

Community Focus

Bundoran

Local History

Hidden Gems

What's on



Some of the original crew on a training course in Waterford L-R Whitey Gilbride, Joe Chapman, Frank O'Kelly, PJ Clancy and Sean Staunton.

The lifeboat – at the heart of the Bundoran community

As volunteers with Bundoran RNLI we often get asked lots of questions – how fast does the lifeboat go? (35 knots/40 miles per hour), can you really get into the drysuits in 45 seconds? (yes), how long does it take the boat to launch after the pagers go off? (6 minutes – yes really) but the one question we get asked the most is – why?... why do you do what you do? why do you put your lives at risk to help complete strangers?

The answer is varied but the most common one is “I want to give something back to my community”

Most of our volunteer crew grew up in Bundoran, went to school in Bundoran and many work in Bundoran. The truth is, when we get called out – we don't know what or who we're going to – it could be one of our neighbours, a former teacher, a colleague, a family member, a friend or a stranger. But whoever we go to, the training that has become part of our weekly routine for many years automatically kicks in.

All walks of life

Our lifeboat crew come from all walks of life - we have teachers, paramedics, farmers, surf instructors, outdoor in-

structors and ambulance drivers, with only a small percent actually coming from a marine background. When a new crew member joins, there's a lot of work to be done before they even get out on the lifeboat. Our mantra is “if you give us the time, we'll give you the time”. While training costs money, the most valuable resource that we have is our time. Our training officer and all crew members give their time to new recruits to show them the ropes and learn the lifeboat way of life.

New recruits will learn on station first and will then be sent to the dedicated RNLI College in Poole, Dorset for more formal training. Assessment is continuous throughout your time as crew whether you have been for two years or twenty two years. Systems change, kit changes and technology changes and everyone needs to be up to date. So when you hear about us going to rescue somebody at Main Beach, or Tullan or Mullaghmore, this is what we've been training for on dark Tuesday nights in January, on sunny Sunday mornings in June and all the time in between.

1976-1994

Since the service was established at Bundoran in 1976, with the RNLI tak-

ing over in 1994, we have had a number of boats. Our current lifeboat “William Henry Liddington” was bequeathed to us at the request of the John Grover Liddington and named after his parents William and Annette (Annette Mary Liddington serves our colleagues at Beaumaris Lifeboat Station in Wales) and has been on service with us since July 2009 rescuing many people since then.

Lifeboats have come and gone but the one consistency is that the lifeboat belongs to the community. It is there to help the community when it's needed at the most crucial of times and without the financial help of the generous communities of Bundoran, Ballyshannon, Leitrim, Sligo and the greater Donegal Bay area, we wouldn't be able to operate.

So when you see us shaking a bucket on the street in the future or selling tickets for our annual dinner dance (Jan 27th 2017) or staging the soapbox race next June, think of your donation as helping to pay for fuel for the lifeboat, for a new drysuit for one of our volunteer crew or for the hours of training that our crew must do in order to fulfil the RNLI's mission – to save lives at sea.

- **Shane Smyth, Volunteer Lifeboat Press Officer, Bundoran RNLI.**



The Lifeboat naming ceremony in May 2010.



The Bundoran Lifeboat - “William Henry Liddington”. PHOTO: Liam Bromley



The Lifeboat crew at this year's dinner dance.

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