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Photo by Nigel Millard

## Meeting the Challenge

This first eight page issue of Dart D Tales tells how the RNLI volunteers in Dartmouth have faced the challenges before them.

It has not always been a success story. The historical article tells how the Branch was described in 1891 as “the worst Branch in the country.” “It must improve or be withdrawn.” They failed to do so and there was no lifeboat on the Dart for one hundred and eleven years.

When the service was resumed in 2007 the challenges were there again. The need for a lifeboat in modern times had to be demonstrated. The volunteers had to be found and their commitment had to be proved. Ninety four requests to launch to date have shown the demand and, whilst the vast majority of calls are for assistance, lives are also being saved; two this summer.

The particular tests presented by providing a service with a D class inshore lifeboat are also being addressed. A suitable stretcher to be carried on the boat has been introduced and has been used twice this summer. The call to a sinking



Illustration by James Fenton

Source to the Sea challenge

yacht underlined the need for quick access to a pump. This is not standard equipment for a D class station but is arriving shortly.

Two other areas of challenge are Training and Fund raising. Two articles emphasise the continuing high standards of training required. In modern times the Operations team is just as involved with fundraising as the Branch itself.

The magnificent sum of £3701 was raised by the Operations team with their Source to the Sea Challenge. An equally arduous venture is being planned for next year.

The information on SOS day, 28 Jan 2011, focuses attention on the financial challenge in the coming months as the country collectively tightens its belt at the same time as increasing reliance is placed on the voluntary services. ●

# Launches since August 2010

No.	Date	Assisted	Location / Search area.	Description
74	06/08/10 Friday 15:57 hrs	Assisted 0	Dart Estuary. Homestone to Mewstone.	A 17ft open boat was reported to be drifting in the vicinity of the Homestone buoy in the Dart Estuary. The crew found that the engine was in the down position but was cold and no keys or identification notices were found on the vessel. The CG backtracked the vessel's probable course to Torcross. The ILB carried out a shoreline search along the backtracked route until the RNLI Lifeguards from Slapton located the owner at Torcross. The ILB towed the vessel to the visitor's pontoon in Dartmouth.
75	14/08/10 Saturday 17:31 hrs	Assisted 3	Lannacombe Bay	A 7m Bayliner cabin cruiser with three on board reported engine failure off Hallsands in Start Bay. The strong flood tide had carried the casualty vessel westwards round Start Point until they were off Lannacombe Beach. Assistance was requested from the RNLI flank station at Salcombe. Their B class ILB took over the tow at 19:01 and towed the vessel to Dartmouth where the Dart ILB took over the tow and berthed the vessel at the Dart Haven Marina.
76	16/08/10 Monday 00:09 hrs ILB In the water 00:15 hrs At incident 00:17 hrs	Life saved 1	Dartmouth Harbour	A yachtsman on the deep river moorings reported shortly after midnight that there was a man in the water, in total darkness, some 20 metres from his yacht. The casualty had fallen from his yacht tender and when the crew arrived on the scene he was in the water holding onto a tender supported there by the original yachtsman who had raised the alarm. He had been in the water for about ten minutes when he was lifted into the lifeboat. As he had no injuries and declined a medical check he was returned to his vessel on the advice of the Coastguard. Helmet camera footage taken by the crew was shown on ITV local news all that day.
77	17/08/10 Tuesday 04:58 hrs	Assisted 1	Dartmouth Harbour	A member of the crew of the yacht <i>Marquis</i> had slipped whilst preparing the yacht for departure from Dartmouth and struck his head against a winch. The lifeboat transferred the casualty to an ambulance on the Kingswear Lower Ferry slip and he was taken to Torbay Hospital for observation.
78	22/08/10 Friday 20:29 hrs	Assisted 2	Dart estuary	A 22ft yacht with two on board got into difficulties south of the Mewstone. The skipper was seasick and a sheet had caught round the propeller. The fishing boat <i>Aquila</i> responded to their distress call and took them in tow. The lifeboat crew freed the propeller, took over and towed the yacht to the visitors' pontoon in Dartmouth.
82	28/08/10 Saturday 12:42 hrs	Assisted 1	Dartmouth Harbour	The Dart ILB had just completed a demonstration with a R.N. SAR Sea King when they were called to a lady from Bridgewater who had fallen down a hatchway on her motor sailor and injured her leg. They took a paramedic with them. She was given Entonox and brought ashore in a basket stretcher to a waiting ambulance.
83	29/08/10 Sunday 12:40 hrs	Assisted 2	Start Bay	A Devon Yawl with two on board capsized during a Regatta race 1½ miles south of the Castle Ledge Buoy. They were taken from the water after ten minutes by the race safety Rib. The ILB took them to a waiting Ambulance on the Higher Ferry slip as the safety boat had to stay on station. They were both suffering from mild hypothermia.
89	02/10/10 Saturday 15:35 hrs	Assisted 2	Dartmouth Harbour	A 30ft yacht, permanently moored on the deep water moorings, developed a leak and the two crew called the Coastguard for assistance. Two yachtsmen had arrived and were pumping her out. Another yacht offered their pump and the RNLI crew took it to the yacht. The DHNA provided a petrol salvage pump. The cause of the leak could not be determined and the lifeboat towed the yacht to the Darthaven Marina where she was lifted out of the water.
92	07/10/10 Thursday 21:16 hrs	Life saved 1	Dartmouth Harbour	The alarm having been raised by a phone call from Kidderminster the Coastguard requested the Lifeboat to take a Paramedic to a 60ft Motor Cruiser berthed in Dartmouth Harbour. She and the Paramedic on the lifeboat crew assessed the casualty as being seriously ill and requiring immediate transfer to Hospital. The lifeboat returned to the Dartmouth shore to collect another three crew and the six fully First Aid trained volunteers were able to lower the casualty on their stretcher down into the lifeboat. He was taken to an ambulance on the Lower Ferry slip for transfer to Torbay Hospital where he made a full recovery.
93	24/10/10 Sunday 12:55 hrs	Assisted 2	Start Bay. Three miles south of the Castle Ledge Buoy.	An 11m yacht on passage from Portugal to Portsmouth lost power and requested assistance. The Dart inshore lifeboat was on exercise with the Dutch Navy Combat Boat CB912 when the call was received. Lifeboat crewmen were placed on the yacht and the Combat Boat as the Dutch Navy towed the yacht to the Harbour mouth. The inshore lifeboat took over the tow and took her to the visitor's pontoon in Dartmouth Harbour.

A fuller account of these launches, as well as those not mentioned above, can be found on the Dart RNLI station web site. The inshore Lifeboat was launched twice in 2007, twenty times in 2008, thirty one times in 2009 and forty one times up to the end of October in 2010.

# The first Dartmouth Lifeboats



Photo by John Fenton

Model of the *Henry and Amanda Shaw* from the Dartmouth Museum

The Inauguration of the first Dartmouth Lifeboat took place on 23 Oct 1878. She was named *Maud Hargreaves*. Miss Maud Hargreaves was the deceased daughter of Mrs Emma Hargreaves, who lived in Claygate, Surrey. The lifeboat was named by a friend of Mrs Hargreaves, Mr Walter Austin.

The Lifeboat House was built at Sandquay by L C Pillar & Co, having been given the contract in early July.

The ten oared lifeboat was built by Messrs Wolfe & Son of Poplar, London. The 33ft x 8½ft boat had a harbour trial on the Limehouse Canal, London. She was a self righting boat with a self water ejection system. The boat arrived by rail at

Kingswear on 22 Oct.

Mrs Hargreaves and Mr Austin arrived at the Castle Hotel on Monday 21 Oct.

The Lifeboat was launched from the slipway on the New Ground that had been built by Redway and Sons. Whilst passing Sandquay they rescued a twelve year old boy who had fallen in the water, to the cheers of the watching crowd.

The President of the Lifeboat Committee was Chas. Chalker – Post master.

Capt Charles Lewis, the ex-Captain of the Dartmouth Steam Ferry Company cross channel ferry *Eclair* was in command. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Coxswain was R Witcher.

Crew: T Richards, C Rogers, J Stevens, S Katzias, C Balkham, T Chaice, W Collins, Jas Stevens, R Stanicombe, A Oman, W Dodd, W Wright, J Memery, Albert Sims.

Extra men: A Collins, T Matthews, Benj. Scantlebury, R Tulley, J Bumber? and R White.

After ten years the lifeboat *Maud Hargreaves* was replaced by a new twelve oared sailing lifeboat *Henry and Amanda Shaw*. She was 34ft x 8ft and had a new water ballasting system. In 1891 it was reported that there had been no practice in

bad weather and they had failed to answer a call because no crew could be mustered. On 11 January 1894 she attended the Brixham ketch *Prince of Wales* stranded near Kingswear Castle. A tug had taken the vessel in tow and was heading back to the harbour when the lifeboat arrived. Four Dartmouth lifeboatmen boarded her and assisted at the pumps enabling her to be safely beached one hour later. During the summer months the lifeboat was housed at Sandquay. In the winter the boat was kept at moorings in Warfleet Creek. In the eighteen years that there was a RNLI lifeboat in Dartmouth they only launched three times and only assisted one vessel. In 1896 the boat was withdrawn.

Information for this article was taken from RNLI sources, *The Chronicles of Dartmouth* by Don Collinson and the Dartmouth Museum. ●



**John Fenton.**  
**Dart Lifeboat**  
**Press Officer**

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# Building and Maintaining our Lifeboat Stations for the Future

**Jamie Mathys.**  
Senior Mechanical Engineer  
for Hoare Lea Consulting  
Engineers. Dart lifeboat crew  
since April 2008 and crew  
representative on the Dart  
fundraising team.



The RNLI currently operates around 350 craft from 235 Lifeboat Stations. There are 128 all weather (ALB) and 208 inshore lifeboats (ILB), as well as 4 Hovercraft for use on coastal mudflats. Additionally there are inshore lifeboats operating from 8 stations on inland waterways around the UK.

The RNLI employ a range of different lifeboats to cope with the diverse geographical conditions found around our coastline. For example in Dartmouth the D Class is ideally suited for the river and its shallow creeks, whilst equally capable of inshore operations to the East and across Start Bay. It facilitates access where the larger all weather boats are restricted by draft and maneuverability.

Lifeboat stations need to provide appropriate boathouse accommodation which will vary dependant on the Class of boat on Station. The ILB's – D Class and Atlantics are usually housed within boathalls and launched by trailer or davits (crane), whilst the larger ALB's are either kept afloat or launched by slipway or carriage.



Exmouth new lifeboat station at night

Photo by Tim Mock

Typically ALB's have a life of 20 years when lying afloat and 25 years when housed ashore.

Afloat boats are those moored in deepwater sheltered locations. Examples of these are seen at both our flanking stations at Torbay (Severn Class) and Salcombe (Tamar Class).

Slipway boats are those housed adjacent to the waters edge where launch and recovery is possible from a graded slipway using rollers and winches; for example Padstow, the recently completed Bembridge and the currently in construction Lizard Lifeboat stations.

A replacement for the Tyne class slipway launched lifeboat, the Tamar class, entered service in 2006. The Tamar is the RNLI's latest design. It is bigger and faster than the Tyne and representative of the continuous improvement in the RNLI fleet necessary to meet the changing needs and demands in the work of volunteer lifeboat crews. It has an overall length of 16 metres, beam of 5 metres and a maximum design load displacement of 33 tonnes. The Tamar, like the Tyne operates

from slipways and afloat berths.

Carriage boats are those housed some distance from low tide deep water conditions. The carriage acts as a "mobile slipway" towed by a specially designed tractor. For recovery, the boat is hauled to a level dry area by the tractor to enable the re-carrying operations to be carried out prior to re-housing in the boathouse. The recently completed Exmouth lifeboat station houses both the Mersey Class carriage and their D Class Lifeboats.

The RNLI is proud of its tradition in building to a high standard, with many existing lifeboat stations having withstood their harsh marine environments for over 100 years and still providing good service today. The RNLI Shoreworks Office work closely with their team of consultants to ensure



Tamar slipway launch at Bembridge



The new Bembridge Life Boat Station

that all new build stations are of high quality construction with low maintenance costs. This is considered essential to both functionality and the good management of charitable funds. All new building works are intended to require only minimum maintenance for 30 years. Particular attention is given to the quality of all fittings, finishes and building details in view of the generally hostile conditions to which most stations are exposed. This emphasis on quality is intended to achieve good value for money over the long term.

Each new build station has its own challenges. By their nature many lifeboat stations are located in remote and inaccessible areas. Deliveries to site are often from seaward with construction teams working off large jack up barges. These projects present major civil engineering and building challenges with tight construction programs which can be affected by adverse weather conditions.

The RNLI has an environmental policy that embraces sustainable construction techniques wherever life cycle cost allow. In addition to being socially responsible, sustainable construction offers long term economic prudence essential to the remit of well managed charitable funds.

The recently completed Exmouth lifeboat station is an example of how the RNLI has

embraced the implementation of renewable energy technologies, with installation of ground source heat pumps to provide background space heating and the collection and storage of rain water which is then used to wash down the boats. Wind turbines and solar photovoltaic generation have been used in sites such as Lifeguard facilities where there is no mains electricity supply. Such schemes are used where defined payback periods have been demonstrated.

Generally an assessment of the site for all new buildings is made to ascertain its suitability for the implementation of renewable technologies. The integration of such technologies will only be made where they do not compromise the functional operation of the lifeboat station. The RNLI Shoreworks Office will always consider any ideas on renewable energy generation that can be built into a project and provide a defined pay-back period on capital investment.

Why not visit our local lifeboat stations or check their website for details of open days where you will always be welcome? Details can be found via [www.rnli.org.uk](http://www.rnli.org.uk). Click on 'in your area' for further information. The Torbay station is open to visitors during the summer months and Exmouth is open all the year. Arrangements to visit the Dart station can be made through Rob Clements, the LOM. ●

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# RNLI TRAINING

Kevin Murphy.  
Dart lifeboat crew since  
May 2007 and Helmsmen  
since April 2008.



Photo by John Fenton

An Anchor and Veering exercise off Kingswear

Every Sunday morning 'Spirit of the Dart' is launched and two crews will go through a training session. Training for the unknown!

Whenever the pagers go off to summon the crew no one knows what they are running to. So how do we train?

Each shout will have a different scenario. The weather conditions will be different. Who or what will we assist? Will it be a single person or a large vessel? Will we be going up river or out to sea?

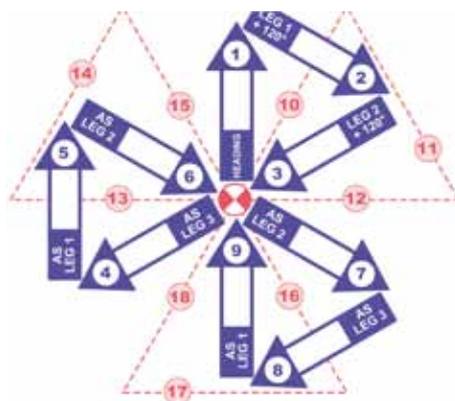
When the ILB goes out it could have a combination of any three crew from twenty volunteers. If all the crew members are to work as a close team, they each need to know what to do and how to execute every procedure.

On a typical training exercise we may practice 'search patterns'. This procedure involves covering an area in an exact pattern, ensuring that the whole area is covered without missing any spots. This could be a 'Sector search' or an 'Expanding Square search' depending on what the job is.

An expanding square search is used when we need to quickly cover a large area. On arrival at the expected position of the casualty, we will firstly set off in the likely direction of drift due to wind or tide. The ILB will then make several 90 degree turns, increasing the size of the box being searched and moving outward from the original position.

A Sector search is when we have an accurate position of the last known place of

the casualty. This may be physical debris or an upturned vessel. This position is known as the datum. Again we will set off in the likely direction of drift, but this time the ILB will turn through a 120 degrees creating a triangular pattern. Each triangle will touch at the original datum position. After this is executed three times, it covers a pattern that looks like a propeller. If nothing is found the process is repeated, but this time the direction of travel will be shifted by 30 degrees, hence filling the gaps of the propeller pattern. This search pattern is very accurate and thorough.



A sector search from the RNLI training manual

Each search pattern is very different, and is used in different circumstances. The decision on which to use is at the discretion of the helm, but the coastguard may also request a pattern. Whichever

pattern is used it must be well practiced!

Each crewman has an important role and each role is dependent on the others. One will dictate the bearing and time of each leg whilst recording the area covered. Another will be the time keeper with the stop watch, while last but not least the third will drive the boat at a constant speed on the bearing and for the time set by the others. While the crew are concentrating on their relevant tasks, each has to keep a keen lookout as this is the ultimate aim of a 'search'!

Other procedures that have to be practised are towing, underway transfers, pilotage, navigation and anchor and veering.

Anchor and veering is a technique used to approach rocks in severe conditions. The theory is to anchor off, away from the rocks and go astern with  $\frac{3}{4}$  throttle, gradually paying out the anchor line until the ILB is close to the rocks. Then the helm will be turned so as to 'veer' at an angle so the boat swings on a pendulum effect closer to the rocks. It is a controlled and exacting procedure which needs to be regularly practiced.

Another very important part of the lifeboat service is in administering 'First Aid'. The RNLI has its own medical training team that cover the country, keeping crews up to date with first aid applicable on the water. This year at Dartmouth most of the crew attended a full training course, lasting twenty hours over nine evenings. A large commitment made by all.

A D-Class ILB may be a small boat, but it carries a lot of equipment. For everything to fit, it needs its own particular storage. Training and using this equipment regularly familiarises the crew with where everything is.

When it is raining in the middle of the night and the ILB is bouncing unpredictably there is no time to rummage around pulling out unwanted kit to find what is needed for the job!

Training can be repetitive but never boring. Each training session is different and every crew member gains that bit more in experience and bonds with the others to make a closer more efficient team. You can never train "too much" as no one knows what the next shout may be! ●

# Mark Strudwick's account of his LOM/DLA course at the Lifeboat College in Poole

Mark Strudwick.  
Dart lifeboat Deputy  
Launch Authority (DLA)  
since August 2007 and  
Tractor Mechanic.



## Sunday

Arrived Sunday evening. Wow what a fab place. A lot bigger than I expected. Evening meal was really good. Met up with the LOM from Bangor.

## Monday

Started with a briefing from RNLI staff. This was followed by a "Get to know you" exercise with the other members of the course. (Good fun) The rest of the morning was taken up with briefings from the Training Managers about where the RNLI is now and where we are going in the future. The Ops Managers came in and gave us another briefing – lots to take in!! After lunch we had a tour around the training college which included the pool, and what a fab facility it is! If you get a chance to go to Poole make sure you go into the Bridge Trainer. It was a fantastic experience. It was amazing being stood still on the bridge of a Severn class lifeboat, but your brain thinks you're at sea. Then to the live engine shop to see all the different engines that are fitted to the current fleet. After that another briefing; this time from the Shore Works Manager about the upkeep of old stations and the excitement of building new facilities. We also had a visit from the Technical Team telling us about the update of the new experimental FCB2 lifeboat (Fast Carriage Boat). Back to the classroom for the day's final wash up. The College is five years old, but so well maintained you would never guess. The day was a real eye opener.

## Tuesday

A very full day with lots of brain work involved. It started with 'roles & relationships' and 'leadership & delegation.' This was where the class had to read about a scenario of an incident in the boat house or on the boat and then pick one of four answers. Your answer was put through a matrix to define your personality! We were then split into teams and had to delegate a job and tasks for the other teams. There were time scales and certain criteria that had to be fulfilled. We were then judged against these to find out how well we fared. (A very hard day made better after a pint or two!)



The RNLI Training College at Poole

## Wednesday

An early start today when we met at reception for a trip to the main building to visit the Ops room; a very impressive and forward thinking part of the organisation. Back to the classroom where we had a visit from a rep of HM Coastguard. It was interesting to see how they co-ordinate all of the other emergency services when an incident occurs. A finance briefing followed. We had a chance to try to



Lifeboats used for training at Poole

fathom out the SAP (pc's!!) & an accident report. The day finished off with a walk around the boatyard & we went on board one of the new Tamar ALB's. What a machine! A good day had by all!

## Thursday

We started off with a visit from the RNLI's Chief Executive, Mike Vlasco. A very approachable man. We all had a very good

time talking to him. He gave us the RNLI's strategy for the next three years. Exciting times! After coffee a visit from the RNLI's occupational Doctor who gave us a talk on "Why people should follow me". The rest of the day was taken up with two extremely good actors, role playing scenarios on conflict management. They would act out a scenario where there would be a conflict between them and the group would have to steer them through their problems to a solution. A great day was had by all. The evening finished off with our Training Co-ordinators & David Brooking, Director of Engineering and Support, having an evening meal with us.

## Friday

The final day! Started off with a briefing from the head of the Press Department about why our Press Officers are so important! We ended with a full week overview and farewells to all the friends we had made. We had guys from as far afield as Lerwick, Northern Ireland and Eire, Holyhead, Isle of Man, Newbiggin, St Bees and Loch Ness. I had the experience of a lifetime, made great new friends & learnt a lot more about the RNLI as a whole. The facilities I felt were second to none and it is nice to know that all our new crew members that visit the College are in great hands. All in all it was impressive to see how forward thinking the RNLI actually is. ●

Photo by Rod Kirkpatrick

Photo by John Fenton

# RNLI SOS

join our biggest fundraising day

Yes, it's come round again! Next year (2011) SOS Day falls on Friday 28 January, and the overall theme for the charity's biggest fundraising day is rowing!

The Under 16 Gig rowers from Fowey issued a challenge to other rowers to raise money for the SOS appeal by rowing afloat or on rowing machines. They plan to row the equivalent of the distance from Fowey to Falmouth. At the time of going to press our local plans are all in the melting pot. The Dart Lifeboat crew are looking to row the equivalent distance of Dartmouth to the Isles of Scilly on rowing machines in the Lifeboat station. Hopefully there will be additional indoor rowing machines available for those who prefer to Sweat rather than Splash and raise money for us by being sponsored. Please keep an eye open for details of how you could



Photo by John Fenton

Photo taken at a recent exercise with RNLI lifeguards and the local coastguard team

contribute to the event, either by taking part or sponsoring others.

The four local Primary Schools have all agreed to take part in SOS day activities again. The photograph of Buster Hart last year in his RNLI gear at St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School has been circulated to all the RNLI Education volunteers promoting this year's SOS events. ●

## Local 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

### 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.

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 web site.  
John Fenton Tel. 01803 770761

### Assistant Press Officer.

Janet Hall. Tel 01803 835718

### Sea Safety Officer.

John Yunnie Mobile 07768 007 365

### Dart Lifeboat Station.

Coronation Park, North Embankment,  
DARTMOUTH, TQ6 9NL  
Tel. 01803 839224

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

### Chairman Totnes Fundraising Team.

Roger Jobson Tel. 01803 732837

**Do you have an idea for a feature  
article? Got something to say? Please  
send your views to John Fenton**

Details of our last ninety four 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.



## Future Events

**Friday 10 December**  
**Xmas Riverboat Shuffle**  
Boarding at main Town Pontoon  
19:00 Depart 19:30  
Supper, Sea Shanties, Disco  
Tickets £15 from;  
The Harbour Bookshop  
The Royal Castle Hotel

**Wednesday 12 January**  
**Commodore Jake Moores**  
**Commodore BRNC**  
"A Life Under Water"  
Dartmouth Yacht Club 7:30pm  
Tickets £5

**Friday 28 January**  
**SOS day**  
Bag packing at Sainsbury's  
Local Primary School events

**Saturday 29 January**  
**SOS**  
Events at Dart Lifeboat Station

**Thursday 24 February**  
**Dart Fundraising Branch AGM**  
Dartmouth Yacht Club 7:30pm

**Dart RNLI Lifeboat "Week"**  
29 July to 6 August

**Friday 29 July**  
RNLI Flag day in Dartmouth

**Thursday 4 August**  
RNLI Fete  
Royal Avenue Gardens