

# OUR LIFEBOATS

## An evolution in lifesaving vessels

Since the RNLI was established in 1824, our lifeboats have launched tirelessly and our crews saved over 139,000 lives. Our lifeboats have evolved almost beyond recognition since the earliest recorded rescues at sea.

Each new class of lifeboat has brought advantages in safety, speed, manoeuvrability and lifesaving equipment, helping crews bring those in danger safely back to shore.



Six steam-driven lifeboats are built before their development is abandoned in favour of petrol.

1890



The first 'fast' lifeboat, *Sir William Hillary*, is stationed at Dover. Her speed is 18 knots and she's the first lifeboat to have a cabin fitted giving crew a degree of protection against the weather.

1930



The experimental Surf class is designed to work in shallow water. It uses waterjets and anticipates both the introduction of inshore lifeboats in the 1960s and the design of the latest Shannon class lifeboat.

1936



Designed so a full crew could live aboard to be ready for action quickly, the Clyde class is the biggest lifeboat built to date.

1965



The Arun class lifeboat is introduced and uses glass-reinforced plastic in later models, winning a Design Council Award in 1982.

1971



The first £1M lifeboat, the Tyne class, is designed as the first fast slipway lifeboat having a 240 nautical mile range.

1982



The 25-knot Trent and Severn classes are designed to lie afloat. Their low hull line aids the recovery of survivors from the water.

1994



The first hovercraft, intended for rescues in estuaries, mud, sand and shallow water, is introduced at Morecambe.

2002



E class lifeboats are introduced at lifeboat stations on the River Thames. Designed to power through heavy traffic, debris and fast tides, these are the RNLI's busiest lifeboats.

1790

Called the Original, this rowing or 'pulling' lifeboat designed by Henry Greathead is used for 40 years.



1851

Following several disasters at sea, the Duke of Northumberland organises a competition to design a self-righting lifeboat, won by James Beeching. The rowing and sailing lifeboats save lives for over 80 years.



1909

Petrol-driven lifeboats are introduced. They cover greater distances out to sea and tolerate worse conditions than the steam lifeboats.



1935

For over 100 years, horses were used to launch lifeboats into the surf. As tractor power is introduced, the last launch using horses takes place at Wells-next-the-Sea.



1963

As leisure sailing and watersports become more popular, inflatable lifeboats are introduced to help deal with the growing number of inshore rescues.



1967

Originally designed by the US Coast Guard, the Waveney class is the first Fast Afloat Boat (FAB).



1972

The first rigid inflatable the B class Atlantic 21 is designed to self-right using an airbag on the frame.



1988

The first fast carriage lifeboat, the Mersey class, is introduced. An aluminium hull enables her to be launched from the beach.



2001

Inshore rescue boats and rescue watercraft are used by RNLI lifeguards as they begin patrolling beaches in south-west England.



2006

Stationed at Tenby, *Haydn Miller* is the first Tamar class slipway-launched lifeboat to go on service. The Tamar's integrated control system (SIMS) brings monitoring and operation of the boat's systems to the crew sitting safely in their shock mitigating seats.



2014

The first Shannon class station lifeboat, designed by RNLI engineers, enters service at Dungeness. Propelled by waterjets, she is agile enough to be launched and recovered directly onto the beach.

