coastguard helicopter also attended but the lifeboat reached him first. The rescue has been recorded as a life saved.	 Photo by John Fenton
147	02/06/12 Saturday 02:01am 	1 adult	Dartmouth harbour	<b>Medical evacuation from boat in harbour.</b> The inshore lifeboat was tasked by HM Coastguard to evacuate a 60 year old lady from a permanently moored converted MFV in the harbour. She was taken to Kingswear ferry pontoon for transfer to Torbay Hospital by ambulance. The ambulance was diverted en route and the crew continued to deliver first aid until its arrival. Nine of the total lifeboat crew are fully first aid trained.	
148	06/07/12 Friday 04:06am 	2 adults	Lower Garrow Point River Dart	<b>Listing boat taking on water.</b> Two visiting yachtsmen on board a 47ft two masted yacht at anchor just north of the Sandridge Boathouse informed the Coastguard that they were aground and taking on water. When the lifeboat arrived they were listing to 60 degrees. The two onboard the yacht were able to contain the water using their own engine and bilge pump. As the tide was rising the lifeboat remained on station until the list had reduced to 35 degrees.	 Photo by RNLI
150	17/07/12 Tuesday 11:55pm 	5 adults	Dartmouth harbour	<b>Yacht trapped by Higher Ferry cable.</b> A Sunfast 40 ft yacht registered in St. Malo became caught on the cable of the Higher Ferry. The ferry is moored a short distance off shore for the night. The yacht was trapped by the cable between the keel and the skeg, close to the ferry. The lifeboat was able to pull the yacht sideways along the cable until it was free. She was then able to proceed under her own power to a berth at the Dart Marina.	
151	23/07/12 Monday 02:55am 	6 adults	Dartmouth harbour	<b>Six youngsters saved at 3am.</b> They had borrowed a dinghy from the Town Jetty, Dartmouth to cross to Kingswear. The outboard engine failed and they began drifting out to sea in total darkness. Four decided to swim and try to tow the boat. When this failed they were able to get back on board without capsizing. A mobile was used to phone a Grandparent who alerted the Coastguard. They managed to grab the line of trots on the Kingswear side opposite Warfleet Creek where they were found by the lifeboat. They were very cold but all conscious and grateful. They were taken to an Ambulance on the Kingswear pontoon and the vessel was returned to its berth in Dartmouth.	

A full account of all launches, with photographs, video if available and positional maps, can be found on the Dart RNLI station web site whose address is at the foot of the page.

**You can receive a Tweet when we launch, followed by details of the call out as it unfolds.**

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of pension advisors. Such is my rock and roll lifestyle. It was 1am, and I was knackered. I crawled into bed, and within seconds was snoring like a diesel locomotive going up a steep incline.

I was woken not by my pager, but by my missus who had been woken by the dog who had been woken by the pager (which I'd managed to leave downstairs in the kitchen). It was the ungodly hour of 2am, but this was it. THIS WAS IT!

"Are you going?" mumbled Tam.

"Of course I am," I declared stoutly, "there's no point in being part of it if you don't go."

Heroic words indeed, but what followed was a near perfect example of how not to deploy yourself at speed to a lifeboat station. First off, I tried to find my clothes in the dark. Then, for some reason best known to myself, I decided I needed a particular t-shirt for the shout, which took a while to locate. I then decided that I shouldn't disturb Tam too much, so went to the front room to get changed. This overlooks the park and lifeboat shed incidentally. I was just in the process of hopping on one foot as I tried to get the other into a leg of my boxer shorts, when I glanced up to see the lifeboat, fully crewed and equipped, pass majestically under my balcony. Thankfully none of the crew looked up, because if they had they would have seen a half naked man pogo'ing across his lounge in the darkness. Forlorn, I stood there for a while, bleary eyed and with my boxies in one hand, before walking slowly back to bed.

"How did it go?" asked Tam blearily.

"I don't want to talk about it" I muttered darkly.



Cartoon by James Fenton

This has led to a certain degree of justifiable abuse during our Tuesday night meetings. Perhaps the best suggestion so far is that I just buy myself some luminous pyjamas and stand on the balcony directing traffic. Others suggestions are not suitable for a family orientated magazine such as this.

Suffice it to say that I've learned my lesson. The pager is now on my bedside table (I have abandoned the pager / dog / missus deployment system as it has proved to be too time consuming). I've got a set of kit ready, and some boots by the door (they're racing boots by the way Jim).

I'm really proud to be part of the Dartmouth crew, even if my only contribution to Britain's maritime safety so far has been to Hoover up after a family's get together at the station. Glance around the room at a crew meeting, and you see genuine men of the sea mixed in with land based volunteers of all ages, shapes and sizes. The unifying factor is that they all want to lend a hand. In my very brief experience it seems to me that this is what the Dart Station, and indeed the RNLI itself, is all about.

P.S. Honour is now even. Jim got his hand on the door handle first but Monty launched the lifeboat in the dark on 16 July to rescue a family aground eight and a half miles up the Dart. ●



Michelle Concannon completes her first half marathon

## Yorkshire Building Society Fundraising

When it was announced that the RNLI would be Yorkshire Building Society's Charity of the year for 2012 Dartmouth's local branch pulled out all the stops.

The team have gone above and beyond to raise as much as possible for the charity which saves lives at sea.

Manager Michelle Concannon in particular has got into the fundraising spirit, running half marathons, doing a sky dive and generally showing her enthusiasm for the RNLI and her team have given her their full support with the huge range of events they have arranged throughout the year.

The fundraising push was kicked off in great style by a special event at the Branch on January 27 selling cupcakes they themselves had made - joined by the Dart Lifeboat Station crew at the South Embankment branch – and they haven't let up since!

They held a raffle of a massive Easter egg and are holding a Branch Charity Day with a special Row-a-Thon on Friday August 9. Taking part will be branch staff members, Michelle and members of the crew and launch crew from the Dart Lifeboat, including celebrity tractor driver Monty Halls!

Michelle has taken on three big challenges as part of her fundraising push – two half marathons and a sky dive!

She said: "I've never done a half marathon or anything like it before, so I was a bit worried, but I was determined I was going to do something special for the RNLI. When I came to do it, I found I really loved it and signed up for another!

"Our Row-a-thon on August 9 is going to be a wonderful day. The crew have been great at supporting it and with Monty coming along as well, I think it will inspire lots of sponsorship for the RNLI.

"We love to support charity causes here at the YBS and whatever we raise the YBS Charitable Foundation will match, so we hope to raise a terrific amount for the RNLI this year through all our efforts." ●

# The Honourable Company of Master Mariners has come to the aid of a local lifeboat crewman

Captain Anthony Speed lives locally in Stoke Fleming and has been a champion of the Dart RNLI lifeboat since its inception. He is also a Past Master of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners, which is a City of London Livery Company with membership open to British and Commonwealth Master Mariners from the Merchant Navy and Seaman Officers of Royal Navy.

In addition to Livery activities their other main interests are: Professional standards & comment on Maritime affairs, Nautical Education and Training. The money that the Livery Company is able to donate comes from their charitable trust, The HCMM & HLD Charity, which provides benevolence to needy Master Mariners & Navigating Officers and education to persons with a professional interest in seamanship and sailing. Their Headquarters ship, HQS Wellington, is moored on the Thames at Victoria Embankment and was seen by the Dart crew during their row in the Great River Race last year. The Dart RNLI were the fortunate recipients of a £2000

cheque given by the Charity to cover the training of their latest lifeboat crewman, Mark Conroy. "Training a new crewman in a nautical charitable organisation, such as the RNLI, certainly fulfils one of these aims" said Captain Speed, as he handed over the cheque at the Dart lifeboat station in May this year.

Mark, aged 27, has been working for the local building firm of Alec Hoare and Son for the last ten years. He had several friends who were already on the lifeboat crew and was encouraged to join. He was initially on the launch crew as a Tractor Driver but moved to become a Probationary Lifeboat crewman in October 2011 when a vacancy appeared. Training of the crew at all levels never stops. When he is considered to be ready Mark will attend a five day training course at the Lifeboat College in Poole. When he comes back to the station he



Photo by John Fenton

Cheque presentation with Capt Speed and Mark Conroy

will be able to practice what he has learnt, being trained by the Dart helmsmen and by visiting specialist trainers. He will then be assessed by a Divisional Lifeboat Inspector using the Dart lifeboat. "Boat handling and seamanship, navigation, communications, search and rescue; the list seems endless" said Mark. "I hope to become a full member of the crew in about a year." ●

## Bronze badge awards

Four of the Dart Fundraising Branch volunteers recently received RNLI Bronze Badges for their commitment and hard work. All four were founder members of the Branch in 2005 and played a vital role in the very successful appeal and the inauguration of Dart Lifeboat Station.

Anna Perry is the Events Secretary. She suggested the eventually successful site for the lifeboat station and also helps empty the more outlying collection boxes. Colin Myers is the Branch Treasurer. Bob Hattersley is the Membership Secretary.

Gordon Pepperell is the Box Secretary with four colleagues to help him empty the 120 boxes in his area.

Anna and Colin received their badges from Roger Jackson at a ceremony at the Lifeboat College on June 21st. Roger is the recipient of the RNLI Bronze Medal for Gallantry following the rescue of four people from a capsized powerboat at Exmouth last October in exceptionally hazardous conditions.

At that ceremony Dave Nicoll, RNLI Area Manager, said "The courage and

commitment of the RNLI's crews is well known but we must never forget that our crews couldn't perform their lifesaving role without the dedication of a large band of volunteers who are often hard at work behind the scenes." Bob and Gordon were unable to attend the ceremony at Poole and received their badges from Frances Warren, RNLI Community Fundraising Manager for the South West region, at the Dart lifeboat station. ●



Photo by Rob Clements

L-R: Gordon Pepperell, Bob Hattersely, Colin Myers, Anna Perry and Frances Warren

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# Richard Eggleton – Dart & Tower Lifeboat crewman Life as an RNLI volunteer

Rich had early connections to South Devon. Although he grew up in Herts. and went to school in Ascot his favourite holidays were with his Grandparents who lived in Hope Cove. His Grandmother was a volunteer on the RNLI Fundraising Branch there. It was her example that sowed the idea of volunteering in his mind. He joined the Berkhamstead Fundraising Branch when he was twelve; the youngest by seventy years!

When he was fifteen Rich left school and went to work on the North Sea. His first ship was an Emergency response and rescue vessel supplying the North Sea oil rigs. By the age of twenty he was appointed Chief Mate; a position he held for 8 years. Since July 2011 he has been the Captain of MV Far Splendour, belonging to the Norwegian Shipping line, Farstad Shipping. The ship specialises in off shore anchor handling, supply and subsea work as well as having Fire Fighting and Oil pollution recovery roles.

The call of the sea was never far away and he volunteered to serve with the Tall Ships Youth Trust when he was on shore leave. He was promoted to Chief Mate on the Prince William, (now sold to the Pakistani Navy) and then the Stavros S Niarchos. The ships would winter in the Caribbean and the Canaries and spend the summer around the UK and the Mediterranean.

His time serving on the Tall Ships led to two meetings that would shape his life. He met his future wife Hettie when he brought the Prince William to Dartmouth and she joined as crew. He also met one of the RNLI crew from the Tower station who came on a Tall Ship voyage and arranged for Rich to come to the station as an Observer. When the opportunity arose in 2006 he joined the Tower crew. At the time he was living in Oxford. He could leave home at 5am and start his twelve hour shift at Tower at 7am. He could then be home by 8.30pm. Living in Oxford and being a volunteer on a busy lifeboat during his shore leave was the opportunity of a lifetime.

The working arrangements on the RNLI Thames stations are very different to those on the coast. Each boat is manned by two full timers and one volunteer. There are ten full timers and forty volunteers based at each of the three stations at Tower, Chiswick and Gravesend. (The unmanned station at Teddington is a pager station).



D Class fleet on the Thames during the river pageant



Photo by Nigel Millard

The crew are on station for their 12 hour shifts, already dressed in their rolled down dry suits. When the Coastguard activated bells ring, the crew pull on their lifejackets, jump in the boat and start the engine. The helm then joins them, having taken the details from the phone call that comes in as the bells ring. The RNLI E class lifeboats on the Thames are expected to launch in ninety seconds and with a top speed of 40 Knots usually reach the casualty within fifteen minutes. The Tower record is that they launched when the call came in, recovered a person from the water and returned to the station in two minutes!

The E boats were originally designed ten years ago to rescue 20 passengers at a time from Passenger vessels. The Mark 2 design Liverpool built aluminium boats have radar and twin 500 Hp inboard diesel engines powering the jet drives. There is more open space on board for casualties and the stretcher is permanently fitted to the engine cowling. They carry a defibrillator as their speed of response

ensures that its use is likely to be effective. Using the Airwave system they can patch in to the other emergency services on the Thames such as the Coastguard at the Thames Barrier Navigation Centre (unaffected by the changes to the CG system), the Police in the air or on the river and the Fire service.

RNLI lifeboats had a major presence on the Thames for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Thames Pageant. The Duke of Kent and Princess Alexandra were aboard RNLI *Diamond Jubilee*, a Tamar class lifeboat that subsequently entered service at Eastbourne. There were ten D class, eight E class and two B class lifeboats providing safety cover for the fourteen miles of the procession route. The Thames crews were spread throughout the fleet to provide local knowledge of the river. Rich was in a D class covering the area from Southwark Bridge to HMS Belfast. He said, "Personally it was very quiet, but lifeboats upstream of us carried out several rescues of people in the water and to the rowers in the procession"

No sooner was Rich back from his latest duty on MV Far Splendour than he was off to be part of the crew of the Weymouth lifeboat providing twenty four days of cover for the Olympics. ●



Photo by John Fenton



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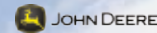
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[www.dartlifeboat.org.uk](http://www.dartlifeboat.org.uk)

[www.youtube.com/dartlifeboat](http://www.youtube.com/dartlifeboat)

# Blackness Marine Father's Day Fundraiser

Having had such a questionable summer so far, Blackness Marine and the RNLI Dart Lifeboat Fundraisers were blessed on the 17th June with a warm dry day for the fundraising activities to unfold.

A display from the lifeboat was enjoyed by all from the slipway. It was a stark reminder of how important this service is to all who use our beautiful river. Shore side some delightful jazz was enjoyed, compliments of BRNC's volunteer band who played throughout the afternoon. Many tried out paddle boarding off the point, tractor rides around the farm and face painted kids exhausted themselves on the bouncy castle whilst their parents enjoyed a refreshing Pimms and a cream tea or two in the sunshine.

As always the BBQ & the big prize raffle / auction raised a fair whack, boasting some truly superb prizes. The on-going local support for our lifeboat from both local businesses donating and people spending on the day is remarkable. It raised a whopping £2110. A big thank you to all our fabulous volunteers who helped before, during and after, to the contributors of prizes, marquees and most off all to the game attendees who really make this event a super day out!

We look forward to doing it all again next year, date to be confirmed...

Becky Fry.

And a huge "thank you" to the Fry family for the use of their land and all their hard work before, during and after the event.

John Fenton



Bouncy Castle £100

Tractor Rides £60  
Lifeboat man Steve Wallis is 1st to disembark.



BBQ £450  
Linda and Jim Brent take their turn at the BBQ



Auction £370. Raffle £380  
Vice Chairman of the RNLI Fundraising Team, Iain Simons (Rt.) helped organise the day and even won a prize.



Souvenirs £115  
Tony Kirkland serves the Wallace family.



Cream Tea £245  
Nicola and Marilyn Fry serving the cream teas.



ILB Demo  
Lifeboat man Tony Rendle attempts to walk on water.

Pimms £390  
Donations £700 less costs

**Final Figure**  
**£2100**

## Local Dart RNLI contacts

### President

Robin Shiffner. Tel 01803 835853

### Lifeboat Operations Manager

Rob Clements. Mobile 07917 514 948

### Chairman Fundraising Team

Harry Escott. Tel 01803 834296

### Secretary Fundraising Team

Clare Thorp. Tel 01803 832123

### Box Secretary

Gordon Pepperell. Mob 07791 448391

### Treasurer Fundraising Team

Colin Myers. Tel 01803 832674

### Local Membership Secretary

Bob Hattersley. Tel 01803 832182

### Souvenir Secretary

Tony Kirkland. Tel 01803 732877

### Events Liaison

Anna Perry. Tel 01803 832393

### Boathouse Manager

Bob Thomas. Mobile 07980 099 932

### Administrator, Press Officer & Education volunteer.

Editor Dart D'Tales and web site.

John Fenton. Tel 01803 770761

### Assistant Press Officer

Phil Scoble. Mobile 07876 767 969

### Sea Safety Officer

John Yunnie. Mobile 07768 007 365

### Dart Lifeboat Station

Coronation Park, North Embankment, DARTMOUTH, TQ6 9RR (Note change in Post code) Tel. 01803 839224

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

## Future Events

### Dart RNLI Lifeboat "Week"

3rd to 9th August

Friday 3rd August

### Dartmouth RNLI Flag day.

If you can help please contact Harry Escott.

Sunday 5th August

### Deep Sea Angling on Outlaw of Dartmouth.

All places are now booked.

Thursday 9th August

### RNLI Fete in Royal Avenue Gardens.

10am to 4pm.

If you can help in any way please contact Harry Escott. He needs cakes, books & DVDs but not bric a brac

Thursday 9th August

### Yorkshire Building Soc.

### Rowathon all day

Outside the branch on South. Embankment. Prizes.

Also Boat trip with band.

Dep 7.30pm from Town Quay

Mon/Tues 13th & 14th August

### RNLI Face 2 Face team at Sainsbury's.

### Dartmouth Regatta

Thurs 30th Fri. 31st August & Sat. 1st September.

Lifeboat Station open in Coronation Park.

See the Lifeboat & RNLI Souvenirs on sale 10am to 4pm.

Thursday 27th September

### A Talk by Monty Halls

7.30pm at Dartmouth Yacht Club.

Entry £5

Wednesday 24th October

### A Talk by Peter Callis on his round the World sailing adventure

7.30pm at Dartmouth Yacht Club.

Entry £5

### Tony Kirkland will take his RNLI Souvenirs to the following;

Sunday 5th Aug Crab Fest.

Saturday 11th Aug Dittisham Regatta

Monday 27th Aug Stoke Fleming Hort. & Sport

Sunday 9th Sept Kingswear Regatta

Saturday 13th Oct Cornworthy Apple Fest (Hunters Lodge)

Sunday 28th Oct Dartmouth Food Festival

Further information on all these future events and reports of past events can be found on the Events section of the station web site.

**Do you have an idea for a feature article? Got something to say? Send your views to John Fenton using the 'Contact Us' facility on the web site.**

Details of our last one hundred and fifty launches, recent and forthcoming events, a photo gallery as well as details of the team members can be found on the local RNLI web site. Notices are also posted on the Notice Boards on the outside the Lifeboat Station and in front of the toilets on the North Embankment.



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