

# History of coastal lifesaving\*

- 1300s China. Chinese develop methods of resuscitation for drowning victims and establish first benevolent or 'humane' societies.
- 1357 Åland Islands. Kökar Catholic Monastery provides shelter and aid to shipwrecked fisherman and distressed mariners.
- 1691 Portugal. King D. Pedro II issues edict to coastal forts to send out vessels to aid the shipwrecked.
- 1692 Sweden. Swedish Diving Company established, principally for salvage, with edict from King Charles XI to rescue the shipwrecked.
- 1708 China. Chinking Association for Saving Life established.
- 1737 China. First river lifeboats introduced.
- 1751 Great Britain. Bishop Crewe establishes Charitable Trust for the Shipwrecked at Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland.
- 1757 Holland. Methods of resuscitating the apparently drowned being taught at Leiden University.
- 1765 France. M de Bernieres experiments with his 'canot insubmersible.'
- 1767 Holland. First humane society in Europe, the *Maatschappij tot Redding van Drenkelingen*, established.
- 1769 Holland. First attempt at establishing dedicated lifeboats in West Frisian Islands.
- 1771 Great Britain. Crewe charitable trust establishes permanent measures for assisting the shipwrecked such as beach patrols during stormy weather.
- 1774 Great Britain. Royal Humane Society (RHS) established.
- 1776 Great Britain. Liverpool Docks Trust establishes first known successful lifeboat service in the world at Formby, Merseyside.
- 1777 Spain. Guild of Lifesavers established in Seville.
- 1779 Canada. Earliest humane station established on Sable Island.
- 1785 USA. Massachusetts Humane Society (MHS) established.
- 1786 Great Britain. Lukin's invents his 'unimmergible' boat, first vessel altered for lifesaving.
- 1787 USA. MHS establishes first 'houses of refuge' around approaches to Boston.
- 1789 Great Britain. The brig *Adventure* is lost with all hands at Tynemouth spurring on the Gentlemen of the Lawe House to hold a competition for a design of 'life-boat.'
- 1790 Great Britain. Henry Greathead builds the *Original* life-boat, and the Tyne Humane Society, the first local private voluntary lifesaving organisation in the world is established.
- 1790 USA. Revenue Cutter Service established by President George Washington.
- 1791 Great Britain. Artillery Sgt Bell conducts first experiments with line-throwing mortar and projectile at Woolwich Arsenal.
- 1797 Canada. Permanent houses of refuge & surfboats placed on Sable Island.
- 1798 Great Britain. 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Northumberland purchases second Greathead life-boat for use at North Shields.
- 1800 Portugal. 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Northumberland purchases second Greathead life-boat for use at Oporto.
- 1800 Ireland. Dublin Docks Trust establishes first lifeboats in Ireland using Greathead's type.
- 1802 Isle of Man. Local lifeboat society established at Douglas, Isle of Man.
- 1802 Great Britain. Henry Greathead Petitions parliament for award and to fund more life-boats. Lloyd's of London establishes 'Life-boat Fund' to assist local societies.
- 1803 Germany. Purchase of one of Greathead's life-boats for Prussia.
- 1806 Holland. Dutch monarchy builds several of Greathead's life-boats.
- 1807 Great Britain. Henry Trengrose conducts earliest experiments with line-throwing rockets in Cornwall.
- 1807 USA. MHS establishes first lifeboat Station in the USA at Cohasset, Massachusetts.
- 1807 Great Britain. Norfolk and Suffolk Humane Societies established – Lionel Lukin develops Norfolk and Suffolk type pulling and sailing lifeboat.
- 1808 Great Britain. Captain George Manby conducts first rescue using line-throwing mortar.
- 1809 Great Britain. Preventive Waterguard established. Forerunner of HM Coastguard.
- 1821 Finland. First lifesaving station established in Finland at Suursaari Is.
- 1822 Great Britain. Preventive Waterguard and Coast Blockade combined to form HM 'Coastguard.'
- 1824 Great Britain. Sir William Hillary's *Appeal to the British Nation*. First 'national' coastal lifesaving organisation in the world, the 'Shipwreck Institution' established.
- 1824 Holland. Two lifeboat societies, the ZHRM and the ZNHRM established (forerunners of today's KNRM).
- 1824 France. First local lifeboat societies established at French ports such as Boulogne.
- 1828 Portugal. Portuguese Monarchy establishes six lifeboat stations (replaced 1862).
- 1832 Great Britain. Lt Kisbee invents the breeches-buoy, or 'kisbee' ring.
- 1832 USA. Congress requests that cutters of the revenue marine conduct winter patrols off Atlantic seaboard for the express purpose of saving lives at sea.
- 1835 Canada. Mary Hichens and family establish Seal Island lifeboat.
- 1835 France. *Societe Generale des Naufrages et de l'Union des Nations* established in Paris.
- 1838 Great Britain. Grace Darling and her father conduct famous rescue of the *Forfarshire*.
- 1838 Belgium. First state-funded lifeboat service established.
- 1842 China. Hong Kong Water Police established.
- 1847 USA. Joseph Francis and Douglas Ottinger co-invent the 'life-car.'

\*Extract from *Rescue at Sea: An International History of Lifesaving, Coastal Rescue Craft and Organisations* by Clayton Evans.

- 1849 Great Britain. Loss of the Tyne lifeboat and her crew. Algernon, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland initiates another lifeboat competition for a 'self-righting' lifeboat.
- 1849 USA. US Congress provides government funds to assist in the establishment of lifesaving measures on the coasts of New England such as the purchase of *Francis* type metallic lifeboats and Manby's mortars.
- 1851 Great Britain. James Beeching wins the Duke of Northumberland's lifeboat competition with his self-righting, self-bailing (SR-SB) lifeboat, later perfected by James Peake and the forerunner of the *Standard Self-Righting* type lifeboat.
- 1851 Great Britain. Sir Richard Lewis becomes secretary of Shipwreck Institution and initiates revitalising reforms.
- 1851 Germany. More state-funded lifeboats for the Prussian coast.
- 1851 Denmark. Government establishes first lifesaving service in Denmark under direction of C B Claudi.
- 1853 Canada. American philanthropist Dorothea Dix provides Francis type lifeboats and a life-car to Sable Island humane station.
- 1854 Great Britain. The Shipwreck Institution is renamed the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, or RNLI.
- 1854 Norway. First state-funded lifesaving stations established.
- 1854 Sweden. First state-funded lifesaving stations established.
- 1858 Australia. Five Peake type self-righters built in Australia for use in Victoria.
- 1859 Australia. Rescue of survivors from SS *Admella* by Portland lifeboat.
- 1860 New Zealand. First lifeboat station established at Timaru.
- 1861 Spain. Government purchases seven Peake type self-righters from the RNLI.
- 1861 South Africa. First lifeboats established by Cape Town Port Authority.
- 1865 Germany. National lifesaving service, the *Deutsche Gessellschaft zur Rettung Schiffbruchiger*, (DGzRS), established.
- 1865 France. *Societe Centrale de Sauvetage des Naufrages* (SCSN) formed in France
- 1867 Canada. Canadian Lifesaving Service (CLS) established.
- 1869 Turkey. Turkish Lifeboat Society established for Bosphorus.
- 1871 USA. The United States Life-Saving Service (USLSS) established under the leadership of Sumner Kimball.
- 1871 Italy. *Societa Italiana di Soccorso di Naufraghi* (SISL) established.
- 1872 Russia. Local lifeboat service established in Port of Riga.
- 1872 Finland. First government-funded lifesaving stations established.
- 1872 USA. USLSS develops *Beebe-McLellan* type surfboat.
- 1873 USA. USLSS Purchases 'English' type SR-SB lifeboat from the RNLI.
- 1873 France. *La Societe des Hospitaliers Sauveteurs Bretons* (HSB) established.
- 1875 Russia. Imperial Russian Lifesaving Society formed.
- 1878 USA. Lt David Lyle invents Lyle Gun for the USLSS.
- 1880 Spain. *Sociedad Española de Salvamento de Náufragos* (SESN) Spanish Lifesaving Society established.
- 1885 Switzerland. *Societe Internationale de Sauvetage du Leman* (SISL) established.
- 1886 Belgium. International Congress for Safety at Sea held in Brussels.
- 1886 Great Britain. Loss of two RNLI *Standard Self-Righting* type lifeboats and 27 crew. Leads to development of *Watson* type lifeboats.
- 1889 Japan. Imperial Japanese Lifeboat Institution formed (DTSKK, later NSKK)
- 1889 Great Britain. First steam lifeboat (SLB), the *Duke of Northumberland*, constructed by RNLI.
- 1892 Norway. *Norsk Selskab til Skibbrudnes Redning* (NSSR) established.
- 1891 Great Britain. The Macara's help establish the first Lifeboat Saturday's, one of the first 'public' charitable fund-raising efforts in the world to raise money for the RNLI.
- 1893 Portugal. *Instituta de Socorros a Naufragos* (ISN) established.
- 1894 Norway. Norwegian sailing lifeboat *Colin Archer* launched.
- 1897 Finland. *Suomen Meripelastusseura Unioninkatu* (SM Finland) the Finnish Lifeboat Society established.
- 1898 New Zealand. Sumner Lifeboat Institute (SLI) established.
- 1899 USA. USLSS and Lt McLellan begin earliest experiments with motorised lifeboats (MLBs).
- 1900 Canada/Great Britain. Marconi transmits first wireless radio-telegraphy signal across the Atlantic.
- 1903 USA. USLSS surfmen assist Wright Bros with first flight of manned aircraft.
- 1904 France. *La Societe des Hospitaliers Sauveteurs Bretons* conducts experiments with MLBs.
- 1906 Australia. First surf lifesaving club in the world established at Bondi Beach, NSW.
- 1907 USA. First USLSS 36ft SR/SB MLB constructed. Purchased by CLS for service at Bamfield, B.C.
- 1907 Sweden. *Svenska Sforadningssallskapet* (SSRS), the Swedish Lifesaving Society, established.
- 1908 France. International Congress on Maritime Lifesaving held at St. Nazaire.
- 1910 Holland. First large Dutch MLB, the *Brandaris*, launched by the NZHRM.
- 1912 Great Britain. Loss of RMS *Titanic*, resulting in the establishment of the first Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), Conference and Convention.
- 1913 USA. 1<sup>st</sup> International Ice Patrol conducted by US Revenue Cutter Service with funding from several nations.
- 1915 USA. USLSS and Revenue Cutter Service amalgamated to form the United States Coast Guard (USCG).
- 1915 Canada. CLS experiments with use of small, high-speed launches for lifesaving on Lake Ontario.
- 1918 Great Britain. The RNLI concludes the First World War, having saved 5,332 lives in four years.
- 1919 USA. USCG Lt Elmer Stone pilots US Navy aircraft in world's first successful trans-Atlantic crossing by aircraft.
- 1924 Great Britain. 1<sup>st</sup> International Lifeboat Conference (ILC) London coinciding with the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of RNLI. International Lifeboat Federation (ILF) established.

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UK and Europe ISBN 0 85177 934 4: [www.conwaymaritime.com](http://www.conwaymaritime.com) North America Naval Institute Press ISBN 1 59114 713 1: [www.usni.org](http://www.usni.org)  
 10% of the royalties paid are donated to the International Maritime Rescue Federation (formerly International Lifeboat Federation).

- 1925 Chile. *Cuerpo de Voluntarios de la Botes Salvavidas De Valparaiso* (CVBS) established.
- 1926 Germany. DGZRS begins to use diesel engines in its MLBs.
- 1928 France. 2<sup>nd</sup> ILC held in Paris.
- 1929 Great Britain. RNLI launches its first high-speed rescue launch, the *Sir William Hillary*.
- 1932 Holland. 3<sup>rd</sup> ILC held in Amsterdam.
- 1936 Greece. Forerunner of Hellenic Coast Guard (HCG) established.
- 1936 Sweden. 4<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Gothenburg.
- 1937 Australia. Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol (RVCP) established.
- 1938 USA. United States Coast Guard Auxiliary (USCGA) established.
- 1940 Great Britain. RNLI lifeboats used to help in evacuation of troops from Dunkirk.
- 1940 Holland. Dutch MLB *Zeemanshoop* evacuates 40 Jewish refugees to England.
- 1944 USA. First humanitarian missions conducted using a helicopter.
- 1945 USA. First rescue at sea using a helicopter and hoist. Penfield Reef, New York.
- 1947 Norway. 5<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Oslo.
- 1948 Japan. Japanese Maritime Safety Board, forerunner of the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) established.
- 1949 Norway. NSSR launches first non-sailing cruising lifeboat, the *J M Johansen*.
- 1949 Switzerland. The Geneva Convention provides for the neutrality of all lifeboats during times of war and allows such vessels to exhibit the Red Cross.
- 1951 Belgium. 6<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Ostend.
- 1950 Poland. Polish Ship Salvage Company established.
- 1953 Great Britain. First peacetime SAR helicopter squadron established.
- 1955 Portugal. 7<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Estoril.
- 1956 Uruguay. *Asociacion Honoraria de Salvamentos Maritimos Y Fluviales* (ADES) established.
- 1957 Germany. DGZRS launches first 'rescue cruiser,' the *Theodore Heuss*.
- 1958 Great Britain. RNLI launches first *Oakley* type self-righting MLB.
- 1958 United States. Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue System (AMVER) established.
- 1959 Germany. 8<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Bremen.
- 1961 Australia. Australian Volunteer Coastguard Association (AVCG) established.
- 1962 Canada. Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) established.
- 1963 Great Britain. 9<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Edinburgh. Both the USCG 44ft MLB and the HSB's inflatable IRB are introduced.
- 1963 Bahamas. Bahamas Air-Sea Rescue (BASRA) established.
- 1965 Åland Islands. Åland Sea Rescue Society (ASRS) established.
- 1965 Great Britain. First experiments with rigid hull inflatables (RHIs) being conducted at Atlantic College in Wales.
- 1967 France. 10<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Dinard.
- 1967 South Africa. National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) established.
- 1968 France. The *Societe Nationale de Sauvetage En Mer* (SNSM) established.
- 1969 Great Britain. RNLI launches first *Atlantic 21* RHI.
- 1970 New Zealand. SLI begins experiments with high-speed water-jet propelled IRBs.
- 1971 USA. 11<sup>th</sup> ILC held in New York.
- 1971 Estonia. Estonian Lifesaving Service established.
- 1971 Great Britain. First *Arun* Class FAB, *52-01*, launched by RNLI.
- 1975 Finland. 12<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Helsinki.
- 1975 USA. Association for Rescue at Sea (AFRAS) established.
- 1976 New Zealand. New Zealand Coast Guard Federation (now Royal NZCGF) established.
- 1978 Canada. Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary, forerunner of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA) established.
- 1979 Holland. 13<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Amsterdam/Rotterdam.
- 1979 Great Britain. First large *Medina* type RHI launched by the RNLI.
- 1983 British Virgin Islands. Virgin Islands Search and Rescue (VISAR) established.
- 1982 Canada. First SAR 'case' handled by COSPAS-SARSAT system.
- 1984 Sweden. 14<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Gothenburg.
- 1985 Holland. KZHRM launches RHI *Koningin Beatrix*, predecessor of today's large Dutch RHIs.
- 1987 Spain. 15<sup>th</sup> ILC held in La Coruña.
- 1991 Namibia. Sea Rescue Institute of Namibia (SRIN).
- 1990 USA. USCG launches first 47ft MLB prototype, MLB *47-200*.
- 1992 Norway. 16<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Oslo/Baerum.
- 1991 Holland. The KZHRM and the KNZHRM amalgamate to form the KNRM.
- 1995 Uruguay. 17<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Montevideo.
- 1999 Iceland. ICESAR, a new combined (land and sea) lifesaving organisation formed.
- 1999 Great Britain. 18th ILC held in Bournemouth/Poole. 175th anniversary of RNLI and the Dutch lifeboat societies.
- 2003 South Africa. 19<sup>th</sup> ILC held in Cape Town.

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