



Lifeboats

December 2017/Issue 17

FOREVER BY THE SEA

TRIBUTE FUNDS NEWSLETTER



As Christmas approaches, it's natural for thoughts to turn to lost loved ones, whose absence can be felt especially keenly. In this newsletter, we have the honour of sharing some of those special memories of people who adored the ocean – told to us lovingly by those who miss them most.

Each of these tales stems from a Forever by the Sea Tribute Fund, set up to honour the memory of a loved one. We're incredibly humbled that their efforts – and yours – continue to inspire and help our volunteers in saving lives on the water. For everything you do, thank you.

While many people might spend December wishing for a white Christmas, our crews know all too well that winter can make for some of the most challenging conditions at sea.

Launching into icy darkness they'll aim to honour your donations, and your loved ones, in the best possible way: by saving lives at sea, this Christmas and beyond.

INSIDE:

YOUR FUNDS IN ACTION

YOUR STORIES

LOVED ONES REMEMBERED

'HE NEVER NEEDED THE LIFEBOAT, BUT HE WAS ALWAYS GLAD IT WAS THERE'

My daddy, Robert, was born in 1917, just before the final year of the First World War, in Portavogie, Co Down. He started as a teenage fisherman in 1932, sailing first on fishing boat the *Essie* with his father and family, then on the *Essie Orr* throughout the war.

The boat often fished in the Solway Firth and berthed in Maryport, Cumbria, where he met the love of his life, Amy. As she was only 20, Amy's parents asked their vicar to write to daddy's minister in Northern Ireland to determine his character. The news was good and they married in April 1942 in Maryport. They had over 60 happy years together until Amy, my mum, died in 2003.

The *Essie Orr* was pale blue and I often watched her head into harbour from the window of our home. It was lovely knowing that soon daddy would be walking up the hill from the quay. He was always so happy to see us!

Daddy once told me of the only occasion when he thought the boat was in danger. The crew set sail in a 'fair air of wind' from Maryport to Portavogie, but as they were half way across, it rose to gale force. His father always hummed or sang while at the wheel but, on that occasion, he was silent. So were



the crew. Daddy knew they were in peril. And there was no radio in those days! Thankfully, they eventually reached Ballyhalbert Bay near Portavogie, and coasted home.

Daddy always had links with the sea. So when the boat was sold, he became the local fish auctioneer, finally retiring aged 70. He never needed the lifeboat in all the years he sailed, but he was always glad it was there. It therefore seemed fitting to set up a tribute fund with the RNLI in his memory.

Daddy was a wonderful man who loved books, poetry and wildlife. He was also an elder in the local Presbyterian Church, and helped found the local fishermen's choir, singing in it until his death in February 2009 aged 91. He loved a joke and played many harmless pranks. He was gentle and kind and a true Christian. Everyone called him 'a wee gentleman'. He was a great father, renowned for his integrity and commitment to everything he believed in. I miss him very much and loved him dearly.

Words from Elaine McFeeters



Photos: Elaine McFeeters

'HE LOVED NOTHING MORE THAN A PRECIOUS STOLEN WEEKEND ON HIS FAMILY'S CATAMARAN'



Photos: Sarah Berresford

When I met my late husband Guy over 35 years ago, it was clear he belonged to the sea. A keen sailor, he had taken part in the notorious 1979 Fastnet Race, and loved nothing more than getting away for a precious stolen weekend on his family's catamaran, often sailing from Poole to Cherbourg and back, or over to the Channel Islands for a longer sojourn. He would also share heart-warming and sometimes frightening stories of his time in the late 1970s as a university student helping to crew the Poole inshore lifeboat.

As with many people, a mortgage and professional working life as a chartered civil engineer took over, leaving Guy little time for sailing. Latterly he enjoyed crewing as part of a select band of civil engineering contractors, racing in the Little Britain Challenge around the Isle of Wight.

With other members of the East Bournemouth and Christchurch Fundraising Group, we were often seen with our collecting buckets around town, at the Reindeer Run or

helping out at the Mudeford Lifeboat Station Fun Day.

Unfortunately, Guy lost his battle with lung cancer earlier this year, but I'm thrilled that work colleagues, contractors, friends and family have generously donated £5,000 in his memory. This will go towards the ongoing running costs of Mudeford Lifeboat Station. I know how much Guy would have loved this, and I take great comfort in it.

Words from Sarah Berresford



'IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER'

My dad Richard never learned to swim. Maybe it was because he was born and bred in land-locked Llandovery in Mid Wales. But it didn't stop him developing a love and respect for the sea that lasted a lifetime.

When we moved to Llannon on the Ceredigion coast, my dad's awareness of the unpredictability of the water was sharpened when two of my brothers needed rescuing after a caper with an inflatable boat and an offshore wind, that swept them away from the coast.

Living close to the sea, my dad developed an admiration for the work of the RNLI lifeboat volunteers. We were so pleased when the crew of St David's lifeboat agreed to scatter his ashes during a training exercise in the sea just off the picturesque station. It was one of a series of requests dad drew up for arrangements after his death while he battled lung disease. It was a battle he lost, aged 84.

After a generous donation to the RNLI in dad's Will and another from money donated at his funeral, I felt I wanted to do my bit for the charity as well. I decided to take on the sea swim at the Tenby Long Course Weekend for St David's Lifeboat Station. It was a 1.2-mile swim and before the event I remember thinking 'this will be a breeze'. But in the cold sea 1.2 miles feels like a long way. I was proud to complete it in dad's memory and know he would have been even prouder of me – keeping up our family's link with the sea and raising £2,700 for the RNLI: the charity closest to his heart.

Words by Sarah Davies – Richard's daughter



Photos: Dave James and Sarah Davies



'I'VE NEVER SEEN A BOAT GO DOWN THAT QUICKLY!'

Ask any emergency service member and they'll tell you the same thing: the most emotionally challenging call-out is often one involving people close to their heart.

In spring 2017, that call came for Lerwick Lifeboat crew member Darren Harcus. At 7am that day, a shout came in to assist fishing trawler the *Ocean Way*; a boat Darren regularly worked on.

20 miles east of the Shetland Islands, the *Ocean Way* ran into trouble, and was taking on water. Its five-person crew were in serious peril.

At 7.15am, Lerwick's Severn class lifeboat *Michael and Jane Vernon* launched to aid the trawler's crew, joining a rescue effort from a passing Norwegian fish carrier and the Coastguard helicopter. Just after 8am, Darren boarded the boat he knew only too well, along with Mechanic John Best, carrying a salvage pump intended to help the *Ocean Way* stay afloat.

But before long, disaster struck. The *Ocean Way's* radio cut out, signalling that water had flooded in below deck, and the trawler soon started to sink. 'We knew we had to get off sharpish,' said Darren – and he was right. Just 60 seconds later, the stern of the boat was disappearing below the waves.

Thankfully by then, everyone aboard had abandoned the ship for the icy-cold water – each wearing the correct survival clothing.

The final two into the water, Darren and John helped the trawler's crew avoid being dragged down by the boat.

Eventually, everyone was hauled aboard the waiting Lerwick lifeboat, bringing to an end a frantic, but successful rescue.

Coxswain Alan Tarby says: 'I've never seen a boat go down that quickly. It went from a manageable situation to a disaster in seconds.'

Alan also relates to the situation Darren found himself in that day. 'I know the trawler,' he says. 'And I know her owner. He's helped us before and he's a really nice man.'

'When we first got the shout, my biggest concern was I thought Darren was aboard the *Ocean Way* as well. So you can imagine how relieved I was to see him arrive at the station!'

This story shows just one of the many rescues your generous donations help to make possible. From everyone at the RNLI, thank you for your continued support.



Photo: Shetland News/Chris Cope

LOVED ONES REMEMBERED

We would like to take this opportunity to celebrate all the **Forever by the Sea Tribute Funds** opened since our last newsletter. We are proud to commemorate:

Frederick Smith • Jack Ferrier • Donald Westwood • Donald Macphail • Chris Samuels • Michael Derbyshire • Christopher Brice • Barbara Thomas • Ann Cutler • Jonathon Bessin • Guy Berresford • Peter Dixon • Shane Whelan • Henry Chapman • Simon Hall • Ben Heron • John Whittaker • Vera Bodimeade • Allan Biles • Gordon Dolman • Clive Collins • Richard Appleby • John McDonald • Robin Masterson • Dorothy Firth • Margery Flanders • Daniel Ryder-Jones • Bran Leece • Ryszard Szenher • Terry Allen • Howard Bradley • Helen Cameron • Stanley Watts • Norman Boyes • Francis Mcgrath • Alan James • Jean Stirling • George Jackman • Stuart Bowers • Barrie Tomlinson • Joyce Horsewood • Ralph Watson • Michael Huckerby • Pete Bradshaw • Nigel Gordon • David Lecointe • Ramon Smith • Raymond Chatley • John Cooper • Joyce Blakeborough • Jean Godden • Helen Anderson • David Mullarkey • Wendy Patricia Maidee Makins • Heather Morris • Janet Jennings • Edvard Bloxham • Janet Jennings • John Wathen • Babs Longyear • David Brooks • Helen Harvey • Patrick Turner • Sydney Crane • Phyllis Whiting • Mary Bulley • James Wilson • Graham Hill • Bruce Farrar • Martin Thompson • Diveesha Shahani • Harold Pendleton • David Albert Edwards • Jeremy Wildin • Noeline Egan • Vera Kitchin • Julie Terryer • Bertie Singletons • Buchan Henry • Jack Vince • Janet Franklin • Robin James Stamp • John Stenton • Janusz Jasicki • Bruce Goddard • Margaret Mccoo • Alan Edward • Tony Turner • Roger Burns • Peter Crowhurst • Edwin Slater • Harry Camm • Michael Ashley-Miller • Dave Harrower • Joan Doris Leach • Jeremy Duncan Manwaring Linn • Jeremy Linn • Janet Gavigan • Una Kathleen Smith • David Smith • Keith Ladbrooke • Alan Davison • Myrtle Foskett • Mary Petrie • Fergus Bateson • Lila Dorey • Sidney And Vera Hanchet • Ronald Buchanan • Sandra Evans • Dr. Jane Boden • Charlie Green • Pamela Gubler • Andreas Violaris • Joff Sadler • Christopher Stuart • Clifford Talbot • Allan Burton • Freda Hipkins • Alexander Fitzpatrick • Peter Prior • Leila Unia • Katie Chopra • Sheila Barton • Arthur Collis • Brian Curtis • Lee Dean • Muriel Harvey • Daphne Eldridge

CONTACT US



If you would like to include your story in this newsletter, or if you have any comments or questions, we'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch with the Giving in Memory Team:

Tel: 0300 300 0124 **Email:** In_memory@rnli.org.uk

The Giving in Memory Team, RNLI, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ.

RNLI.org/ForeverByTheSea