

Beachley and Newport

Lifeboats; Land Search; Cliff, Mud, Mountain, Swift Water and Flood Rescue

What is SARA?

SARA is a volunteer Search and Rescue Charity, with Lifeboat and Rescue Stations along the length of the River Severn. The teams based at Beachley (near Chepstow) and Newport work together, to perform rescues on the Usk, Ebbw and Wye as well as the Severn, and to conduct land search and rescue across Gloucestershire. Last year these teams conducted 86 different operations.

Recent Operations

For the operational team members at Beachley and Newport there were two lengthy and sad search operations in the late summer. Late on a Friday evening a man suddenly went missing in Sedbury; lifeboats and land search teams were out looking until around 4am, working closely with the Police and Coastguard. A land team was deployed again the next day and on the Tuesday three lifeboats searched on the Wye. Sadly the man's body was spotted on Thursday near Brockweir, and SARA was able to deploy very quickly to effect the recovery.

A week or so earlier we had been called to Wentwood Woods, to join Longtown Mountain Rescue in searching for a missing man from Newport. The teams searched all day to no avail. In this case there was no immediate follow up involving SARA. The police then requested a second search three weeks later, during which the man's body was found by one of the SARA teams. These cases are sad for all concerned but we are grateful that we can help to bring closure to the families concerned.

The lifeboat crews were also called out by the Coastguard a few times, mainly to small vessels drifting downstream - under the M48 Severn Bridge or the Old Chepstow Bridge in Chepstow. On one task a canadian canoe was recovered close to Charston Rock, towed back up to Beachley and handed over to the Coastguard. On another occasion a motor cruiser with engine failure was towed back home to Portishead from the Wye.

The Water Rescue Team from Newport was also involved with a missing person search in the Bargoed area, supporting Gwent Police.



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Station News

Over the summer we have had a major 'spring clean' at the Beachley Station. The container has finally had some strong shelving installed, redundant old equipment has gone and areas such as the boat bay were repainted



The former frontline lifeboat has been sold, as has the old blue landrover 'Mobile 2'. In its place we now have a new land search vehicle, which is currently being fitted out.



The team also attended the Flood Expo at the NEC in Birmingham, making some very useful contacts with DEFRA and with suppliers.

Steep Ground Training

September saw a complicated rescue training exercise in the Wye Valley. A group of walkers had fallen into a deep ravine at Cleddon Falls, and needed to be rescued. One had a 'broken leg', one an 'injured shoulder' and the third was not injured but was frightened and hysterical!

The SARA Team set up a rope pulley system, stabilised the injured casualties and then extracted them using a mountain rescue stretcher - all the while watched by the SARA Team Doctor who had come down from Kidderminster to monitor the exercise.



SARA Beachley Land Search Manager Kathy Donaldson said "The exercise at Cleddon was a real challenge and a very useful learning exercise. Many thanks to the landowner and to the great casualties who helped out!"



Exploring the Wye Valley by Night and by Day!

Cross Station Training

A wet October morning in the Wye Valley was the ideal opportunity for members of land teams from each SARA station, plus colleagues from Cave Rescue, to learn and practise new skills.



There was a rope rescue followed by a challenging stretcher carry, various search techniques and how to protect a potential crime scenes. Then after lunch (and a lot of tea and cake in the group shelter) a session revising helicopter landing site theory was followed by the opportunity for crew, who had never done so, to let off some smoke and flares.

Gwent PCC Visit

Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner Jeff Cuthbert visited the Newport base in September, and experienced the River Usk in SARA Lifeboat 14 'The Maureen Easton'.

Jeff Cuthbert commented "SARA is an exceptional organisation



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I am fully supportive of its ambition to move to a better access point on the River Usk. I will do everything in my power to support identifying a suitable new location so that they can continue to save lives."

Duck Race

SARA's Annual Duck Race was held in late July. This year the event kicked off with a simulated rescue on the Chepstow cliffs, where a casualty had become stuck in the Gloucester Hole, next to the flag. The Cliff Rescue Team lowered down a qualified Casualty Carer along with a stretcher. Once the casualty ('Bob', the rescue dummy) was secure, they were then raised up the cliff, where an 'exercise ambulance' was waiting, at least in theory!



All three of SARA's lifeboats from Beachley and Newport were also on display, including some dramatic high speed manoeuvres by SARA 1 Lifeboat 'The Jim Hewitt'. They each demonstrated how they could rescue a casualty from the water.



At 1 o'clock sharp, the 1,000 plastic ducks were dropped from the A48 bridge, onto the incoming tide, and they drifted rapidly upstream to the finish line at the Old Bridge. Once past the bridge they were all collected by the SARA lifeboats.

The event raised around £1,500 for SARA.

Launch Tractor

Another major milestone this summer was the completion of the launch tractor rebuild. The Beachley Launch Tractor - a converted dump truck - was built in 2005 by crew members Chris Taylor and Gareth Denley. It has taken quite a battering over the years, so Chris and fellow coxswain Ian Blayney spent many weekends and evenings rebuilding it this year.



Many thanks to local businesses Linde Severnside, PJ Engineering, Wheelmasters, Flexible Solutions KB Transport, Essential Graphics and Steve Davis for helping to make this possible.

Cubs Visit

In July, we welcomed 2nd Caldicot Cubs to the Beachley Station. The Cubs were given an overview of the work SARA do in the local area and got 'hands on' with our Rescue equipment. After rescuing our forever in danger



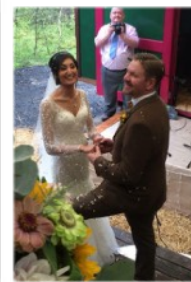
Throwbag Men, the Cubs gave our Land Search Control Vehicle and Landrover a thorough inspection! A final stop in the boat bay to see our Lifeboats, SARA 1, SARA 3 and SARA 5 rounded off the visit. We'd like to thank all at 2nd Caldicot for coming down to see us!

Wedding Season!

Many congratulations to long time SARA members Anthony Perrett and Zahara Ally who were married in August, and also to trainees Lisa Gorenflo and Ingram Weeks who also married in September!



Lisa



Ant & Zahara



Ingram



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Fundraising News

Summer is always a busy time for fundraising events. Many thanks to the team at Llanvaches Village Residents' Social Group who raised £150 for SARA with their Picnic Event. We were delighted to see them at the Station and to show them around.

The players at the Brockweir Amateur Dramatic Society (BADs) chose SARA as one of the beneficiaries of both their spring pantomime and autumn play - we really appreciate the support of communities across our area.

The SARA Team were at Chepstow Racecourse August Bank Holiday weekend, showing many many children SARA Lifeboat 3!



And we were busy providing safety cover at the Monmouth Raft Race and the Severn Bridge Half-Marathon.



At the Monmouth Raft Race

With Christmas approaching, you can raise money for SARA when shopping online - you can choose - visit [Easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and choose Severn Area Rescue Association, and also sign up to Amazon Smile at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/505504-0>

Give Monthly Online

As a charity SARA depends on donations.

To support us, please visit:

www.sara-rescue.org.uk/donate

Please consider setting up a monthly donation
- you can now do that on our website!

Please don't forget to tick the 'Gift Aid' box!

Please Join Us!

We are always looking for new operational crew members, both as Lifeboat Crew and Land Team Members.

In addition, our Fundraisers help to raise the essential money which is needed to keep the Station operational. Other Specialist Members have skills such as administration and vehicle mechanics, which are essential to keeping the operation going.

All operational team members need to be physically fit; lifeboat crew should ideally live within 15 minutes of Beachley or Malpas, and must be able to swim. Full training is provided - regular attendance during the training course is needed to attain operational status, and then continuation and progression training can follow.



"Now look here you 'orrible lot..."

For more information just contact beachley.trainingmanager@sara-rescue.org.uk

SARA (Severn Area Rescue Association) is a Registered Charity in England & Wales No: 505504
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