

Lifesaving in action

In 2008, Tamar class lifeboats launched 90 times and rescued 91 people. In total, RNLI lifeboats launched 8,293 times, rescuing 7,612 people – an average of 21 people a day.

Rough but ready

Newly on station on 25 June 2007, Padstow's Tamar class lifeboat proved her worth with a double shout spanning 12 hours in conditions that the crew remember as their roughest to date.

As the lifeboat battled against gale force winds and waves the height of a double-decker bus, the crew remained firmly strapped into their impact-absorbing seats for as long as possible. An elderly couple were in trouble aboard a yacht with no power. At the mercy of the waves, the yacht was taking on water and a notoriously perilous sandbank lay ahead. There was no time to lose.

In heavy rolling seas, Coxswain Alan Tarby put two of his crew aboard the sinking yacht. In such dangerous conditions the husband and



wife were completely frozen with fear and could not be safely transferred to the lifeboat so all four were airlifted off by helicopter.

With a tow secured, the lifeboat set course for a rough return to Padstow. The waves were so steep they kept obscuring the yacht from view. Nevertheless, as they made steady progress, the crew spotted another yacht in a treacherous position. The first yacht was safely moored and then the lifeboat returned to save the lone yachtsman.

Though the rescue was completed by 5.20pm, conditions were so severe that the lifeboat could not be recovered by slipway. The crew were forced back into open water and felt the full force of the waves for a further 6 hours before finally being able to return to station.

Photo: Rob Aggas

Photo: Nicholas Leach



Lifeboats



RNLI

The crew

The lifeboat is the key piece of equipment that the RNLI provides its volunteer crews. There are over 4,500 lifeboat crew members in the UK and RoI. It is thanks to their willingness to exchange leisure, comfort and sleep for cold, wet and fatigue, and to spend many hours of their own time training to become highly skilled and efficient, that such a high proportion of the RNLI's money can be spent on first-class lifeboats and equipment, not on salaries. Without their courage, determination and skill, lives cannot be saved.



TAMAR CLASS LIFEBOAT

The RNLI provides, on call, a 24-hour lifeboat search and rescue service to 100 nautical miles out from the coast of the UK and RoI.

RNLI lifeboats can be divided into two categories: all-weather and inshore. The Tamar is an all-weather class of lifeboat (ALB).

The Tamar is the newest class of ALB in the RNLI fleet. Designed to be launched from a slipway, the Tamar can also lie afloat. A computerised Systems and Information Management System (SIMS) is installed so many of the onboard controls for navigating and controlling the lifeboat can be managed remotely and the crew can remain in their seats for longer, further improving their safety.

There are currently five classes of ALB in the RNLI fleet: Tyne, Mersey, Trent, Severn and Tamar. These boats can be operated safely in all weathers.

They can self-right in the event of a capsize and are fitted with navigation, location and communication equipment. The RNLI allows its ALBs a working life of around 25 years.

Different classes of lifeboat are needed for various locations, primarily depending on geographical features, the kind of rescue work that the station is asked to do and the cover provided by neighbouring stations. The RNLI carries out a 5-yearly review of lifeboat stations, looking at the incidents they launch to and the changing pattern of marine activities to ensure that the existing and future lifeboat coverage are appropriate.

RNLI designers and engineers continually make improvements to existing craft to meet the changing needs of the lifeboat service and develop new classes of lifeboat as required.

To find out how to visit our lifeboat stations go to rnli.org.uk/rnli_near_you

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea

Registered in England and Wales (209603) and Scotland (SC037736). Charity number CHY 2678 in the Republic of Ireland

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'The crew are very impressed. She's a robust and versatile lifeboat that gets to casualties quicker and keeps the crew safer.'

Mechanic Steve Lowe, Tenby lifeboat station

Date introduced: 2005
Displacement: 32 tonnes
Launch type: Slipway or afloat
Number in fleet: 11
Fuel capacity: 4,600 litres
Length: 16.3m
Crew: 7
Beam/width: 5.3m
Max speed: 25 knots
Draught/depth: 1.4m
Range/endurance: 250 nautical miles

Construction: Hull: fibre reinforced composite with single-skin section below the chine and 100mm thick foam-cored sandwich above; Deck and superstructure: 25mm foam-cored sandwich
Engines: 2 x Caterpillar C18 marine diesel – 1,001hp each at 2,300rpm
Survivor capacity: Self-righting: 44
 Non self-righting: 118

The finer details

The Tamar class lifeboat is designed primarily to operate from a slipway, but can also lie afloat and is inherently self-righting. Her mast and aerials can be lowered to fit into a boathouse.

The Tamar is fitted with an integrated electronics Systems and Information Management System (SIMS) designed to offer her crew the ability to monitor, operate and control many of the boat's systems directly from the safety of their shock-mitigating seats.

These bespoke seats enhance crew comfort and safety. They also incorporate essential controls such as throttles and joystick with the trackball for the SIMS screen close to hand. SIMS provides access to all communications (VHF, MF, DF, intercom), navigation (radar, chart, DGPS, depth and speed) and machinery monitoring including engines, transmission, fuel and bilge.

The Tamar's propellers and rudders lie in partial tunnels set into the hull that, along with

steel-lined main and bilge keels, provide excellent protection from damage in shallow water or slipway operations. In addition to her twin engines, the lifeboat is fitted with a hydraulic-powered bow thruster for improved manoeuvrability.

The Tamar carries a Y boat, an inflatable daughter boat housed under the aft deck and deployed from a hinged door in the transom. The Y boat has a 15hp outboard engine and is used in moderate conditions to access areas the lifeboat cannot reach.

Comprehensive first aid equipment includes stretchers, oxygen and entonox. Other equipment includes a portable salvage pump carried in a watertight container.

In return for their dedication and commitment, the RNLI makes a pledge to its volunteer crew that its rescue equipment is maintained to the highest standards and able to respond to emergencies at sea.



Photo: Nicholas Leach



Mersey class



Trent class



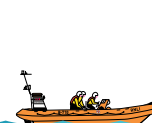
Tamar class



Severn class



Tyne class



B class



D class



E class



Inshore rescue hovercraft

All-weather lifeboats

Inshore rescue craft