

Rob Clements RNLI Dart Lifeboat Operations Manager

I was enrolled as the Lifeboat Operations Manager (LOM) for the proposed new Dart Lifeboat Station on 1st January 2005. Many of the current team, excited by the prospect of establishing a new lifeboat station in Dartmouth and fired with enthusiasm, volunteered. The age limit for crew then was 45yrs. As I was too old for the crew I went for the LOM's job.

I knew little or nothing of how a lifeboat station should be organized or how it should be run and it was a leap into the unknown, buoyed by nothing more than a passion for the task ahead.

The RNLI Regulations state a Lifeboat Operations Manager shall be solely responsible for the boathouse and the lifeboat. He should liaise with the Coastguard and authorise the launch of the lifeboat and ensure it is available to launch at all times with a competent and trained crew. Fortunately I have five Deputy Launch Authorities who share the burden of being on duty 24 hours a day and are able to respond to the Coastguards requests. Twice weekly training sessions and the day to day running of the station takes up much of our time. I often have to remind myself that the



Lynn and Rob Clements –
 Lifeboatman of the Year 2016

Photo by John Fenton

crew are volunteers who need to juggle family responsibilities with the demands of the RNLI.

Lifeboat Stations, by the nature of what they are, develop strong and resilient teams. They develop enduring friends both in the station and out. Brought together with one aim, to save lives at sea, we also come with a wealth of life experience and talent.

There have been occasions over the past ten years when the 'Shout' has not been straightforward. Our team share the elation and satisfaction when we have saved a life as well as the disappointment when, despite our best endeavours, a life is lost. We continuously improve by being self-critical when we could have done better, as well as noting when things have worked well.

Would my previous life experience assist me? Other than being a Dartmothian with a love of our town and river and having worked with small teams, it would seem very little!

After school, and at the age of 16yrs. I left home to join the Metropolitan Police as a cadet. At 19yrs. I was posted to my first station at Notting Hill. My education in the three and a half years on the beat at Notting Hill was somewhat fast track! Especially for a naïve Devon boy.

I had married my wife Lynn, a Kingswear girl, in 1969. Lynn trained as a radiographer at the London Hospital Whitechapel and then worked at St Giles Hospital Camberwell. In 1971, when Lynn was pregnant with our first child, we decided to move back home to Devon. I obtained a transfer to the Devon and Cornwall Police and served at Exeter, South Molton and then as a village bobby in North Molton on Exmoor. After 11yrs I moved to Barnstaple Police Station and then spent 3yrs. in plain clothes as Coroners Officer for North and West Devon and also as Licensing Officer for the North Devon area. In my spare time I

Continued on page 2

Selected launches since August 2016

No.	Date	Assisted	Location / Search area.	Description
265	19/08/16 Friday 11.11am	2 adults	Off Warfleet Creek River Dart	Call to three kayakers in the water Four kayakers had hired two double kayaks and made their way to the mouth of the river, accompanied by an instructor in a single kayak. They decided in view of the heavy swell and adverse tide to turn back at Warfleet. One kayak capsized and filled with water. The instructor also capsized as he tried to tow the vessel. The three were in the water for approximately 10 minutes and the alarm was sent to the Coastguard by a passing yacht. A Harbour Authority boat with a cuddy was first on the scene and took the two casualties on board. They were extremely cold and when the inshore lifeboat arrived a lifeboat crewman with first aid equipment was put on board. The instructor self-righted and the second kayak did not become a casualty. The casualties were landed at the low water landing and taken to the lifeboat station to warm up and were given dry clothing.
267	27/08/16 Saturday 7.28pm 	4 adults	Old Mill Creek River Dart	Hen Party marooned on the mud. A hire boat with four young ladies on board went aground on the mud two hours after High Water. The RNLI Dart inshore lifeboat was tasked along with Coastguard and the Fire Brigade from Dartmouth and their mud rescue team from Teignmouth. The inshore lifeboat took two inflated rescue mats out to the mud and returned for the Fire Brigade and Coastguard teams. The hire boat was some 35m from the nearest water. The team collected two of the casualties, took them to the lifeboat who then returned them to the shore. The process was repeated for the second two casualties and the boat was left at anchor on the mud. They were taken to the lifeboat station for hot drinks and returned to their families.
270	24/09/16 Saturday 9.50pm 	3 adults	Checkstone buoy Dart estuary	Disabled 36ft yacht brought into harbour. The yacht Phoebe, on passage from Plymouth to Guernsey, had a disabled engine due to a rope round the propeller. All three of the crew were sea sick. They decided to seek shelter in Dartmouth and requested help to enter the harbour and berth. It was a difficult operation in the 38 knot Southerly wind, a 6ft swell and poor visibility due to rain squalls. She was berthed immediately ahead of a 40ft yacht with a broken boom that had been brought in earlier by the RNLI Tamar ALB from our flank station at Salcombe

A full account of all 275 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. Information can also be found on our Facebook page.

Continued from page 1

studied for an Open University degree and graduated with a BA. Lynn, not to be outdone, then graduated with a BA Hons.

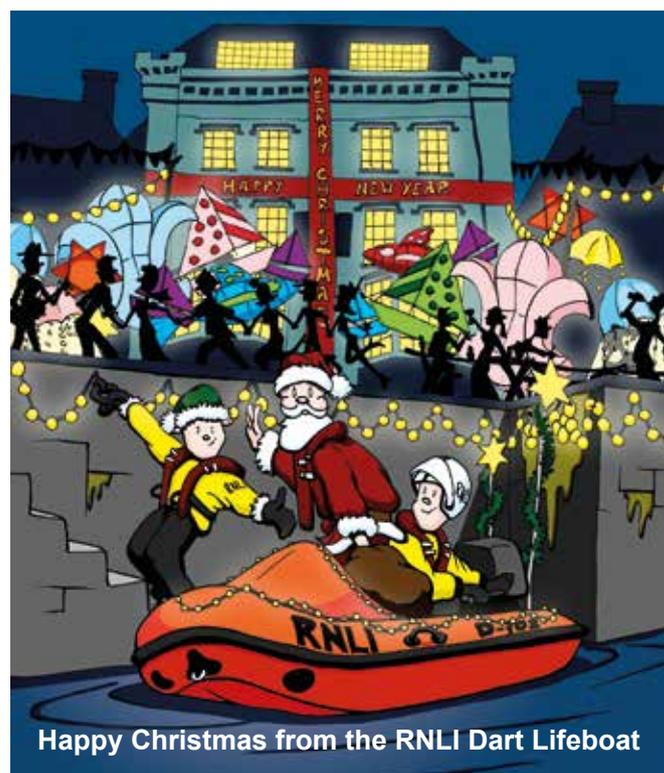
I gained promotion to Sergeant in 1986 and was posted to Axminster and later Seaton Police station, East Devon. I served at Exmouth Police Station for my last three years police service as Crime Reduction Sergeant which has parallels with the current aim of the RNLI to reduce deaths by drowning on the coast by 50%. Our purpose was to develop Crime Reduction plans for the East Devon area.

Next came retirement (at last!) and a move home to Dartmouth. For 8yrs. I worked as a seasonal River officer for the Harbour. Then the RNLI came into our lives, leaving little time to spare for enjoying our own boat.

I will shortly stand down as LOM at Dart Lifeboat Station confident that the next incumbent will inherit a team to be proud of; full of ability, courage and enthusiasm to save lives at sea.

So what is needed to become an RNLI LOM?

Some knowledge of the sea and your area is important and also to have a very supportive WOLOM (wife of LOM).



Cartoon by James Fenton

Where do we go from here?

From 1 January 2017 the way that charities contact the public will have changed. As a result it is almost certain that this magazine will no longer appear in printed form. Hopefully it will still appear as a pdf available, as it is at present, as a link on the station web site. It will also be published on the station Facebook page.

The other source of information on the activities of the lifeboat crew along with news from the local fundraising team and the RNLI Dartmouth Visitor Centre will be via the occasional emails sent out to those who have 'Opted in' to having them.

We can only tell you if a new Issue of Dart D'Tales has been published and/or send you the email updates if you have opted in to letting us use your email.

ON A NATIONAL LEVEL.

The RNLI is asking its members to 'Opt in' to receiving future communications by phone, post or email from the charity. You can choose all or some of these methods or 'Opt out' completely. You can 'Opt in' by phoning the RNLI Customer Care Team on 0300 300 9918 or emailing optin@rnli.org.uk.

ON A LOCAL LEVEL.

In future the RNLI Dart team will be keeping you up to date with an email, sent out regularly, or you can follow events on our local RNLI station web site. www.dartlifeboat.org.uk

There are two ways to "Opt in" to receiving news from the local RNLI Dart team. (Please note that this is quite separate from and not linked to your giving permission to hear from the RNLI centrally.)

1. You can fill in a form at the Dartmouth RNLI Visitor Centre and leave it there. The Centre will be open daily except for 24 and 25 December. It will also be closed throughout January and February.

2. You can fill in an 'Opt in' form by choosing the 'Contact us' link on the front page of the www.dartlifeboat.org.uk website.

We need your name. Your address if you are happy to be contacted by post. Your telephone numbers if you are happy to be contacted by phone and your email if you are happy to be contacted by email.

Even if you have already given your permission in the past for us to hold your data on our encrypted database but not 'Opted in' you will need to repeat the process so that we can be sure that we comply with all your wishes.

John Fenton
RNLI Dart Lifeboat Press Officer.

Privacy notice

Your contact details and preferences will be stored locally. We will always store them securely. We'll use them to provide the service you have requested and communicate with you in the way(s) that you have agreed to. Your data may also be used for analysis purposes, to help us provide the best service possible. We will only allow your information to be used by suppliers working on our behalf and will only share your information if required to do so by law. For full details see the Privacy Policy at www.RNLI.org/privacypolicy or contact Supporter Care on 0300 300 9918 or 1800 360 258 (RoI).



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Index of Dart D'Tales Spring06 to December16

		Issue/Page Number		Issue/Page Number
A				
All-weather Lifeboat Centre Poole		May16/4&5		
Appeal	Funding the new lifeboat and station	Dec07/1		
	The Appeal moves towards its target	May08/3		
	The setup Appeal is reached	Aug08/2		
Awards	Albert Medal Sam Popplestone 1878	Dec15/7		
	RNLI Bronze Badges	Aug12/4		
	RNLI Excellence in Volunteering Awards	Nov16/7		
	Lifeboatman of the Year Mark Strudwick	Dec15/4		
	Lifeboatman of the Year Rob Clements	Nov16/1		
C				
Call-out system modernisation programme		Aug16/4		
Casualty care				
	Big sick – Little sick	Nov13/3		
	Roll up stretcher	May13/6		
Coast Review				
	The 1st Review establishing the station	Aut06/2		
	Coast Review 2011	Apr11/4	Aug11/1	
Community Lifesaving (see also Respect the water)				
	Coastal safety	Aug14/4&5		
	Serious Fun DVD	Apr09/1		
Contacts		Every issue/4or8		
D				
Dogs rescued				
	A spaniel on Christmas day	Dec08/1		
	Tom the German Pointer	Aug13/1		
F				
Facebook Dart Facebook page set up	May12/7	Nov16/8		
Flood Rescue	Aug10/4	Aug15/1&3		
Friends of Dart lifeboat	Apr11/6	May15/5		
Fundraising				
	Angling competition	Dec15/5		
	Blackness Marine	Aug12/7	Aug13/7	
	PALM fm's Charity of the Year	May12/2		
	RNLI Fete	Nov14/7		
	Sainsbury's local Charity of the Year	Aug13/1	Aug15/8	
	South Division SOS team of the Year	Apr09/1		
	SOS triumph	May10/1		
	SOS events in pictures	May12/8		
	Souvenirs	Aug13/8		
	The Worshipful Company of Paviers	Nov16/7		
	Third party Events	May08/4		
	Dartmouth YBS make Dart Charity of the Year	Aug12/3		
Fundraising by the crew				
	24 hour non-stop sailing race	Aug09/3		
	Canoe racing at Tuckenhay	Aug09/2		
	Grace Darling Anniversary Row	Nov13/1&4		
	Great London River Race	Dec11/1&4		
	Rowathon	Apr11/1		
	Source to the sea challenge	Dec10/1		
	Triathlon	Aug14/6&7		
	Yukon 1,000 Race	Nov16/6		
G				
Great London River Race.	See under Ryder			
H				
Helicopters				
	Bristow Coastguard helicopters		Nov14/1&3	
Historical (see also Vintage lifeboats)				
	Dartmouth lifeboat 1878 – 1896		Dec10/3	
	Early history of Dartmouth lifeboat station		Dec10/3	
	Naming Ceremony of D702		Aug08/1&4	
	Searching for a lifeboat station		Aut06/1	
	Setting up the station. The early days		Dec07/4	
	Setting up the Dart lifeboat		Dec12/1	
	Why we need a lifeboat in Dartmouth		Aut06/1	
I				
Inshore Lifeboat Centre East Cowes				Aug15/4&5
L				
Launches (in chronological order)				
	Five months, Five shouts		May08/1	
	Recent launch highlights		Every issue/2	
	Christmas Day		Dec08/1	
	Fifty launches in two years		Dec09/1	
	Alerts on your mobile		May10/2	
	Review of the year 2010		Aug10/1	
	Analysis of first 100 launches		Apr11/2	
	Analysis of the first four and a half years		May12/1	
	Launches. Background information		May15/3	
	Launch crew Monty Halls' experience		Aug12/3	
	Lifeboat crew Initial setting up		Dec07/4	
Lifeboat stations				
	Building lifeboat stations for the future		Dec10/4&5	
	Dartmouth		Dec10/3	
Lifeboats				
	D class Bob Savage		Dec07/3	
	E class lifeboats on the Thames		Aug12/5	
	Severn class ALB Penlee		Nov14/6	
See also Vintage lifeboats				
Lifeguards				
	1st for RNLI lifeguards on Blackpool Sands		Spr06/2	
	Hit the Surf		Dec15/5	
	Training with lifeguards		Aug09/1	
Lifejackets				
	Fundraising for new design RNLI lifejackets		Dec11/8	
	Lifejacket Clinic	Aug09/4	Apr11/5	May15/4
	Lifejacket storage lockers			Aug13/5
Lifeboat Operations Manager				
	Duties of a LOM		Dec07/2	
	Rob Clements LOM	Aug08/2		Nov16/1
N				
Naming Ceremony D702 (see Historical)				
National Coastwatch Froward Point		Dec07/2		Dec11/7

	Issue/Page Number	
O		
Opting in	Aug16/6	Nov16/3
P		
Patrons of the Dart lifeboat		
David Dimpleby		May08/1
Mike Felton	Aug08/1&4	Nov14/4
People Paul Boissier		Aug16/3
Jim Brent	Dec11/1&4	May14/4
Margaret Brockway		Apr09/2
Don Campbell DLA		Aug10/3
Rachel Cole		Nov13/1&4
Richard Eggleton		Aug12/5
Jo and Harry Escott		Dec11/6
Ed Featherstone		Nov16
Jerry Gilby		Dec08/1
Haydn Glanvill Paramedic		Aug08/4
Janet Hall ALPO		Aug10/1
Monty Halls	Aug12/1	Nov13/1&4
Lizzie Helyer		May15/2
Tony Hoile DLA		Apr09/4
Charles Hunter-Pease		May14/1
Pete Lucas		Apr11/7
Tracey Lucas	May14/4	Nov16/7
Jake Moores		Aug14/1
Gordon Pepperell		Dec12/4
Chris Rampling	Dec09/1	May13/7
Tony Rendle	May14/5	Nov14/6
Chris Tracey		Aug16/4
Dr John Uhr-Delia LMA		Spr06/2
Chris Wallace		Dec12/3
John Yunnie Sea Safety Officer		Aug11/3
Poetry Kevin Pyne For the new lifeboat crew		Aug08/3
Kevin Pyne Picture of a modern lifeboat		May10/4
Press Officer.		
See Janet Hall & Tony Rendle, Assistant LPOs,		
under People		

R		
Respect the Water		Aug15/7
Review of the Year		Aug10/1

S		
Sea Safety		
Personal Locator Beacons for the crew		May14/5
John Yunnie Sea Safety Officer		Aug11/3
See also under Lifejackets		
Storm Force	May12/4	May16/6 Aug16/1&3
Supacat Shannon class Launch & Recovery vehicle		May13/4&5

The generosity of our advertisers has enabled us to produce this edition at reduced cost to the RNLI. Please support them. Additional costs have been met by donations from the Friends of the Dart lifeboat.

	Issue/Page Number	
T		
Trafalgar Night Dinner		Dec08/4
Train 1 Save many		Dec08/1
Training	Aug10/1	Dec10/6
Training & CoBT		Dec08/2
Training Courses		
Casualty Care course		Aug13/3
Deputy Launch Authority course at Lifeboat College		Dec10/7
Helm's course at Lifeboat College		May08/2
Lifeboat Press Officer's course		Aug13/4
Training for Flood Rescue		Aug13/6
Training with Lifeguards		Aug09/1
Training with Wind Surf Cruise Liner		Nov13/3
Travel		
Sail round the World. Pete Callis		Dec11/3
Sail to the Azores. Dennis Courtney		May12/3
Trek to the South Pole. Dr. Lynne Tracey		May13/1
V		
Vintage lifeboats		
<i>The Duke of Cornwall</i>	Apr11/7	Dec15/7
<i>The Henry Finlay</i>		Aug14/3
<i>The Ryder Ex Looe</i> lifeboat		Aug11/1&4
Great London River Race		Dec11/1&4
Visitor Centre		
Update prior to opening		Nov14/5
The concept		May15/1&8
Shop opening		Aug15/6
The Official Opening		May16/1&3
Design and layout		Dec15/1&8
W		
Web site		
Birth announcement		Apr11/3
Ralph Seeley. Web Designer		April11/4
Y		
Youth Education Conference		May16/6

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The Yukon 1,000 The toughest race in paddlesports.

Yorkie Lomas, a volunteer on the RNLI Dart lifeboat crew, and Phil Langman, a volunteer on the Dartmouth Coastguard search and rescue team, had previously rowed across the Atlantic in 2004 from Tenerife to Barbados with Shaun Barker and Jason Hart, taking 36 days 58 minutes, so they were looking for something a bit more challenging!

The Yukon 1,000 mile Canoe and Kayak race is the longest in the world and takes the competitors through some of the most deserted land on the continent. There are no stages or check points; all the competitors are alone and self-sufficient.

They started with nine other crews on 18 July 2016 from Whitehorse, Canada and finished 1,000 miles downriver at a remote Alaska Pipeline highway crossing near Fairbanks, Alaska. They were paddling an 18ft. GRP two man Canadian canoe and only occasionally saw any of the other competitors. They carried a satellite radio which sent back their gps position. The organisers would use this to send a rescue helicopter if they were

in trouble and monitored their six hour compulsory nightly stops from 11pm to 5am. Having landed on a suitable beach each night they pitched their tent and cooked a meal. That only gave them a couple of hours sleep before they were up at 3am preparing for the next day's launch. There was plenty of wildlife to be seen in the remote wilderness. On the first night they shared their campsite with a wolverine and as they paddled down saw bears and moose on the banks. Sea Eagles fishing on the river were common.

Asked about the weather, Yorkie said, "Too hot, too cold, too wet and Mozzies everywhere." In places the river was 20Km wide whilst in others it narrowed down to rapids with challenging turbulence to negotiate. There were no maps of the ever-changing channels and a route had to be chosen with care to avoid having to paddle back against the current. Phil described the Yukon as a big, exposed, wild river. "When the wind blows the waves can be over a metre high." he said.

The race instructions ended "When



Photo by Phil Langman

Yorkie on the Yukon

you finish you phone in your time, pat yourselves on the back and go home. There's no big party."

Yorkie and Phil completed the race in eight days 3 hours and were the fourth tandem canoe team to finish. The race is about physical and mental endurance as well as personal triumph. The victory is in the sense of achievement. They have raised £1,296 for the Children's Hospice South West on their justgiving.com/fundraising/Yucon1000 page so far and it is still open for donations, large and small.

(Photographs from the race can be found on www.dartlifeboat.org.uk under the Photos tab in the Yukon 1000 album.)





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Excellence in Volunteering

I have been privileged to present Tracey Lucas and Ed Featherstone RNLI Excellence in Volunteering awards. I presented Tracey with her award on the Kingswear Castle prior to the river cruise on 10 September 2016. Ed Featherstone was presented with his award on 19 September 2016 at the RNLI Dartmouth Visitor Centre.

J K Moores OBE DL FRSA
Chairman RNLI Dart Lifeboat Management Team.



Photo by Riki Barmister

Photo by John Fenton

Ed is a worthy recipient of the award for all his efforts as Chair of the RNLI Dart fundraising committee. His dedication, commitment and energy for over three years have been instrumental in taking the Branch forward. Everybody at Dart RNLI owes him a debt of gratitude for all that he has achieved in making it one of the most effective in the country. His idea to have a Visitors Centre away from the boathouse, the first in the Country, has transformed Dart RNLI.

Tracey is extremely deserving of this prestigious award for all her work in setting up and running the Dartmouth Visitors Centre, taking it from its first inception to one of the premier Centres in less than a year. She has worked tirelessly, advising on layout, approving plans and organising volunteers, as well as managing the stock. In addition she has taken on the role of joint Chair of the Fundraising Committee, along with Paul Manley, and ensured the continued success of the branch.

Dartmouth visit by the Court of the Worshipful Company of Pavors

Twenty one of the thirty strong Board of the Worshipful Company of Pavors, one of the City of London livery companies, came to Dartmouth this year to enjoy the annual trip arranged by the Master. They spent a long weekend at the Dart Marina Hotel with their partners. As well as having the opportunity to discuss company matters in a less formal atmosphere, they were able to visit several local attractions. They travelled to Paignton by steam train, visited Greenway House and gardens before going to Sharpham Vineyard to sample the cheeses and wines and returning to Dartmouth by boat, having eaten at the Anchorstone. On Saturday they enjoyed a tour of Britannia Royal Naval College

before having a formal dinner there. Sunday morning was filled with a visit to the Dartmouth Yacht Club and an opportunity to go on board Peter Lucas's RNLI Barnet class lifeboat, the Duke of Cornwall, which was moored alongside the Dartmouth Yacht Club pontoon. They were joined at the DYC by the crew of the RNLI Dart inshore lifeboat and Rob Clements, the Lifeboat Operations Manager, gave a brief talk outlining the activities of the D class lifeboat locally.

The crew then gave a demonstration of the capabilities of the boat, including a 'man overboard' exercise.

The Worshipful Company of Pavors will have supported the RNLI twice in



Photo by John Fenton

Visiting lifeboats on the Dart

the last five years; firstly by making a substantial donation to the RNLI lifeboats based on the Thames and later this year through a further donation to the RNLI Dart Branch.

Information for this article was given by Ian Lumsden, Master of the Worshipful Company of Pavors.

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

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.

Future Events

December

RNLI Visitor Centre remains open except 24 and 25 Dec

January & February.

RNLI Visitor Centre will be closed Tuesday 28 Feb.

RNLI Quiz at the Dartmouth Arms Starts 8pm. Teams of 4; £2.50pp

First come first served on the night Raffle

Saturday 20 April

'Sink our Ship'

1pm

Dart Lifeboat crew in the Boatfloat.

Saturday 15 July

BRNC Volunteer Band Concert 7.30pm at St Saviours Church, Dartmouth

Thursday 27 July

RNLI Fete in Royal Avenue Gardens 10am to 4pm

Friday 4 Aug

RNLI Flag day

Proposed for September

Picnic afloat on the Kingswear Castle Paddle Steamer

Further information on all these future events and reports of past events can be found on the Events section of the station web site.

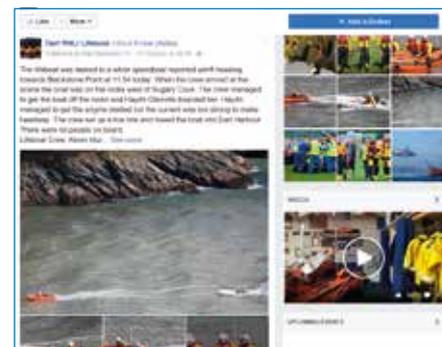
www.facebook.com/dartrnllifeboat

The RNLI Dart lifeboat has run the above Facebook page since April 2012 and the followers have grown steadily over the years. It is now written by Riki Bannister, our Assistant Lifeboat Press Officer. Her greatest achievement was when the site registered 118,000 hits during the coverage of the rescue of the French trawler crew from their capsizing boat in Dartmouth harbour on 10 March 2016.

We use the Dart station website to cover the factual story of a launch and include a site map with photos and video if they have been taken. Facebook enhances that by also covering the continuing story and photos of the event, such as during the subsequent salvage and re-righting of the trawler.

Several local newspapers "like" us on their online services and in turn go on to share our news with a far wider audience. The story of the rescue of the hen party which went aground on the mud at the entrance to Old Mill Creek went global and was seen in New Zealand, China, India and the Emirates. "The View", the Appeal Group staff newsletter and one of our regular advertisers, described the incident as "worthy of the opening credits of an episode of Casualty."

As yet we have no home on our website to describe the activities of our



Screenshot of Dart RNLI Facebook page

crew, such as training with our flank stations or with the local Coastguard team or the RNLI lifeguards. Such events can be fully covered however on our Facebook page with photos and video.

For the first time this issue of Dart D'Tales will appear on our Facebook page, as well as in a pdf viewable on the station web site. Hopefully this will enable us to reach an even wider audience who will be interested to hear more about the activities of our volunteer teams.

If you are not registered with Facebook you can see the RNLI Dart Facebook page on the address above. To interact with the page or to see it in an unobstructed way however you will need to become a member of Facebook.