

2nd F/L Pierce , M/Nav Dedmen , M/LM Allen.

Whilst en-route to Richmond (Yorks) to recover a body from a river, NRCC (bless 'em) re-tasked them to go to the assistance of a yacht taking water east of Flamboro'. Shortly after their arrival the leak was plugged and all was well. P.S. Boulmer recovered the body.

3rd F/L Best, F/L Clark, M/LM Ainslie.

A major search was launched for two girls in their late teens who had set off from Filey beach after an argument with their boyfriends. They were reported to have set sail in a Woolworths dinghy plus a quantity of booze . They have not been seen since. I bet the bottles were non-returnable too.

8th S/L Paish, F/L Prentice, M/LM Ainslie

A man who believed he had cancer jumped off the Humber bridge, the above crew searched for him but to no avail. Apparently he didnt have cancer at all, he had Heppatitis B !

9th F/L Sandford, F/L Clark, SGT Spain (Rentadangler)

A passenger on the cobble "Moby Dick" suffered a heart attack, he was soon lifted and taken to hospital.

11th F/L Sandford, M/Nav Dedmen, SGT Spain.

Although this search was a long one it was worthwhile. The missing woman they were looking for was found nursing an injured ankle on the Pennine way. She was piked up and deposited with Bolton M.R.T.

11th S/L Paish, F/L Prentice, F/S Barnes.

As the fishing cobble "Vahalla" was entering Bridlington harbour she lost her propellor and was swept against the sea wall where she broke up and sank. Some of the 13 on board managed to scramble ashore helped by onlookers. Some were washed away but were lifted out (not easily) by the crew above, remarkably only one man was lost.

12th Same crew

A crewman from the survey vessel "Bon Esprit", was stretcher lifted and taken to Hull R.I. with suspected meningitis.

13th F/L Best, F/L Clark, F/S Wakeman.

A solo dutch sailor had parted company with his yacht when it sank, he was picked up in his dinghy (plus pusseycat) by a passing trawler. Our crew lifted them both and took them to Scarborough. He had been adrift for 12 hours plus before being found.

AUGUST 1985

16th F/L Best, F/L Prentice, F/S Wakeman

1 mile east of south landing, Flamboro', a youth who had been cut off by the tide was lifted and placed at the top of the cliffs.

24th F/L Pierce, F/L Prentice, F/S Barnes

These were tasked to search for a woman crew member lost overboard from a yacht but nothing except an empty lifejacket was found.

25th F/L Sandford, M/Nav Dedmen, F/S Wakeman.

This crew had to take a radio and other equipment to the yacht "Floosie" (vessel involved above) which had lost comms with the c/guards and was still making for landfall.

25th F/L Pierce, F/L Prentice, M/LM Ainslie.

Requested to search for "Floosie" as Tyne Tees lifeboat had failed to R.V. as planned. After establishing comms with "Floosie" crew homed onto PLB placed on board earlier.

29th Same crew

While on passenger run to Finningly a Canberra put out a mayday having taken a birdstrike on the canopy near to Leconfield. He headed for Binbrook and so did our crew. He landed safely just before R28 got there.

27th Same crew

Just as they arrived to search for two boys thought to be cut off by the tide in Robins Hoods bay the boys were found so R28 RTB.

31st F/L Sandford, F/L Whittaker, F/S Barnes.

A small vessel off Cleethorpes called mayday as he was sinking R28 put its winchy on board and ascertained that the boat might sink quicker if they went back to base collected the sykes pump and put it on board. This they did then went home. The boat seems to have made it 'cos we got our pump back.

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS August 25 1985

For the love of a cat in the bag

AS Jack Riethoven's yacht went down in towering seas 50 miles from land he valued one life more than his own . . . Kitty, his Siamese cat.

Clutching her tenderly he jumped from the sinking boat into an inflatable life raft he had already tossed over the side.

He slipped Kitty into a canvas bag to give her some protection from the wind and spray. Cuddling her close to keep her warm he managed to calm the shivering animal.

As raging seas threatened to engulf the raft he baled

out water with one hand, but still held on to the canvas bag with the other.

In calmer moments he broke open the iron rations and shared the high protein chocolate and biscuits with his tiny companion.

He had injured his hip in the escape from his yacht and as the hours went by suffered increasingly from exposure.

For 12 hours his battle to stay awake went on, until he was spotted and picked up by a Grimsby trawler.

Within minutes an RAF helicopter was hovering overhead and Flight Sergeant

by BRIAN DUFFY

Phil Wakeman was lowered by winch to the injured man.

He was about to be taken to hospital — and separated from his beloved cat. Somehow the exhausted yachtsman found the strength to protest: "No. My bag. I must have it."

Flight Sergeant Wakeman, who did not know what was in the bag grabbed it and slung it on Mr. Riethoven's shoulder. The two men were then winched the 30 feet to the helicopter.

Flight Sergeant Wakeman

made his patient comfortable and stowed the bag on a bench. Suddenly it moved.

Carefully he drew back the zip, and out popped Kitty's tiny head, and for the remainder of the half-hour flight Mr. Riethoven cradled bag and Siamese cat in his lap.

Even on touchdown it was only after he was assured that Kitty would be well taken care of that he agreed to be separated from her and was finally taken by ambulance to hospital in Scarborough. He was detained for treatment to his injured hip and from exposure, shock and hypothermia.

Kitty was given a saucer of warm milk at the police station before being taken to kennels in Harrogate.

Last week, still nursing his injuries, Mr. Riethoven and his pet flew home to Oegstgeest, near Rotterdam.

Flight Sergeant Wakeman said: "He was making such a fuss about the bag when I wanted to winch him up that I did not argue. Kitty seemed to enjoy the flight in the helicopter despite her ordeal."

The six-month quarantine did not apply to Kitty since she was never free on British soil.



A crewman on the Valhalla tries to throw a line to rescuers.



PREPARING for a rescue attempt aboard the stricken boat.



TROUBLE — only yards away from safety in the harbour.



THE airlift begins with an RAF helicopter from Laconfield.

Death on the Valhalla

A HULL man died when a Bridlington fishing boat, only yards away from safety, was dashed to destruction against a harbour wall in heavy seas yesterday.

Twelve other people were plucked ashore after fighting for their lives during the sea drama watched by hundreds of holidaymakers.

The boat, the Valhalla, broke in two after getting into difficulties while approaching the harbour in a fierce gale.

Coastguards, by standers and the crew of an RAF helicopter launched a desperate attempt to rescue the men, all members of a sea angling party, after some were thrown into the raging swell near the wall.

Five men were still detained in Bridlington's Lloyd Hospital today suffering from the effects of shock, hypothermia and from being immersed in the sea. All are said to be in a satisfactory condition.

The man who died was Mr Kenneth Handley (58) of Normabell Street, Holderness Road, Hull. The men on board the Valhalla were from the Negas Sea Angling Club. Throughout the drama, safety was only yards away from those on board. One eye witness said: "They were so near, yet so far away."

The Valhalla was returning to Bridlington harbour after receiving a weather warning when she lost a rudder and was rapidly swept towards the harbour wall.

Coastguards, who were on the scene within minutes, threw lines and ladders over the wall in a desperate attempt to rescue men thrown into the freezing water. Local fishermen clambered down steps and threw lines and lifebelts.

Several of those aboard the boat managed to scramble to safety, while five were airlifted to shore by the RAF helicopter from Laconfield. The rest were hauled onto dry land.

The pilot of the helicopter, Squadron Leader Chris Paish, told how he and his two men crewed the aircraft against bad weather during the rescue.

He said: "When we got there, the Valhalla was trapped against the side of the pier, in a corner between the harbour wall and the sea wall to the eastward."

She was up against a flight of steps and the coastguards and a number of other people were on the steps throwing ladders and lifebelts.

"Some of the people from the boat were trying to scramble up the steps," he explained. "Four or five were in the rear deck which was beginning to fill with water."

Sq Ldr Paish said that one man was washed overboard and winded Barney Barnes was lowered to try and pick him up. "It was fairly rough with strong winds, and the waves were breaking against the wall," he said.

"The boat was beginning to tilt and it was half on top of a wooden breakwater. We got Barney to one ship, but he couldn't get the strap on and picked him up by wrapping arms and legs around him. Barney dropped him in the first time and then put him on the steps."

Sq Ldr Paish added: "By this time the boat was filling with water and was breaking up. Most of the men were in the sea. We picked up two more and took them to the bottom of the steps."

"The only other one was unconscious and in the water and he was brought up to the ambulance."

"We went back and could not see anyone else. By this time the boat was in two big bits."

Sq Ldr Paish said their attention had then been attracted by the frantic waving of members of the public. They had found a survivor who had made his way to the beach and was against the sea wall. He was airlifted to the ambulance.

The helicopter then spent 10 or 15 minutes scouring the area to check for more bodies in the water.

Sq Ldr Paish said that the Valhalla had been in a place where any boat going to help would have probably landed up in similar difficulties.

"Barney was hampered by the sea and breaking waves," he added. "He would just



BYSTANDERS and coastguards launched a desperate bid to save the crew.

He lived for his fishing, says grieving widow

A GRIEVING Hull widow spoke today about how her drowned husband lived and died for his favourite hobby of fishing.

Relatives and friends were today comforting Mrs Kathleen Handley, whose husband Kenneth was swept into the sea when the Valhalla was smashed against Bridlington's harbour wall.

Mr Handley, a retired Hull dockworker, went on regular sea fishing trips with parties from a Hull angling club.

Mrs Kathleen Handley, of Normabell Street, Hull, was told of her husband's death last night by police who called at the couple's home.

After a sleepless night, Mrs Handley said today: "I just can't believe it. It hasn't sunk in yet."

Mr Handley, who has three sons and a daughter who are all grown up, retired four years ago and devoted his time to fishing, supporting Hull Kingston Rovers and his two lofts of pigeons.

"He lived for his fishing, especially sea angling. He went all over the place at least once a month," Mrs Handley said.

"They cancelled a trip to Hartlepool a fortnight ago because the weather was too bad. But he rang up on Saturday night about the trip to Bridlington and was told the weather was alright."

Mr Handley was picked up by car by another member of the fishing party. It was about 7 pm last night when police called with news of the accident.

Mrs Handley said she was unsure whether her husband could swim, but police had said it was believed he had not been wearing a life-jacket.

Her close neighbour and best friend, Mrs Barbara Davison, also of Normabell Street, said police had told them Mr Handley was unconscious when he was spotted in the sea.

One theory is that Mr Handley, who suffered from angina and had a slight heart attack six years ago, may have suffered a heart attack as he hit the cold sea water.

Mr Handley, who has lived in Normabell Street for 25 years, also has nine grandchildren.



AN RAF man plunges into the surf to rescue an angler.

Report by
Steve Petch

Pictures by
Ray Brunning



ROCKED holidaymakers watch as one of the fishermen is brought ashore.



THE Valhalla, dashed against the harbour wall.

Fairground sneak

Robbery while owner helps save lives

A CALLOUS thief stole the takings from a fun fair ride whose owner had rushed to help rescue fishermen from the coble which smashed on the wall of Bridlington harbour.

Mr John Harrison (21), left his kiddies ride and joined his brother, Michael, and other fairground workers on steps leading down to the sea.

While he was away £40 was stolen from his ride. He said: "The money does not bother me. It is just the thought of what they did when people were dying. I was surprised

throughout the operation by the actions of holidaymakers. As we tried to get through to help they were pushing us back and laughing. All they were interested in was getting a good view."

Fairground worker, Mr Wyatt Vernon said: "A trawler came to help the coble and was towing it into the harbour when the lines snapped. I do not know why the fishermen didn't jump as it was obvious the coble was going to smash up on the wall."

Another attendant, 16-year-old Liam Dealtry, of Hastings Walk, Westhill Estate, Bridlington, said: "The front end of the coble hit the wall and

the boat swung round onto the sea breaks. I heard a tremendous scrape and it snapped in two. We then ran down the steps to throw lines to the men in the sea. The holidaymakers were just a nuisance. They wouldn't get out of the way."

Mr Vernon said: "I was disgusted by the tourists. They stood in the way and were just laughing."

John Harrison said: "We didn't know what to do but we got down there to try and help out."

"Local fishermen were showing us what to do and we threw all sorts of lines to the drowning men and managed to get two or three out."

Mr Vernon said: "The man who died was at the back of the boat. He seemed to have given up all his fight. He went straight under and didn't come up."

● The five men detained in hospital at Bridlington were named by police today.

They are Mr Michael Miles, of Cambridge Street; Mr Robert Eastwood, of Egton Street; Mr Carl Oakley, of Chatsworth Avenue; Mr Colin Mostyn, also of Cambridge Street and Mr George Wright, of Innescourt, Orchard Park Estate, all Hull.

The skipper of the vessel was Mr Ian Taylor of Blackburn Avenue, Bridlington, and the second crew member was his 15-year-old son Mark.

The other men on board were: Mr Robert Read, of Hesse High Road; Mr Carl Matthews, of Stynberg Street; Kevin Shaun Hutchinson, of Kinderscout Close, Bransholme; Mr Davind Harrison, of Alaska Street and Stephen Postill, of Egton Street, all Hull.

Death on the Valhalla

● From Page One

reach out for a survivor, who would then be moved several feet by the sea."

The Valhalla was crewed by Mr Ian Taylor, of Blackburn Avenue, and his 15-year-old son, Mark.

About 200 yards from the entrance to the harbour it had countered steering difficulties when it apparently lost a rudder.

A trawler, the My Rose Ann, went to help and managed to get a line to the Valhalla, but it broke loose and the 30 foot fishing vessel was pushed by the sea towards the pier.

The Bridlington lifeboat was already at sea towing a distressed yacht and it and the Flamborough lifeboat also made their way towards the scene.

One eye-witness was Hull Daily Mail photographer Ray Brunning, who said: "It was



MR KENNETH HANDLEY, died in Bridlington tragedy.

choppy and the boat was getting flooded with water from time to time. It was rotten conditions down there, they were getting bashed about.

"They finished up down near the steps. They were so near, but yet so far away. They were just helpless. The boat broke up in a matter of minutes."



THE Valhalla struggles in heavy seas before the tragedy.



HUNDREDS watch the drama unfold from the funfair site.