

THE LIZARD LIFEBOAT - VISITOR CENTRE NEWS

The RNLI is working extremely hard to re-open as many of its shops as it possibly can and already some 50 or so retail outlets have been adapted to take on board the demanding requirements of Covid - 19 Regulations in order to make operations as safe as possible for volunteers and customers. It will be some time before our own Visitor Centre Shop is up and running. Situated, as it is, within an operational Lifeboat Station, there are many more factors which have to be taken into consideration before we can open to the public again.

Despite all of the restrictions, operation of the Station is in full swing and it has been a busy holiday season for Coxswain Dan Atkinson, Mechanic Ed Leckie and the boat and shore crews.

Historically, this has always been a busy time of year for Lizard Lifeboat crews. One such event began on 14th September 1886, when the steamship 'Suffolk' left Baltimore, USA on one of its regular runs to London. Along with a crew of 43, she carried a cargo of 2900 tons of general merchandise (including 24,000 sacks and casks of flour), 161 live bullocks and 2 young passengers. Unfortunately, tragedy struck and the Suffolk never reached her target destination. On 28th September, in dense fog, she struck the Lizard Point rocks. With the ship badly holed forward, the order "Lower the boats" was given by Captain W. H. Williams and all aboard abandoned ship.

RNLI Lifeboats 'Edmund and Fanny' and 'Joseph Armstrong' were launched from Lizard and Cadgwith and they eventually came alongside the Suffolk's three lifeboats which, upon finding themselves dangerously close to the rocks in very rough conditions, had pulled out to sea in order to avoid further disaster.

24 persons were taken into the Lizard boat and 21 into the Cadgwith boat. All persons were safely landed at Polpeor but more than 100 of the bullocks were lost with the remainder managing to swim ashore. Over the coming days the Suffolk gradually broke up and sank.



THE SUFFOLK FOUNDERS ON THE INFAMOUS LIZARD ROCKS



RNLB JOSEPH ARMSTRONG

A successful operation by the Lizard boats and crews and may that be the case in all future activities.

**David Gascoigne
Visitor Centre Manager**