



140

THE FISHERMEN'S MISSION

140 YEARS SERVING FISHERMEN & THEIR FAMILIES

Spring 2021

network

The Newsletter of the Fishermen's Mission

A life at sea
It's in the blood



Providing a lifeline of welfare and support to fishermen and their families

Diamonds are Forever

North Shields Fish Quay

“As the boat went down, I made it to the life raft. I looked around and saw Lee floating towards me, his life jacket had kept him on top of the water. I grabbed him and pulled him out of the sea. Without our life jackets we would not have made it.”

Alisdair W. CC BY-SA 3.0 - <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/> - via Wikimedia Commons

The words of Colin Graham, crew member and owner of the Diamond D. His North Shields prawn boat was fishing eighteen miles off the Tyneside coast when adversity struck. A large boulder had stuck in the nets and was hauled up on deck. The Diamond D suddenly became dangerously unstable. With the merciless sea pounding the decks, the vessel was soon overwhelmed. Within minutes the Diamond D had sunk.

Colin and his crew mate Lee plunged into the treacherous waves, desperately scrambling into a life raft as their boat sunk beneath them. Thankfully, they were wearing Fishermen’s Mission & Seafish supplied life jackets.



Diamond D owner Colin Graham (seated) with Skipper Lee Donnison (right) and Peter Dade, North Shields Fishermen’s Mission

As they hit the water their Emergency Position Indicator Radio Beacon was activated, alerting the Humber coastguard who initiated a search and rescue operation. The crew spent a terrifying hour in their life raft, adrift in the icy North Sea, before the Tynemouth lifeboat arrived.

Boat owner Colin Graham comments:

“There is no doubt that wearing our life jackets saved our lives. Seven years ago, when I visited the North Shields Fishermen’s Mission Office to pick up the life jackets, I clearly remember saying that we would never need to use these for real!”

Peter Dade, Mission Area Officer for the Fishermen’s Mission in North Shields comments:

“Fishing is the most dangerous peacetime job in the UK. Although our joint education and life jacket distribution programme with Seafish

happened years ago, the benefits are both long lasting and lifesaving.”

After a medical check-up, the crew were returned home where Peter Dade continued to care for them, as he explains here:

“As well as the physical and emotional trauma of shipwreck, there is also economic damage inflicted as livelihoods are lost and precious equipment too. I secured grants from the Seafarers Hospital Society and the Shipwrecked Mariners’ Society to replace the guys’ essential fishing gear like welly boots and oilskins. It means this stricken crew can get back to fishing as soon as possible.”

Fishing is the most dangerously unpredictable job there is. We can only help our fishermen prepare for the worst at sea with your help. Please donate today to save lives at sea.



Photo © Ashley Lightfoot (cc-by-sa/2.0)



The Diamond D heads for sea

Colin Graham

The **Agony** of loss

In the early hours of November 21st 2020 the Brixham trawler Joanna C sunk with the loss of two fishermen, Adam Harper and Rob Morley. A third crew member, Dave Bickerstaff, was rescued after spending hours in the water. Fishing communities are hit hardest when a boat is lost, when loved ones, friends, and colleagues don't come home. Helen Lovell from the Brixham Fishermen's Mission shares a personal reflection on this tragedy.

"I vividly remember that morning when I heard the Joanna C BM265 had been lost off Newhaven. I knew one of the crew, Adam Harper, and the boat was owned by my cousin's family. It soon became clear how painful the loss was for the close-knit fishing communities of Brixham and Newhaven. A stark reminder for us all of the true cost of bringing home the catch.

My weekend was spent engaging with fishermen who needed support and wanted to express their sadness. Over the following days I reached out to fishing families who have previously lost loved ones at sea. Most importantly, my colleagues and I were there for the families of Adam and Rob, in the agony of sudden loss and in preparing them, and their children, for the long haul ahead.

The Fishermen's Mission holds the privacy of next of kin as a priority. I was able to deflect the growing media attention on the families by talking generally about our work and asking people to pray for the lost fishermen.



The Man & Boy statue Brixham, bedecked with tributes



Helen Lovell, Brixham Fishermen's Mission

Our Brixham office was inundated with cards, letters, and donations for the families affected. My colleague Sarah Dorsett laid a floral tribute from the Fishermen's Mission.

Thankfully, both Rob and Adam's bodies have now been recovered. I had the honour of conducting Adam's private family funeral. As Adam made his final trip down the quay, the Brixham trawlers sounded their horns in respect. I joined with fishermen from Newhaven to attend the family wreath-laying at the Man & Boy statue, which has become a focal point for people to share their sorrow.

I will reflect on this time with great poignancy. So many people felt the loss of Adam and Rob deeply whilst keeping Dave and the families in their prayers. My residing memory of Adam is seeing him smiling on a sunny summer evening at Brixham breakwater, talking about his beloved Liverpool Football Club, fishing, and being content in the beauty of nature surrounding him."



Tributes to Rob and Adam at Newhaven

Gifts in Wills can have such a positive impact on the lives of hardworking fishermen who run into difficulty. This is Tom's story...

Tom's Story

Tom Parker is 33 and lives with his fiancé Vicki and Jacob, their eight-year-old son in Brixham, Devon. He has been a share fisherman for 16 years, working in all areas of commercial fishing including trawling, netting and crabbing.

Using compensation money received from a motorbike accident, Tom decided to follow his dreams and buy his own boat. He'd not long been the proud owner of the Kendore, fishing vessel FH258, when the Covid-19 pandemic struck.

The nationwide lockdown meant the registration for Tom's vessel was delayed so he was unable to fish. This had a significant effect on the family's income. Paying essential household bills and even buying enough food became almost impossible.



The Kendore sits proudly at Brixham Harbour

After being told that the family did not qualify for Universal Credit, and with their situation becoming more desperate, Tom contacted the Brixham Fishermen's Mission after finding the contact details online.

Brixham's welfare team quickly referred Tom to the local food bank and arranged support from our

maritime partners so the family could buy essential clothing and keep the heating on. Tom's son also received a laptop from the Royal Merchant Navy Education Foundation to help with his home learning during lockdown.

As lockdown was lifted, a boat blessing service was held by Helen Lovell from the Brixham Fishermen's Mission and Tom headed out to sea. Following a long-held tradition, the first box of fish landed from Tom's boat was auctioned off for the Fishermen's Mission. Tom comments:

"I was delighted to give something back to the Fishermen's Mission. They have been amazingly supportive to me and my family. There were times when I felt like I had made the wrong decision to purchase my boat or that I was doing wrong by my family. But the Fishermen's Mission made me feel that there were options and strategies available to make this all less stressful. They gave me confidence and faith in myself and my choices."

Supporting young fishermen like Tom, and his family, is only possible with your help. Leaving a gift in your will is an excellent way to support our work, allowing your donation to live on for many years to come. For more information, please call Sophie, in complete confidence, on 01489 566922 or email her at SophieDavies@fishermensmission.org.uk



The Kendore is blessed with the Parker family and Helen Lovell from Brixham Fishermen's Mission



Jacob works the winch!

It's in the **blood**

Fishing is like no other job. Often the knowledge, skills, and wisdom essential for a life at sea are passed down through the generations, making it more a way of life than a simple occupation.

That is certainly true along the south coast of England as Daniel Huff, the Fishermen's Mission Port Officer covering Eastbourne, Newhaven, Brighton, and Shoreham comments:

"Many fishing families here go back centuries. It's fair to say that the fishermen here share one thing in common – a true love and dedication to fishing through the good times and the bad."

Recently Daniel has been supporting a fisherman whose fishing heritage spans many generations. Daniel tells us his story:

"Chris Leach belongs to a long line of fishermen who can trace their roots back to the Doomsday Book! He remembers going fishing with his dad, aged six, and has vivid memories of hauling the day's catch up Shoreham beach by hand.



Chris Leach with Daniel Huff on a socially-distanced visit

Chris's 50-year fishing career came to an abrupt halt in April 2020 when he was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer. Surgery was not an option and Chris had to undergo an intense period of chemotherapy and radiotherapy."

As illness robbed him of his livelihood, life suddenly became very bleak for Chris. Thankfully, a fellow net mender urged his friend to contact the Fishermen's Mission. Daniel explains how we helped:

"Immediately we reassured Chris that we were alongside him and could help practically, emotionally, and



Daniel Huff, Fishermen's Mission Port Officer covering Eastbourne, Newhaven, Brighton, and Shoreham

financially. We sourced grants from the Seafarers Hospital Society and the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, meaning the mortgage was covered for the next four months. That had a huge effect on how Chris approached his cancer treatment. He could now concentrate on getting better rather than worrying about his mortgage payments."

Daniel kept in weekly contact with Chris, and as Daniel explains, there is hope on the horizon:

"I am pleased to report that Chris has made a full recovery and is back fishing at sea part-time when his health allows. Chris and his family are very grateful for the help they received from the Fishermen's Mission during this time. For me it is an honour to serve our fishing families when the storms of life blow in."

The Fishermen's Mission have been caring for fishermen like Chris for 140 years, but our future is in your hands. Please donate today and allow us to continue serving UK fishermen for generations to come.



Chris Leach mending nets during his recovery



Ciaran & Ronan McHugh delivering Christmas goodies to Tron migrant fishermen, celebrating Christmas thousands of miles from home. Thanks to the McHugh family for their kindness!



Fishermen's widow Maureen with her dog Candy. Maureen expressed her thanks, saying: "It helps and it's the thought that counts. It's been a horribly tough time and I've only been out twice a year."



Michael and Scott, fishermen from Amble, were delighted to receive some Christmas delights to keep them warm through this harsh winter.

Winter Warmers

Christmas 2020 was very different for everyone. Lockdown prevented many from meeting family and friends. Thanks to your support, the Fishermen's Mission were able to bring some festive hope. Very generous donations from Seafood and Eat it, Lands End, Yorkshire Tea, the McHugh family in Tron, the Newcastle Mothers' Union and others allowed us to deliver some joy to our fishing communities. On behalf of them all, a heartfelt THANK YOU!



Jack, a 23-year-old seventh-generation fisherman, lost his leg to cancer two years ago. He is a great inspiration to all in the Bridlington fishing community.



Gemma's partner Peter died at sea in 2019 leaving two very young children behind. Peter loved everything about fishing, the camaraderie and freedom. He fished from a very young age with his dad. It was in his blood. For Gemma, the pain of losing Peter is still very raw and this act of kindness means a lot.



Retired fisherman David lives alone on the south Cornish coast. He remembers the good times of fishing, the good catches and fun stories. The hamper is a welcome Christmas kindness for David as this time of year brings back sad memories of losing loved ones.



Sid is a static net fisherman. During lockdown he supplied fish for vulnerable people within his community. He also looked after his crew and ensured their wages were maintained when they could not fish.



Charlotte is the only female fisherman in the Whitby area and is carer for her disabled father who is a former fisherman. She was overwhelmed to receive the hamper which she shared with her Dad for his birthday.



Arthur fished off the Yorkshire coast for many years. The Fishermen's Mission is very close to Arthur and his wife Christine's heart, as they are to ours. They have lost three sons, including one who was lost at sea. We have had the privilege of being able to support them.



Carole was married to a well-known Scarborough fisherman. She has found the last year tough due to loneliness, self-isolation, and chronic arthritis. The hamper was a wonderful surprise and a real 'pick me up'!

Blessing **Bella B**

The blessing of a new fishing boat before her maiden voyage is a long-held fishing tradition. It is an honour for the Fishermen's Mission to be called upon to undertake such dedication services.

The Blackie family have been fishing out of Eyemouth for generations. Their new boat, the Bella B was ready to sail. Lauren Blackie, wife of skipper Jamie, called Claire McIntosh the Fishermen's Mission Area Officer for Eyemouth, requesting a blessing. Claire McIntosh recalls the event:

"It was a very joyful and happy occasion to bless and dedicate the Bella B and her crew. Occasions like this bring together fishing families, united through friendship, kinship and a working relationship."



Claire McIntosh with the crew and families from the Bella B

Prayers of thanks were given for the Bella B, her crew, and their families, as well as prayers of safety for the trips to sea ahead. Also remembered were the wider fishing and seafaring community.

As the blessing ended, the tradition of breaking a bottle over a new boat was enhanced as the heavens opened with an impromptu heavy shower. Claire comments:

"It was a very fitting blessing and an ideal welcome to the world of fishing for the Bella B."

Kayak Jack raises a stack!

What a hero!

Well done to super paddler Jack Gatacre who has raised over £14,000 for the Fishermen's Mission. Jack navigated his kayak around 700 miles of Scottish coast and inland waterways in a daunting two-week round trip. Starting and finishing in Pittenweem, Jack's valiant voyage took in Edinburgh and Glasgow via the Forth & Clyde Canal, Arran, Jura,



King of the Kayak, Jack Gatacre, is met by Pittenweem trawler, Winaway, at the end of his challenge



Jack Gatacre with Sandy Garvock at Collieston

Mull, Fort William, Loch Ness and the Caledonian Canal before returning to the North Sea at Inverness to pass Aberdeen, Dundee and St Andrews!

Jack took on the challenge to honour his girlfriend Janet's father, Alec Gourlay, who recently retired after 50 years fishing from Pittenweem. Kayaking 40-50 miles each day was made tougher by the unpredictable nature of the Scottish weather – even in the summertime!

Fishermen's Mission Port Officer in Peterhead, Sandy Garvock, met Jack at the end of a day's paddling to lend support. Sandy commented:

"What Jack has achieved is phenomenal. We are so thankful to him for all the hours of training he put in to complete his mission and thanks also to Jack's sponsors and support team."

Has Jack's epic voyage inspired you to raise funds for the Fishermen's Mission? Get in touch - we are here to support you in whatever challenge floats your boat!

SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE!

The Fishermen's Mission was founded in 1881 – that's 140 years serving fishermen and their families. From our beginnings as a ship-based Missionary society working at sea through to today's outreach work around our coastline, we are proud of the difference we make, every day, in our UK fishing communities.



Our 140th anniversary events begin with a commemorative online eBook.

Coming in early April, our online

eBook will be a great way for you to celebrate with us, support our work, and leave your own 140th anniversary dedication for all to see.

Visit our website and follow us on social media to know when the book goes live.

SOMETHING TO CREATE!

Our Fishermen's Mission 2022 Calendar competition is now open!

Our 2022 calendar theme is 'When the boat comes in – British fishing lives through the year.' We are asking you to get creative with the paint brush or in the kitchen. Share with us your best artwork/photo or tastiest dish to maybe feature alongside those from world famous artists and chefs.

See the inserted flyer in this Network or visit www.fishermensmission.org.uk/calendarcomp22/



How 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 or post a cheque to our address shown below. **For every £1 we generate we spend 88p on our services.**

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 do get in touch **FREephone 0800 6341020** or email: enquiries@fishermensmission.org.uk

Remember us in your Will

Everyone wants to ensure that friends and family are well provided for if you are writing or updating your Will. However, just a small gift to the Fishermen's Mission can make all the difference to our work and ensure that your help continues. If you would like a legacy leaflet call **FREephone 0800 6341020** or email: SophieDavies@fishermensmission.org.uk

How to contact us:

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