

The official opening of the RNLI Visitor Centre in Dartmouth.

The RNLI Visitor Centre on Dartmouth's South Embankment was opened by Sarah Wollaston MP on Thursday 31 March 2016.

Sarah was introduced by Stephanie Pavie, RNLI Public Engagement Manager, who also read out a message from Paul Boissier, Chief Executive of the RNLI. 'I am sorry that I cannot be with you today to celebrate this milestone event for the community and the committed RNLI volunteers of Dartmouth. This Visitor Centre is a leap forward for our retail and visitor experience, enabling us to showcase the brave and courageous work of our lifesavers. This Centre is the first of its kind for the RNLI and will inspire and engage current and future RNLI supporters for many years to come.'



Photo: Stuart Millard

Sarah Wollaston MP opening the new centre, supported by Tracey Lucas, Volunteer Manager and Amanda Woods, RNLI Visitor Experience Manager

It was the volunteers of Dartmouth, Ed Featherstone, Tracey Lucas and their dedicated team, who first identified the need and they have worked hand in hand with Amanda Woods, our RNLI Visitor Experience Manager, to make this happen. Thank you to you all, for everything you have done to make this idea a reality and for everything you do to support this life saving charity.

Tracey Lucas, the volunteer Dartmouth Visitor Centre manager, was presented with

a bouquet of flowers by Amanda Woods as a token of thanks for all the hours of work it had taken to get to this day and she in turn thanked her team, without whom none of this could have been achieved.

Sarah Wollaston had a preview visit around the Centre before meeting the volunteers and talking to the 'Little Crew'; the children of the lifeboat crew who were watching the proceedings from within the Dart D class inshore lifeboat parked outside.

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Photo: Stuart Millard


Amanda Woods being interviewed for ITV Local News



Photo: Stuart Millard

Sarah Wollaston and Jake Moores, Chairman of the RNLI Dart Lifeboat Management Group, talking to the children of the crew

Launches since November 2015

No.	Date	Assisted	Location / Search area.	Description
250	07/02/16 Sunday 11.42am		Off Kelly's Cove Start Bay	Abandoned boat drifting off the Mewstone. Walkers on the S.W. Coastal path saw a presumed upturned dinghy off Old Mill Cove, N.E. of the Mewstone. They reported it to the volunteers at the Froward Point Coast Watch Station who informed HMCG Solent. The RNLI Dart inshore lifeboat was deployed to investigate. They found an eight foot tender, practically submerged. It had drifted in the gusty 27 knot winds to a position off Kelly's Cove. All the indications suggested that it was unlikely that there had been anyone in the boat when it was lost. The tender was towed into Dartmouth Harbour.
251	10/03/16 Thursday 12.37am Video on Dart RNLI web site 	5 adults	Off the South Embankment Dartmouth Harbour	Five seamen rescued from French trawler. Three French pair trawlers from Cherbourg had sought shelter in Dartmouth Harbour from the very rough conditions at sea. Two of them, the <i>Sagittaire</i> and the <i>Saint Christophe</i> were tied up to the Town Quay when the emergency services were called. Both of the trawlers were listing severely. There was a report of a fire on board one and both crews needed evacuation. The Dart inshore lifeboat evacuated three of the crew from the <i>Sagittaire</i> over the stern and then returned for the next two, one of whom had to be lowered from the transom with a rope. The Fire Service rescued the crew of the <i>Saint Christophe</i> by ladder and established that there was no fire. The Spring tide was at its lowest at 12.33am and it became apparent that the <i>Saint Christophe</i> was not re-righting herself. The lifeboat crew were asked to establish whether there was internal flooding in the vessel. They did so and found it to be severe. The two French crews were taken to the lifeboat station for hot drinks and overnight shelter. An environmental protection boom was placed round the vessel by the Dart Harbour Authority.
252	12/03/16 Saturday 3.10pm	1 dog	Dittisham River Dart	Retriever retrieved. No sooner had the Dart lifeboat station been cleared after the annual free lifejacket check than the pagers sounded. Harlem, an 11 year old Golden Retriever, had dashed into the river 200m upstream of the Dittisham Sailing Club boat park. The inshore lifeboat was initially asked to provide safety cover for the Fire Service on scene. Mike Bennett, from the sailing club was standing in the river beside the dog, which was up to its belly in the mud. The dog was rapidly tiring and it took the combined efforts of Mike Bennett, two from the Fire Service, a Coastguard and two of the lifeboat crew to free him. He was landed from the lifeboat on the sailing club slip and returned to his grateful owner.

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



Photo: Riki Bannister



Photo: John Fenton

Correspondence:

re RNLI Dart support for the two French trawler crews who came to grief in Dartmouth Harbour.

@ Dartmouth Lifeboat crew. On behalf the Pas de Calais, Northern France Regional Fishermen's Organisation, I would like to thank you for the assistance and great help you gave to the crew of the Saint Christophe. We appreciated your great work. Olivier Lepretre. President du comité Regional des Peches nord pas de calais Picardie.

@ Dart RNLI Lifeboat. On behalf of the French fishing communities, Thank you so much for your tremendous efforts, help and hospitality you gave the crew of the St Christophe during this ordeal. You did a great job. Thank you again.



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Continued from page 1

She expressed a big 'Thank you' to all the RNLI volunteers, both at the Centre and at the Dart lifeboat station. She had found the Visitor Centre 'remarkable' and believes that everyone who visits will be safer for the experience.

The proceedings were drawn to a close by Jake Moores, Chairman of the RNLI Dart Lifeboat Management Group. He acknowledged the pivotal role Ed Featherstone had played by putting forward the idea to RNLI headquarters

to create a shop in Dartmouth. This Centre has become the result. 'From small acorns great oak trees grow.' Jake declared that it had been a great day for the Town and the RNLI. The volunteers were looking forward to many years of service, both at the Centre and at the lifeboat station.

Sarah Wollaston then cut the ribbon across the doorway and ushered in the many enthusiastic visitors and supporters who had come to take part in the celebration.

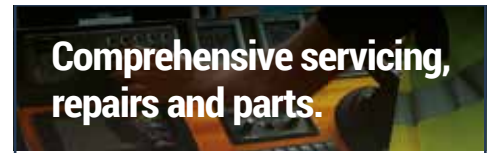
AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF RNLI DART

Readers of this article are likely to be current 'Friends of RNLI Dart', former Friends or new to the Friends organisation. The 'Friends of RNLI Dart' are a support group providing financial assistance to help off-set the running costs of our local lifeboat. These costs range from funding 'shouts' and crew training, to meeting the production expenses of this magazine. Friends also help to raise public interest in local lifeboat operations and may even provide members who volunteer to help with our fundraising activities or to help in the new visitor centre. All in all the Friends are important to us in so many ways.

Friends are kept informed of local activities through background articles and news items printed in this magazine which is published three times a year. Friends may also opt to receive more frequent email updates and news over the course of the year. Many of our supporters will already have received an invitation to the recent

fundraising group's AGM in which there was a request for Friends to renew their subscriptions. For a minimum of £5 (no maximum!) you too can become a Friend, and in doing so you will help us to maintain this essential service based on the River Dart.

Our membership dates from 1st May to 30th of April 2017. If you would like to join us please complete the form included with this magazine. Please note that if you have already provided a 2016/17 subscription then no further action by you is required. Standing orders are welcome, as indeed are any suggestions for future fundraising efforts. Volunteers ranging in commitment from a few hours annually to potential committee members are also very welcome. If you would like further information on how you can become more involved in supporting the RNLI team based at Coronation Park please contact me, Paul Manley, on (01803 414774) or email: paulkmanley@gmail.com



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The RNLI All-weather Lifeboat Centre.



Photo: John Fenton

History.

The £24 million RNLI All-weather Lifeboat Centre (ALC) was opened, on budget, in March 2014 and aims to save the donors between £3 and £4 million a year, which is a significant return on their investment. The factory will be at full production level by 2019. During the design stage the RNLI held workshops with other partners in the marine industry where they discussed processes that had worked best for them and what they would have changed. The input from the RNLI Inshore Lifeboat

Centre in East Cowes was crucial as they had pioneered the use of 'lean working' within the RNLI.

Production.

Severn, Trent and Tamar all weather lifeboats (ALBs), and the fleet of seven hovercraft, will all eventually be maintained and refitted here and six Shannon class lifeboats will be built each year for the next 10 – 12 years. For the next two years Trent and Severn class ALBs will still be refitted in external

boatyards until the ALC is fully ramped up. A decision has yet to be reached on a Trent replacement as there is a significant height difference between the Trent and a Shannon.

Layout.

The ALC consists of two blocks, linked by a covered aisle. Building A, on the left holds three paint booths. A fully built Severn class ALB, with its

mast down, can fit into booths one and two and wheelhouses and other smaller components are painted in the third.

The Shannon hull and wheelhouse are currently built by SAR Composites; a fully RNLI owned subsidiary in Lymington. They will have transferred that process to Building A by the end of June 2016, bringing their workforce with them.

Working with composites and paint generates particulates that are dangerous to health and so a particulate removal system is installed throughout Building A, but it is not required in Building B, thus reducing costs.

The roofed central aisle is 23m wide; enough to give a boat-mover room to place a Severn ALB in a paint booth or a repair bay in Building B.

Building B is where the ALB and Hovercraft refits, repairs and maintenance are carried out, as well as the building of the Shannon class. The overall impression of the Centre from outside illustrates how well the building complements the rest of the Campus.

Building the Shannon class ALB.

Over sixteen weeks the hull and wheelhouse are prepared in moulds in Building A, before being detached from one another and transferred to Building B. They will be kept apart until the final fit-out. Over the next eight weeks pads



Photo: John Fenton

Top: The All-weather Lifeboat Centre. Building A is on the left. Above: Scarborough Shannon class, due on station Nov 2016



Photo: John Fenton

Building B. Foreground: Shannon class in various stages of fit out. Beyond them facing left, Fleetwood Shannon class due on station June 2016 and Swanage Shannon class on station April 2016 and furthest away a Severn class in for refit.



Photo: John Fenton

John McCallion
Production Operations Manager.
RNLI All-weather Lifeboat Centre

are placed on the bulkheads using jigs to position them, saving time and expense, and then components are fixed to the pads. Very little is stored on-site and components come in kit form, on a daily basis, from the Lifeboat Support centre over the road.

During this stage the main emphasis is on the fitting of the water jets. (The two 650HP engines drive the waterjets which can displace 2.5 tonnes of water per second giving a new boat a top speed in excess of 30 knots and the ability to reach 25 knots throughout its working life. It also has the ability to stop within one and a half boat lengths from 25 knots.) After this stage the two halves are sent back across the aisle to the paint booths.

During the final fitting out stage back in Building B the hull and wheelhouse are glued together and a laminate is placed over the bond before sacrificial fenders are fitted over that. The final fitting out work can be carried out from three levels as a fully adjustable working deck surrounds the boat. It gives good headroom for those on the lowest level and saves components and tools having to be lifted onto the next level, allowing safe and efficient working conditions.

Environmental aspects.

When the channels in Poole harbour were dredged the spoil was brought ashore to the site of the new ALC by barge, thus saving 5000 truck movements. The site, which included reclaimed land, had to be

raised by 1.4m in comparison to the 1m above sea level that was required when the College site was built 12 years ago. The factory was then supported by 2100 vertical concrete piles. Holes Bay was declared a Nature park in 2015 and the demolition of the old site was delayed so as not to disturb any of the 85 species of over-wintering birds. There is a semi-permeable membrane used on the blast slab where the boats are washed down and substances, such as anti-fouling, are trapped by it. The membrane is then disposed of separately before the treated water is returned to the Bay. The roof of the ALC is covered with solar panels which feed into the campus-wide grid.

The work force.

In order to staff the ALC the RNLI recruited 50 new workers to complement the 40 existing staff. The management is committed to employing six new apprentices each year, drawn from different trades. They are not limited to chargeable work and spent spend time within other departments of the RNLI such as Fundraising, Education and Health and Safety. The aim is that when they reach the end of their apprenticeship they will have become 'RNLI Citizens' and will want to continue to work for the Charity.

Cosandra Fleet number 13-12.

The ALC bell was brought from the RNLI maintenance facility at Borehamwood. It was rung at the opening ceremony of



Photo: John Fenton

Cosandra Shannon class Fleet number 13 12

the ALC and again when Shannon class lifeboats completed at the ALC commence their harbour and seagoing trials. Cosandra was the first Shannon class lifeboat to be completed at the ALC.

John McCallion said: 'I was very proud when Cosandra was handed over to the fleet. My role is one of supportive management, to enable our skilled craftsmen to do what they do best. Their expertise enables the volunteer crews to go out and save lives and that is why it is so important for us all to continue with the very high quality of work taking place here.'



John Fenton.
Dart Lifeboat
Press Officer

Storm Force

New crew needed! Discover the exciting world of lifeboats and lifeguards – the RNLI's very own club for young people aged 7 to 11.

Membership makes a fun and educational gift that lasts for a whole year; all for only £10. Members receive:

- a membership pack with exclusive crew bag, pencil tin, bumper activity booklet and more
- four issues of Storm Force magazine a year packed with real rescue stories, fun things to make and do, water safety advice, plus competitions with cool prizes.
- access to the online Crew Room with exciting games
- exclusive Storm Force Station Days where you can meet the crew
- a shiny new badge for every year of membership.

There are Storm Force membership packs for sale in the Visitor Centre and a form to activate the membership. A major plus for joining now is that this year we are planning to hold a Storm Force Day at the Dart Lifeboat Station on Saturday July 16. The lifeboat crew, the RNLI lifeguards, the RNLI Flood Rescue team and the Coastguards will all be there with demonstrations and will then go on to perform rescues on the river. Storm Force members can apply to come. You find out how to apply when you become a member – you cannot just turn up on the day! But you had better be quick.

Visit www.rnli.org.uk to apply online.

Youth Education Conference

The Conference was spread out over three days in March this year and held at the RNLI College at Poole. Forty six delegates attended from venues as far apart as Cornwall and the North of Scotland. Those attending the packed programme of inspirational speakers, thought-provoking films and practical brain storming workshops, brought a vast range of experience to the meeting. I managed to pick up several ideas and film presentations and hope to use them in local schools and our newly opened Dartmouth RNLI Visitor Centre.

A psychologist gave us an insight into how learning styles change across the age ranges. The experiences of those who specialised in working with the over 15 year olds were particularly interesting and so different from the techniques used by those of us working with the Primary age range. The older ages are often influenced by peer pressure and alcohol and the effect of these can have an enormous influence on decision making; not always for the better.

If the only message we have for the 16 year olds and older about tombstoning is "stop!" it will not be listened to or acted upon. It led to an interesting debate as to whether we should in fact teach them where the dangers in tombstoning lie; shallow water injuries, the effect of the tide on water levels, under-water

dangers such as entrapping weed, debris and rocks, cold water shock and more. In Fife in Scotland two boys died whilst tombstoning, within nine months of each other, in the same quarry. The presentation that had the greatest affect on us over the whole Conference was given by the mother whose 18 year old son was the first to die. He had broken his neck as he entered the water. She has joined a team of Education volunteers from the RNLI and representatives from the Police and Fire Service, to go into schools and to speak to the older students. She spoke movingly about the effect his death had on his family and friends, both in his community and school. She was asked at the Conference why was she re-living such a painful experience? She replied, "I would not want anyone else to go through it." It was a very powerful message.

The next task for the local Education volunteer team will be to take the RNLI Beach Safety presentation to the Primary schools in Dartmouth and Totnes in the two weeks before the May half term. Hopefully there will be no mention of tombstoning.



Photo: RNLI

Tombstoning: note the depth of the water.

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www.dartlifeboat.org.uk

www.youtube.com/dartlifeboat



Photo: RNLI

South Hams RNLI Beach Lifeguard cover for 2016

Bantham:	At weekends until 30th April 30th April – 25th September fulltime cover 1st October – 16th October weekend cover 22nd October – 30th October fulltime cover
Sedgewell Cove:	30th April – 25th September
Challaborough:	21st May – 25th September
Burgh Island:	9th July – 4th September
Thurlestone:	9th July – 4th September
Hope Cove:	9th July – 4th September
Slapton Sands:	9th July – 4th September
Blackpool Sands:	9th July – 4th September

The 2016 season has seen the RNLI Lifeguards patrolling the full two week Easter holiday period at Bantham beach which is a significant step forward for the service.

In addition to providing safety patrols across the South Hams beaches RNLI lifeguards will be working alongside education volunteers to deliver beach safety talks to schools across the South Hams and Plymouth, in an effort to raise awareness of how to stay safe when visiting the beach. These safety talks will help the RNLI achieve its aim of reducing drowning by 50% by 2024.

When visiting the beach please stop and speak to the lifeguards. They will be happy to provide relevant safety advice to make sure you enjoy your day on the beach safely.

Volunteer Recruitment Fair, 21 May

RNLI Dart Lifeboat and South Hams CVS are co-sponsors of a Dartmouth Volunteer Recruiting Fair to be held at the Flavel Church on Saturday 21 May between 11am and 2.30pm. RNLI Dart has vacancies for volunteers for the Crew and Operations Support Team, for the Visitor Centre and for the Fundraising Branch Committee, in particular for a Chairman, an Events Secretary and a Membership Secretary. Representatives of all these categories will be available to describe the roles and answer your questions. There will also be an opportunity to talk to representatives of many other volunteer based organisations from in and around Dartmouth.

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Local Dart RNLI contacts

President

Robin Shiffner Tel 01803 835853

Chairman Lifeboat Management Group

Jake Moores Tel 01803 833036

Lifeboat Operations Manager

Rob Clements Mob 07917 514 948

Treasurer Operations Team

Paul Weedon Tel 01803 833812

Sea Safety Officer

John Yunnie Mob 07768 007365

Chairman Fundraising Branch

Position vacant

Vice Chairman and Visitor Centre Manager

Tracey Lucas Mob 07850 578127

Secretary Fundraising Branch

Jenny Gould Mob 07905 935580

Box Secretary

Gordon Pepperell Mob 07791 448391

Treasurer Fundraising Branch

Lizzie Helyer Mob 07813 803472

Events Secretary

Position vacant

Local Membership Secretary

Position vacant

Boathouse Manager

Bob Thomas Mob 07980 099932

Administrator, Press Officer & Education Volunteer

Editor Dart D'Tales and web site.

John Fenton Tel 01803 770761

Assistant Lifeboat Press Officer & Dart Lifeboat Facebook Editor

Riki Bannister Mob 07709 694167

Lifeboat Visits Officer

Kevin Murphy Mob 07890 809106

or by the "Contact us" link on the web site

Dart Lifeboat Station

Coronation Park, North Embankment,

DARTMOUTH, TQ6 9RR

Tel. 01803 839224

Please note that this is an unmanned station.

RNLI Future Events

Mayday Events 29 April to 31 May

Sat 30 April

Sink our Ship with the lifeboat crew
Dartmouth Boatfloat 12noon

Tues 3 May

Dartmouth RNLI Flag Day

If you can help please contact
Ed Featherstone 01803 835328

Sat 21 May

Volunteer Recruiting Fair

Flavel Church 11am – 3pm
Co-sponsored with South Hams
Community Volunteer Services
Information about the RNLI & other
organisations needing volunteers

Fri 1 July

Sainsburys collection from 10am

Sat 16 July

Storm Force Day

Dart Lifeboat Station 1pm - 5pm
By application & only for Storm
Force members

Dart RNLI Lifeboat "Week"
29 July to 6 August

Friday 29 July

Dartmouth RNLI Flag day

If you can help please contact
Ed Featherstone 01803 835328

Sat 30 July

Dartmouth Garden Safari

11am – 4pm
Tickets / map £5 per adult on sale at
RNLI Visitor Centre, South
Embankment from 1 July and also
from the gardens on the day

Sat 6 & Sun 7 August

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Thursday 4 August

RNLI Fete in Royal Avenue Gardens

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Dartmouth Regatta

Thurs 25, Fri. 26 & Sat. 27 August.
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Dartmouth South Embankment
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Further information on all these
future events and reports of past
events can be found on the Events
section of the station web site

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Do you have an idea for a future article? Got something to say? Please send your views to John Fenton using the 'Contact Us' facility at the foot of the 'About us' tab on the web site.