



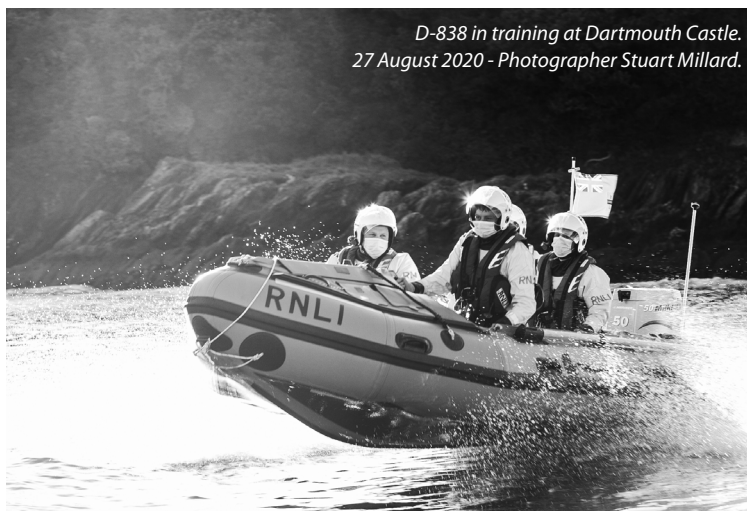
A LOOK AT THE RNLI DART CALLOUTS DURING 2020

The new D class, D-838 Dudley Jane, took over from our original D class, Spirit of the Dart, in July 2019 and responded to 10 shouts in 2020. All bar one were to people in trouble in Dartmouth Harbour (one) and up the River Dart (seven).

In total, RNLI Dart responded to 33 callouts over the year. 14 were to yachts, of which six were being sailed by single handers. Paddleboarders, kayakers and motor cruisers accounted for another four each. There were calls to two small fishing boats and one each to a RIB, an inflatable, a speedboat and a dog in the water.

On four occasions two lifeboats were launched in response to a call out. On Saturday 19th September the Dart volunteers were able to respond in the Atlantic lifeboat to a Mayday call from a 33 ft yacht with three on-board as they crossed the Skerries bank and were dismayed. The wind was gusting 25 kn and there was a 2m swell. They were able to reach the three uninjured yachtsmen very quickly, aided by their VHF radio direction finding capabilities, but the tow back against the wind and sea took 1¾ hours.

In early July seven people were flung into the water when a yacht capsized up-river as the sails were put up. The westerly wind was gusting to force six. The B class lifeboat rescued three from the water and the D class was able to go ashore to aid the four who had swum to a very muddy river bank.



*D-838 in training at Dartmouth Castle.
27 August 2020 - Photographer Stuart Millard.*

Later that month both lifeboats went to the aid of a Dutch lady who had fallen in her yacht near Dittisham. She suffered a severe head injury. The crew of both boats were needed to lift her from her yacht to the larger B class lifeboat. The D class then took her husband to the ambulance so that he could accompany his wife to hospital.

Both lifeboats are sent if a search is required for a missing craft or person.

In early July seven people were flung into the water when a yacht capsized up-river as the sails were put up.

Fourteen eyes are better than eight. Two paddle boarders set off from Blackpool Sands in 17 to 21 knot winds from the south-west.

One got back to shore but the other was swept out of sight and found by the crew of the B class off Redlap Cove. Once they had returned the paddleboarder to Blackpool Sands the crew of the B class lifeboat were then able to escort the D class back to the more sheltered waters of the river.

Salcombe and Torbay are our RNLI flank stations. A 20 ft motor cruiser with engine failure gave his position as being off Slapton Sands. He could not be found there and the Tamar all weather lifeboat from Salcombe joined the search. They found him off Start Point and towed him towards Dartmouth for the Dart lifeboat to take over the tow.

The trial to see if the callouts and weather conditions warranted adding a B class lifeboat to RNLI Dart began on 19 September 2018

From left to right. Atlantic 85 B-875, Atlantic 75 B-795 and D class D-838 in training 27 August 2020 - Photo-Stuart Millard.



and ended almost 2 years later, on 7 July 2020. During that time the trial boat, an Atlantic 75, was launched 50 times, saved two lives and assisted 97 people.

The Atlantic 75 lifeboat, B-795, Staines Whitfield, answered 15 calls in 2020 until she was replaced after the trial by the larger and more powerful Atlantic 85, B-825, Norma Ethel Vinall, from the relief fleet at Poole. She became operational on 28 August 2020 and has since responded to 12 callouts by the year end.

Only three weeks after becoming the operational lifeboat she went to the aid of three large vessels in strong winds. There was the dismasted yacht on the Skerries. The following day a single-handed sailor on a 45 ft. yacht requested help in the same area. He had suffered engine failure and was unable to make

progress under sail. The yacht was towed to Dartmouth Harbour.

Exactly a week later a 45 ft. motor vessel struck a rock as it left the Dart estuary and started to take on water. It needed all the power of the Atlantic 85 to tow her quickly to Darthaven Marina where she was lifted out of the water and the damage assessed. If these three incidents had occurred when there was only a D class inflatable lifeboat available the Coast Guard would

have had to task the all-weather Salcombe Tamar lifeboat to come from around Start Point. The Atlantic 85 was able to quickly respond to the vessel taking on water whereas, even at her top speed of 25kn, it would have taken some time for the Tamar to reach her. It is also considerably more expensive for the RNLI to launch an all-weather lifeboat than the B class.

The most recent good news is that Lee Darch and Yorkie Lomas,

who have both been on the crew since the station opened, have been passed as helms for the D class lifeboat. That gives us a total of eight helms, thirteen lifeboat crew and four shore crew with others waiting in the wings for the Covid restrictions to be lifted.

John Fenton RNLI Dart Lifeboat Press officer
jfsdartnli@btinternet.com



*42 ft. vessel, holed below the waterline, being towed to Darthaven Marina. 22 September 2020.
Photo- David Bown*

Dartmouth RNLI visitor centre

We are delighted to say that our RNLI visitor centre in Dartmouth has now reopened. Currently we are only able to offer retail facilities but hope to extend to the full visitor centre experience on or soon after the 17th May. However, our shop is full of exciting merchandise with some new lines and old favourites.

We run exclusively with volunteers and for the next few weeks at least will only have a small number of our team available. This means that we will opening for reduced hours and days and these may vary depending on volunteer's availability and public reaction as Covid rules are relaxed. We are also limiting visitors to four at any one time. We hope to be back to full opening after 1st June.

We are looking for additional volunteers, so if you are interested, (no experience or specific RNLI knowledge necessary) please contact me at tracey.lucas@hotmail.co.uk

We look forward to welcoming back our visitors.

Tracey Lucas, Volunteer Manager, RNLI Visitor Centre, Dartmouth



News, details of launches, photographs and videos can be found on the Dart station website. www.dartlifeboat.org.uk or the station Facebook page www.facebook.com/dartnllifeboat