

November 2009  
Issue 9

# Glasgow's Lifeboat

*Newsletter of the Glasgow Humane Society*

*Charity no SC001178*



**Officers Foreword** Staying in a constant state of readiness is an extremely onerous task. This is one of the reasons why the GHS has different types of craft and more than one of each type. Different waterways and different areas of the same waterway require different approaches.

Engines, boats, necessary equipment for the boats, trailers, etc have to be constantly monitored. If we were to list the amount of constant preparation for the "next" encounter, it would become a booklet.

Especially in our immediate area where there is so much use/misuse of our river and banking we have to be ready to move instantly when we observe something or are alerted by a member of the public.



## ***Glasgow Humane Society and Land & Environmental Services working together***



The Glasgow Humane Society has always worked in partnership with outside agencies. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the recently drawn up agreement with Glasgow City Council Land and Environmental Services. The work carried out by the Society for the "Highways Dept" "Roads Dept" "City Engineers Dept" since the Society was established, has been acknowledged and formalised. We are working hard in this continued partnership carrying out tasks like removing waterway debris, inspection, reporting and ensuring maintenance of safety features. Recently we took Engineers out on the water for several days commencing at 0700hrs carrying out inspections of Quay walls, Bridges, etc throughout the City.

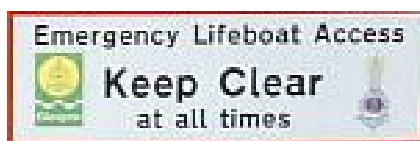


***Officers removing debris from bridge piers and taking evidence of vandalism and crime on the riverbanks***



***GHS personnel replace around 500 lifebelts per year***

Partnerships exist also between Development and Regeneration Services, Emergency Planning, Culture and Sport, Clydeport, Clyde Gateway and others.



***Developing waterway safety signage***



## [In the right place at the right time](#)

Since our last newsletter 13 rescues and 38 direct preventions have taken place due to our proactive approach to safety.

Single, double, quad scullers and fours have been rescued after making simple mistakes and ending up in the drink. Drink related tragedies have been averted by George and Tony when "high jinks" resulted in young men being chased out of the water, at each of the three Boathouses, the viewing platform, St Andrews Bridge and Polmadie Bridge. Persons who were depressed enough to consider entering the river have been persuaded not to and subsequently received necessary help. Persons who went further and actually entered the water have been rescued upriver at Dalmarnock and Polmadie,

### **Man in water at Dalmarnock**

About 1930hrs, the phone rang and rowing coach Mike Foster informed George that there was a man swimming in the river at the blue fence (2 mile upstream beside the Dalmarnock Sewage Works).

The man was obviously struggling and Mike thought he would not last long. George raced for the launch shouting at his son Ben to contact Tony and ask Tony to meet at the blue fence.

As George was starting the launch, a rowing four arrived having raced downriver to tell him of the man (belt and braces). George sped upriver and in less than 2 minutes George was beside the man in the water, at a point where there is a steep bank and a depth of water right at the edge of some 5 metres. A lifebelt had been thrown beside the man but he had not taken it but was hanging onto tree branches.

George lifted him with difficulty into the boat as not only was the man holding onto the branches in a tight hypothermic grip, but he also had his legs wrapped round the underwater branches of the tree. The man was very stiff due to hypothermia and could not really give any self assistance.

Once in the boat George ensured the man was not in too immediate danger (wrapping him up to keep warm) and said that he would take the man to the GHS wharfage. Mike arranged for the Ambulance to rendezvous there.

Arriving at the wharfage George Tony and a passerby called Scott placed the man on one of our stretchers and brought him ashore to a position where we could more easily attend him. George contacted the Duty Officer to ensure that the ambulance knew where to attend.

The man was wrapped in blankets, a pillow placed under his head and we all took turns to keep him talking. Stephanie (George's wife) arrived and assisted with the care of the man. Assistance was also received from Coach Ricky Walsh who arrived by car

Police, Ambulance and Paramedic on motorbike arrived.

Medics say that they reckoned the man would not have lasted much longer than 5 more minutes in the cold water.

### **Woman in water Polmadie Bridge *Report by George Parsonage***

2105 hrs a Police car arrived outside the house with blue light and siren; I ran downstairs and opened the door in time to see an Officer running up the path informing me that a woman had jumped from Polmadie Bridge.

I ran for the lifeboat and sped upriver. It was pitch black and pouring wet, but I managed to see the woman floating motionless on her back south of centre about 200metres down from the Bridge. I lifted her into the boat laid her down on the bottom of the boat at my stern seat and resuscitated her. Tony met me at the wharfage along with Lifeguard Alec Macdonald who had run from his nearby house. Alec Tony and I lifted the woman onto the pontoon and with Police assistance lifted her up to the Boathouse. She was placed on a stretcher and wrapped in blankets until Ambulance personnel removed her to Hospital.

The above two rescues show not only the state of readiness of the Glasgow Humane Society Officers and Lifeguards, but shows the expertise necessary in having to deal with persons who are not in a position to "give help themselves" during the rescue and who can be "extremely unwilling to co operate".

## [Missing persons searches](#)

When a Missing Man was reported to us, we carried out an immediate search of the necessary area, also enlisting the assistance of our Lifeguards and our vast number of Riverwatchers. Searches of the area continued every day (sometimes three searches a day) until our Officers recovered the body. Searches as requested for other missing persons have also taken place with the same enthusiasm but fortunately with better results—they were not in the water.

## [Visit to the GHS](#)

The Society for the first time had a public visit by the winners of a charity competition. David and Pat Prentice took part in a raffle for Burnbank Home with the star prize a visit to the GHS and a trip on the river. Pat and David were given a tour of the Lifeboat Station, Lifeguard Portacabin, Museum & Art Gallery along with a historical insight into the work of the GHS. A sail on the river with the Officers allowed them to show some of the great work carried out on a daily basis helping to serve Glasgow's Waterways.



*George and Tony with David and Pat after their visit*

Thanks goes to David & Pat for the gratefully received letter & donation.



*Officers George and Tony before attending the service*

## [Armistice Sunday](#)

Officers George and Tony represented the Society at a service of remembrance on Armistice Sunday. George laid a wreath featuring the Society logo on behalf of all associated with the Society.

## [Statistics](#)

An update on the statistics from January 1st until December 1st 2009 show,

- 3110 patrols were carried out at various waterways (though mostly the River Clyde) by Officers, Lifeguards and Riverwatchers
- On 441 occasions lifeboats were launched
- 606 Lifebelts were recovered
- Animals were dealt with on 17 occasions
- 429 potential hazards were removed from the river or riverbank
- On 52 occasions stolen or lost goods were recovered
- 237 meetings were attended or held
- Advice or assistance was given on 396 occasions
- Additional safety cover was given at 41 events
- 20 rescues were carried out
- On 55 occasions rescues were attended or accidents prevented
- 14 talks/presentations were given
- Bodies recovered 2
- 7 training courses were organised, run and certificated by the Glasgow Humane Society

## *DAYS GONE BY*

1980s on the Kelvin in the West end.

This brings us to a newest section in our newsletter, where George and Tony scour the old minute books looking for an interesting story that George has turned into a short story. Our latest story sees us go back to the 1950's on the canal and into the

### *Bayonet Practise*

In the 1950's Ben Parsonage was called to the Canal one night to remove a body from the water. It was carefully lifted onto the towpath as the body appeared to be headless and wrapped in canvass and sewed up. CID and Crime squad attended and photographs were taken from every angle. An inspection of the body then started coupled with Bennie beginning to laugh. What's wrong Bennie asked a senior detective. You know exactly where we are Sir said Ben. Yes Maryhill. You know what that wall is? Yes the old Maryhill Barracks. Then it dawned on the Detective what they were looking at. It was a dummy from the war which had been used for bayonet practice.

### *The will to live*

Around 0900hrs one morning I was informed that there was an old woman missing who had last been seen in Kelvingrove Park. The woman walked with sticks and there were fears that she had fallen into the River Kelvin the previous day. It was with heavy heart that I was conveyed to the locus thinking that I was about to recover another body.

As I do frequently to be on the safe side, I walked the banking judging the flow of the river and looking for any new hazards before boating. The Dumbarton Road Bridge was being painted at the time and had scaffolding erected all round it.

I was sure that I had heard a faint groan from under the bridge; a Police Officer confirmed that I had. Tying ropes to trees I slid down to a position from where I could look under the Bridge. There was the old woman hanging onto the scaffolding. Shouting for more ropes to be placed down the banking I waded into the water and brought her to the shore. A stretcher was produced from a nearby work, the woman placed on the stretcher and lifted up the banking. Now we were only a few hundred yards away from the Western Casualty Department so we decided not to waste time waiting for an Ambulance but to run. So from the bottom of Church Street 3 Police Officers on one side of the stretcher and myself and another two Officers on the other side, with another Officer running ahead waving the traffic to either side of the road, we ran along Dumbarton Road and up the driveway to Casualty. Doors were kicked open as we ran through and doctors and nurses appeared as if by magic. The old woman made a good recovery. It had been a warm June night and coupled with the fact that having walked for some time using sticks the old woman's arms were strong this has saved her life. Talk about having the will to live - good on her.

## *SCOUT AND ABOUT IN BISHOPBRIGGS*



SCOUT AND ABOUT: Members of the 175 Scout Group, Bishopbriggs, were the recipients of an informative talk on safety near canal banks and water, and lifesaving tips from the Glasgow Humane Society. Pictured with the children are, from left, Lynne Watson (175 Scout Leader), Tony Coia (officer from Glasgow Humane Society) and Richard Pears (175 Scout Leader). (K92203)

## *Architectural safety features update*

We are glad to report since the last magazine that developers have taken cognisance of the drop bag/raft" situation and we have noted secure areas being made on sites for storage of such material.

New build along our waterways is slow in the present financial climate, but we receive a weekly list of planning applications which we study carefully and ensure that any developers are aware of what is expected regard safety features.

The annual clearance of the riverbanks between the Tidal weir and Rutherglen Bridge has slipped a bit in the last two years and the effect of this was seen during the summer when overgrowth prevented persons being able to walk/run/cycle along the towpaths and see the river and prevented us having a clear view of anyone on the banking.

Again this year the clearance expected to commence at the end of October has been postponed until the beginning of the year and of course this means that less overgrowth will be dealt with. On the plus side much clearance will take place upstream of Allan's Pend (Newhall St) at the beginning of the year thanks to work on the cycle path and the east end regeneration route suds pond.



*Front page of Evening Times showing rafts on the river*

Barriers have gone up between Dalmarnock Bridge and Belvidere for the work on the Games Village. Causing us to have to re-do vital lifebelt positions at that locus.

By the time the Games arrive there should be quite a transformation on our riverbanks and we must continually lobby and advise to have this work carried out to the most agreeable and safe standards.

## *Welcome to a new Director*

Welcome to Sam Brown who was recently elected onto our Board of Directors. Sam is a lifelong supporter of the work of the Society and the tireless efforts of George.

## *Projecting the memories*

Officer George recently featured in a merchant festival play, that reminisced the memories of Glasgow people. The Memory Projector by Wild works featured an interracial play in which sound and images showed the people of Glasgow's memories of the past 50 years and how their life had evolved during that time.

### *LIFEBOAT CONTACT DETAILS*

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*Glasgow Humane Society*

*"Preventing Accidents.....Saving Lives"*

## *A summer of events*

This summer has seen a huge amount of work preparing and de-rigging after events, some people could have mistaken Glasgow Green at times for a building site. This as always involves the GHS giving input into best practise for safety around waterways. We advise both Council event sections, Land & Environmental Services and Culture & Sport Glasgow on a day to day basis leading up to events on our thoughts on how each event can be best placed to ensure the safety of visitors to the Green with regards to the River.

Events over the last few months have included, the World Pipe Band Championships, GUBC v EUBC Regatta, The Glasgow Show, Clydesdale Summer Regatta, BBC Proms in the Park, Clyde ARC Head of the River Race, GCC Annual Fireworks Display, Clydesdale Head of the river race Great Scottish Runs and many more.

### Clydesdale Head of the River

*Director Mike and Officer George after a days racing*

This years Head of the River Race saw a huge entry from junior novice to senior vets, including both a Society Director & Officer competing.

It was an early morning start for Officers and Lifeguards of 07.00 hrs preparing equipment and boats for the day. As has become common place the Society gives additional coverage to the regatta. Over 8 Lifeboats were on duty all day with over 12 personnel on duty at different times. A busy day was sure to be ahead of the boys and girls on the water while a good days racing was not to be missed. At one point the shout went up that a sculler had capsized on the Waterside Street straight . Lifeguard Fraser MacIntyre was quickly on the scene taking control of the situation rescuing the young school girl out of the water.



After an exciting end to a mornings session lunch and a morning de brief saw a happy Lifeboats Crew. The afternoon was no quieter with 2 more rescued from the cold. Officer George alerted to a double scull capsizing on the Rutherglen Bridge straight raced to assist while summoning Lifeguard Adel for backup.

A successful day for the "Corp" was praised by race Officials and various club represents.

### Glasgow Show 2009

Now firmly founded as the Society's annual weekend the Glasgow Show again gave a host of excitement. After weeks of preparation and organisation the day finally was upon us.

The Society succesfully took part in the Lord Provosts Procession from the City Chambers to the Green with a healthy number of Society personnel and equipment on show.

The visitors to the show were given displays in lifesaving techniques, rowing, canoeing and kayaking races along with a charity stall and of course a great chance to meet the Lifeboat Crew and hear some stories.

The planning for the 2010 show is already underway and anyone who would be willing to help in anyway is most welcome to get in touch with the Society Officers.

