



# TOWER Lifeboat

## Welcome to the Summer 2016 edition of Tower Lifeboat newsletter

The ups and downs of a turbulent Summer in every respect do not seem to impact on our workload. We still have a high rate of calls to the ever diverse incidents. And our volunteers continue to display the RNLI values: Selfless, Trustworthy, Dependable, and Courageous. Those of you who watch television will have seen us as one of the featured stations in the BBC1 documentary series: Saving Lives at Sea. The series focusses on the work of RNLI volunteer crew do, and includes our station.

This newsletter contains the usual updates. As ever stay in touch with us, keep spreading the word of what RNLI volunteers do in London. And if there is anything you would like to see in this newsletter – then do please let me know. No-one ever has – so we assume it hits the right spots!

Keith Cima  
Thames Helmsman ([keith\\_cima@rnli.org.uk](mailto:keith_cima@rnli.org.uk))

## Calendar of events

### September 2016

19 Joyce Kennedy Memorial Lecture –  
Launderers Hall  
22 City of London (COLC) branch  
dinner on MV ELIZABETHAN

### November

22 COLC Wine tasting

All Tickets:

[buchanancaren@icloud.com](mailto:buchanancaren@icloud.com)



## Respect the Water

The Spring Newsletter briefed you on our projects to enhance lifesaving capability in our patch as a contribution to the national Respect the Water campaign. The campaign has an annual re-launch in July, and this year is primarily targeting men 16-39 as this group account for the largest proportion of drownings. The 3 key risks are Cold Water Shock which can steal air from lungs rendering the victim helpless, the water can be unpredictable, and beware slips and trips – half the people who drown had no intention of entering the water. More information can be found at [www.rnli.org/respectthewater](http://www.rnli.org/respectthewater) or search #RespectTheWater on social media. If you sail, fish, dive, canoe, or even just walk alongside water – including inland waters – then the messages of Respect the Water apply. The Community Incident Reduction Manager for London is [adam\\_robson@rnli.org.uk](mailto:adam_robson@rnli.org.uk) and he is available to come and speak to community groups about water safety.

## Community Safety

And a short update on Tower's contribution to the RTW campaign. As at the Spring newsletter a paper was due to go to Corporation Members asking them to approve signs on bridges, embankments, lifebuoy boxes and training packages. This paper has now been passed and we move to implementation in the City area, and now plan to approach other riverine boroughs asking them to engage with a similar plan. These things do not happen fast, and so this is a long term project.

## Service Calls

E-07 *Hurley Burlly* has remained on station for most of the summer so far, and continues to provide reliable service. So far in 2016 Tower has launched 337 times and rescued some 40 people of which 14 were lives saved as at 19 August.

Q. Why has the Blackwall Tunnel got so many bends in it?



**Lifeboats**

## Big Fat Saturday

In June Tower volunteers organised an all-day training event, kindly hosted by Greenwich Yacht Club. (GYC is a long-standing supporter and fundraiser for Tower Lifeboat). Their facilities and helpful members enabled crews from 3 of the Thames stations to undertake a variety of realistic training exercises, including using the spare E-Class lifeboat to rescue a drifting and disabled yacht, as well as casualty care scenarios, both afloat and ashore, which involved 6 'casualties' with a variety of injuries and problems – helped by some very convincing acting and make-up! We also ran a problem-solving practical challenge and a boat skills competition (for example, the fastest team to tie a range of knots – blindfolded). At the end of the day the crews retired to Tower Lifeboat Station for a BBQ and 'pub quiz' – which sneakily tested the crews' river and navigation knowledge, as well as more fun general knowledge related to the river. At this stage a team of full time Helms entered the fray, and very satisfied with their quiz performance - conceded to a Volunteer team!



## A personal view – Gary Pittaway – Tower Volunteer from 2002

As a child I remember seeing an orange boat speed out of a harbour towards the sea. My dad said that it was the lifeboat going to save lives. Saving lives? This was a profound statement. Little did I know that I would move to London and 30 years after seeing that lifeboat, I would join the RNLI as volunteer crew at Tower Lifeboat Station. In 15 years as crew, I have been involved in many rescues of those who have found themselves struggling in the rapid and often turbulent waters of the river Thames. When a victim is rescued and life supporting casualty care provided we may ponder what happened, but we don't judge. Being in a team responding to calls for help 24 hours a day is a challenging role and to pull someone from the clutches of the river is the most rewarding feeling. The high standard of training that we receive kicks in automatically as the focus of the team is on the victim. The training that I have received has helped me on many occasions away from the lifeboats. I am a Scuba Diver Instructor and have been required to assist on a few occasions when a fellow diver has become unwell after a dive and it is this training that has given me the knowledge and confidence to be able to act swiftly and deal with any situation that I come across. To this day, I've never forgotten that lifeboat leaving Sutton Harbour.

## Service Call – 26 July

At 1651hrs on Monday 25 July 2016 Tower Lifeboat received a launch request from London Coastguard in response to a report of a female in the water on the inside of Bankside Pier. The lifeboat launched and made best speed to the Pier. On arrival they located the casualty - a young woman - in the water, in difficulty, and in danger of being swept away by the dangerous tidal flow. Another young woman who had happened to be on the pier was dangling from the pier with one hand and gripping the hand of the woman in the water to prevent her from being swept away. This brave young woman, Natalie H, was also managing to keep the woman in the water afloat. The lifeboat Helm manoeuvred his boat into position and recovered the casualty from the water. By now the casualty was still breathing but distressed, cold and weak. Whilst we might not encourage members of the public to have a go like this, it was clear to the lifeboat crew that had Natalie not held on to her that the casualty would have been swept away, and may well have drowned. A brave lady, and nominated for an award.

*A. When the first Blackwall tunnel was built in 1897 it was designed for horse-drawn carts and carriages. It had to be curved, rather than straight, simply because the horses would bolt if they saw the light at the end of the tunnel.*