

Mayday: Rescue at Sea Royal Mail salutes the lifeboat and coastguard services



SIX STAMPS honouring the lifeboat and coastguard services go on sale at Post Office branches and Royal Mail Tallents House on 13 March. They feature rescue at sea at various locations around the British coast: Barra (Outer Hebrides), 1st class; Appledore, 46p; Portland, 48p; St Ives, 54p; Selsey, 69p; and Tenby, 78p. The stamps, designed by Hat-trick Design of London, are printed by Walsall in litho. The stamps have interrupted perforations along the top and bottom edges – gaps being created in the line of perforations by the omission of pins, to spell out ‘sos’.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Orders for serviced FDCs must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark) or to their nearest Royal Mail Special Handstamp Centre (Poole postmark), marking the outer envelope ‘F00808’ or ‘F00809’. Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Poole postmark.

For details of sponsored handstamps and addresses of the Handstamp Centres see the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe, £24.95 elsewhere). For a free sample copy write to: British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ.

Rescue at sea stamps Earlier Royal Mail issues have featured stamps on this theme, including the 1963 Lifeboat Conference issue, the 1972 Anniversaries set (7½p 19th century Coastguard stamp), and the 1985 Safety at Sea issue •



Left: the first day cover.

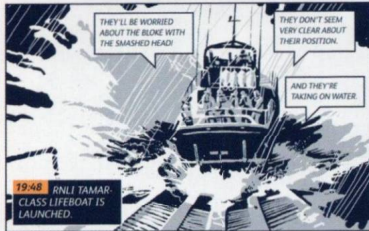
A presentation pack (below), designed by Hat-trick Design, provides an illustrated history of the lifeboat and coastguard services.



EVERY YEAR HUNDREDS OF INCIDENTS OFFSHORE PUT LIFE AT RISK. THESE MAY COME FROM INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL SHIPPING, FISHING VESSELS OR LEISURE SAILORS – FROM OCEAN-RACING ENTHUSIASTS TO WINDSURFERS – AND MAY INCLUDE THE INCAUTIOUS SWIMMER.

RESPONSE TO SIGNALS OF DISTRESS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MARITIME AND COASTGUARD AGENCY (MCA), WHICH CO-ORDINATES A RAISED AND PROPORTIONAL RESPONSE BASED UPON THE INFORMATION IT RECEIVES AND THE RESOURCES AT ITS DISPOSAL. AMONG THESE ARE THE LIFEBOATS OF THE ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION (RNLI), COASTGUARD OR MILITARY HELICOPTERS, OR OTHER SHIPS AND VESSELS CLOSE TO THE INCIDENT.

MANY EMERGENCY RESCUES ARE INITIATED BY A MAYDAY CALL BY RADIO OR, MORE LATELY, THREE DASHES SENT BY AUTOMATIC DIGITAL TRANSMISSION OR A MAYDAY FROM A MODERN BUILT RADIO OR FROM THE BOAT'S EMERGENCY SATELLITE DISTRESS BEACON. MAYDAY IS AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED REQUEST FOR HELP DERIVED FROM THE FRENCH 'M'AIDER' – HELP ME.



THE MARITIME AND COASTGUARD AGENCY HAVE A NETWORK OF 19 COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTRES TO CO-ORDINATE SEARCH AND RESCUE ACTIVITIES AROUND THE COAST OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

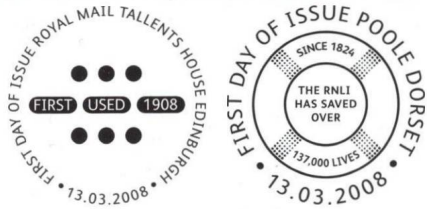
THE ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION OPERATES A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT LIFEBOATS DEPENDING UPON THE RESPONSE REQUIRED. COMPREHENSIVELY EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH ALL FORMS OF SURVIVAL PROBLEMS, BOTH SOLID HULL AND RIGID INFLATABLE BOATS (RIB) ARE USED.

THE TAMAR CLASS IS THE MOST MODERN LIFEBOAT IN SERVICE. DISPLACING 31.5 TONNES, THE TAMAR IS A FAST, SLEEPLY LAUNCHED, ALL WEATHER BOAT WITH A SOPHISTICATED CONTROL SYSTEM. WITH A FIBRE REINFORCED COMPOSITE HULL AND TWIN DIESEL ENGINES, THE TAMAR CAN REACH 25 KNOTS AND HAS A RANGE OF 200 NAUTICAL MILES. THE TAMAR WILL EVENTUALLY REPLACE THE OLDER TINTH CLASS LIFEBOAT (DISPLACEMENT 25 TONNES).

THE SEVERN CLASS LIFEBOAT IS THE LARGEST IN THE FLEET WITH A DISPLACEMENT OF 41 TONNES. IT SHARES ITS HULL SHAPE WITH THE SMALLER, BUT BASICALLY SIMILAR TRENCH CLASS (DISPLACEMENT 22.5 TONNES). THE SEVERN AND TRENCH HAVE RECENTLY REPLACED THE OLDER ARUN CLASS (17.5 TONNES).

THE MERSEY CLASS IS THE SMALLEST SOLID HULLED LIFEBOAT AND THE FIRST DESIGNED TO BE A FAST-CARRIAGE LAUNCHED BOAT. DESIGNED FOR INSHORE, ESTUARY AND RIVER RESCUE, THE RIB LIFEBOATS INCLUDE THE 8.5 METRE G-C CLASS AND THE 5 METRE D-C CLASS. THE SMALL AND HIGHLY MANOEUVRABLE D-CLASS CAN BE TRAILER MOUNTED.

COASTGUARD HELICOPTERS ARE OPERATED FROM FOUR MCA BASES AND THE MCA CAN CALL ON ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM TWO ROYAL NAVY AND SIX ROYAL AIR FORCE HELICOPTER BASES, ENSURING UK WIDE SEARCH AND RESCUE COVER.



Mayday: Rescue at Sea Prices	
Set of stamps	£3.29
Presentation pack	£3.80
FDC envelope	£0.30
Serviced FDC (UK orders)	£4.34
Serviced FDC (overseas)	£3.70
Stamp cards set	£1.80