

Maritime Rescue Institute
Coastal Notes – 11 July 2006

Katy Miller, the young yachtswoman re-tracing Ellen MacArthur's solo round Britain journey, whom we have been following since her stop in Stonehaven, has now safely arrived in Newlyn. She only has a few more hops along the South coast before she reaches her start point at Hamble. Well done Katy.

Eagle eyed visitors to the harbour may have noticed that MRI 42, the biggest of the lifeboats, is missing. No, she hasn't gone for good: she been away for her 5 year hull and machinery survey. It was intended that this would be done at the Amble Boatyard, where she was originally re-built for MRI, but fate had other ideas. About 30 miles off the Firth of Forth a thrust bearing on the starboard gearbox failed. The crew decided to divert to Eyemouth and was able to maintain a steady 10 knots on just the one engine.

Coastal Marine, the Eyemouth shipyard, was exceptionally helpful. In spite of being very busy, they agreed to take on the repair as a matter of high priority. With the full agreement of the Amble Boatyard, they also undertook the painting and the survey. Fairly extensive work has been carried out as part of the survey: new thrust bearings were fitted to both gearboxes, the engines were serviced and the external jet drives changed. The fendering and sponsons were replaced, thanks to Eric Leach and Polymer Applications of Stonehaven.

Computers are everywhere these days, and MRI 42 is no different, so the computer systems that run the radar and chart plotters were also upgraded. Barring another intervention by fate, she should be back on station in Stonehaven around the weekend. Our other lifeboats will be due for their surveys over the next two years.

It was great for the crew to be in a place that still has an active fishing industry. Around 78 boats ranging from 10 – 24m fish for crabs, prawns, and white fish. White fish boats are pair trawling and seine netting. But, it's not only a commercial harbour; there's also a very busy marina; Katy Miller spent time in Eyemouth before heading for Stonehaven.

While the crew was in Eyemouth it was a hive of activity with the Jim Clark Memorial Rally and the annual Herring Queen Festival. Jim Clark, the late great rally driver, was born in nearby Duns.

Of course, Eyemouth isn't the only place to have a Festival. MRI's own Harbour Festival is only a week away. We feel we have a really good day out in prospect, with lots to see, hear, eat and watch. Joyce Falconer, who plays Roisin Henderson in River City, will judge the children's fancy dress competition, while Andy James of Northsound 1 will be compere for the day. Children, look out your mermaid's tails and pirate hats, and bring your parents down to the harbour on Sunday 23rd.

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