



# A REAL LIFE SAVER

## RNLI PADSTOW

Padstow is a small town on the north coast of Cornwall, approximately 2 nautical miles within the River Camel Estuary. The town is built around a small harbour that divides its facilities between the local and visiting fishing fleet and a strong maritime leisure trade. The town is situated on the western side of the river directly opposite the village of Rock.

A lifeboat was established at Padstow prior to 1825. The RNLI took full control of the boat and station in 1856. The current lifeboat station is located at Mother Ivey's Bay, Trevoze Head having been resited from Hawkers Cove in October 1967, due to river silting. The lifeboat can now launch into deep water at any state of the tide.

Lift consultants LECS UK and lift manufacturer Alimak Hek have recently completed the major modernisation of the cliff lift at the RNLI's new lifeboat station at Padstow. The inclined lift travels 35 metres at an inclination of 48°

The former station was located alongside the new one and remained operational during the construction phase and the lift had to be altered to suit the levels for the new station.

The design of the new Padstow lifeboat house is unique. The designers and consulting engineers, Haskoning UK Limited of Haywards Heath, along with the project architects, Poynton Bradbury Wynter Cole of St Ives, came up with a distinctive shape, one that rests well against the imposing cliffs at Trevoze Head.



The lift is required to be reliable and functional and has to face all weathers. Its main function is to transport casualties & stretchers to the cliff top roadway, which paramedics can reach with conventional vehicles hence the need for reliability. The inclement weather conditions experienced on the north Cornwall coast also needed to be considered and suitable materials to achieve longevity were selected.

The lift included many unique features such as a centrifugal emergency lowering system, pressure sensors on the lift and toe guards and rear mounted car escape door.

LECS (UK) have a long history working with inclined lifts and were the Consultants on the original installation at Padstow as well as at other cliff locations where lifts are installed including Scarborough, Hastings, Lizard, Folkestone, Southend, Babbacombe and Lynton & Lynmouth. Earlier this year LECS (UK) received an award from ACE, the Association for Consultancy & Engineering, for its part in the Babbacombe inclined lift project.

Alimak Hek has a long history of installing straight, curved and multi-inclinal lifts usually inside bridge legs, mines and power stations, where access is relatively easy. Access at RNLI Padstow was difficult and specialist abseiling teams were employed to assist the installation crew.







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The Royal National Lifeboat Institution is a registered charity, which exists to save lives at sea. It provides, on call, the 24-hour service necessary to cover search and rescue requirements for a distance of 50 miles from the coast of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. There are currently 223 lifeboat stations in the UK. The RNLI is entirely dependent upon voluntary contributions and legacies for its income.

David Cooper of LECS (UK) and Craig Brown of Alimak Hek would both like to express their thanks to the RNLI volunteers for their assistance throughout the project, which is a testament to the engineering abilities of both companies.





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The first Padstow lifeboat was built by the Padstow Harbour Association in 1827 and kept at Hawker's Cove. The RNLI took over the station in 1856. In 1899 a new steam lifeboat was provided and the station's first motor lifeboat was commissioned in 1929.

A new boathouse and roller slipway were built at Hawker's Cove for a second motor lifeboat in 1931. A further boathouse and 73 metre slipway ensued in 1967 and were later adapted for the station's Tyne class boat.

Completion of the new award-winning boathouse and slipway for Padstow and naming of its new £2.5M Tamar class ON-1283 (16-04) Spirit of Padstow took place recently.

Sadly many Padstow crew have lost their lives during rescues. In 1867 in a service to the Georgiana on 6 February, five of the lifeboat crew drowned when the lifeboat capsized – Daniel Shea, William Intross, Thomas Varco, Andrew Truscott and Michael Crennel paid the ultimate sacrifice.

History sadly repeated itself on 11 April 1900 when the steam lifeboat James Stevens No. 4 launched and, as she was leaving the harbour, met a heavy swell and capsized. Out of her crew of 11, 8 were drowned – Coxswain David Grubb, T Bate, James Grubb, E Kane, JS Martin, JB Old, J Stephens and S East. A memorial to these brave men can be seen in Padstow cemetery.

Padstow lifeboat station has an incredible record for saving lives and over its history, crew members have been awarded 2 Bronze and 28 Silver medals for gallantry and many other worthy awards.



*Padstow Lifeboat Crew*

