

## Tasked 50 times in two years

The Dart RNLI inshore lifeboat finally became operational on the 7th of November 2007 after months of discussion in the Town. The position of the lifeboat station, and even whether we needed a lifeboat in the Port, aroused strong feelings. Andy Pound, leader of the Dartmouth Mobile Coastguard Team, had said that before the inshore lifeboat was established there were many occasions when the services of a boat had been needed and none was available.

The inshore lifeboat has been tasked to rescues as far away as Start Point and Berry Head. The decision as to which lifeboat to send follows a discussion between the MCA and the launching authorities in Dartmouth, Salcombe or Torbay depending on the wind strength, sea state and the nature of the task.

The inshore lifeboat really comes into her own within the harbour, in surf conditions, operating close to rocks and in shallow waters as found in the river. This year 78% of calls have been to incidents up river or in the harbour and estuary. Another surprising statistic is that a quarter of the calls this year have been between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m.

Often the "Shout" turns out to be routine but at the time of the alarm each one is a potential tragedy if not dealt with. Yes we have launched to rescue a dog that had fallen off a cliff and was injured but the dog had owners and bystanders who wished to put themselves at risk to rescue him. Broken down



Photo by Andy Kyle

or drifting boats can cause serious injury if they come ashore or into contact with other boats.

We have evacuated injured persons from the shore, where only our inshore boat could reach them. We have launched to search for missing persons and tragically we have searched and then assisted in the removal of a body from the river at Totnes this August.

Last November we saved the life of an 18yr old canoeist at Redlap.

**It is good that the RNLI volunteers are in Dartmouth "to save lives at sea."**

## Chris Rampling.

Chris was 17 when he became one of the first and the youngest to volunteer to join the Dart lifeboat crew. He is also the only crew member to become a qualified RNLI lifeguard.

On leaving Dartmouth Community College he spent four years at the South Devon College, gaining a National Diploma and then a Foundation Degree in Outdoor Education. RNLI trainers came to Dartmouth for VHF training and first aid courses to enable Chris and the other volunteer crewmen to gain their VHF and Practical First Aid at Sea certificates. He went on to gain his RYA powerboat level 2 certificate during the introductory ILB course at the Lifeboat College in Poole. "The capsizing drill in the sea survival pool was awesome. We had to do it in total darkness with a strong wind and simulated thunder and lightning. You couldn't hear yourself speak."

During that week Chris teamed up with Ben from the RNLI Station at Cowes. He next met him when they both gained berths on the

sail training ship Prince William. Trinity House sponsor RNLI volunteer crew under the age of 25 for a week on the tall ship. During the week they sailed from Ipswich to Portsmouth via Cherbourg. Chris had to climb to the Royals in the dark to let out sail during the trip and drew the (short?) straw to return to his lofty perch as they manned ship to enter Southampton.

Chris has been on 9 of the 50 launches of the Dart ILB so far. Asked which was his most memorable he decided it was his first:-the sheep rescue. "The sheep jump off the rock as the boat approached. The waves were breaking over its head." Chris went into the water to help extract it. "The sheep waited to show how relieved it was until it was in the boat!"

The rescue classified as "a life saved" was to a capsized sea canoeist who had managed to swim ashore at Redlap Cove. Chris described the scene. "He was unable to help himself. We put him in a survival bag and took him as quickly as we could in the rough seas to a



Photo by John Fenton

Paul Boissier, Chief Executive Officer of the RNLI met Chris Rampling and Haydon Gianvill on his visit to the Dart station

waiting ambulance at Blackpool Sands. He was hypothermic and kept slipping in and out of consciousness."

Having qualified as a NARS beach lifeguard Chris had joined the South Hams RNLI team in June 2009. During the intense training he gained his certificates to drive a 4 Wheeled Vehicle and All Terrain Vehicles as well as enhanced First Aid.

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Cartoon by James Fenton

# Launches since July 2009

No.	Date	Assisted	Location / Search area.	Description
33 10/09	25/7/09 Sat. 10:25 hrs	Assisted 2 plus dog	Forrest Cove West of Blackpool Sands, Start Bay	A 16ft Atlantic 500 angling boat was swamped during an attempted landing at Forrest Cove. The ILB transferred the couple and their dog to Blackpool Sands where the lady was treated by a West Country Ambulance crew. The boat was recovered by friends of the owner.
35 12/09	1/8/09 Sat. 02:32 hrs	Assisted 2 including assisting Police retrieve the body of the 2nd casualty	Steamer Quay Totnes River Dart  Search of River Dart up and down- stream from Steamer Quay	Three young men had capsized a pram dinghy off Steamer Quay. One swam ashore to raise the alarm. The second was quickly located by the ILB crew on a moored yacht and taken ashore. The river bank was searched by mobile CG, Fire and Police teams. The ILB and two other boats crewed by RNLI lifeboatmen searched the river, joined by a SAR helicopter from RAF Chivenor. The ILB then took onboard a Police dog and his handler from the Dartmoor SAR team. The dog indicated an area to search and the body of the third man was located by Police divers on the river bed. The RNLI crew assisted the divers with the retrieval of his body.
40 17/09	27/8/09 Thurs. 13:28hrs		Blackpool Sands Start Bay	Four people had been thrown into the sea as they attempted to land on Blackpool Sands. They were assisted ashore by the RNLI Lifeguards. The ILB crew bailed out the speedboat and towed it back to Dartmouth.
41 18/09	28/8/09 Fri. 10:53hrs	Assisted 7	The Mewstone East of Dart Estuary	The cutter from HMS Victory with 7 on board was sailing in the Dart Estuary in winds gusting 49Kn. The second sail could not be lowered and they got to within 20 feet of the Mewstone and were rowing hard when they put out a Pan Pan. They had been observed by the National Coast Watch station at Froward Point who informed the Coastguard. The Regatta safety boat Patronas was the first to reach them. They towed the cutter clear in a 7 foot swell with 2 foot breaking waves. The ILB escorted them to the Dart Estuary and took over the tow to the Town Quay.
44 21/09	11/9/09 Fri. 16:50hrs	Assisted 2	Greenway Boathouse River Dart	An elderly lady fell and fractured her right ankle close to Greenway Boathouse. Paramedics had strapped her leg and placed her on a stretcher. The lifeboat crew transferred her on the stretcher to an ambulance on Greenway Quay.
46 23/09	8/10/09 Thurs. 13:01hrs	Assisted 1 dog	Little Dartmouth Start Bay	A Jack Russell Terrier had fallen down the cliffs and become wedged at the foot of the cliff. He was released by the lifeboat crew and handed over to the Coastguard team who abseiled back up the cliff and returned him to his grateful owner.
47 24/09	18/10/09 Sun. 14:40hrs	Assisted 1	Castle Cove Dart Estuary	A holidaymaker slipped on the rocks and briefly knocked herself out. She was treated by the Ambulance crew and the mobile Coastguard team. Due to the proximity of the casualty to the water's edge and the difficulty of carrying her over the rocks the stretcher was placed inside the RNLI beach stretcher and she was evacuated in the ILB to Dartmouth.

Not all launches have been shown due to the high number during this period. Full details are on the local website.

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## FUNDRAISING FOR THE RNLI

The year started well with the National event, SOS Day. The Lifeboat Station was a central point for things such as, Strip Our Skins with Chris Tracy, painful but successful, Sup Our Soup and Sizzle Our Sausages to name but a few. We also packed bags at Sainsbury's.

A very happy event was the fun day at Blackness Marine. Watch for a repeat of this event in 2010. Flag Day is always a good way to raise funds and this year the 1st August was no exception. The weather was kind to us and we had a good result. We held the RNLI Fete in the Royal Avenue Gardens on the 7th August. Again we were very lucky as the sun shone all day. The atmosphere was exceptionally happy for helpers and visitors. Choir 86 came to the Dartmouth Guildhall in September; it was a most enjoyable evening and one which we will repeat.

This year we have been invited to a number of Regattas and Fetes with our Souvenirs. Dartmouth Regatta was of course very successful when we had our table rigged in the Lifeboat Station. We were also invited to Dittisham and Kingswear Regattas, and again we



A generous cheque presentation from the Kingswear Regatta

sold a lot of souvenirs and had a lot of donations.

Our local Golf Club gave us a surprise donation as did the Regatta Joint Sailing Committee. The captain of the Golf Club in Bristol was on holiday in Dartmouth for our naming ceremony. He was so impressed that he arranged events for us over the year. It's true to say that all fundraising consists of hard work and dedication. I believe that my task is made easier because I work on behalf of the RNLI. We shall be active around Dartmouth and Kingswear during 2010 raising funds and awareness, please keep supporting us.

**Harry Escott.**  
Chairman Fundraising Committee.

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Children from Dartmouth, St John The Baptist and Stoke Fleming Primary Schools bring their SOS collections to the station

**Juniors now have a special page on our local web site. The web address is at the foot of the page.**

The RNLI also has a special web site for young people. It can be reached on [www.rnli.org.uk/shorething](http://www.rnli.org.uk/shorething)

There you can find Activities and Games, from building a lifeboat to training as a lifeguard. You can test what you know about staying safe on a beach and about the flags the RNLI lifeguards use. Young people can join the junior branch of the RNLI called Storm Force. Join and you receive an excellent magazine with lots of information about the lifeboats and things to do.

**[www.dartmouth-lifeboat.org.uk](http://www.dartmouth-lifeboat.org.uk)**



Chris, centre right, celebrates his send off to New Zealand

His second vital rescue was as an RNLI lifeguard at Hope Cove. A woman had been swept out to sea in a rip current and Chris swam out to her on his rescue board. She had become very distressed by the time he got to her. When he brought her ashore the people on the beach clapped.

"Most embarrassing!" said Chris.

The qualifications Chris has gained as an RNLI Beach Lifeguard are recognised internationally. He has set off to New Zealand to visit relatives and hopefully be employed as a lifeguard over there, before returning in the Spring to join his RNLI colleagues in the UK.

Photo by John Fenton

## Third party events.

These events are organised by those who wish to support us, but are not members of the local RNLI fundraising team. Posters can be produced by the Fundraising team and keep the corporate RNLI image. Contacting Anna Perry, Events Co-ordinator, on 01803 832393 early in the planning stage should help to avoid date clashes, both with our own events as well as those of other organisations in the Town.

## 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

### Treasurer Fundraising Team.

Colin Myers. Tel 01803 832674

### Local Membership Secretary.

Bob Hattersley. Tel 01803 832182

### Souvenir Secretary.

Mrs. Jo Escott. Tel 01803 834296

### Event Co-ordinator.

Anna Perry. Tel 01803 832393

### Boathouse Manager.

Bob Thomas. Mobile 07980 099 932

### Administrator and Press Officer.

### Editor Dart D Tales and website.

John Fenton Tel. 01803 770761

### Sea Safety Officer.

John Yunnie Mobile 07768 007 365

### Dart Lifeboat Station.

Tel. 01803 839224

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



Promoting SOS Day at the South Divisional Conference



Photo by John Fenton

## Future events

Tuesday 12th January  
"The sinking of HMS Victoria"  
An illustrated talk by Mike Rowley  
Dartmouth Yacht Club 7:30pm  
Tickets £5

Friday 29th January  
SOS day  
Events at Dart Lifeboat Station



Friday 29th January  
Show our Signs "Tinnitus"  
the rock band with crew members  
At the Royal British Legion.



Saturday 30th January  
"Sax on Saturday" Sax Appeal  
will play at the Dartmouth Guildhall



Thursday 25th February  
Dart Fundraising Branch AGM  
In the Lifeboat Station at 7pm.

Wednesday 10th March  
"The waterways of France"  
An illustrated talk by Dr Mike  
Holliday. Dartmouth Yacht Club  
7:30pm. Tickets £5

**SOS day** is a vital part of the RNLI Fundraising strategy. This year the Dart Lifeboat team won the South Division Lifeboat "Team of the Year" award by raising the amazing sum of £2900.

SOS events do not all have to be on SOS day itself and, whisper it quietly, do not even have to be based on the acronym SOS.

Last January the three local Primary schools all held their own events and it is hoped that other schools will join them this time. The Dart Fundraisers are arranging "Sax on Saturday" when Sax Appeal will be playing at the Dartmouth Guildhall on Saturday 30th Jan. The lifeboat crew will not be out shone and their activities, as well as events at the Lifeboat station, will be publicised nearer the time.

In 2009 there were several "Third Party events" which contributed to the Dart total and we would be delighted to give any advice or help to anyone wishing to run their own event. The RNLI web site [www.rnli.org.uk/sosday/home](http://www.rnli.org.uk/sosday/home) is full of advice and ideas

Details of our last fifty 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.