

RNLI South Queensferry have had their busiest year

✘ 2010 proved the busiest year in the RNLI Queensferry Lifeboat Station's history with the most launches in the whole of Scotland with seventy four rescue missions and in terms of people rescued they were the fifth highest in the UK and Republic of Ireland where there were 8713 launches and 8313 rescued. RNLI Queensferry Lifeboatmen and women on call twenty four hours a day had an exceptionally busy year responding to a variety of emergencies from treating casualties, conducting missing person searches assisting both the Fife and Lothian and Borders Police, fishermen trapped by the tide to rescuing sailors and their craft in difficulty in the Firth of Forth.

Early in June a party on Cramond Island which was advertised on Facebook attracted over 500 revellers, many walking out the causeway in flimsy summer clothes on a glorious warm sunny afternoon but were caught out when the weather dramatically deteriorated in the evening with icy northerly winds coupled with torrential rain were now very cold and soaked through and trapped on the Island by the rising tide. The RNLI Lifeboats from both Queensferry and Kinghorn were called out by the Coastguard and evacuated over sixty revellers six of whom were treated for hypothermia. In another incident in October a man was stranded on Cramond Island and attempted to wade ashore only to be beaten back by the fast incoming tide and was taken aboard the RNLI Queensferry Lifeboat suffering from hypothermia. The crew placed him in a survival bag and the patient recovered sufficiently for the attending ambulance to stand down .

The wholly volunteer crew put their extensive training to good use when they had to deal with injured persons at sea when a young lad fell and split his chin while on a cruise aboard the

“Maid of the Forth”. The Lifeboat crew transferred him to the Lifeboat, made him comfortable and landed him and his parents from where the ambulance took him for treatment in hospital. In August a crew member aboard the barge “Atlas” under tow to Burntisland took ill and collapsed. The crew took him aboard the Lifeboat where they administered first aid and oxygen before being treated ashore by paramedics before being transferred to hospital.

Six people aboard a 40feet yacht “Moonstruck” had cause to be grateful to the RNLi after their vessel ran aground on Society Bank after being taken aboard the Lifeboat and landed safely ashore and on the rising tide pulled the yacht clear and towed her to Port Edgar Marina, one of a number of vessels which ran aground during the year.

Many skippers were grateful to the RNLi Queensferry Lifeboat crew when their vessels suffered engine failure. A cruiser with two men and a dog on board broke down off Inchcolm Island in July and in October a 26 feet yacht “Dignity” with two persons aboard suffered the same fate west of the Forth Road Bridge and both were safely returned to Port Edgar Marina. Four sailors , two from South Queensferry set sail from Copenhagen in their 40feet yacht “Chablis” only to suffer engine failure after only eighty miles of their five hundred mile journey. This was the start of a traumatic voyage as they now had no radio communications, faced gale force storms and even the other extreme, being becalmed for twelve hours. On reaching the Firth of Forth after an adventurous five days the crew were delighted to be met by the RNLi Queensferry Lifeboat which towed her to Port Edgar Marina and berthed her safely.

✘ In the summer four sailors from Anstruther were involved in a dramatic rescue when their Westerley Seahawk “Sardilou” sailing west from an overnight stop at Aberdour in strong winds, heavy seas and falling tide were swept on to the Meadulse Rocks off Inchcolm Island and with the yacht keeling over on the rocks putting everyone in danger, the skipper

launched the liferaft and called for assistance. The RNLI Queensferry Lifeboat crew managed in really difficult conditions managed to get the two men and two women aboard and landed them at the Lifeboat Station at the Hawes Pier, South Queensferry where the badly shaken sailors were given hot drinks and comforted after their ordeal. The crew went back out to the yacht, now high and dry on the rocks and secured her position with mooring ropes. On the rising tide the crew took the skipper back to the stricken yacht managed to pull her clear of the rocks and escorted her to Port Edgar Marina to check for any damage.

Tom Robertson MBE, the Lifeboat Operations Manager praised the work undertaken by his dedicated team of lifeboatmen and women, all volunteers who were called upon day and night to assist those in difficulty at sea in often in hazardous conditions. Tom invites anyone working in the South Queensferry area and who would be interested in joining the crew would be made most welcome on Monday evenings from 6.30pm. at the Lifeboat Station at the Hawes Pier, South Queensferry. Sea going experience is not essential as full training would be provided.

Photos courtesy of the RNLI