

Beachley Lifeboat & Rescue Station

Lifeboats; Land Search; Cliff, Mud, Swift Water and Flood Rescue

What is SARA?

SARA is a volunteer search and rescue charity, with Lifeboat and Rescue Stations along the length of the River Severn. Our members perform rescues on the Wye and other rivers as well as the Severn, from the cliffs and other areas of difficult terrain, and conduct missing person searches in support of the Police. Each year we conduct over 100 different operations. The team based at Beachley (near Chepstow) often works with teams and boats from other SARA stations as well as other agencies.

SARA Operations

An alert SARA Lifeboat crew saved a kayaker from grave danger one morning in August! As part of a protracted search, SARA Lifeboat 3 'Swift and Bold' had been tasked with a shoreline search down stream of the M4 Bridge. In transit, her crew stopped to speak with the man whilst he was making his way downstream towards Bristol, in case he had seen anything.

SARA 3 completed its search but the crew then realised that they had not seen him again. They alerted the Coastguard who got in touch with the Bristol Vessel Traffic Service (VTS). VTS was able to spot the - now upturned - kayak which was well on the way 'out to sea'.

VTS was able to vector SARA 3 on to the kayak in the area of Denny Island. Fortunately, the man himself had clung onto his craft; he was taken aboard SARA 3 and transported to Portishead where he was handed over to the care of Portishead RNLI and Coastguard. SARA Lifeboat 3 then continued a further search tasking before returning to Beachley. Super well done to the crew!

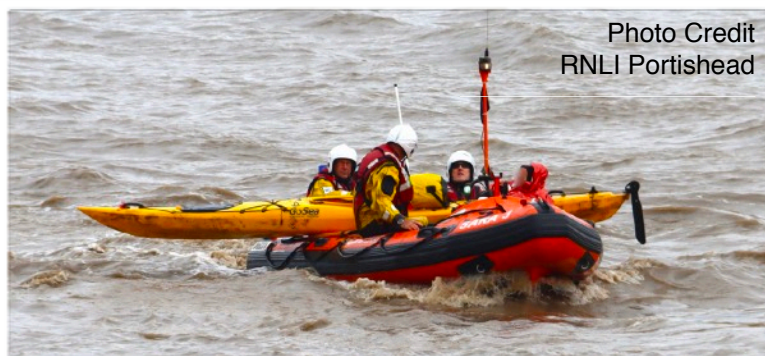


Photo Credit
RNLI Portishead

SARA Lifeboat 1 'The Jim Hewitt' was also involved in saving lives this summer, in this case a group of teenagers cut off by the tide on Lyde Rock (the gantry opposite the Old Ferry Inn Business Centre at Beachley). Realising they had been caught out by the height of the spring tide – at the place with the greatest tidal range in Europe – they had sensibly called 999.

Our land search team has been out too, supporting Missing People searches for Gloucestershire Police. Callouts have included ones to Minchinhampton, Gloucester itself a few times, Woodchester Mansion, Moreton Valence, Dumbleton (near Evesham), and to Chippenham in support of Wiltshire Search and Rescue.



There was even a callout in Chepstow at 1am one night, after a member of the public had called 999 concerned about lights seen in a quarry in Chepstow close to the Wye. Two members of our rope rescue team went to the location to investigate. The Coastguard Rescue Team confirmed that no-one needed any assistance, and that it had been a false alarm with good intent. And then there was the cow, read on for more details....!

A full list of our callouts is at www.sara-rescue.org.uk/callouts.



Exercise Rambo

A cliff edge...Two missing children...Blood pouring out an injured leg... Someone stuck in a tree...

No, this wasn't the latest blockbuster, but the précis of an exercise for SARA and the Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS). As might be the case on a real job, the specialist HART team paramedics were not available, so a paramedic and doctors from SARA provided the medical response. Simultaneous and co-ordinated activity was key in this multifaceted and time-pressured exercise at Woodcroft Quarry in the Wye Valley.

A team of SARA search team members hunted for the missing people, whilst GFRS and the SARA medical team dealt with the injured 'Mum'. There was constant communication to update the teams and use personnel effectively. GFRS and SARA then worked together to rescue the treebound casualty ('Dad') from the branches and move them up the cliff, utilising an arachnipod and people power to haul the stretcher over the cliff edge with an attendee.



Leadership roles were taken on by both SARA and GFRS with the teams integrating, particularly on the ropework, and a better understanding of the skills of both teams and stronger relationships were built for future callouts.

Oh and a learning point, always check if anyone is allergic to ketchup (especially if they are important people in the Fire Service team)!

Secretary of State Visit

In July Secretary of State for Transport Mark Harper visited SARA at Beachley to raise awareness of Drowning Prevention Week 2023.

We took him and one of his aides out on SARA Lifeboat 1, and talked to him about the work that we do with school and youth groups. Also, of course, we took full advantage of the opportunity to lobby him on a few important topics, not least our funding needs!



Chepstow Roman Bridge

In August a small team provided safety cover and other muddy assistance to a group from the Chepstow Archaeological Society, investigating the site of the Roman bridge across the Wye just above Chepstow Castle. There were amazing results, with the bridge foundations emerging from the mud after nearly 2000 years!

This followed a visit with the Archaeologists in May, in which we located the ruins and had a preliminary investigation. Both were arranged for the bottom of spring tides, to give the maximum exposure. This meant that both outings provided a lot of good training value for us, with boat handling in shallow and pretty fast moving water as well as operating in the mud, as well as helping with the archeology!



CYMRU KITCHENS
We'll fit... where others can't!

New Helm and Coxswain

In August we celebrated the promotions of two lifeboat crew. Mark Powell, who joined in 2019, is now a Lifeboat Helm, able to captain a lifeboat in daylight and in reasonable weather.

Dave Deveney, who joined in 2016 and has been a helm for over 2 years is now a Coxswain, our highest qualification meaning that he can take out a lifeboat in almost all conditions. Many congratulations to both!



SARA Coxswain Dave



SARA Helm Mark

Summer Fundraising

No SARA summer would be complete without a lot of fundraising activity, and its been great for our crew to be out meeting people and showing off some of our boats & rescue equipment.

Notable events have included the Caldicot Castle Emergency Services Day, the Wye July event and the Monmouthshire Show, along with lots of carnivals and fetes plus a concert in Usk by Monmouth Concert Orchestra

Thanks to all the team members who have supported these events, and event organisers and the generous public.



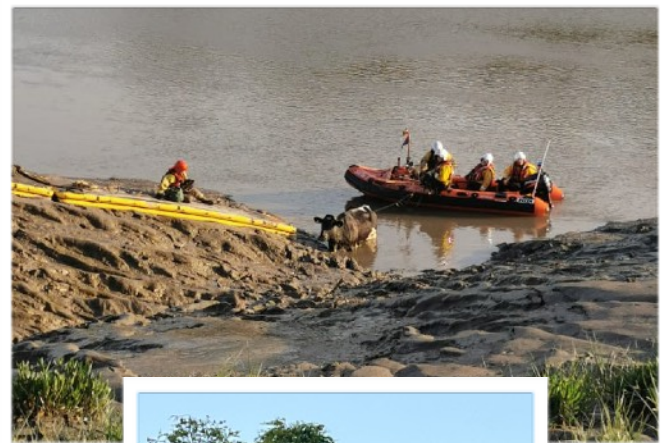
Rescuing Gertrude

One evening at the end of May we helped Gloucestershire Fire Service to rescue Gertrude the cow (probably not her real name), who had somehow ended up swimming in the Wye.

Lifeboat SARA 3 arrived on scene about 1840, and for an hour her crew coaxed Gertrude down the river to a gully where the fire team and the farmer were preparing to extract her. They set up a line of 3 mud platforms to aid access, as SARA 3 blocked the cow from leaving the gully. This inevitably resulted in the boat coming to rest *on* the mud, and Gertrude stuck *in* the mud.

After a long series of attempts, Gertrude was eventually and unceremoniously dragged up the mud by the farmer, helped out by Fire Service and SARA crew. She was obviously very exhausted, but, as they were leaving the scene with the sun having set, our crew members witnessed Gertrude sitting up, nosing with other members of her herd who had gathered round to welcome her back.

SARA 3, high on the mud at low water, was simply tied off to wait for the tide to rise. SARA 14 ferried the muddy crew back to Beachley and then helped to retrieve SARA 3 at about 0100, after she had been refloated.





A Monthly Donation?

SARA depends on donations. A small monthly donation would help us immensely!

What your monthly donation could provide each year:

£5 a month = a new water rescue helmet

£10 a month = lifeboat fuel for a month

£30 a month = a new drysuit for a rescuer

**To set up a monthly donation,
visit sara-rescue.org.uk/donate or
contact info@sara-rescue.org.uk**

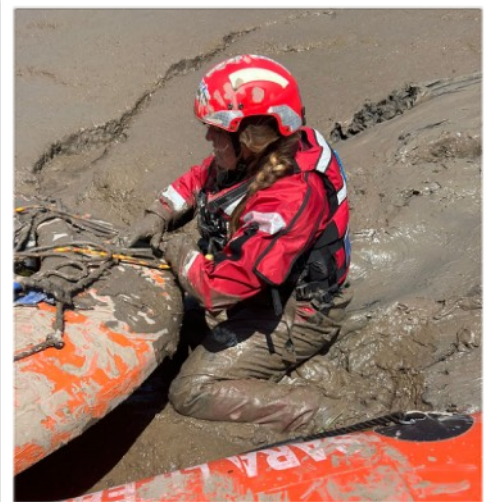
**Or set up a monthly payment from your
online banking using
Sort Code: 30-91-89; Acc 00365745
There is a Gift Aid Form on our website**

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And Finally...

What could be more fun for a training outing than crewing a boat from Beachley to Tintern and back, and getting thoroughly muddy along the way? This is one of last year's new recruits, who completed her land search training in December and her Swiftwater Rescue training in February, getting to grips with some of the more slippery aspects of SARA's operations back in June.



The Herbert Protocol

At SARA we are often asked to look for someone with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia. Our search is so much more effective if the person or their family has completed a **Herbert Protocol Form** about them in recent months.

If they do go missing their family can give the form to the Police officers or SARA, and it greatly helps us to find the person quickly.

You can read all about the form, and download a copy, from our website at:

www.sara-rescue.org.uk/herbert-protocol

THE HERBERT PROTOCOL
Safe & Sound

Herbert Protocol

SARA
Severn Area Rescue Association

PART 1

There may be important pieces of information that you are able to provide to the Police in the event that the person you are caring for has gone missing. Try and have several copies of recent, close up photographs of the person. This may help the Police when searching for them. The checklists below are important – but don't worry if you haven't all of the information that it asks for as it will not apply to everyone.

Fill in these sections and keep it in a safe place, where it can be easily located if the person that it refers to goes missing. You may want to make several copies which can be kept safe by neighbours or relatives. If you are concerned about the whereabouts of your friend/relative then you **MUST** call the Police on 999.

Full Name: _____
Preferred Name: _____
Preferred Language: _____
Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____
Ethnicity: _____
Gender: _____
Current Address: _____

ATTACH AN UP-TO-DATE PHOTO HERE
It may also be helpful if you have an old address

SARA (Severn Area Rescue Association) is a Registered Charity CIO in England & Wales No: 1193634*
Registered Address: The Lifeboat & Rescue Station, Beachley Road, Chepstow NP16 7HH

www.sara-rescue.org.uk

*Charity 505504 prior to 31 Dec 2021

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