

The Grace Darling Anniversary Row

Exactly one hundred and seventy five years after Grace Darling and her father carried out their heroic rescue a small rowing boat set out from Dartmouth in an attempt to row around the Eddystone Lighthouse and back.



Rachel Cole and Monty Halls at sea

Monty Halls was rowing in memory of his best mate Jason who was killed in a helicopter crash whilst serving with the Royal Marines in Iraq and Rachel Cole was remembering her father, a Brixham fisherman, who drowned when she was only fourteen. It was also of course in memory of Grace Darling and her father whose momentous rescue took place on the 7th of September 1838.

They set off from Dartmouth harbour just before midday, cheered on by a crowd of family, lifeboat crew and well-wishers. A heavy squall from the west hit them as soon as they left the river and they were to face moderate to strong headwinds for most of the row. Whilst the tide was with them they made 5 knots across Start Bay, but then faced 3 to 4 foot waves and white horses once they were around Start Point. It was impossible to row against wind and tide so they anchored up off Prawle. The Salcombe Tamar lifeboat came out to check on them as the light faded. She had the same Coxswain, Chris Winzar, who had taken the lifeboat out to scatter the ashes of Monty's colleague Jason, some ten years before.

At 1am it was time to have a hot drink and to raise the anchor to set off with the tide, even though the wind was still against them and the cold rain was pouring down. To their consternation they found that the anchor was stuck fast to the sea bed. It was a terrible decision to have to make, but after one and a half hours they decided to cut themselves free. They did have a secondary anchor on board. They felt very disheartened as they rowed together for the remaining two hours of useful tide. After that they each rowed alone for an hour whilst the other rested. It was very difficult maintaining a straight course when only one was rowing.

Rachel said, 'It was hard work and quite scary rowing alone at night. The weather was the exhausting part; not so much the rowing.' At least she had the company of Garfish

that would jump out of the water attracted by their headlights.

They had to anchor every time the tide changed. By late on Sunday afternoon they were some nine miles from the Eddystone light and lying off Wembury. The weather had been deteriorating throughout the row with cold rain, headwinds and a difficult sea. They anchored up and contacted the shore crew by satellite phone for a weather update. John Yunnie and Rich Eggleton had been following them by road along the coast. It was bad news. The westerly winds that had headed them all the way were due to swing to the east and strengthen to force 6. They also had electrical problems on board. The all-round bow light had failed,

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Launches since July 2013

No.	Date	Assisted	Location / Search area.	Description
181	23/07/13 Tuesday 4:20pm  Video on website	2 adults	Forest Cove West of Blackpool Sands Start Bay	Two trapped at Forest Cove. Two 18 year olds had hiked to Forest Cove at low tide. They were then trapped by the incoming spring tide. They used a mobile to contact the Coastguard. The Coastguard initially contacted the RNLI lifeguards at Blackpool Sands. Lifeguard Mike Turner used his paddleboard to reach Landcombe Cove and then swam to Forest Cove. He then directed the crew of the Dart D class inshore lifeboat to the casualties.
182	20/08/13 Tuesday 6.48pm  Video on website	1 adult	Off Hallsands Start Bay	Rescue of Canoeist Whilst training in the Range (Start Bay) the lifeboat was diverted by the Coastguard to a kayaker in trouble 400 metres off Hallsands. He had been fishing from his sit-on-top kayak when he capsized. As one of the ports was open his boat then filled with water. He had a buoyancy aid and wetsuit, but had been sitting on the upturned craft for an hour when he was rescued. He was returned, with his craft, to North Hallsands beach where he was met by the Coastguard team.
187	01/09/13 Sunday 3:45pm  Video on website	2 adults 1 dog	Dartmouth Harbour	Fire on Motor cruiser. A Mayday call was received by the Coastguard from a Fairline Targa 29 motor cruiser in the mouth of the Dart, reporting a fire on board which had stopped their engine. Interceptor, a Regatta Race safety RIB helmed by Colin Bower, previously with the Torbay RNLI lifeboat crew, reached the scene first. As Interceptor had twice the power of the inshore lifeboat the helmsman asked Interceptor to take the initial tow to pull the cruiser away from the Mewstone. Rachel Cole, lifeboat crewman, was put on board. The lifeboat took over the tow at Warfleet and put the cruiser alongside the South Embankment. There the local fire crew were able to board and established that the fire had been in the exhaust system and it was safe for the lifeboat to tow her to her berth.
189	14/09/13 Saturday 1.41pm	4 adults	Slapton Sands Start Bay	A Mayday call from a 43 foot Fairline Motor Cruiser with engine failure. She had drifted on to the shore at the North end of Slapton Beach. Dart ILB and Torbay All Weather Lifeboat were tasked to the scene. When the ILB arrived the vessel was being held offshore by another vessel. The ILB stood by until the Torbay lifeboat arrived and took the casualty vessel in tow. She was towed to the Noss Marina on the Dart, escorted by the ILB.
190	14/09/13 Saturday 1.42pm	2 adults	Dartmouth Estuary	Pan Pan call from drifting speedboat. The ILB had been tasked to a Mayday at the North end of Slapton Sands (Launch189) There were then calls from a small 4 metre speedboat that had broken down South of the harbour entrance. The lifeboat crew were asked to assess this situation whilst en-route to the Mayday. Royal Naval units that were on exercise in the area were able to assist and the ILB was stood down from this incident and continued to the Mayday call.

This rescue may be featured this Autumn in a new BBC series on new recruits to the rescue services. Rachel Cole was the new recruit.

Three calls of pan-pan in radio telephone communications is used to signify that there is a state of “urgency” as opposed to an “emergency” on board a boat, ship or aircraft or other vehicle but that, for the time being at least, there is no immediate danger to anyone’s life or to the vessel itself. This is distinct from a Mayday call, which means that there is imminent danger to life or to the continued viability of the vessel itself. Thus “pan-pan” informs potential rescuers (including emergency services and other craft in the area) that a safety problem exists whereas “Mayday” will call upon them to drop all other activities and immediately initiate a rescue attempt.

192	18/10/13 Friday 5.39pm  Video on website	3 adults	Dartmouth Harbour	Rescue in severe weather conditions A 42 foot yacht requested help due to loss of engine power. They were able to sail into the Bight, where they lowered their sails and were taken in tow by the Dartmouth D class inshore lifeboat. They were secured alongside the Town Quay. The call out was noteworthy because of the torrential rain, the Force 6 gusting 7 wind from the S East and the size of the yacht.
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A full account of all launches, with photographs, video if available and positional maps, can be found on the Dart RNLI station web site whose address is at the foot of the page.

You can receive a Tweet when we launch, followed by details of the call out as it unfolds.

Your lifeboat needs You

Each year the Dart Lifeboat running costs amount to more than £30,000. Replacing the boat in the future will cost much more. All of our crew and the fundraising team are volunteers from Dartmouth and the surrounding villages. We need your help to raise the money to save lives. If you would like to be a part of the Dart Lifeboat Team, please call Ed Featherstone on 01803 835328 or email ed.featherstone@btinternet.com

The Wind Surf exercise

When Trainee Pilot and Dart RNLI crewman Rich Eggleton went on board the five masted cruise liner *Wind Surf*, earlier this year he was surprised to find that he knew several of the ship's officers. He had trained with the Chief Officer at Fleetwood Nautical College and met the 2nd and 3rd officers when they were trainees on the Tall ship, Prince William, where he was Chief Mate.

Several other lifeboat stations had offered to carry out an exercise with the ship as she progressed up the South coast, but the approach by Rich was the first to be taken up.

It was agreed that the exercise would take place in early September when the liner next visited Dartmouth. It would involve the Dart inshore lifeboat with Haydn Glanvill, our Paramedic, on board, as well as the ship's medical team and some of the ship's crew.

The scenario involved a crewman who had fallen through a hatch and injured his neck and spine as he landed in the cramped and extremely noisy engine room of the stern-thruster some three metres below. The ILB crew came alongside the Water sports platform which is a large area at the stern of the 535 foot ship. This hinges down when the ship is at anchor. They were met by the Ship's Doctor, who briefed them and led them below to the accident scene.

As it was an exercise the lifeboat had taken a crew of four and they were all needed to vertically lower the ship's stretcher from the hatchway above and then to carefully move the casualty, under Haydn's expert tuition, onto the stretcher. The noise in the engine room was deafening and it made communication very difficult. As both of the Dart lifeboat

press officers were unavailable, Andy Kyle stepped into the breach. He takes many photos of the Dart lifeboat that appear in the papers and on the Station web site from his studio; The View from the Dartmouth Office. He had been a Press News Photographer for many years before coming to Dartmouth and was amazed by the skill and professionalism of the lifeboat crew.

The ship's crew rigged a block and tackle to lift the stretcher up from the engine room but as it was only an exercise the casualty was released before it took place. An excellent de-briefing took place between the *Wind Surf* medical team and the lifeboat crew in the ship's medical facility. The whole exercise was filmed using a helmet camera and will be used by Dr John Uhr Delia, the Dart Lifeboat Medical Adviser, to train the rest of the crew. The video has been forwarded to Paul Savage, RNLI Clinical Lead, in case it is of use for training more widely.

The hospitality offered by the ship was



Photo by Andy Kyle

Welcome aboard the *Wind Surf*

curtailed by a call from the Coastguard to attend a capsized catamaran near Froward Point. It turned out to be one of the passengers from the ship who had taken the chance to go for a sail whilst she was at anchor. In the event the rescue was carried out by the safety boat from the *Wind Surf* which had accompanied him.

All those involved, both from the ship and the RNLI, found the exercise highly instructive and hopefully the lessons learnt can be passed on to a wider audience. ●

Happy Christmas from
the Dart Lifeboat team



Cartoon by James Fenton

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

Dart Lifeboat Station

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DARTMOUTH, TQ6 9RR
Tel. 01803 839224

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



Photo by Matt Davies, RNLI LPO Salcombe

The Ocean Rowing Club boat at anchor off Prawle

the radio batteries were running low and the solar panels were not charging. It was looking bleak. They could have reached the Eddystone but could not have returned to Dartmouth before the winds made it impossible. 'Not to carry on was the worst decision of all; - worse than cutting the anchor rope,' said Rachel.

Even then the anchor had not had its last word. It jammed again and it took them another one and a half hours to get free. On the positive side they covered the distance from Wembury to Start Point with the wind and tide behind them in an amazing five hours. They kept rowing in pouring rain until they were round Start Point. By this time their lighting was down to glow sticks and their headlights. They were practically invisible and there were Spanish trawlers fishing in the area.

At 1am they anchored for the last time when they were one mile south of the Skerries. The second night was the worst of the whole trip. They were exhausted. There was a severe storm. The rudder was constantly banging on the hull behind their tiny cabin. Waves were crashing over the side of the boat and they had to constantly check their position by GPS to be sure that the anchor was not dragging. Sleep was impossible.

At about 8.30am they set off across Start Bay on their homeward leg. The wind had turned to the east and the sea was choppy. The last mile against the tide and into the river Dart was the hardest part of all. Rich Eggleton had brought out the Great Adventures RIB with their families on board and it gave them the strength to fight off the cramp and to reach the Dartmouth Yacht Club pontoon.

It took Rachel several minutes to unpeel her hands from the oars and to get her feet out of the straps. 'That was up there with the hardest things I have ever done,' said Monty.

It was also a high profile opportunity to raise money for the RNLI through sponsorship and donations. In all over £1500 was raised. ●

Future Events

2013
Fridays 6 13 & 20 Dec
Sat 14 Dec
RNLI Souvenirs,
Calendars, Diaries, Mugs
and Coasters
Dartmouth Butter Market

2014
20 - 31 Jan
SOS Education Team
visits to local schools

SOS WEEK
27 Jan to 1 Feb

SOS
Friday 31 Jan
Bag packing at
Sainsbury's

Sat 1 Feb
SOS Sink our Ship
Dartmouth Boatfloat

Wed 12 March 7.30pm
'Aircraft carriers': A talk
by Cdr. Jason Phillips
Dartmouth Yacht Club

Thursday 20 March
7.30pm
Dart Fundraising Branch
AGM
Dartmouth Yacht Club

Future events are also
listed on the front page of
the web site

A monthly update of launches and future events can be sent to you by email. If you would like to receive this please leave your name and email address on the 'Contact Us' page of the web site, found under the 'About Us' tab

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