

Hamble Lifeboat

Hamble Lifeboat was formed in 1969 and called the Southampton Water Inshore Rescue Service (Hamble Rescue) by local residents in response to an increasing number of casualties in Southampton Water and the local area. The RNLI had seagoing lifeboats at Bembridge and Yarmouth but no inshore rescue boats.

At a Parish Council meeting in February 1969 a councillor reported that as the outcome of a letter received from Dr Tees on the question of providing a rescue launch based on Southampton Water, a meeting would be called to explore the possibilities of having an inshore rescue boat stationed at Hamble. At the next Council meeting it was informed those attending the meeting had formed themselves into the 'Inshore Rescue Service' and they had a large number of volunteers who are well qualified to operate the service.

The volunteers then raised funds for an outboard powered 17ft dory inshore rescue boat that operated from Petters slipway (now Ensign Way).

Due to difficulties of operating from a lee shore the Parish Council agreed that it could move its base to Hamble Foreshore in 1972. Over the years Hamble Rescue as it was then known improved its lifeboats by replacing them with bigger and more powerful ones with better equipment. The first lifeboats were named St Andrew and later after the names of the people who donated money for them. In 1989 a second backup boat was commissioned and this arrangement continued to today.

Over the years Hamble Lifeboat has on average attended 100 incidents a year and in 2017 replaced its original base on the foreshore with an improved lifeboat station.

Hamble Lifeboat is one of eight independent lifeboat members of the Solent Sea Rescue Organisation that patrol the Solent area and are tasked by the Coastguard. It is funded by donations from the general public and operated by a volunteer crew. The service has evolved from having a small dory to having two of the most powerful 32' RIB inshore lifeboats in service in the country.

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History of the lifeboat compiled by Hamble Lifeboat

1969: The first boat, St Andrew, a 17' Dory with twin Mercury outboards, went into service. This boat, although far from ideal, provided a good service and attended over 100 incidents in her first year.

1972: The service moved from Petter's Slipway to its' current base on Hamble foreshore.

1974: The first St Andrew was replaced by a larger boat, the 21' 'Boston Outrage' Dory St Andrew II. This boat was fitted with better equipment and twin 50hp outboards. This vessel provided excellent service for a number of

years. Arguably her finest hour was the night of the Fastnet Disaster (1979) when Hamble Rescue was launched to a yacht aground off Beaulieu. This rescue, although successful, severely damaged the boat and showed that something bigger and better was required.

1981: The Dory was replaced with a craft far better suited to the job and the forerunner of what is used today. That boat, the St Andrew III, was a 30' Atlantis Eagle. She was a RIB powered by a single 212hp diesel engine and Castoldi 06 water jet. This combination gave high speed (35kts), exceptional manoeuvrability and the ability to operate in very shallow waters. St Andrew III was responsible for the next evolution of the service. During 1988 St Andrew III needed a major refit and so came out of service. Hamble Rescue was without a boat for nearly 6 months, a situation that was never wanted to be repeated; therefore it was decided to purchase a reserve boat.

1989: After a year being fitted out by Chief Coxswain Colin Olden the reserve boat, St Mary, went into service. A 7.4m Humber, she had a single 250hp Iveco engine and Castoldi TD238 water jet. St Mary provided excellent back up but did not have the capabilities of the larger boat. It was decided that to provide the service required that 2 boats of equal size and capability were needed.

1992: St Andrew IV, the first of the current series of boats went into service. As with St Mary (and all subsequent boats) she was purchased as a bare hull and fitted out with all the equipment as funds permitted. This Pacific 30 RIB was fitted with twin 250hp Iveco engines and twin TD238 water jets. Complete with radar and GPS navigation systems she was a truly modern lifeboat and was exactly what the service required.

1997: To serve in tandem with St Andrew IV and after the sale of St Andrew III, Harry Childs went into service. Built to the latest specifications, Harry Childs a Halmatic Pacific 32 has twin 330HP Iveco diesel engines and twin Castoldi TD238 water jets. This gave a total compatibility with spares. This boat also has radar, GPS plotter and all the latest safety equipment.

2006: St Andrew IV was sold and is now operating as a Coast Guard rescue boat in New Zealand. The latest boat, John & Violet Hurrell, went into service. Again, a Halmatic Pacific 32 with twin 350HP Iveco diesel engines and Castoldi TD238 water jets. This boat had been built to all the latest specifications to comply with the rescue boat code of practice. She is one of the most advanced lifeboats of its type in service anywhere in the UK.

2012: After several years of work to secure a 99-year lease and planning permission, fund raising started to build a new lifeboat station on the Hamble foreshore site.

2017: Construction of new lifeboat station completed and in use.

2018: Hamble Lifeboat celebrated its 50th anniversary.