

All we ask is that people take care on the water

The services we carried out in May were typical of calls to this station. One call was to a person suspected missing overboard from a commercial ship outbound from Felixstowe. He was later found safe on board. At the other extreme was a depressed youth under the influence of alcohol, reported missing on the shoreline.

Referring to children and young people, one service in May was to an inflatable dinghy drifting out to sea with three youngsters on board. Had it not been for the fast response of the Harwich inshore lifeboat, this incident could have had very serious consequences. There was an offshore wind blowing Force 5/6 and one of the children was particularly distressed.

A number of call outs were to broken down boats and this also raises concern. It does appear that people are putting to sea without checking their boat is ready, particularly if it has sat unused during the winter. Like a car, if a boat is not used for many months, and is left outside in all weathers then it needs a good check over before being taken to sea – where it is far away from the convenience of the AA or RAC!

The month of June has been a bit more normal but now we brace ourselves for the school summer holidays and the prediction that more people will be heading for the coast this summer. Our motto at the Harwich Lifeboat Station is 'Ready for Every Challenge'. May did provide a challenge but we are always ready for whatever we are called to do.

Workhorses of the RNLI fleet

Relief boats are vital if the RNLI is to maintain 24/7 cover at every station. Whenever a lifeboat needs repair or has to be withdrawn for servicing and refit, a relief boat has to be called in. As the Harwich crew are trained for our Severn class boat it means the relief boat also has to be a Severn. Since the last newsletter the Albert Brown has been away for a refit which can only be done when the boat is lifted out of the water, to change propellers and undertake any specialist repairs to the hull or machinery. The relief boat we had was 17-02, The Will. Looking at its logbook we can see how well used a relief boat can be.

In the past 12 months The Will has been:

- Relief boat at Weymouth;
- Returned to Poole HQ on standby;
- Relief boat at Torbay;
- Relief boat at Falmouth;
- Brief duties at Fishguard and Donaghadee;
- Return via Newlyn to Poole relief fleet;
- Return to Torbay as relief boat;
- Exhibited at Southampton Boat Show;
- Return to Poole for HQ Open Day;
- Relief duties at Yarmouth, IOW;
- St Peters Port (Channel Is) and Dover;
- Maintenance at Poole;
- Picked up by Harwich crew and stopped at Newhaven en route to Harwich.

These relief boats are amongst the hardest working in the RNLI fleet.

Captain Rod Shaw, Lifeboat Operations Manager



WERE YOU WATCHING ON THE BOX? When Virgin 1 filmed a TV series about the people who work in the dangerous waters of the North Sea they called on the Harwich lifeboat – one of the busiest on the East Coast. For the series *Trawlers, Rigs and Rescues*, the film crew followed the boat crew for several weeks. The biggest event they covered was a 'medevac' training exercise involving the Air Sea Rescue helicopter R125 and Essex Police attending an incident aboard the sailing barge *Victor*. This was the largest exercise of its type the Harwich lifeboat had been involved in. Pictures show scenes aboard the *Victor* with crew, observers and volunteer casualties, and both lifeboats powering down the Stour.

