

Operational Activities

Our teams have been successfully deployed on land and water over the summer

The boats have been busy over the summer months with a series of rescues of small craft. One drifting boat which was recovered appeared to have just come loose and been floated by the tide, but another drifting boat had 3 crew aboard and had suffered engine failure. A third small boat had engine failure at night in a heavy sea, and the single occupant – who had no lights, buoyancy aid or communications – was very lucky to be rescued before his boat was swamped. The Beachley boats also cooperated with RNLI Portishead on an operation in which two yachts had run aground; both yachts were successfully refloated, and escorted to Portishead and Sharpness respectively.



Beachley's land search team has also supported Gloucestershire Police with two short and successful operations, and another which continued for several days. For that search the SARA teams were joined by Longtown Mountain Rescue Team and the Search and Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA South Wales), as well as a number of Police Officers in joint search parties.

The SARA Beachley team has also been called out or stood-to for both mud rescue and cliff rescue tasks, which were then safely resolved without the need for SARA.

Cliff and Boat Rescue Exercise

A wide range of SARA capabilities were tested with a full training exercise in July in the Lower Wye Valley. The scenario was that a climber was injured high on 'Fly Wall' in Woodcroft Quarry near Tidenham. All Beachley crew were called out from home and responded in real time.

The first crewman was lowered down to the 'casualty' (Bob, the station's full size rescue mannequin) and found a note explaining his injuries. Having assessed the situation the casualty was 'picked off' and lowered to the base of the cliff where he was given first aid by another SARA Team.

Due to the difficult terrain, the SARA lifeboat was launched from Beachley. The casualty was stretchered away from the cliff and carried across the rocks down to the river, transferred to the lifeboat and whisked back to Chepstow - where in real life an ambulance would have been waiting.



Rope Rescue Training

One of the roles of the SARA Beachley Station is Cliff Rescue in the Lower Wye Valley. Following the conclusion of the Land Search training in April, Mark Carwardine led a short and intensive Rope Rescue training course in June.

Over the course of 3 sessions, crew from both Beachley and Tewkesbury learned how to lower and raise each other, pick an injured climber off a wall, and how to rig and manoeuvre a stretcher on very steep ground. High above the tourist boats at Symonds Yat and at Wyntours Leap, they practiced setting up reliable anchor systems, and then in a wooded ravine they set up a cable-way, to raise up a stretcher from the gully and bring it out horizontally.



There was then an intensive evening of testing all the different skills, in and around Beachley Station. As a result, 8 more crew are now qualified as Rope Rescue Operators.

At the same time our good links with Gloucester Cave Rescue Group (GCRG) have been further enhanced. Beachley personnel have been to their depot in Cinderford twice to train on their Larkin Frame, a handy piece of kit for executing cliff rescues where a stretcher has to be raised, and which is on call should Beachley need it.



SARA 14 Maureen Easton

Work has been proceeding rapidly on the new designated lifeboat for the Newport Station, to be known as SARA 14 'The Maureen Easton'. The SARA team has continued to work with their counterparts at Delta Marine. A party from SARA visited Delta on 15 September, with some of Maureen's family, and everyone was delighted with the new boat which is now almost complete.



The official dedication of the new boat is now planned for Saturday 22 October, in Newport.

First Aid Safety Cover

The summer months are also busy ones for providing First Aid and safety cover for major sporting events in the area. SARA's capabilities made it ideal for supporting the Monmouth Aquathlon in July, and the Monmouth Raft Race in September, with safety teams on land, on the river bank and on the water for both events.



The SARA team also supported the Severn Bridge Half Marathon, running directly above the Beachley Station!

The M48 Severn Bridge is 50 years old this year. SARA provided safety supervision and display facilities for the 50th Anniversary celebrations on September 8th as well as hosting an evening screening of vintage films illustrating the bridge's construction and history.

August SRT Exercise

Sunday 21 August saw Swift Water Rescue Teams from Beachley and Sharpness Stations gather for a real-time exercise. The first callout required a search in and around a pond at Newport Sports Village. 'Bob', (the mannequin) had been hidden in the reeds. His demise did not seem entirely natural and the team had to practice Scenes of Crime procedures.

Meanwhile, on the Ebbw River at Bassaleg, a live human 'casualty' was taking up residence on a small islet downstream of the weir, having 'fallen' from the by-pass bridge. Teams had just one hour from arrival to plan and execute the rescue. An imminent exercise tidal surge added urgency but both teams successfully achieved the aim.

The final element of the exercise took place further up the Ebbw at Risca. The teams were amalgamated to rescue a kayak pinned against a rock by the fast flowing water. Time was of the essence and dear old 'Bob' was once again in grave danger.

The kayak was quickly tethered and brought to the riverside for 'Bob' to be recovered on a stretcher and safely handed over to waiting exercise paramedics.

The exercise was a great success, not only due to the excellent planning by Richard Dainty, but also due to the ingenious deployment of skills shown by the crew taking part.



Off to Sandhurst

SARA is delighted that one of the Beachley Crew has been selected for Army Officer training and is off to Sandhurst in May. Aidan Welch, who is 19, joined SARA in October 2015.



He has qualified as operational crew for land, rope and swift water rescue and has been involved in a number of land searches as well as two major swift-water related exercises. It will be a shame to see him go but we wish him well!

SUPPORTERS OF SARA (SOS)

The Supporters of SARA help out on fundraising stands around the area and the team continues to grow.

We are still recruiting for new Supporters – if you have a few weekend days to spare and would like to help us to raise the money we need we would love to hear from you!

Please email beachley.fundraiser@sara-rescue.org.uk for more information.



Family fun at the Duck Race in August



THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

Our collecting tins continue to bring in a steady flow of necessary funding toward our operational costs.

Whilst “every penny counts” is an often used and familiar quotation, we are acutely aware that SARA Beachley’s annual operational overheads exceed £40,000.

We are very grateful to all who have contributed toward our vital work

Donate @ Just Giving

As a charity SARA depends on donations.

To donate to SARA, please visit:

www.justgiving.com/sara-rescue/Donate

Don't forget to tick the 'Gift Aid' box so that we can claim an additional 25% of your gift back from the tax-man!

Recycle 4 Charity

Over £1,000,000 donations to more than 5,000 Charities!

Do you have
Empty Inkjet Cartridges & Old Mobile Phones?



Recycle them to raise funds for:
Severn Area Rescue Association

SARA

£1.00
donated per
usable inkjet from
the wanted list

50%
of mobile phone
market value
donated up to £70



Recycle your Laser/Toner Cartridges through ZeroWasteRecycling.co.uk!

www.recycle4charity.co.uk | 01273 400 185 | info@recycle4charity.co.uk

OR SIMPLY CALL IN AND COLLECT FROM
THE LIFEBOAT AND RESCUE STATION, BEACHLEY, CHEPSTOW NP16 7HH



The Swift Water Rescue Team deploys on exercise at Risca



SARA Lifeboat 1 'The Jim Hewitt' in action on the River Wye
(Photo courtesy of Steve Phillips)

SARA (Severn Area Rescue Association) is a U.K. Registered Charity No: 505504
Registered Address: The Lifeboat & Rescue Station, Beachley Road, Chepstow NP16 7HH
General Enquiries 03488 460 226 (IN EMERGENCY DIAL 999 or 112)