

June 2009  
Issue 8

# Glasgow's Lifeboat

*Newsletter of the Glasgow Humane Society*

*Charity no SC001178*



**Officers Foreword** 2009 as usual has been a very busy time for all at the Glasgow Humane Society.

We are quite happily settled into our "new" role where we concentrate on the original ideals of preventing persons drowning by simply preventing them entering the water but also ensuring that there is enough safety features in place in the event of there getting through our "barriers"

Tony and I work well as a team and have also built up good squads of Lifeguards, Riverwatchers and sundry assistants

Society Directors are working extremely hard in the background striving to ensure that the Society continues to receive the support that it deserves.

New Directors are coming forward and we welcome them into the Society "family"



## **Working to prevent accidents & save lives**

Late on a Sunday afternoon rowing coach Ian Sommerside alerted Officer George to around 20 children who had built rafts at Glasgow Rowing Club and looked to be launching them into the river. George raced up river with Lifeguard Ben, once on the scene they found over 20 building site drop bags floating in the river and others on the river banking. Tony had been paged from work to assist in the ongoing incident, and arrived after a couple of minutes. The task was a difficult one with over 20 bags to remove and the worry that children may return to float on the bags. George had informed Strathclyde Police to the ongoing situation and Police Officers arrived on the banking to assist where possible. The security staff at the

building site where the bags came from were alerted and asked to remove the remaining bags from the banking, while George Tony and Ben removed the rest from the river taking them back to the Society pontoon for safe keeping.

This was to quote George "an accident waiting to happen", with the potential for over 20 children playing in the river it would only take one drowning to be a tragedy.

The next day Officers were alerted by a member of the public that children and drop bags were at the club steps again. Officers George & Tony raced upriver ensuring all was ok to find again numerous bags on the river banking. These were again removed and placed in safe keeping with the City Council Parks Department management having been informed of the ongoing situation. Council staff happily assisted in removing the bags once Council Health and Safety personnel had noted the incident and advised as best they could.

This has been an ongoing problem since the building site opened in 2006, but never on a scale like this.

This incident was subsequently front page news in the Evening Times a few days later in the week as can be seen in the pictures.



**Officers George and Tony  
with the dangerous bags**

## ***Society Director passes away***

We are extremely sad to report that William "Bill" English has died.

Mr English was Secretary and Treasurer of the Glasgow Humane Society for many years in his position as Director of Finance for Glasgow City Council. After his retriial from the Council Mr English stayed on as a Director of the Society and gave years of faithful service. He will be sadly missed.

Our thoughts are with Mrs English, the family and the extended family.

At the service in St Andrews Church Bearsden the Society was represented by Officer George Parsonage.



***Officers George & Tony with Lifeguard Erick and staff from Gorbals L..C..***

## ***Training Gorbals Lifeguards***

Officers and Lifeguards have been busy over that last few months training Pool Lifeguards and rowers the skills required to save lives. Staff from the Gorbals Leisure Centre took part in 3 separate training sessions held at Glasgow Green, while Strathclyde University Boat Club were given their annual course for fresher's.

The aim of the Society rope throwing and water safety course is to firstly prevent the rescuer becoming a casualty themselves. We use a wide range of rescue equipment ranging from poolside type throw bags to large 30 metre throw bags for off bridges along with lifebelts and other ropes.

It can seem all too easy although some of the candidates were highly trained pool lifeguards, when faced with a drowning person, the elements of outside and unfamiliar surroundings it could become a different task.

The courses involved people of vast different experience and certificates were handed out up to level two qualification.

## ***Voluntary Lifeguard gets married***

Congratulations are due to Lifeguard Mark Craig who recently got married to his lovely wife Lindsey.

## ***New Director joins the board***

Welcome to Michael Yeomans who was accepted to join our board of directors after a Society EGM



***Lifeguard Mark and his Wife Lindsey***

***Our City - Our River - Our Lifeboat***  
***"Preventing Accidents.....Saving Lives"***

## [Missing person search brought to a close](#)

After around 7 weeks the search for a missing person was brought to a close. The body of a woman who was missing from the Cambuslang area was recovered by Officers. This brings closure to a long ongoing incident, involving all sections of the Society who were "keeping a watching brief" of the river during this period.

## [Man rescued at Tidal Weir](#)

Early in the morning of Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009 Officer George manned a lifeboat and rescued a man who was trapped in the water at the north corner of the Tidal Weir at Glasgow Green

Once George had been alerted to the situation he had the man out of the water in less than two minutes.

George brought the man into his boat and chatted to him while he drove back to the wharfage and the waiting Ambulance. The man was removed to Hospital where unfortunately he later died.

It was subsequently discovered that the man had been in the icy cold water for more than 45 minutes before George by pure chance found out that there was an ongoing incident in the immediate locality of the Glasgow Humane Society Station.

George was extremely upset by this occurrence as it was the first time in over 1500 rescues that he had rescued a person who later died from the effect of being in the water.

He was partly consoled by some friends of the man whom they called "American Al" coming to thank him for doing his best.



*Officer George who has rescued over 1500 people*

## [Statistics](#)

An update on the statistics from January 2008 show,

4014 patrols were carried out at various waterways (though mostly the River Clyde) by Officers, Lifeguards and Riverwatchers

On 961 occasions lifeboats were launched

860 Lifebelts were recovered

Animals were dealt with on 27 occasions

1039 potential hazards were removed from the river or riverbank

On 49 occasions stolen or lost goods were recovered

428 meetings were attended or held

Advice or assistance was given on 1398 occasions

Additional safety cover was given at 59 events

11 rescues were carried out

On 119 occasions rescues were attended or accidents prevented

38 talks/presentations were given

Bodies recovered 2

14 training courses were organised, run and certificated by the Glasgow Humane Society

## *DAYS GONE BY*

This brings us to a new section in our newsletter, where George and Tony scour the old minute books looking for an interesting story that George has turned into a short story.

Our first story sees us go back to the 1960's with Officers Benjamin and George Parsonage called out to an incident.

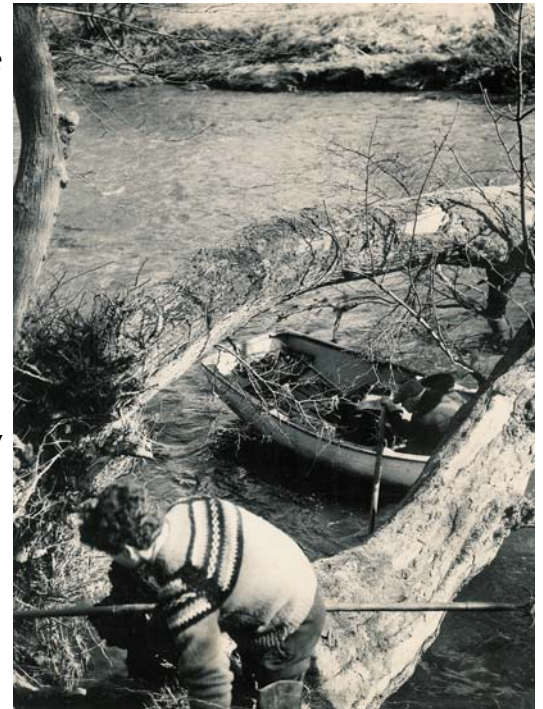
### *What a doll*

One night Father was called to the River Kelvin at Kelvinbridge where there was the report of a woman's body in the water. I accompanied Father in the Police Landrover with boat on trailer to the scene.

Police were trying to move away the large crowd of mostly young onlookers who were piled against the north bridge parapet.

Lying over the weir about 100metres upstream of the bridge was what appeared to be the naked body of a woman with long blonde hair.

The crowd was cleared and Father and Police Officers stood trying to work out the next move. The river was in heavy flood. Father said that there was something "not right" about the look of the body and its position and suggested waiting until dawn 0500hrs (about 2hrs time) for a better look. In the meantime it was decided to put out the story that the body was a shop dummy in the hope that the "sightseers" would go home. It worked a treat and soon only the Police and ourselves were stood at the locus. Father and I went to the Police Station for a cup of tea and returned to the locus at daylight. Premonition, Expert knowledge or what, the body was indeed not human, but it was not a shop dummy, it was a sex doll. Due to the floodwater it was decided not to launch the boat and a Police marksman was called in. A bullet through the skin of the doll and it deflated with swoosh a weeeeeeee booooooooo downriver gradually getting smaller and smaller. It landed on the bank a few hundred metres downstream where it was removed and a Police Officer given the job of cutting it into small pieces. He said it was very lifelike—we'll take his word for it.



*Officers Ben & George Parsonage  
searching River Kelvin 1960s*

## *Support Glasgow's Lifeboat*

Assistance is always required by the Glasgow Humane Society. Whether that is financial support or extra man hours. If you feel you or your company can assist the Society in any way or donate equipment even if it is second hand, please do not hesitate to contact one of our Officers. The Society has to continually provide its volunteers with PPE ensuring their safety along with the ongoing maintenance and running costs of keeping a Lifeboat Station in full readiness for any emergency or call out that may arrive. The Society has been serving Glasgow and its waterways for over 220 years and continues to follow its original ideals set up in 1790. So dig deep and help a local charity helping a local waterway near you.

### *LIFEBOAT CONTACT DETAILS*

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## [Clydeport Paddle 2009](#)

On Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May Tony and George along with Lifeguards Mark Mackay and Mark Craig joined the paddlers for the Annual Clydeport Paddle.

The weather was overcast with a fair headwind making the paddle quite onerous. A photographic record was made of the new bridge, new quay wall ladders, lifebelt positions, new railings and other safety features. Footballs and lifebelts (returned to stances) were lifted and a handbag and jacket located and removed. An inspection of the River Kelvin as far upriver as the waterfall at the Kelvin Hall was made and photographs taken to be passed on to the relevant authorities.

Lifeguard Ian Sinclair met us at Erskine and took a "team" photograph

While at Erskine, George and Tony handed in to Erskine Hospital, the wheelchair found at Glasgow Green some weeks ago.

This was a good day's workout for the "corp."

The day started at 0800hrs with the preparation of canoes, ropes, lifebelts, buoyancy aids etc. At 1000hrs George and Tony drove their cars to Erskine to be left there to bring the canoes back to Glasgow Green. Mark Craig met George and Tony at Erskine and brought them back to the wharfage. The day finished at 1800hrs when the canoes and equipment were unloaded at the Green.



Officers & Lifeguards at Erskine

## [Event safety coverage](#)

Recent events have included Clydesdale Head, Western Head, SUBC Small Boats, SUBC Barony Cup, Clydeport Paddle, Paddy in The Green, County Grand Orange Lodge. The Society continues to provide this free service to the City ensuring the safety of all visitors to the Green on event days.

## [SUBC Barony Cup](#)

This event is an annual date in the Officers diary, the great relationship built up with Strathclyde Uni makes a great day for all. The day sees graduate crews race against present SUBC members in various races. Officers George and Tony this year provided the safety cover along with Lifeguard Colin Munn. As was expected it was a quiet day except for the intrusion of an "Irn-Bru" fridge floating down the course, which was removed with the assistance of students and graduates on the banking. After the racing George presented Strathclyde Graduates with the Barony Cup.



Officer George presents the Graduates Captain Johnny with the Barony cup

The fridge is removed from the river

