

Pilot Cutter Treffry



PILOT CUTTER TREFFRY

Displacement: 24–27 tons

Length: 50 ft (15 m)

Beam: 14 ft 6 in (4.42 m)

Propulsion: 2 x 390 bhp General Motors 8V71T

V-8 diesel

Speed: 17.5 knots (20.1 mph)

Range: 210 nautical miles (390 km)

Call sign MTHJ5

The “Treffry” was built by Brooke Marine, Lowestoft (369) as Lifeboat ROTARY SERVICE 5001 the first of the Thames class a follow on from the Waveney Class. Built in steel with an aluminium superstructure she was Length 15.00 metres, Beam 4.30 metres and had a draft 1.13 metres. She was totally watertight and had a self-righting capability. Powered by twin GM 8V-71TI engines with Allison M20R 2:1 Reduction Gearbox she developed 390 HP per Engine. Her service speed was 17 Knots and she had a fuel Capacity of 2100 Litres.

In the 1960s the RNLI's fleet consisted of motor lifeboats of limited speed due to the shape of their hull. The United States Coast Guard (USCG) had developed a faster 44-foot motor lifeboat which planed across the water with a reduced contact area and therefore could move much faster. The RNLI obtained one in 1964. This led to the introduction of the 44-foot-10-inch (13.67 m) Waveney-class into service in 1967. The RNLI's architects designed a larger version with a longer hull and a bow of different shape. Six boats were ordered, four from Brooke Marine in Lowestoft and two from Richard Dunston in Hessele, but a cash-flow problem saw the project cancelled after just two of the Brooke Marine order had been built. Cancellation charges were paid as the builders had already ordered the necessary materials. Instead the alternative Arun-class, which had first launched in 1971, went into full production.

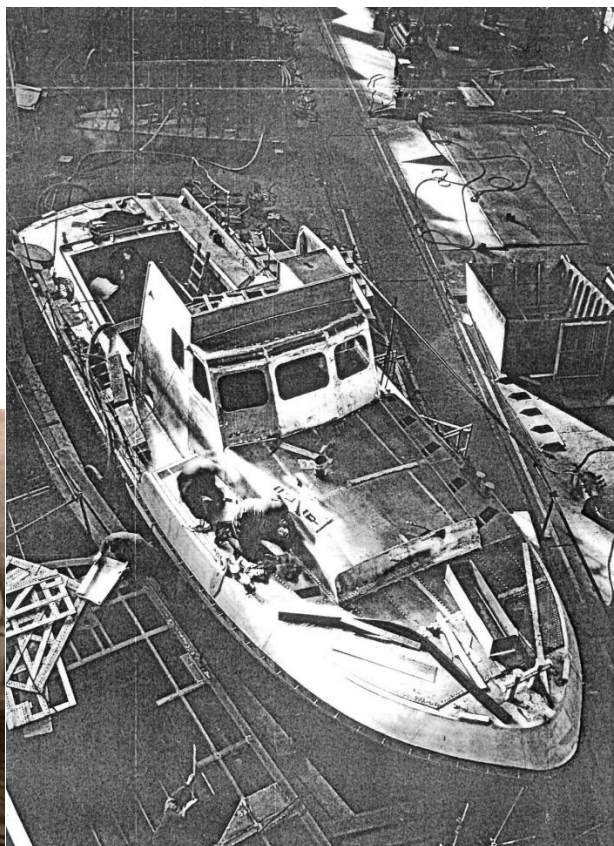


The Brooke Marine
yard

This prototype Thames-class, RNLI Official Number (ON 1031) and Operational Number 50-001 was launched in 1973 and was named Rotary Service as its £200,000 price was funded by Rotary International. It entered service at Falmouth in December 1974 and was in service there until August 1978. During this time it was used for 45 service calls and saved 17 lives. Its most meritorious service in this time was on 28 November 1977 when Coxswain Arthur West was awarded an RNLI Bronze Medal for his outstanding seamanship and tremendous courage in saving six men from a storm-lashed 110 by 70 feet (34,000 by 21,000 mm) barge. In 1979 it was reallocated to Dover where it was well liked. It was replaced in 1997 by brand new Severn-class RNLB City of London II (ON 1220).



She derived her name from the Donors being the ROTARY CLUB OF WESTMINSTER WEST. It all began when the RCWW arranged a meeting with both the President of RIBI, Geoffrey Sargeant, and Admiral Sir Wilfred Woods, who was the Chairman of RNLI. This meeting took place on 5th March 1968. It was agreed that the RNLI would decide on the Class of Lifeboat and develop the specifications for it. The RCWW would set up a Lifeboat Appeal Committee (LAC) to explore the possibilities of raising the funds, which at that point in time appeared to be a very daunting task. The original Trust Deed and the original appeal expired in 1972 when £18,500 was presented to the RNLI. The Lifeboat "Rotary Service" was built by Brooke Marine in Lowestoft in 1973 and delivered to the Falmouth Lifeboat Station for testing. Its appearance generated great interest and more impetus toward raising funds to meet its then estimated cost of £200,000. The RCWW and the TRC launched a fresh appeal on the basis that Rotary should make a fairer contribution to the cost of the lifeboat. This resulted in £63,685 being raised by the end of 1981. With the assistance of many individual Rotarians and many Rotary Clubs, the total sum eventually raised was close to £155,427 and this included an enlarged RIBI contribution of £84,481.82, some legacies (of Mr D I Craig, Mary Ann Redgate and Mary Conbronge Fowkes) and £1000 bestowed by the then Late PP Herbert Statham. In addition, a legacy of £5000 from a Rotarian in Bournemouth, £10,000 from the Dover RC, further donations from the TRC and a further contribution from RIBI pushed the amount raised towards the target of £200,000.

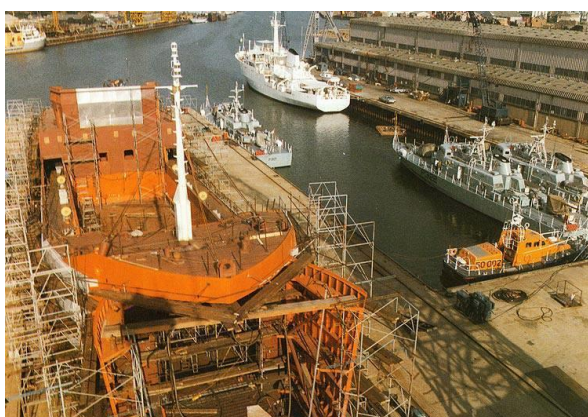


in the build process



“Rotary Service” righting test which all lifeboats go through

“Rotary Service” was a prototype Thames Class lifeboat operated by the RNLI. She was given the RNLI Official Number (ON) 1031 and Operational Number 50-001. The class takes its name from the River Thames. "Rotary Service" started trials at Falmouth in 1974. As she was a prototype, she was under evaluation and had enhancements made. The Thames Class lifeboat was inherently self-righting by means of a watertight super-structure. The fifty one foot Thames was one of two designs for a fast lifeboat produced in the early 1970s (the Arun Class was the other).



After her launch in Lowestoft



returning from sea trials before delivery



Brooke Marine Limited
SHIPBUILDERS - ENGINEERS AND CONSULTING NAVAL ARCHITECTS



THAMES CLASS 50-001

<p>Type 30 ft Self-Righting Length overall 30' 0" Beam 14' 0" Displacement 22.5 tons Fuel Capacity 400 imp. gallons Twin General Motors 8V-71 Total Power 760 SHP Maximum Speed about 17 knots Range at 17 knots - over 300 miles</p>	<p>Electronic Equipment Comprises: Kelvin Hughes Type 17W Radar Kelvin Hughes Fathand M.F. S.T. Decca Navigator Mk 91 Pye Wavemeter VHF Radio transmitter and receiver Fathograph Echo-Sounder Exoco Intercom 5-station Unit</p>
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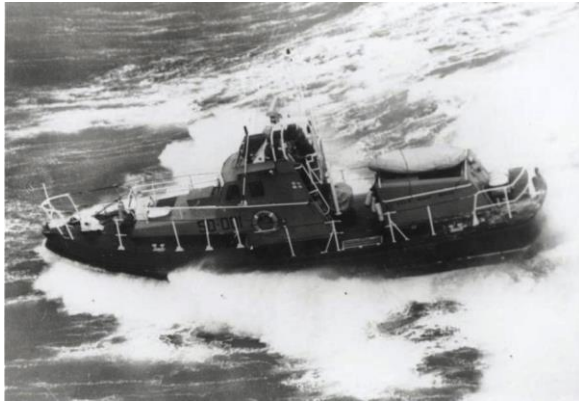

Shipyards : Lowestoft - Suffolk - England
TELEPHONE : LOWESTOFT 5221 TELEGRAMS : BROOKMART LOWESTOFT TELEX 8748

A second Thames Class lifeboat, RNLI Official Number 1032 - Operational Number 50-002, was built and named "Helmut Schroder of Dunlossit". It too was being evaluated. During trials the original bow on both boats proved unsuitable. So a new temporary GRP bow was built for ON1032 and tested and when found suitable. Following these tests, new steel bows were built for both boats which then entered service. A further 4 Thames Class lifeboats were ordered.

Service in Falmouth

During her time at Falmouth, "Rotary Service" was used for 45 service calls and saved 17 lives. Its most meritorious service during this time was on 28 November 1977. The Rotary Service put to sea that evening to help a crew of six on a jack up barge the "Mer d'Irois" that was being towed by the tug "Englishman" in heavy seas 8 miles (13 km) off The Lizard. The barge was 110 feet (34 m) long, 70 feet (21 m) wide, and had four legs which rose 70 feet (21 m) above the deck and forty feet below. Five men managed to jump onto the lifeboat, but the sixth narrowly missed being crushed between the lifeboat and the rolling barge. Lifeboat Coxswain Arthur West was awarded a Bronze Medal for his outstanding seamanship and tremendous courage, and his crew were also recognised for the parts they played in the rescue.





Pictures of her service to assist the Indian cargo/passenger ship “State of Kerala” with some 60 people on board and in trouble near Gull Rock. Photos by David Brenchly, Cornich Photo news



Pictured in 1975 she was the Falmouth Lifeboat station’s last displacement hulled lifeboat.

She was reallocated and placed on station at the Dover Lifeboat Station in 1978. She was stationed at the best known and busiest lifeboat station and carried the name of Rotary Service with pride and distinction



. Artwork Scott Snowling for the TCLT



In Falmouth

An illustration of "Rotary Service" appeared on the RNLI Official Series Cover in celebration of the lifeboat at the 10th Southampton Boat Show in 1978.



Her Naming Ceremony was carried out by the Queen Mother in October 1979.



QEPM on board the Dover Lifeboat 'Rotary Service', at the naming ceremony on 30th October 1979.... See more





Rotary Service on station at Dover



Spectacular pictures operating in rough seas at Dover



Pictures from Dover Lifeboat station archives

Lifeboat – “ROTARY SERVICE” commenced in Falmouth in 1974 and relocated to Dover in 1978.

Total Service: Launches Total: 411

Lives Saved: 177

Medal Services.

Falmouth	28th November	Bronze Medal	Coxswain A. West
Dover	16th October 1987	Silver Medal	Acting Coxswain R. Couzens
Dover	24th January 1995	Six Bronze Medals for the crew.	

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYa7GsFV0yl>

The RNLI Committee of Management then decided that a slightly larger and faster lifeboat was needed and cancelled the order for the four Thames Class life boats and placed orders for the Arun Class lifeboats. In 1997 “Rotary Service” was replaced by the brand new Severn Class, “City of London II”. She was placed in the relief fleet. After a few months in the relief fleet, “Rotary Service” was withdrawn from service. The following year she along with her sister lifeboat she was put up for sale.



Early in 1998 the harbour commissioners agreed that a reserve cutter was needed as the Gore Point and the Par Pilot were both getting older and potentially there was work for a second cutter as a relief. Captain Sutherland and Captain Kenneth (Sam) Guy went to Poole in April 1998 to look at RNLB Helmut Schroder of Dunlossit (ON 1032). It was agreed by the Board to purchase her but the RNLI later withdrew her from sale and she was shipped to New Zealand where it was renamed P&O Nedlloyd

Rescue and put into service with Sumner Lifeboat Institution Inc. It was sold to Lyttelton Port Company Ltd when replaced in 2010 by a new locally built Sumner-class lifeboat. It now serves as a LPC work boat and relief pilot boat named LPC Rescue.

In May a second visit was made to inspect the Rotary Service which was being painted hull grey out of the RNLI colours. The Commissioners then agreed to purchase this vessel and their bid of £61000 was accepted in June.



She made passage in July with the superstructure still orange as this was the colour for her pilot boat duties

Service in Fowey as a pilot cutter



Arrival At Fowey escorted in by the Fowey Lifeboat “Maurice and Joyce Harvey” And Gore Point the original Thames hull boat



Steve Barker, tug master and 2nd Coxswain of the Fowey lifeboat putting her through her paces on arrival. Hull painted grey



Having been put onto the harbour commissioner's slipway at Brazen Island and had her hull painted and modifications to meet the pilot boat regulations she entered service on 12th October 1998.

She was named by Mr Johnathan Treffry, Lord of the Manor at a ceremony on Berrills yard pontoon adjacent to the Fowey Lifeboat house.



Treffry in-board, Gore Point outside and Fowey and relief Lifeboats



Mr Johnathan Treffry naming “Treffry” watched by Peter Voelcker, Chairman Harbour Commissioners, Pilots and staff with Mr Mike Davis, Department of Transport , Ports division



Left
Guests before July board meeting.
Below:-
Toby West her Coxswain whilst in Falmouth
with Captain Mike Randolph senior pilot.
Also in picture Eric Robins foreman
shipwright



Note: Toby served as: Crew from 1947 -1960, on the Crawford and Constance Coneybeare Bowman from 1960-1972, on Coneybeare and the Lilla Marras, stationed Falmouth fom 1968-1974. Second Coxswain from 1972-1975, on the Rotary Service and Coxswain 1975-1980 Rotary Service and Elizabeth Anne from 1979 to his retirement 1980

July 1999 “Treffry” went to Poole for 175 year celebrations with other old lifeboats





Fowey has its own annual old lifeboat rally and Treffry attended the 2003 2005 and 2006 rallies. Pictured above at the 2006 One on Albert Quay pontoon



She was slipped annually for refit and running survey with MCA surveys at regular intervals



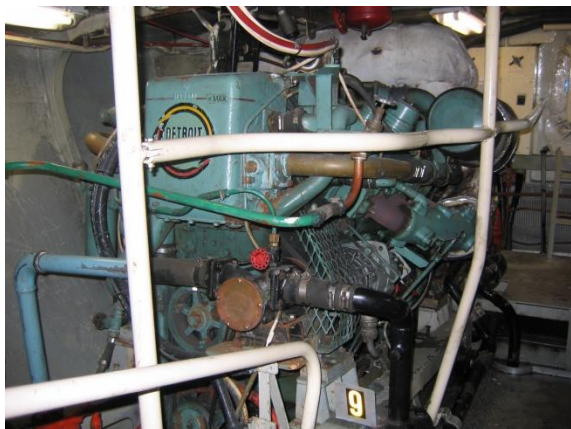
A view of the engine room



The wheelhouse and the lower steering position with water tight door accessing for'd cabin



Views in and out of the main cabin showing water tight door



Port engine and looking for'd between both engines



Treffry and Gore Point (the prototype for the Thames class) alongside each other. Treffry had a flying bridge and upper steering position



Outboard of Gribbin her replacement

Looking down on Treffry





On Pilotage duty at speed and escorting a ship out of the harbour



Taking the pilot off the cruise liner Hanseatic

Passing the tug Pendennick returning to the harbour



Going ahead of the m.v.Sunnanhav

at sea with coxswain at the flying bridge





A ROYAL VISITOR TO TREFFRY

On 20th July 2005 The duke of Kent President of the RNLI, paid a visit to Fowey and having been taken around the harbour together with Lady Mary Holborrow, Lord Lieutenant aboard the Harbour Commissioners vessel "Polmear" he landed at Town Quay to meet the crew of the Fowey Lifeboat, committee members, Harbour staff and school children who had been doing a sailing display. He watched an air sea rescue display and then boarded the Fowey Lifeboat "Maurice and Joyce Harvey" with coxswain Keith Stuart, escorted by "Treffry" for a passage to Charlestown. Halfway there the lifeboat was called to a shout and a quick transfer to the "Treffry" took place in the middle of St. Austell bay. The Duke then took the helm on the flying bridge and steered her into Charlestown harbour where he and Lady Mary and the royal party went ashore.



The flotilla escorting the Duke of Kent about Fowey Lifeboat just ahead of the tugs



Old lifeboat rally in Fowey

Service in Ireland

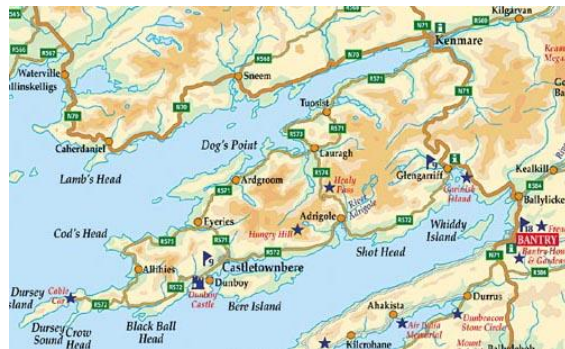
In May 2006 the Board confirmed she would be sold with a fibre glass replacement being sought. In October 2006 a bid was accepted by the Fowey Harbour Commissioners board and she was sold to Castletownbere in Ireland for £35000



She sailed on 24th October 2006 with two 40 gallon oil drum full of fuel on deck as top up for the passage across the Irish Sea. She was licensed to carry 12 passengers P3 Passenger Licence license number 1205 which expired 22-Sep-13 and she was used in pilotage and other services provided by Castletownbere Marine. She was then put up for sale.



To see her introduction video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxFNpUprDwo>



Castletownbere is a small town in County Cork in Ireland. It is located on the Beara Peninsula by Berehaven Harbour. It is also known as Castletown Berehaven. The name of the town comes from the no longer extant MacCarty Castle, and not Dunboy Castle which was home to the O'Sullivan clan. The area is the setting for Daphne du Maurier's 1943 novel *Hungry Hill* named for the mountain of the same name which is the highest peak in the Caha Mountains. A link to Fowey, the home of Daphne du Maurier. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IC_1jvpaG_U

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouAuYPIHqpY>



As of 2014, The Thames Class Lifeboat Trust became interested in returning the first Thames Class lifeboat to Lowestoft and were seeking donations towards the vessels purchase, preservation and use as a training vessel based in Lowestoft, teaching young & disadvantaged individuals seamanship skills and giving the confidence to suit jobs in the maritime sector.

They reported that we have now visited Bere Island and completed the purchase of “Rotary Service”, during the trip our volunteers were joined by a maritime surveyor who assessed the condition of the vessel, and submitted a report to the trustees in readiness for her restoration.

The surveyors remarked: “This is a very strongly built craft and it remains generally structurally sound, it is a fine example of skilled complex steel/alloy boat building from Brooke Marine.”

Boosted by the surveyors opinion the volunteers immediately proceeded to begin getting Rotary Service ready for the trip home to Lowestoft, and spent a week aboard cleaning, painting and applying

the all-important “Rotary Service” Name and her original RNLI number on the stern.



Finally brief acceptance trials were carried out prior to our volunteers returning home, these trials were an ideal opportunity for us to get some excellent photographs of “Rotary Service”. One engine was unserviceable and the other in a poor condition. She was towed from Castletownbere on by the tug “Nomad” to Portland where she arrived on 15th October 2015 and was then transferred to a low loader for the road journey to Lowestoft arriving there on



Safely berthed at Portland Marina



Commencing the journey “home”

The next plan was to begin the journey home and the next stage involves moving her to Milford haven it is then their belief that road freight, whilst challenging in its own ways may prove to be the most economical, safe and reliable method of transit back to Lowestoft,



The flying bridge and top of the cabin had to be removed for the road transport and she was loaded onto a low loader



Former lifeboat Rotary Service brought back to Lowestoft to be turned into a floating museum. The boat is prepared ready to be lifted off the lorry. Picture: James Bass



Once in Lowestoft she was unloaded .The cut off superstructure seen on the fore deck



Sadly this did mean foregoing the original planned visits to Falmouth, Fowey, Poole and Dover but there is an intention to make a trip round to these ports once restored.

She is now being restored in Lowestoft by volunteers from the Thames Class Lifeboat Trust
A Registered charity No. 1160783 chairman Scott Snowling <http://www.50001.org.uk/> also on facebook

Our Aims

The Thames class lifeboat trust exists in order to:

- Advance in life and help develop young people aged between 12-25yrs from 'vulnerable' backgrounds within the uk through:
 - (a) the provision of recreational and leisure time activities provided in the interest of social welfare, designed to improve their conditions of life.
 - (b) providing support and activities which develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate within society as mature and responsible individuals.
- Preserve, operate, maintain and exhibit for the benefit of the public the historic Lowestoft built lifeboat 50-001 in particular but not exclusively by:
 - (a)acting as a community resource offering maritime and team building training for young people and under privileged individuals.
 - (b)operating the lifeboat as a floating museum.





Work progresses with the engines removed and to be replaced.

**Passages of the Pilot
cutter Treffry ex lifeboat
Rotary Service**

