

MAY 1985

1st F/L Sandford, F/L Clark, Sgt Williamson

Rich Sandfords first job! The fishing vessel "ESME" had need of our sykes pump as the one they had borrowed from Boulmer had broken. A second visit to the boat was made to take them an extra five gallons of petrol. Check your tyres and oil sir?!

23rd F/L Best, F/L Whittaker, M/LM Allen

Beverley police asked for assistance in searching for a patient from Broadgate (n(t)) hospital who had declared his intention to end it all somewhere wet. The search failed to locate him. (He was found a week later in Beverley beck having failed his swimming test)

26th F/L Sandford, F/L Hewitt, F/S Barnes

Now Rich has found out how its done theres no stopping him! Skipton police requested help in lifting a female potholer with two broken arms and head injuries from Ingleborough to Airedale hospital.

Whilst in the area they heard another potholing incident bubbling along and "just happened to be passing" . They had to wait through part of the four hours before they could take the casualty to airdale for treatment for his dislocated shoulder. OK Sandford take a place in the que we'll call you when its your turn.

28th F/L Best, F/L Hewitt, F/S Barnes

Asearch was set up for one of two canoests between Cleethorpes and Mablethorpe early into the search he was located in a cafe ashore. Canoe believe it!

NORTH YORKSHIRE: A girl caver was winched to safety by RAF helicopter after breaking both arms in a 70ft fall deep underground. A3201S

NEXT TIME IT'L
BE CENTRE PAGE !!

Pothole luck of student in 100-ft plunge

A 22-YEAR-old university student was recovering in hospital today after surviving a 100ft fall during a Bank Holiday potholing expedition.

Miss Andrea Wynne, from Bolton, was with a joint party from Lancaster University and Manchester University potholing club near the Gaping Gill pothole at Ingleton, North Yorkshire, when the accident happened.

It was one of three accidents near the Ingleton holiday centre.

Miss Wynne fell down Stream Passage and was taken to hospital suffering from broken arms and cuts to the head.

Members of the Settle Cave Rescue team

took her from the cave system and she was transferred to Airedale Hospital, Keighley, by an RAF rescue helicopter.

Gaping Gill is one of the country's deepest potholes and a rescue worker said she had had a "miraculous" escape.

Rescuers were called out again later yesterday evening to rescue a 29-year-old man who fell down Juniper Gulf pothole at Ingleborough.

Mr David Deacock, from Stone, Aylesbury, was also taken to Airedale Hospital, where he was detained with a dislocated shoulder.

A 10-year-old boy drowned while walking with his parents and two brothers at the popular Waterfall Walk area at Ingleton.

Heroes for those in peril on the sea . . .

STAR reporter Kathy Wilkinson spends a day with the heroes of the sea . . .



WITHIN 15 minutes of receiving an emergency call, a rescue helicopter from RAF Leconfield can be airborne and on its way.

In reality it's nearer five minutes, say the crew. At night, standby time increases to an hour to allow for more preparation time in poorer conditions.

Two bright yellow Wessex helicopters are based at the RAF station, situated a few miles from the market town of Beverley in North Humberside.

The station is manned 24 hours a day 363 days a year by a minimum of three aircrew and five ground crew. On the other two days, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, the crew are allowed to be on standby from home.

An example of their efficiency was demonstrated last Christmas Day when a man suffered a heart attack on a tanker moored off Flamborough.

The helicopter was overhead the vessel within the hour, despite two crew members having to travel from Driffield and the pilot from Market Weighton.

The helicopter search and rescue service at Leconfield is not just confined to its coastal patch which stretches from Teesside to Skegness, but extends inland as far as the Peak District and Birmingham.

However the vast majority of their valuable work is confined to the area around Scarborough and Spurn rescuing stranded holidaymakers from the sea and cliffs.

The crews are also actively involved with shipping in the North Sea undertaking such tasks as dropping in urgent parts for repairs, taking injured and sick crewmen to hospital, rescuing survivors from stricken craft.

An increasing area of the work takes them to the Peak District to recover lost walkers and to pick up injured ramblers in remoter and often inaccessible regions.

Helicopter crew must keen in training and are required to complete a number of practice drills, including being rescued from the sea, throughout the year.

Once a month, the RAF's marine craft unit based at Plymouth, takes part in training drills and enables crews

How we saw the drama and danger of an RAF rescue

to practise different exercises and become familiar with equipment.

One such exercise involved picking up five "survivors" from a tiny dinghy bobbing around in moderate sea swell.

Pilot Fl-Lt Richard Sandford, aged 23, had the tricky job of hovering some 40 feet above while navigator and winch operator Fl-Lt Geoff Clark lowered master air loadmaster Dave Allen to the dinghy.

Within a few minutes, the survivors are safely winched into the helicopter before being set down on deck.

Volunteers are recruited from the RAF ranks to take part in drills. It was the first time Vickie Jackson from RAF Finningley had taken part and, despite some trepidation, said she enjoyed it.

Vickie, who works in the medical administration department, was providing medical cover for the exercise.

Said Geoff: "If it's a very small object, like a small dinghy or a person, we get our man at the right height just above the water and drag him through it counting down the distance. At about 25 feet, the object disappears under the helicopter."

Heavy sea swell can make rescues from boats awkward as the height of the helicopter above the water is constantly changing.

Cliffs can be more straightforward. However there are different problems.

"If a bloke is stuck hanging on by his fingernails, we have got to be careful not to knock him off with the down-draught," said Geoff.

"But one of the hardest things we do is getting people on and off decks which can be especially tricky in swell. We take injured and sick people to the nearest major hospital accident unit," said Geoff.

pictures: Dennis Lound

Search and rescue helicopters have been based at Leconfield since 1957 since when the men of 22 Squadron's D Flight have scrambled 2,306 times and lifted 1,525 people to safety.

BRAVERY AWARD

Two helicopters from Leconfield were involved in searching for men feared drowned off Flamborough last May in the worst fishing tragedy on the Yorkshire coast for more than a decade.

Three South Yorkshire anglers perished when the fishing cobbie North Wind capsized after setting out to help search for another vessel, the Carol Sandra.

Dave Allen received a top bravery award for his courage shown in the rescue attempt when he was seriously injured after being struck against the side of the lifeboat.

Although the summer tends to be the busiest time for the rescue crews, they are on call all year round. In 1981 — the first year they had the Wessex aircraft, there were 68 scrambles and 34 people rescued. In 1982, there were 67 scrambles, 28 people picked up. 1983 saw 103 scrambles with 44 picked up.

Last year, the helicopters were scrambled 85 times and 69 picked up. In the first four months of this year, there have been 19 scrambles and 26 survivors.

As the busy holiday season approaches, holiday-makers are urged to take special care when using airbeds and dinghies in the sea. With children, secure the dinghy with a rope, especially if the wind is blowing offshore.

Take care on the cliffs and report any incident immediately to the coastguard on 999.

JUNE 21 1985



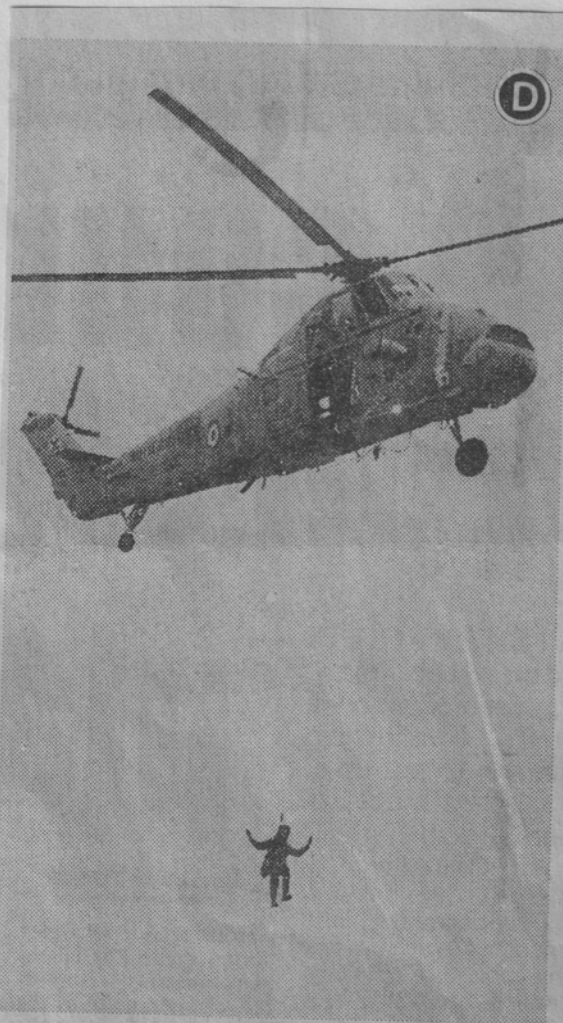
The rescuers — FI-Lt Geoff Clark, FI-Lt Richard Sandford and air loadmaster Dave Allen.



Navigator Ron Dedman and winchman Terry Williamson spot trouble.



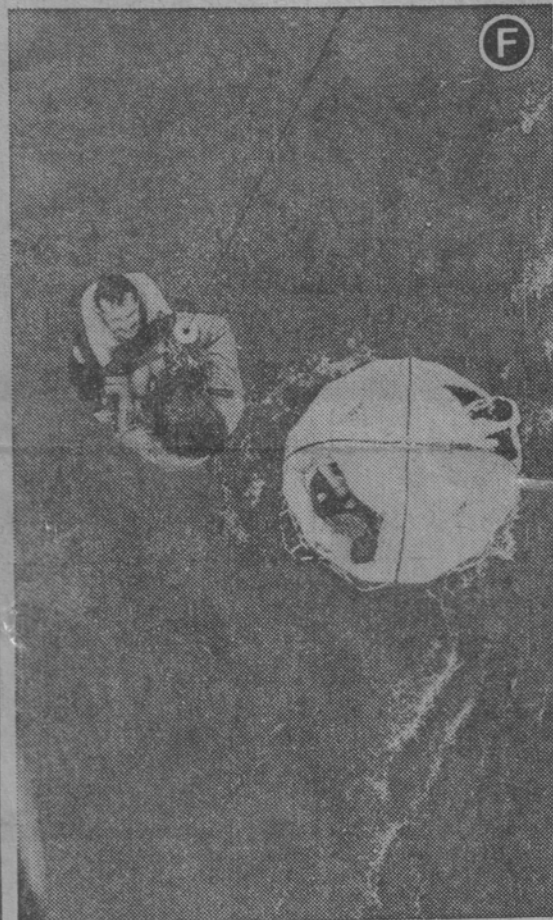
A rescuer leaves the helicopter on a winch.



Halfway there — suspended in mid-air between helicopter and the dinghy in distress.



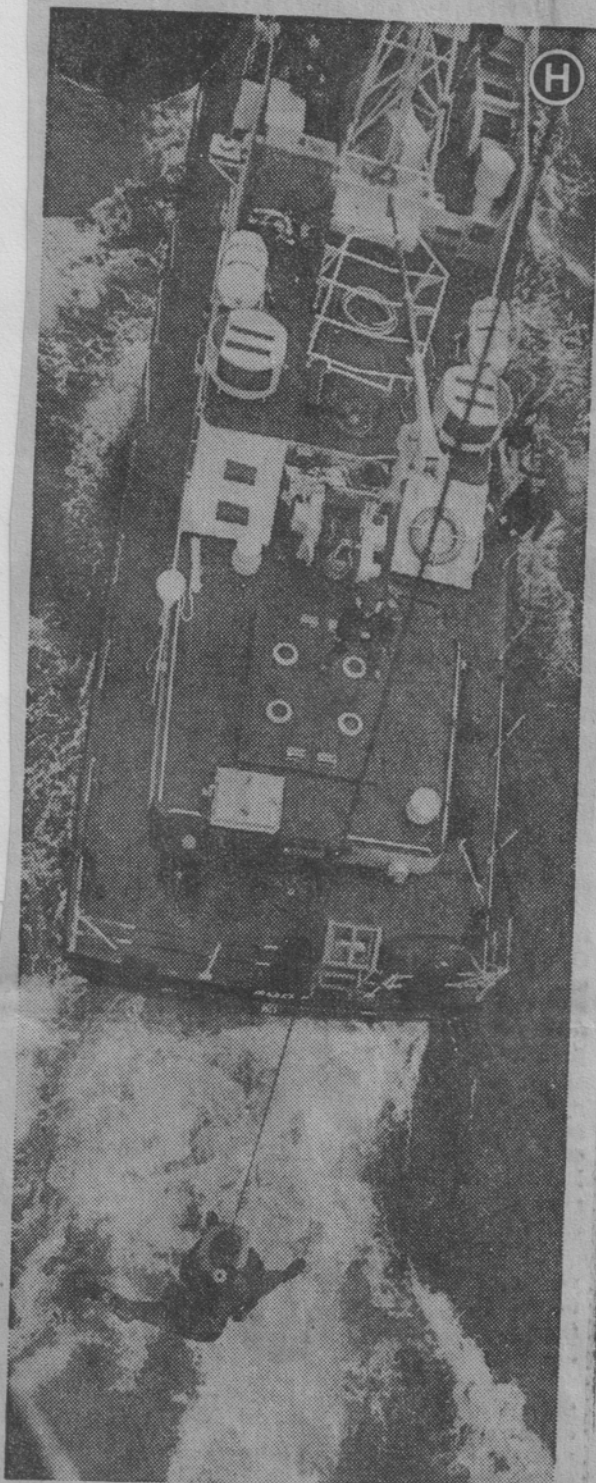
Up and away — on the way to safety from the dinghy.



Aboard the 'copter — and it speeds off to an RAF launch nearby.



The 'rescued' man is lowered to the launch — then back to dry land.



The rescuer straps one of the 'stranded' men onto the winch.

25 Years Ago: The RAF demobbed its pig farm at Leconfield because it had ceased to make a profit. In the past, the flying farmers had grown their own cereals for as many as 170 pigs, but had been forced to give this up. The pigs and equipment were sold.

"SOME WOULD SAY THEY NEVER LEFT!!"

Lifeboat launch for stamps



Four new stamps on the theme of safety at sea will go on sale at all post offices on Tuesday.

To mark the issue a special exercise was held on board the Humber lifeboat, when the coxswain — Scarborough man Brian Bevan — received a giant enlargement of one of the stamps from Robin Hitchin, Head Postmaster of Hull and

formerly Scarborough's Postmaster.

The stamp was dropped down on deck with winchman Eric Ainslie of the RAF air-sea rescue squadron based at Leconfield. It will be displayed in the offices of the Humber lifeboat station at Spurn Head.

A special commemorative handstamp cancellation postmark will be available for

collectors on the day-of-issue of the new stamps.

The stamps mark two important dates in maritime safety — the 200th anniversary of the unimmensible lifeboat and the 50th anniversary of the invention of radar. This year is also the 175th anniversary of a lifeboat station at Spurn Head.

● Pictured left to right: Mr Ainslie, Mr Bevan, and Mr Hitchin.