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Lifeboats

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From the Chairman

Well, what a year this is turning out to be! After the last edition of Shout! was issued, 2019, which ended up as our busiest year ever in terms of call outs, continued in other respects pretty much as normal. But then Covid-19 struck and that altered life for all of us. Lockdown! This obviously had a major effect for the crew who suddenly had to develop a totally new way of working. As you would expect they coped with this admirably and you can read more about what they had to do and how they managed in Chris Harvey's article.

On a personal note I felt lucky to have chosen to dry my boat out and scrub and antifoul it on the very day that lockdown was announced for the following day!

You might have expected 2020 to be very quiet in terms of call outs with virtually no visiting boats in our waters. But surprisingly, while unlike last year, it is proving to be above average for call outs.

A casualty of lockdown was our Annual General Meeting scheduled for April which obviously had to be postponed. We were, however, able to hold a low key AGM in August.

We are so fortunate in Guernsey to have such dedicated and competent volunteers making up the crew of our two lifeboats. They all deserve our thanks and support for giving up their time so readily for the benefit of those, whether on land or sea, who need their services.

Jim Le Pelley



Lifeboat Operations Manager's Report

This time last year I wrote that 2019 was proving to be an extraordinary year, and so it continued. By the end of 2019 we had dealt with 42 call outs, our busiest year on record. Taking into account the fact that we had two lifeboats available for the second half of 2019, that sometimes both launched for the same shout, we launched 46 times. To put this into context, in 2018 we had 21 call outs and the 10 year rolling average is 22.3. So, callouts in 2019 doubled! We also finished the year with a total of 81 afloat training exercises, also double the usual amount, in order to get the crew trained up on the Inshore Lifeboat. It is humbling to think that all of this has been achieved by a crew of 20 and demonstrates their absolute dedication, commitment and hard work.

Not to be outdone, 2020 has proven itself to also be extraordinary for entirely different reasons. As the COVID-19 pandemic threatened our island early in the year, the station had to find a new way of working to ensure our ability to crew the boat was never compromised. Exercising, gathering in the station and crew meetings were all stopped and minimum crew were carried on shouts.

This was done in the hope that if one crew member was found to have been infected, it would not be passed throughout the whole crew. Precautions were also taken to make it possible to transport COVID-19 casualties without endangering the crew. Thankfully, one of the benefits of lockdown meant that there were also very few shouts. Inevitably, as lockdown eased shouts increased again, and as Guernsey became COVID-19 free, it became possible to remove restrictions

around the crew. Restrictions around exercising afloat remained until recently whilst the RNLI protected its UK supply chain and support function. As a result, we have only just been able to progress with training a new cox and navigators.

Up to the end of September 2020, we have had 29 call outs. Whilst lower than last year, this is still well above average despite very few callouts during lockdown. In total we launched 39 times; 24 for the All Weather Lifeboat and 15 for the Inshore Lifeboat.

The difference between call outs and launches demonstrates that for 10 call outs, we launched both boats. We are just over halfway through our two year trial with the Inshore Lifeboat and these figures show just what a valuable addition she is proving to be. As well as being a very capable, rapid response boat in her own right, we also have more options where both boats can work together more efficiently or support each other. For example, a search of the cliffs will involve the All Weather Lifeboat searching further out, with a better view from her higher Upper Steering Position, with the Inshore Lifeboat searching very close in amongst the rocks and gullies. In this way,



The Inshore Lifeboat out on call.



The Inshore Lifeboat collecting a paramedic off the beach.

the cliffs and coast can be searched very thoroughly. The Inshore Lifeboat is then able to collect the casualty and transfer them to the All Weather Lifeboat for medical treatment and a more comfortable ride back. We have also used the Inshore Lifeboat to collect a paramedic off the beach to transfer him to a casualty on the All Weather Lifeboat. The possibilities and benefits are as varied as the rescues themselves.

Finally, at this difficult time, it is worth noting that not all of our call outs are for people in distress on their boats. Within the above figures for 2020, 8 of our 29 call outs related to people in our community who were struggling with their mental health. This is a huge increase compared to prior years and something we can all play a part in reducing.

Chris Harvey

Return of Service

Call outs for the lifeboats are called "Shouts". The history of all Shouts is recorded on the official St Peter Port Lifeboat website under the heading "Return of Service".

Thanks to the hard work of Capt. Peter Gill, the 1,500 Shouts going back to 1874 are recorded and updated every time there is a call out. Colin Le Conte, our webmaster, then updates the website so anyone interested can see the information. This makes a fascinating historic record of the work of the Guernsey Lifeboat.

www.rnli.org/gg/return-of-service



The Inshore Lifeboat responding to a Shout.

Guernsey Lifeboat Guild Fundraising Report



Since the last newsletter, we have experienced some excellent fundraising towards the end of 2019, with the Fish Supper Quiz, the Wear a Guernsey event, the Charities Christmas Fayre, the annual lunch and excellent Christmas card and calendar sales. I hope you saw the Lifeboat tree in the Town Church, which Jenny Ridley decorated as part of the Christmas Tree Festival.

2020 started with planning for the year's fundraising. Unfortunately, planning was as far as we got because Covid-19 arrived and the RNLI put a blanket ban on fundraising and closed all shops. When things eased up in Guernsey, we still had to wait for permission from the RNLI to start any activity again. It took them a little time to accept that Guernsey was in a different situation from the UK and Ireland, but eventually we were able to attend the Lions event in place of the Donkey Derby and the rearranged Rocquaine Regatta. We held a very successful Fish Supper Quiz in September, organised by Naomi Corbet.

When the shop in St Sampson was finally

allowed to open, we discovered damp. At the time of writing this has not been satisfactorily remedied. The shop has been reopened, however, and the Christmas cards, calendars etc. are in stock, so do please visit. It is open between 10.00am and midday on Wednesdays to Saturdays. The footfall at the shop is generally very poor, with the ladies seeing no customers in two hours. We desperately need premises with a much higher footfall.

Our friends in Sark continue to be great fundraisers and we thank the Adams family for all their hard work. A very sad occasion was the funeral of Alfie Adams in October 2019, and we extend our sympathy to all the family.

I would like to thank all the Committee: Jenny Ridley, Tony Pattimore, Jo May, Lisa Duggan, Naomi Corbet, Jenny Tasker, Rod Swanson and Val Kilby for all their support over the past year. David and Kathy Le Cras have retired after many years as box secretaries and we thank them and Tony and Naomi who have taken over all the boxes.

We thank Nigel Moll for his support for the Committee and last, but very much not least, we thank Alf Solway for his continued efforts to raise very large sums for the RNLI.

We have recently held a couple of Flag days, one at the Co-op in St Martin's on 17th October and another one at Forest Stores on 24th October. In November, please take part in the **Wear a Guernsey Day** on the 19th - more details will be released nearer the time. Please either visit or help us on our stall at the **Charities Christmas Fayre** at Beau Sejour on 22nd November and come to the **Annual Lunch** at Les Rocquettes on Sunday 29th. See separate sheet for more details.

Our thanks go out to everyone who supports us; please do feel free to join the Committee or offer to help at an event. We are always looking for new ideas for fundraising for Guernsey's two lifeboats. The crew have been very busy over the past year and their dedication and bravery are second to none.

Celia Allen



The RNLI stand at a local event, popular with all ages.



The RNLI stand, showcasing some of the goodies on offer.



A variety of goodies in the RNLI shop.

All Weather Lifeboat (ALB)

Our ALB is the "Spirit of Guernsey", a Severn type lifeboat, and has been on station at St Peter Port since 1997. At 17.3m long the Severn is the largest in the RNLI fleet.

These amazing craft are incredibly robust. After a capsize they will self-right and are capable of floating even when two of their five watertight compartments are flooded.

She would normally sail with a crew of between 5 and 10, and is able to self-right with up to 47 people on board.

Built with a major ferry disaster in mind, she is able to carry 185 people!

Powered by two 1,600 HP MTU engines she can travel at about 25 knots.



The All Weather Lifeboat.

The engines use about 500 litres of diesel an hour, and with her 5,500 litre fuel tank she has a range of 250 NM.

The ALB also carries an inflatable boat, called the Y class, which is powered by an outboard and is deployed by an onboard crane.

Spirit of Guernsey is due for an internal upgrade and refit in the next year or two, after which she will be good for another 25 years.

Carl Bisson

Inshore Lifeboat (ILB)

Guernsey has an ILB on trial for 2 years. The first boat was the Elizabeth and Margaret Milligan (B889) and this was replaced by the John and Louisa Fisher (B870) earlier this year. Both are B class lifeboats - the Atlantic 85 which is nearly 8.5m long.

Although an amazing sea boat, the RNLI insist on a maximum age limit of 55 to crew the boat as the ride in rough conditions can be physically demanding. She can go to sea with a minimum of 3 crew members and a maximum of 4. With no wheelhouse on the ILB, the crew are exposed to the elements at all times and rely on their protective kit to keep them safe and warm.



The Inshore Lifeboat in amongst the caves. Photo by St John Emergency Ambulance Service.

The ILB has two 115hp 4 stroke petrol engines and weighs 1.8 tonnes. These are fed by two 105 litre fuel tanks and at full speed she uses 40 litres of petrol an hour. The ILB is capable of 35 knots (almost 40mph) in a Force 6 wind and can go out in even rougher conditions. She has an inflatable bag, fed by two gas canisters, which can be inflated in the event of the boat turning over in rough weather. When inflated, the ILB will right itself and the crew can go through a procedure to either carry on with their task, or get back home safely.

Used as a quick response asset for a range of situations, the ILB carries a large amount of specialist equipment, including a medical kit and oxygen, a specially designed fold up stretcher, a portable salvage pump to bail out a boat taking on water, searchlights, infrared sights and thermal imaging cameras for searching at night and 80m of towline. The ILB is capable of towing quite large boats and the crew often train towing the Spirit of Guernsey weighing 42 tonnes.

With its fast response and ability to get close inshore, the ILB has already been a valuable asset for rescues around the coast of Guernsey.

Stu Carre

Friends of St Peter Port Lifeboat Lottery

The "100 Club" has reached over 100 members with one prize of £100 and two prizes of £50 awarded every month.

If you are a keen boater and would like to support the local lifeboats, please visit our website or contact Ali at alison.marquis@gov.gg and complete a form.

The form can be found at rnli.org.gg under the section "Friends of St Peter Port Lifeboat" and the leaflet and rules can be found at the bottom of the page.



Future events:

1. Thursday, 19th November, Wear a Guernsey Day.
2. Sunday, 22nd November, Charities Christmas Fayre at Beau Sejour.
3. Sunday 29th November, Annual Lunch at Les Rocquettes, 12.00pm for 12.30pm. £25 per person. Apply to: Mrs Jenny Ridley, 4 Vue de Mer, La Rue de La Vallee, Torteval, GY8 0PP or call 265708.

Thank you again for all your support and we look forward to seeing you at this event.



RNLI CHRISTMAS CARDS

Please support us by visiting the Clock Tower Shop for Christmas Cards and other gift ideas.

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Chairman: Mr Stuart Popham

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We hope you enjoy reading this annual newsletter. If you do not wish to receive newsletters or important information from the St Peter Port Lifeboat Station in future, please e-mail the Lifeboat Administration Officer alison.marquis@gov.gg or call on 720229.

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