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NEWS FROM THE RNLI LIFEBOAT TEAM IN DARTMOUTH

A DEATH IN FLINTSHIRE SAVED A LIFE IN DEVON.

Elaine McCleod Scott left a legacy to the RNLI and when she died the money was used to construct a new D class lifeboat, number 812, which was named after her. On this occasion, the new boat was placed in the Relief Fleet at Poole. Every class of lifeboat has many lifeboats in the Relief Fleet ready to temporarily replace station lifeboats whenever they require regular or emergency maintenance. There is even a replacement for the four RNLI Hovercraft based around our coasts. When the Dart lifeboat needed an urgent repair, there was no RNLI cover locally for four hours, which is the time it took to bring a replacement boat and transfer all the equipment to the relief boat.

Inshore lifeboats are serviced approximately every three years, depending on their usage and the conditions in which they operate. When D702, Spirit of the Dart, went for service in late September her place was taken by the new boat. She was so new that the engine only had ten minutes of usage on the clock.

Over a period of just under four weeks whilst D812 was with us, there were four shouts and they exemplified the range of situations the crew are frequently called to.

At around 11pm on Saturday 23 September an 80 year old Dartmothian was transferring himself from the pontoon moored in the river on the Kingswear side to

Below: The specialised transport which brought D712 back to Dart lifeboat Station after servicing.



Photographer John Fenton.



Photo by Andy Kyle.

his live-aboard yacht when he fell in. His cries for help were heard by John Sealey, the River Taxi operator who had just brought him across the river before the taxi was berthed for the night. He realised that the casualty

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was not wearing a lifejacket and threw him a life ring which he secured so that it could not float away, but he was unable to lift him from the water. Mr Sealey immediately called the Coastguard who paged the lifeboat crew. Not only was it a relief lifeboat but the helm that night, James Hoare, Senior D class helm from our flank station at Torbay, was covering the Dart helms for the weekend. The volunteers were on the water in nine minutes and, directed by the Dart crew, the lifeboat reached the scene two minutes later. The casualty was barely able to respond due to the cold and Haydn Glanvill, paramedic on the Dart lifeboat crew, went into the water to help get him out. The sailor could only be lifted out when the life ring had been removed and by then he had been in the water for some twenty minutes.

The lifeboat crew used a neoprene hood to stop him losing heat from his head, gave him Oxygen and wrapped him in a self-heating thermal blanket. (When the blanket is flapped, chemicals within it inter-react and produce heat.) He was brought ashore with the help of the Dartmouth Coastguard volunteers and the Police at the Lower Ferry landing slip and transferred to a waiting Ambulance.

He was visited in hospital later by Haydn and gave

his permission for the headcam footage taken on the night to be used by the RNLI in any way that would best serve their aim of "Saving Lives at Sea"

The Dart station website went down in October due to a major upgrade by the host organisation and appears to be unrecoverable. Fortunately Jeff Cooper of www.wemakemagazines.co.uk had already been commissioned to create a new web site and it may be visible in its early form on www.dartlifeboat.org.uk by the time this issue of By the Dart is published. The video can be seen on the central RNLI site at www.rnli.org.uk by searching in the News and Media section and choosing Dart as the lifeboat station.

As well the rescue described above which has been recognised as "A life saved" the volunteers were called to a man trapped by the tide. The 56 year old had made his way at low tide from Blackpool Sands to Jenny Cole's Cove to the south. He became trapped and was unable to climb the cliffs. As he was preparing to try and wade back, fully clothed, he was seen by a property owner at Matt's point who raised the alarm.

The Dartmouth Coastguard SAR team and the RNLI Dart inshore lifeboat were tasked to attend. He was rescued from the beach in the cove by the lifeboat crew and taken to the lifeboat station in Dartmouth where he was assessed and given a hot drink and warm dry

clothing before being driven home by the Coastguard team.

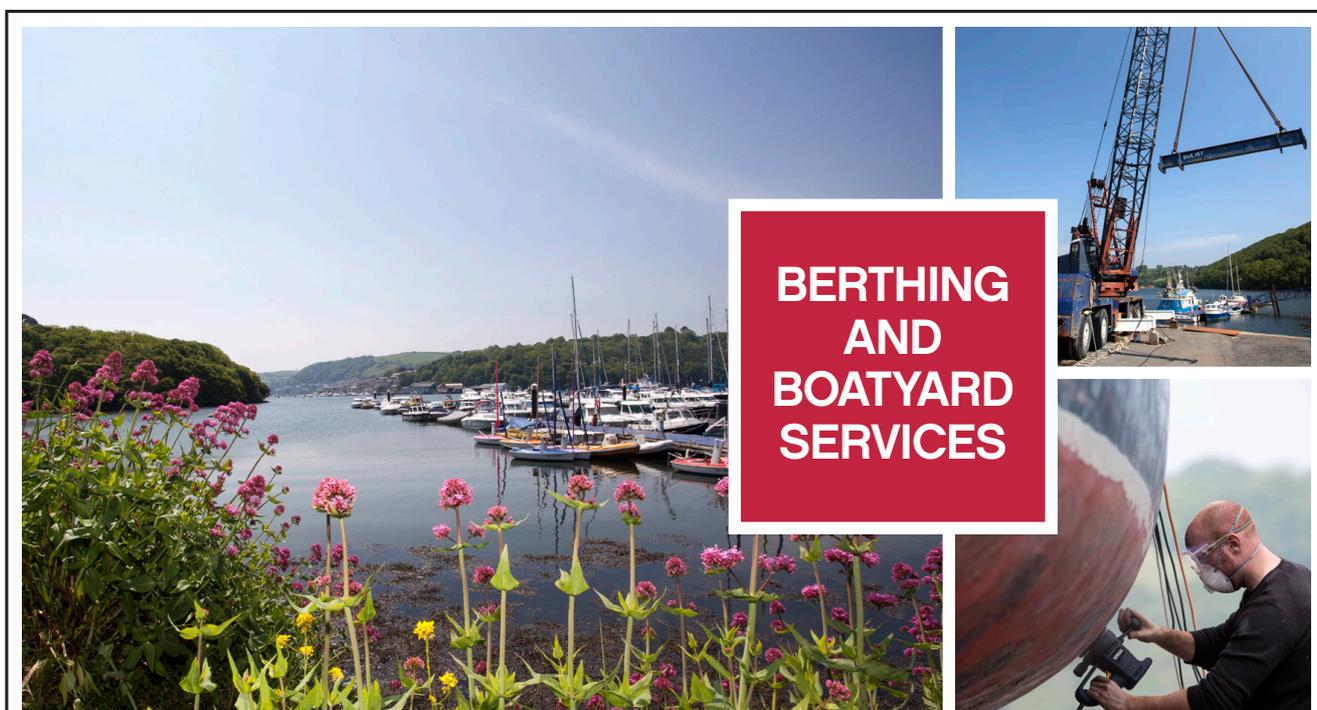
Eleven days later the team were tasked to three adults on a motor boat with engine problems five miles away near the Skerries. There have been frequent requests for help from broken down fishing boats, motor boats and yachts this year, some of which have been so large or so far out to sea that we have had to ask for help from one of the all-weather-lifeboats at Salcombe or Torbay. On this occasion both Dart and the Salcombe lifeboats were called as the light was failing. In the event the boat managed to limp to the mouth of the Dart and was met by the Dart lifeboat which escorted them to a berth at the Noss marina.

The fourth call was initiated by the Police and concerned a child who had been seen at the water's edge by the Lower Ferry and was now missing. The area around Bayards Cove and further downstream was carefully searched by the lifeboat crew until the search was called off an hour later by the Police.

The latest launch on 3 November to investigate a red flare seen in the Stoke Gabriel area was the 45th of the year. This equals the previous highest number of shouts which was in 2010 – and there are still eight weeks left until the end of the year.

www.dartlifeboat.org.uk

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