

26th January 2012

Fowey 001 2012

Vital safety equipment stolen from Fowey's RNLI all-weather lifeboat.

Over the past ten weeks Fowey's RNLI lifeboat station has been victim of a series of thefts. Four quick release stainless steel shackle assemblies have been stolen from the all weather lifeboat *Maurice and Joyce Hardy* whilst it has been secured on its mooring at Berrills Yard. The thefts have been on four separate occasions and all committed during the night.

These shackle assemblies are vital pieces of safety equipment as they secure the safety rail to the lifeboat, helping protect the lives of the volunteer crew whilst they are on deck. Each one of these shackle assemblies costs the RNLI approximately £150 to replace. The RNLI is a charity 100% funded by donations, legacies and fundraising, £600 of which now has to be used to replace this equipment. Each lifeboat station is currently fundraising to purchase the new lifejackets which have been developed by the RNLI. £600 would buy two of these.

The volunteer crew of Fowey's RNLI lifeboat station have been called out twice in the last month in weather conditions where the use of the safety rail has been vital. The first callout was on the 30th December when the all-weather lifeboat was required to proceed across St Austell bay to Chapel Point, just off Portmellon, to search for a dog which had fallen down the cliffs and was trapped. The more recent callout was on the 7th January when the volunteer crew took the *Maurice and Joyce Hardy* to assist a broken down fishing boat which was 22 miles out into the English Channel. This required the crew to set up a towline to the fishing boat in moderate weather and a large ground swell, and then spend several hours monitoring the tow whilst returning the fishing boat to Mevagissey. Both of these callouts were during the hours of darkness.

Station Mechanic Carl Gudmunsen, a fourth generation volunteer crewman, said "I am shocked and disappointed that some people would place mine and my fellow volunteer crewmembers lives at risk by committing these crimes. Both of our most recent shouts have involved several hours at sea with crew members working out on deck in sea conditions which would endanger their lives without the use of the safety rails. Fowey as a community works very hard to pay for the upkeep and maintenance of our lifeboats, both of which we are very proud of."

For more information on Fowey RNLI lifeboats and details of any recent shouts log on to: www.foweylifeboat.co.uk

Notes to Editors

- In 2010 the RNLI launched 8,713 times and rescued 8,313 people, an average of 22 per day, over 3,000 of these launches were in the hours of darkness.
- The RNLI is an independent charity funded entirely by voluntary donations, not HM Government.

RNLI Media contacts

For more information please telephone Sam Ellis, RNLI Volunteer Lifeboat Press Officer on 07970 092116 or samkellis@live.co.uk or Tamsin Thomas Media Relations Manager for the south on 07786 668847 or tthomas@rnli.org.uk or contact RNLI Public Relations on 01202 336789

RNLI online

For more information on the RNLI please visit www.rnli.org.uk. News releases and other media resources, including RSS feeds, downloadable photos and video, are available at the RNLI Press Centre www.rnli.org.uk/press

Key facts about the RNLI

The RNLI charity saves lives at sea. Its volunteers provide a 24-hour search and rescue service around the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland coasts. The RNLI operates over 230 lifeboat stations in the UK and Ireland and has more than 100 lifeguard units on beaches around the UK. The RNLI is independent of Coastguard and government and depends on voluntary donations and legacies to maintain its rescue service. Since the RNLI was founded in 1824 its lifeboat crews and lifeguards have saved over 137,000 lives. The RNLI is a charity registered in England, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.