

2009 Incidents

18.8.09

During the afternoon of 18 August, a member of the public alerted the Prawle Point Watchkeepers to 2 men in the water clinging to a buoy and their canoe full of water under the cliff below Prawle Point. One Watchkeeper with a hand held radio went down the cliff to a point where the casualties were visible. The other Watchkeeper called Brixham Coastguard reporting the incident. The line was kept open to give updates. The two men managed to climb out onto the rocks and recovered and emptied the canoe. Two kayaks were also standing by. The Salcombe Inshore Lifeboat (ILB) arrived on the scene as did Prawle Point Coastguard Rescue Team. The two men were able to re-launch the canoe and paddled to the ILB. They climbed aboard with their kit and a towline was attached to the canoe. They were taken to Salcombe Harbour.

9.8.09

Late afternoon on 9 August, a Prawle Point Watchkeeper spotted a white rib with one person in it, circling behind and crossing the wake of a container vessel. This vessel was shown by AIS to be 5 nms out from the coast – a long way out for a rib. Continued observation showed the man in the rib leaning over the side and possibly recovering something from the water, the rib then departed in an easterly direction. It was then lost from view. This was reported to Brixham Coastguard who passed the information to Customs who then contacted Prawle Point directly. Because of the non-availability of a Customs vessel the incident was not followed up but the information was nevertheless welcomed.

27.7.09

In the evening of 27 July, the skipper of the catamaran Sailing By, called Brixham Coastguard requesting help to enter Salcombe Harbour as he was exhausted. Although a catamaran with a sail not setting correctly had been logged earlier by the Prawle Point Watchkeeper, a low sun angle prevented a continuous watch on the craft. The Watchkeeper informed Brixham of this and that as soon as the casualty was visual again, he would report. The Salcombe All-Weather Lifeboat (ALB) was launched and Brixham advised them of the position of the casualty. The Prawle Point Watchkeeper regained visual contact with the casualty and observed a small sail set and the skipper in the wheelhouse, this information was given the Brixham who relayed to the ALB. The catamaran crossed the Bar accompanied by the ALB.

25.7.09

At 1200 on 25 July, the Dive Master of Totnes Diver 1 called Brixham Coastguard reporting that 3 pairs of divers had not surfaced and were near to the end of their dive time. The dive rib's position was given as on the west side of the Salcombe Estuary. Prawle Point Watchkeepers could see nothing in the area between Bolt Head and the Salcombe Bar and reported this to Brixham. Following a call from Brixham Coastguard giving a Lat and Long position, Watchkeepers identified the rib and also a yacht Juliana which was assisting. The Salcombe Inshore Lifeboat and All-Weather Lifeboat were launched and came to the scene. The yacht Juliana found all the divers on the surface – they had possibly drifted west in the tidal stream and were therefore no longer visible to the Dive Master. All the divers were taken to Salcombe, cold but otherwise safe and well.

16.7.09

Yacht Sea Fever sent a MAYDAY distress call from a position 500 metres south of Bolt Head. Her rudder had jammed and she was drifting towards the Mewstone. Brixham Coastguard contacted NCI Prawle Point and the watchkeepers reported that they had visual contact and gave details of vessels in the vicinity. Later they reported that a RIB had gone alongside the casualty to assist and when the Salcombe ILB was approaching they gave a position update. Salcombe ILB towed Sea Fever into Salcombe Harbour.

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13.7.09

A MAYDAY distress call was received from the yacht Joniki II which had gone aground off Lannacombe Beach and was taking in water. Brixham Coastguard responded and advised the casualty that Salcombe Lifeboat would be tasked. The casualty was not visible from Prawle Point but watchkeepers were able to give the Coastguard information about the sea state and weather on scene and vessels in the vicinity. Joniki II was later towed back to Salcombe by the lifeboat.

4.7.09

A sea angling charter launch Calypso contacted Brixham Coastguard by mobile phone to say they were sinking 3 miles south of Bolt Head. Brixham Coastguard issued a PanPan alert. Prawle Point watchkeepers immediately reported having the casualty visual and gave her position. When Salcombe Lifeboat crossed the Bar the watchkeepers gave an updated position on VHF Channel 0 and the guided the lifeboat to the casualty after it had been going to the wrong vessel, thus earning the thanks of the Lifeboat crew. Calypso was able to return under own power to Salcombe escorted by the Lifeboat.

3.7.09

Yacht Sweet Chariot reported on VHF Channel 16 that she had engine trouble and difficulty sailing. The Prawle Point watchkeeper reported the casualty visual and later reported that she had been taken in tow by fishing vessel SE18.

14.6.09

Prawle Point watchkeepers spotted two RIBS with divers aboard near the historic wreck. They informed Brixham Coastguard as well as the wreck licensee. Shortly afterwards the police were on the case and a helicopter arrived on scene. Both RIBS returned to Salcombe and the divers were interrogated by the police.

10.6.09

A MAYDAY distress call from yacht Innisfree reported that her engines had failed and she was drifting onto the rocks near Salcombe Bar. Prawle Point watchkeepers advised Brixham Coastguard that they had the casualty in sight. She was taken in tow by the South Sands ferry into Salcombe Harbour.

1.6.09

Brixham Coastguard contacted NCI Prawle Point after receiving a call from fishing vessel Tunny reporting an engine failure 4 miles SSW of Prawle Point. Watchkeepers confirmed that they had the vessel in sight and gave regular position updates. Salcombe Inshore Lifeboat (ILB) was tasked but FVTunny was able to restart her engine and made her own way into Salcombe accompanied by the ILB.

26.5.09

At 1019 local time, the Prawle Point Watchkeepers spotted a yawl with red sails with a tender fouled under its bow. They reported this to Brixham Coastguard. Some 9 minutes later yacht Graceful Lady reported the loss of its tender to Brixham Coastguard. PQ Watchkeepers telephoned Brixham to inform them that they had the tender visual and gave a range and bearing from Prawle Point. Brixham issued a 'Sécurité' alert to small craft. Several other yachts reported sighting the tender to Brixham Coastguard but none were able to recover it. Prawle Point Watchkeepers kept the tender in sight and reported its position to Brixham but by 1128 it was no longer visible from Prawle Point. At 1530 the skipper of fishing vessel BM30 reported to Brixham Coastguard that he had recovered the tender off Bolt Tail. He informed them that he was continuing to his destination and would

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be returning to Brixham a week later. This information was relayed to the owner of the tender with the telephone number of BM30's skipper.

25.4.09

On the afternoon of 25 April 2009, eagle-eyed NCI Prawle Point Watchkeepers spotted an object on the shoreline which appeared to be a deflated, small, black and orange inflatable. They immediately telephoned to Brixham Coastguard, who tasked the Prawle Point Coastguard Rescue Team to investigate. Watchkeepers kept in regular contact with Brixham to give the position of the object for the Rescue Team. In just under half an hour the Rescue Team arrived at the Lookout for a visual position check. The Rescue Team deployed to recover the object which they did some 20 minutes later. The object turned out to be a commercial buoyancy suit, luckily empty.

14.4.09

In the afternoon, Brixham Coastguard heard the word Mayday on Channel 16. They phoned NCI Prawle Point to ask if the Watchkeepers had heard any Mayday calls. Nothing had been heard at Prawle Point. A short while later yacht Serendipity reported to Brixham Coastguard that a flat bottomed craft identified as the Isles of Scilly Doctor/Nurse Support vessel was testing equipment in Start Bay. Brixham Coastguard made several attempts to contact the support vessel with no success. Approximately 20 minutes after this NCI Prawle Point Watchkeepers phoned Brixham Coastguard to advise them that the Watchkeepers had observed a slow moving radar target in the Star Bay area. Fifteen minutes later the Watchkeepers were able to report that the target was now moving SSW at approximately 6 knots. Brixham Coastguard said that Helo Rescue 106 had been tasked. There was no resolution of this incident during the remainder of the Watch.

20.3.09

A yacht named Katy Laura transmitted a Mayday call to say that she had been dismasted and required immediate assistance. Her position was reported as being 3½ miles west of Prawle Point, off Bolt Head. Brixham Coast Guard responded. A few minutes later the fishing vessel Anglo Dawn called Brixham Coastguard to say that she was half a mile distant from the casualty and would assist. Despite an ENE force 5 wind the visibility at the time was only 2 nautical miles in haze. The watchkeepers at Prawle Point advised Brixham Coastguard that because of the low visibility they were unable to see the casualty but they were able to give a local weather report at Brixham Coastguard's request. Brixham tasked Salcombe All Weather Lifeboat to assist. In the event, however, Anglo Dawn was able to tow the Katy Laura into Salcombe Harbour. With the crew safe, Salcombe ALB returned to base.