

POWER

SHELLEY JORY-LEIGH

Business woman and British Power Boat Champion Shelley Jory, from Hampshire, is one of the UK's leading powerboat racers and the top female in the world. In her spare time she runs a bridal business



Proud ambassador for RNLi

I WAS honoured to become an Ambassador for the RNLi and although I hope I never need their services I jumped at the chance to work with the charity.

In one of my first engagements the Calshot RNLi Crew invited me to join them for the day during one of their busiest times of the year – Cowes Week.

I joined five of Calshot's 30 volunteer crew on board Max Aitken III, an all-weather lifeboat, as they headed out to patrol the Solent.

The RNLi has an active fleet of more than 330 boats ranging from five to 17 metres with a relief fleet of around 115 boats. They rely on more than 40,000 volunteers to man the stations and crew the boats.

The crew on board with me for the day were Coxswain Duncan Christie, 34, Tim Woodcock Lifeboat Press Officer, Mick Dye, 51, Mike Croxson, 31, and Mike Nicholas, 47. They were either on days off from their regular jobs or on holiday and had a combined service of 30-plus years volunteering for the RNLi.

In 2010 the Calshot lifeboat alone attended more than 1,300 shouts. The 235 Lifeboat stations in total in 2010



Photo: Nikki Drummond

rescued 8,313 people and saved 309 lives. As the crew told me about their experiences and about their constant training, the radio crackled into life.

The coastguard had a call from a RIB that had come across a small pleasure craft suffering engine problems and battling with the rolling swells so the

crew leapt into action. Within seconds they retrieved the co-ordinates and plotted the course.

The casualty was a small Fletcher and in the conditions the crew could not secure their auxiliary engine to return under their own power. The lifeboat crew checked that the two-man crew were ok

and tow lines were swiftly secured.

Towing the boat into Warsash another call came through. Cowes Lifeboat was assisting a Dutch yacht with rudder failure and conditions made it difficult to tow the large yacht. After safely delivering our first casualties the Calshot crew went to assist.

Working closely as a team, the Calshot crew sent their sea anchor over to the yacht to aid passage back to Cowes Marina.

With the yacht safely back in Cowes we returned back to Calshot where the crew stood down until their pagers sounded again.

All-in-all it was a relatively quiet day for the Calshot crew but they explained to me that both casualties were typical of what they see day-in-day out.

These guys are fantastic and do a phenomenal job keeping us safe on the water. They tackle everything they are faced with professionally and swiftly and it's easy to see what a tight unit these saviours of the Solent are!

To find out more about joining the RNLi visit www.rnli.org.uk

Safe Boating everybody!

TOP TIPS FROM AN EXPERT

BEFORE leaving I asked Coxswain Duncan Christie for three top tips for boaters:

- 1 Always check the weather forecast for your sea area**
- 2 Ensure you are carrying enough fuel**
- 3 Carry a VHF radio**



Lifeboats