

Maritime Rescue Institute Coastal Notes – 16 November 2005

Bemused bystanders have looked on in amazement over the past couple of weeks as MRI's 3 lifeboats have been treated in a seemingly cavalier fashion. They've had their sponsons deflated, had loads of people standing all on one side, had angles measured and been filled with water! This latter probably generated the most consternation; after all, it's not every day that people use 3 inch pumps and large yellow buckets to get water **into** a lifeboat; even the deck drains were closed so that the water couldn't escape. People on board were paddling about in water up to ¾m deep. So, what on earth was going on?

The reality is that all 3 lifeboats were undergoing tests to establish their compliance with the new Code MGN280(M) for vessels under 24m, relating to rescue lifeboats. All these tests were to demonstrate that the boats have the stability to survive extreme events such as having all the sponsons deflated or being totally swamped. Although all the boats have already had their stability checked as part of their sea-going trials, they still need to be seen to comply with the new Code, which is administered by the MCA. We're happy to say that all 3 lifeboats came through their trials with flying colours - not that we ever doubted them. MRI 42 carried 15 tonnes of water onboard and still remained totally stable.

The next part will be a formal survey by the MCA of all the equipment carried onboard. In order to meet the requirements of the Code, some new equipment and audit systems will have to be put in place. This code ensures enhanced safety levels for the lifeboats, the crews and any casualties. Safety is always a top priority and MRI is happy to do whatever is necessary to achieve even higher standards. After all, safety is the message that we give out on courses, on our work with schools and through our membership of the International Lifeboat Council.

There is a saying that you can't put a price on safety, but in all, compliance with the Code will cost MRI well in excess of £3,000, by the time we pay all the survey fees and buy the new equipment. Last weekend we held a fund raising event that raised £340, so we only need another 9 like that to cover the cost of compliance! You can't put a price on safety, but it does have its costs.

Visit www.maritime-rescue-institute.org to find out more about us.

Your online shopping can support MRI also; log onto www.buy.at/mri

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