

Daily Clarion, Thursday March 30, 2006

Rescue at sea!

Dramatic scenes occurred on Wednesday night when the storm of the century hit the Atlantic coast. Loss of life was narrowly averted.

Children in Rescue Drama

THE OFF-SHORE LIFEBOAT SERVICE was once again at the centre of a dramatic rescue when it was called out last Wednesday night. Three children had been spotted drifting out to sea by a passer-by. They were in a small boat as the weather deteriorated. They were named as Jack Morris (10), Jonas Leech (10) and Sam Patel (11).

Stunned

"I couldn't believe my eyes," said Trevor Jones (67), a local resident who raised the alarm. "I'd come to watch the storm from the cliffs and I saw them being washed away. I called 999 from my mobile phone and alerted the coast guard. They had no sails or oars," added Mr Jones, "and were being battered by the storm."

The lifeboat was raised at 7.45pm and reached the children at 8pm. During a risky operation to transfer the children to safety, one of the lifeboat crew was almost swept overboard as waves reaching 15 feet threatened to swamp both craft.

Heroes

"I can't thank the lifeboat service enough!" said Mrs Sandra Morris,

mother of one of the boys. "These people are true heroes. You can be sure the boys will never be so stupid again. They all could have died."

A Perilous Place

Senior Lifeguard Dan Brigham described the event to our reporter.

"Apparently, the boys had been playing in the boat while it was moored, but somehow the mooring came loose and they were swept out by the tide. The children were in great danger. The sea is a perilous place, even in fine weather. The combination of a fast tide and the incoming storm meant the worst conditions possible. Thank goodness no lives were lost. It could have been a tragedy."

"So often," he commented, "we get called out because of someone's stupidity. They should never have been near the sea in these conditions."

Busiest Year Ever

The local lifeboat service has been involved in over 9,000 rescues during the year. This shows an increase of 8.5% for the area, which is higher than the national average. The service is totally manned by volunteers and relies on donations by the general public for its survival. If you would like to support their essential life-saving work, contact rnli.org.uk