

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 Usk, Wye, both Avons and other rivers as well as the Severn, and from the cliffs and other areas of difficult terrain, and conduct missing person searches in support of the Police. In 2023 SARA conducted 107 different operations. The team based at Beachley (near Chepstow) often works with teams and boats from other SARA stations as well as other agencies.

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

Operational Call-Outs

The second quarter of 2024 was - as usual - busy for the team, with a mix of outcomes for callouts and a busy programme of fundraising. Late May was dominated by the tragic search for local man Jake Jones, see story inside. There were several taskings for the land search team, including one in June which went on into the small hours just north of Gloucester, and not long afterwards another late-night callout to Edgehills in the Forest of Dean. Both of these resulted in the missing people being found safe.

There has been extensive training undertaken by the Rope Rescue Team this year, with instructor upgrade courses being followed by basic ('operator') and supervisor ('technician') level courses being delivered internally. No sooner had these finished than there were two callouts which required ropework in close succession, both to Wintours Leap. One was to rescue a fallen climber with an injured leg and the second to recover the body of a missing local man which had sadly been found during a search.

Searching at night,
helped by the
Coastguard helicopter!



A ropework setup at Wintours Leap, and a multi-agency debrief at the end of a job



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The Search for Jake

At 1800 on Monday 20 May, the Coastguard paged us to reports of a person in the water near Sedbury; Jake Jones. We launched SARA Lifeboat 1 within 10 minutes and began a search of the area. This was the start of a series of searches over the following week

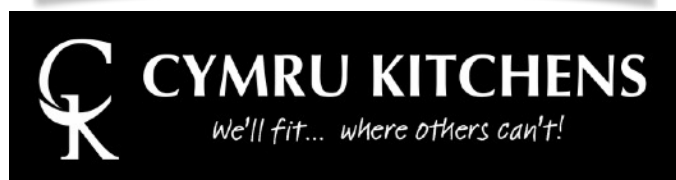
All three of the Beachley boats, and Newport's SARA 14, were involved at various times, along with our land search team. Chepstow Coastguard and Police drone and helicopters were also involved. On the Saturday we worked with colleagues from Lowland Rescue Oxfordshire, who brought their water search dog and advanced sonar. Extensive searches were conducted but nothing was found.

Sadly on the Sunday morning, we were paged to an area of the Severn just downriver from the mouth of the Wye. SARA Lifeboats 1 and 3 worked with Chepstow Coastguard to retrieve Jake's body, which was handed over to the police and ambulance service.

We are glad that we could help to bring this sad search to a conclusion, and our thoughts remain with Jake's family and friends.

Water Safety Talks

One of SARA's 'Charitable Objects' is to promote water safety, and we have been visiting schools across the area to educate children. If your organisation would like a talk, please get in touch!



Chris Greenaway!

In November a new appeal was started to raise money for a replacement lifeboat launch tractor for SARA Beachley. Thanks to the generosity of local people, organisations and businesses we have almost reached £30,000!

We are now looking closely at suitable machines that will serve us for the next 25 years as our current much-loved tractor goes into retirement, and at building a suitable 'garage' for it at Beachley.

Thank you to all who have contributed!!

A very special thanks goes to Chris Greenaway and his many supporters. Earlier this year Chris undertook to complete three massive challenges.

Training throughout the particularly wet winter, he started with the Worcester marathon, followed by The 3 Peaks just a week later (in 21hrs 44 mins). He finished up by completing the 100km Cotswold Ultra Marathon in June.



Chris decided to do all this in memory of his sister in law Emily. Emily suffered greatly and sadly took her own life, resulting in an extensive search to bring her back to her family. The SARA lifeboat team searched relentlessly for a number of days before she was located and recovered. Chris' monumental effort raised over £15,000 towards the new launch vehicle that will enable us to continue our work on the Severn Estuary.

SARA teams are all too often tasked to search for people in this situation. For the families involved it is an extremely distressing time and we rarely discuss our part in helping them come to terms with their loss. However, this is perhaps an opportunity to explain that we treat this part of our work extremely seriously, with sensitivity, dignity and professionalism. Doing our best to bring people back to their families is the least we can do in such sad circumstances.

On the Run from Hit-Men

Thurs 21 June was the longest evening of the year, with a late high tide, so it was an ideal opportunity for the lifeboat and land search teams at Beachley to work together on an amphibious missing person search exercise.

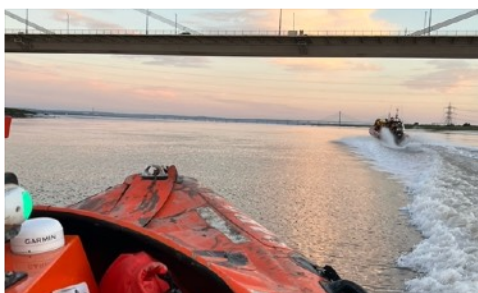
The exercise scenario was that the missing 75 year-old man had hidden in woods near Tintern as he was worried about a mysterious hit squad that he thought was looking for him. 'Exercise Police' had discounted this possibility, so we deployed 2 land search teams by lifeboat and a 3rd by road in order to try to find him.



They conducted a set of searches and found the 'exercise missing person' (one of our Ruth Lee dummies). He appeared to have been shot, or possibly stabbed with an umbrella, and blood / ketchup was oozing from his chest. The team had to attend to him whilst being mindful that it was a likely crime scene.



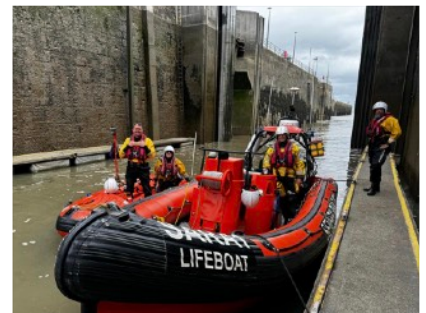
He was assessed and given immediate 'care', and extracted to the river bank, taken onto the smaller SARA Lifeboat 3 and from there onto SARA Lifeboat 1, which took them back to Beachley. Good training for trainee and operational lifeboat crew, land team members and a couple of trainee search party leaders.



In other Training

Our team generally trains twice a week, and this covers all our rescue disciplines. We have a cohort of Lifeboat Trainees getting up to speed, so their training has been a priority.

At the start of July they headed down to Portishead Marina (17 mins @ 30 knots) to practise mooring alongside pontoons under the watchful gaze of quite a few members of the public! The marina is an ideal place to practise manoeuvring, and raft-towing into the locks.



The trainees practise retrieving a casualty from the water, and occasionally something more tasty!



The Rope Team also had an outing to Avonmouth Docks, joining a challenge training event on one of the big cranes. Self-ascending 50m in free space is not for the fainthearted!



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The Golf Day

On Fri 27 Sept, we are hosting a Golf Day at the prestigious St Pierre Old Course outside Chepstow, as part of our fundraising for the new Launch Tractor and its garage.

It's for teams of 4 with great prizes for the best individual and best team rounds. There are other fun competitions to enter and prizes to be won, eg hole in one, nearest the pin and the longest drive. There is a 2 course post-match meal, as well as coffee & bacon roll on arrival.

It's great value at £65 / person – £260 / team.

Reserve your place now by contacting mary.miller@sara-rescue.org.uk or calling 0787941359.

Fundraising thanks!

As well as the amazing work towards the Launch Tractor, our regular fundraising has been going well. We need to generate something like £50,000 year just to keep the Beachley operation running, never mind the rest of SARA.

In May, we organised the Devauden Races for the first time, and later on ran a sponsored abseil at Woodcroft Quarry - many thanks to Borderlands Outdoor for helping with that! Then at the start of June we had our Annual Duck Race in Chepstow (sponsored by Jewson) followed by the unique Wild Wye SwimRun.



We've also been fortunate to have received many grants and donations, such as this one from the team at 3 Hill Street, Lydney! Thank you everyone for your support! It really does help.





SARA
Severn Area Rescue Association
Beachley Launch Tractor Appeal

FRIDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

4 BALL COMPETITION AT ST. PIERRE OLD COURSE, CHEPSTOW

- Welcome coffee, bacon buttie and post round meal
- Teams of 4 with great prizes for best individual and team rounds
- Fantastic value at only £65/person or £260/team
- Nearest the pin, hole in one and other fun competitions

NOW BOOKING

CONTACT
mary.miller@sara-rescue.org.uk



The Cause

£30,000 is needed to replace the lifeboat launch vehicle at Beachley. This is essential to enable SARA to continue its work keeping people safe on the Severn Estuary

More information at www.sara-rescue.org.uk and <https://www.sara-rescue.org.uk/lifeboat-launch-tractor/>
SARA (Severn Area Rescue Association) Registered Charity CIO in England & Wales No: 1193634 HQ: The Lifeboat & Rescue Station, Beachley Road, Chepstow NP16 7HH



A Monthly Donation?

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

Just email info@sara-rescue.org.uk to request a standing order form.

Please don't forget to tick the 'Gift Aid' box!

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www.sara-rescue.org.uk

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