

## Maritime Rescue Institute Coastal Notes – 3 May 2006

This Sunday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 14 runners from Stonehaven, Aberdeen and Edinburgh will take part in the BUPA Great Edinburgh 10k, raising funds for MRI. They'll join thousands of other keen runners taking to the Edinburgh streets; their route will pass some of Edinburgh's well recognised landmarks – Holyrood, the new Scottish Parliament, St Leonards Street made famous in the Rebus novels, and Arthur's Seat. See [www.greatrun.org](http://www.greatrun.org) for more details. This latter will test the quality of their training programme, being steep and unforgiving. The snow and ice in March made training very difficult for all the runners, but since then they have been putting in the work preparing for the day. They've also been building up sponsorship, which makes all this effort worthwhile; more sponsors are always welcome.

MRI has also applied for some guaranteed charity places in next year's Great North Run. This would offer the opportunity of a secure entry to a highly successful and popular event. One of Sunday's runners took part in last year's and thoroughly enjoyed the day – the build up, the atmosphere, the crowds helped to lift weary legs all the way round, leaving a great sense of achievement.

Visitors to the harbour on Tuesday would have seen that the MRI 42 was out of the water. At this time of year barnacles and weed start to grow below the waterline; if they're allowed to establish, their drag would significantly slow her down and delay her reaching a casualty. Also, the longer they're left, the harder they are to remove, so it's always best to get rid of them early. She was scrubbed, steam cleaned, then polished. Some minor repairs to the protective covering on the sponsons were carried out at the same time; winter always leaves its mark and this winter she took a pounding lying on her storm moorings. It's a tribute to her strength that only minor repairs were needed.

In the first 2 weeks of July, she will be out of the water again for her annual refit. It's part of the requirement under the Code; the MCA can inspect the boats for compliance with the standards laid down. The other two boats will then have their refits in turn.

The bad weather this week might be unwelcome but it isn't unusual – there's even a name for it: the Gab o' May, which just means a spell of cold, bad weather occurring in early May. Farmer's would call it the 'teuchat storm', meaning the storm when the lapwings (teuchats) are nesting. It can be a damaging time for the birds on the coast – the birds are all paired up by May and eggs or young chicks can be washed off the cliffs. This is when we can appreciate how smart the guillemot's very pointed eggs are. Instead of being blown away by high winds, they simply spin around on their own axis. Fowlsheugh will be coming into its own soon, with thousands of breeding birds on the cliffs. Weather permitting, there will be boat trips to see the birds from the sea or the bird sanctuary is open for cliff top walkers.

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For further information or to get involved with MRI as a volunteer, please contact 01569 765768 or email [hamish.mcdonald@btconnect.com](mailto:hamish.mcdonald@btconnect.com).