



THE  
FISHERMEN'S  
MISSION

# NETWORK



SUMMER 2025

# One-in-ten-thousand

**Seafarers will tell you about the one-in-ten-thousand wave. It is a vicious wave, a violent wave, a damaging wave. Fishermen pray it never comes their way.**

For Mudeford fisherman Peter Dadds, those remote odds became reality. On a relatively calm day, that malevolent wave suddenly rose seven meters out of the sea to crash with devastating effect onto his boat.

Peter recounts the moment:

“It looked like the entire horizon was coming for us. The noise was deafening – like a freight train bearing down on our small boat. We only had seconds to play with and desperately tried to manoeuvre the boat out of the wave’s path but there was no escape. A solid wall of freezing water engulfed us, tossing the boat upside down. I was forcibly dragged under the sea, cutting my head open when colliding with the winch on the way down.

“Underwater, my lifejacket automatically inflated helping me to rise to the surface. The sea around us was now a foaming white maelstrom. I saw our capsized boat but sheer dread gripped me as I couldn’t see my crewmate. He was stuck in the wheelhouse as the boat upturned.



To my overwhelming relief, after twenty seconds or so, he bobbed up from underneath the boat.

“Together we swam to the capsized hull and helped each other out of the water. Sitting on the upturned hull we were in shock, soaked to the skin and freezing cold. All we could do now was float on the tide, hoping someone would see us. As the hours passed, I thought about my beautiful young daughter and how close I had come to never seeing her again. Eventually, after four freezing hours, a passing yacht spotted us and alerted the RNLI.”

**As Pete told us his story, he stopped many times as the trauma of that day played out in his memories. His crewmate still has nightmares. Fishing really is like no other job. Please donate generously today to ensure the Fishermen’s Mission can be there for our fishermen when that one-in-ten-thousand wave comes along.**



Peter returns home after a day at sea

“It looked like the entire horizon was coming for us. The noise was deafening – like a freight train bearing down on our small boat.”



# One fisherman's journey

Serving at the heart of our fishing communities is something the Fishermen's Mission prides itself on. Responding to emergencies or facilitating longer-term support, we are alongside our fishermen as the stories of their lives unfold.

Photo Courtesy of Kevin Ritch, Shetland



Peter with Suesan Brown

“We chatted things through, and I explained to Peter the support the Fishermen's Mission provided. Working with our maritime partner charities, we facilitated grants to wipe out his debts and cover life's essential costs.”

**Like waves breaking on the bow of a fishing boat, our care for a family can be ever-changing, but journeying with them is what matters.**

**Grimsby Fishermen's Mission Port Officer Suesan Brown, tells us about Peter:**

“I first met Peter when we were supporting his fisherman dad, Peter senior. I'd see him and his wife Dale at various events, and Peter had long been involved in planning a memorial bench for fishermen lost in conflict. However, it was still a shock when Peter approached me in July 2024 with news of a cancer diagnosis.

“We chatted things through, and I explained to Peter the support the Fishermen's Mission provided. Working with our maritime partner charities, we facilitated grants to wipe out his debts and cover life's essential costs. This allowed Peter to focus all his energy on dealing with his illness.

“Peter responded well to treatment and by March of this year he was planning a return to work. Our care changed to a pastoral role – remaining alongside him and Dale.

“In early April, Dale informed me Peter had been laid low with an infection that had turned to sepsis. Tragically, a few days later, just before he turned 67, Peter passed away.



Chloe and Dale

“My care now turned to Dale, their daughter Chloe, and the grandchildren.

Losing Peter so suddenly was profoundly shocking. They were struggling to make sense of it all. It is my privilege to visit the family often, embracing their tears and smiles, recalling memories and sharing bittersweet stories of a well-loved man.

“I was honoured to arrange and take Peter's funeral, and the journey continues with Dale as I will now apply for a regular Biannual Grant for Dale from the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society.”

**Supporting our fishermen and their loved ones through the chapters of life's story can only continue with your help. Please donate today to ensure we will always be able to ride the storms of life with them.**



# Always remembered, always in our hearts



NATIONAL FISHING  
REMEMBRANCE DAY

11th May 2025

“The Service was very moving especially being outside on the pier where you could throw a rose in the water in memory of your loved one. I felt it showed recognition and respect for the dangerous job of our fishermen.”

Such was the scene in 34 ports around the UK coastline as the second National Fishing Remembrance Day was held on Sunday, 11th May 2025. From Lerwick in Shetland to Brixham in Devon, this was a day for reflection and commemoration. Families and friends joined together with many from local fishing communities and the wider fishing industry to movingly pay tribute to those who have paid the ultimate price to bring home the catch.

National Fishing Remembrance Day is a joint initiative between the Fishermen’s Mission, The Seafarers’ Charity, Stella Maris, Seafish and the Maritime Coastguard Agency. Marc Evans, Fishermen’s Mission Chief Executive, comments:

“There is a strong partnership between the charities and agencies that support fishing, and once again we have come together to conduct this important day

Bright spring sunshine fell across quayside fishing memorials as flowers were laid or floated away on the tide. In fishing churches, choirs sang and prayers were said, whilst bagpipes played their lament as the names of the lost were remembered.

of remembrance for the families and communities who have lost their loved one whilst working at sea.”

In Scotland, the service at Peterhead saw Karen Adam, MSP for Banffshire and Buchan Coast, say these words:

“Fishing is more than an industry here, it’s our heritage, our lifeblood and our identity. Behind every boat is a family, a community, and generations of skill, bravery and sacrifice. As we gather to remember, we stand in solidarity with all those who have felt the pain of loss, and we give thanks to those who risk everything to feed the nation.”

**Throughout our 144-year history, the Fishermen’s Mission has shared in the highs and lows of our fishing communities - celebrating the good days but never forgetting the tragic days. Every fisherman lost is always remembered, always in our hearts.**



Grimsby retired fishermen remember lost crewmates



Handmade memorials to loved ones at Newhaven



Fishermen’s Mission Area Officer Jackie Dodds leads the service in Wick, Caithness

**“The event was a wonderful tribute to our fishermen, and it’s great to think this will be an annual event. Your organisation is a real credit to fishermen throughout the UK, and given faith is at its heart makes it even more special.”**



“The remembrance service for lost fishermen was a poignant reminder of the danger faced by fishermen every day as they work to provide food for the country.”



C Aware is a joint initiative between the Fishermen's Mission and Macmillan Cancer Care that engages with fishing communities to raise awareness of cancer symptoms, treatment, aftercare, and encourages early cancer screening.



**Fishermen face unique risks in their work and lifestyle that can increase their likelihood of developing cancer. A North Shields fisherman shares his story with us:**

"I was on the quayside sorting the catch when a C Aware Cancer Champion stopped for a chat. He was distributing mole checker cards which help you spot early signs of skin cancer. I'd recently noticed some changes to a mole on my arm. After a chat with the Cancer Champion, I went to see my GP where I was given the all clear. I now understand the risks of being out at sea and having to protect my skin."

**Deb Johnstone, C Aware Cancer Community Programme Manager, comments:**

"This story is a powerful reminder of the difference early cancer screening can make - and the impact of community engagement. Cancer Champions play a crucial role in encouraging people to check for signs of cancer and seek early cancer screening. This fisherman has since signed up to be a Cancer Champion.

"In the past year C Aware has made a huge impact. We have delivered cancer information through face-to-face conversations, social media, promotional materials, focus groups, social events and our podcast.

C Aware has also responded to fishermen by providing cancer information on their own cancer concerns.


Working with health partners, we arranged cancer awareness sessions on testicular, lung and bowel cancer signs and symptoms, and

how to use bowel cancer screening kits. Our Cancer Champions have also supported the NHS Health Literacy Team with the redesign of hospital appointment letters to make them easier to understand.

**"By engaging directly with fishermen, the Fishermen's Mission C Aware team are breaking down barriers and reducing healthcare inequality in our fishing communities - and that is very good news!"**



**You can discover more about the difference C Aware is making by visiting the C Aware Facebook page.**

 /FishMishCAware

[www.fishermensmission.org.uk/c-aware](http://www.fishermensmission.org.uk/c-aware)



**John - Fisherman**

"Hi, my name is John, and I am a former fisherman. I was worried about a mole that had changed colour but had put off getting it checked. After attending a skin cancer awareness session, I saw my GP and the hospital who confirmed a melanoma which has now been surgically removed. I'm so thankful and relieved for the awareness raised through the C Aware Team."



**Elle Charlton - C Aware Cancer Community Engagement Officer**

"Hello, I'm Elle. My role is to understand the fishing community and build meaningful connections with local providers who can offer cancer awareness and support. I create resources and organise bespoke events to provide cancer awareness for fishermen and their families in their own community. It's been great to get to know the fishing community here and to break down the stigmas around

talking about cancer. People have been so responsive and knowing we are making a difference means everything."



**Danielle Murray - C Aware Cancer Community Volunteer Lead**

"Hi, I'm Danielle. I am the C Aware Cancer Community Volunteer Lead. I promote the C Aware Cancer Champion role alongside identifying and recruiting Cancer Champions. We have now successfully recruited 48 Cancer Champions from across the fishing community. C Aware aims to normalise talking about cancer and to encourage early cancer screening. Our Cancer Champions fulfil this role through sharing 'light touch' cancer awareness with their friends, families and colleagues."



**Norman - Cancer Champion**

"Hello, I'm Norman and I am a C Aware Cancer Champion. C Aware has given me the platform to speak with medical professionals to ask and get answers on a variety of cancer questions. This opportunity has increased my knowledge on what to look for with my own body. It has helped me and my friends in a very real way as I now share cancer information with them from the C Aware cancer awareness sessions I have attended. I really can't think of a stronger motivation than that to be a Cancer Champion."



**Scan the QR code to check out our C Aware 'Reeling in Cancer Awareness' podcast.**



**Carol Elliott - SeaFit Manager** describes a typical event:

“From early in the morning the quayside is buzzing. Fishermen returning from a night fishing or preparing for their day at sea ahead are soon engaging with local health care providers and Fishermen’s Mission Port staff. Fishermen can get a full M.O.T. taking in NHS health checks and screening, quayside dentistry, and physiotherapy as well as picking up healthy living and wellbeing tips and advice.

“Every event is different, and we can trial new services to see how they impact the fishing community. Recently we’ve started working with the Royal National Institute for Deaf People who are conducting hearing checks. Fishermen have a higher than national average rate of hearing loss which isn’t surprising given the working conditions at sea.

“It’s just great to hear the good-natured banter amongst the fishermen alongside the more serious discussions about their own health and wellbeing. Many will not have visited a doctor or dentist for years. Generally, fishermen find it hard to ask for help. Even though they may appear to be tough and resilient they often suffer through carrying on fishing despite illness and injury. Seeing them finally getting assessment and treatment for long-term health concerns is very moving.”

Life as a commercial fisherman is both mentally and physically demanding. Fishermen need to be on the top of their game to bring home the catch. The Fishermen’s Mission, in partnership with the Seafarers Hospital Society, gives fishermen a helping hand through award-winning SeaFit events. By taking health services directly to the quayside, SeaFit provides healthcare solutions to the marginalised in our fishing communities.



SeaFit health and dental checks



SeaFit is going from strength to strength and now has events running across the UK. The numbers below show the difference SeaFit has made in the past year - and each one is a reflection of a fisherman’s life improved.

- 2,140** Engagements with healthy lifestyle advisors
- 245** Health checks
- 165** Health checks at quayside events
- 76** Dental checks
- 234** Mental health counselling sessions
- 474** Physio sessions
- 57** Events in **18** ports



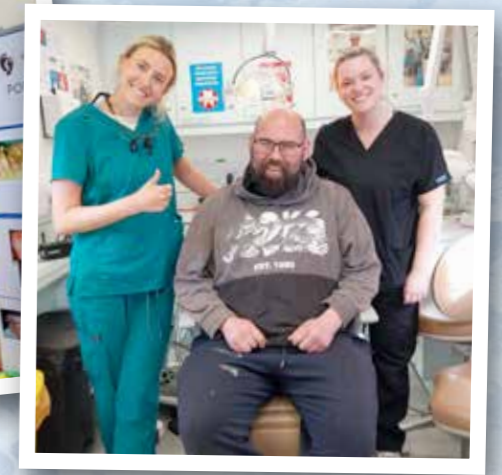
**Charlotte Boddy - Female Fisherman**

“I found the event at Bridlington quayside to be beneficial, particularly Dentaid, as I had been struggling with toothache for some time. It is a much-needed service judging by the number of people who turned up. Thank you for the service I received, I am now pain-free.”



**John White - Fisherman**

“The Seafit events are a great opportunity for fishermen to access all sorts of health and wellbeing support. Since SeaFit has been coming to Bridlington harbour I have accessed dental, NHS health checks, physio, and mental health support. I’ve also been spreading the word of the great support on offer to my crew and fellow fishermen. We struggle to access NHS services with being out at sea, so with it being on our doorstep it is a no-brainer.”



**Essential healthcare and quayside services are only possible with your support. Please donate today to enable us to continue.**

# We care, because you care

**The articles in this Network, and previous editions, are all true stories reflecting the many and varied issues faced by our fishermen. For them, no two days are the same.**

It could start normally; they've said goodbye to their family – maybe giving their children a hug - and headed out to sea. But tragically, something has happened that fateful day, changing their life – perhaps for ever.

It might be a serious injury, meaning they can no longer fish and earn a living. But who pays the bills, puts food on the table?

Fishing boats are lost at sea, occasionally with the loss of life. Such events have a profound and lasting impact on families and entire communities. Who can support them at this time?

Thankfully, our caring, professional and knowledgeable Port staff are there to help rebuild the lives of those affected.

This vital work is made possible thanks to the generosity of people like you leaving a gift in their will to the Fishermen's Mission. Maybe this is something you might consider, please?

**For more information about leaving a gift in your will, and how you can do this for free, please contact Andy Perry, Legacy Manager, in confidence on 01489 566922 or email [andyperry@fishermensmission.org.uk](mailto:andyperry@fishermensmission.org.uk)**



Photo Courtesy of Kevin Ritch, Shetland

## Some of the ways you can help us

### Make a donation

■ We receive no government funding or lottery support so every single donation makes a real difference to us. You can make a donation by calling **FREEPHONE 0800 6341020** or donate online at: **[www.fishermensmission.org.uk](http://www.fishermensmission.org.uk)** or post a cheque to our address shown below.

**You can set up a regular gift online or use the enclosed gift form.**

### Become a volunteer

■ We are always grateful for the help given to us by our dedicated volunteers. If you can spare a few hours each month please call us for a chat on: **FREEPHONE 0800 6341020** or email: **[enquiries@fishermensmission.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@fishermensmission.org.uk)**

### Pray for the ministry of the Fishermen's Mission

■ You can download our Prayer Calendar at [www.fishermensmission.org.uk/prayercalendar/](http://www.fishermensmission.org.uk/prayercalendar/)

### Remember us in your will

■ Everyone wants to ensure that friends and family are well provided for when you are writing or updating your will. By including even a small gift to the Fishermen's Mission you can make a life-changing difference for fishermen and their families.

If you would like our 'Guide to Gifts in Wills' booklet call: **FREEPHONE 0800 6341020** or email: **[andyperry@fishermensmission.org.uk](mailto:andyperry@fishermensmission.org.uk)**

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