

Humberside Coastguard Search and Rescue Helicopters

Captain Jonathan Stanley, Deputy Chief Pilot



Summer has arrived early, COVID-19 travel restrictions have been eased, people are flocking to the hills and coastal resorts and the SAR base is getting busier again. Aside from any concern about becoming infected with the coronavirus, if you *do* decide to spend time on the beach or otherwise in the great outdoors, please be extremely cautious: hospitals and ambulance services remain 'stretched', some charitable rescue service providers may not be operating at their normal capacities and all rescuers are likely to treat casualties as potential virus carriers. Many of you will be understandably keen to escape from enforced and extended home confinement but, when you do so, please continue to stay safe in every way. The incident near Goathland on 31 May illustrates the point.

We have noticed some very unusual effects of the recent lockdown period, many of which are continuing as I type this update. Earlier in the month my crew went to the Lake District to conduct some mountain flying training and, in the course of just over an hour among the fells in glorious sunny weather, we saw a total of only four people hillwalking and no boats at all moving on Windermere. If you have ever been to the Lakes in warm, sunny weather, you will appreciate how odd that seemed! From an aviation perspective many regional airports (including Humberside) have greatly reduced their opening hours and have frequently been closed for days at a time; if nothing else, this has reduced our refuelling options away from base. In addition, the massive reduction in airline traffic has made the skies seem very quiet indeed...although it has sometimes seemed to emphasise the continuing military activity!

Finally, I apologise if we have woken local residents late at night recently; hopefully the incident list below will explain the reasons for those antisocial-hours callouts, from which the importance of our prompt response will be self-evident.

Date	Times	Tasking
8 May	09:00 – 10:57	Called to unconscious male with CPR in progress aboard a large wind farm support vessel 20 miles north of Cromer, Norfolk. Winch paramedic deployed and provided medical intervention, but casualty deceased.

9 May	00:38 – 03:33	Serious onboard incident with 5 casualties aboard the vessel 'Seaway Strashnov', 35 miles east of Mablethorpe. The vessel was equipped with a helideck. Rescue 912 landed on the helideck before taking the 2 most seriously injured casualties to Hull Royal Infirmary, leaving the three remaining casualties to be evacuated by lifeboat.
9 May	06:15 – 09:06	Returned to the 'Seaway Strashnov to recover the remaining three casualties owing to difficulties in completing a lifeboat recovery. All taken to Hull Royal Infirmary.
11 May	16:08 – 18:10	Fallen mountain biker in northern Peak District who had crashed after suffering a seizure. Casualty and two ambulance paramedics taken to Sheffield Shirecliffe landing site for onward transfer to hospital.
21 May	12:49 – 15:24	Male with broken ankle at the base of cliffs at Flamborough Head. Winched and taken to Hull Royal Infirmary.
25 May	12:53 – 13:42	Tasked to rescue a man who was stuck on top of the High Stacks pinnacle at Flamborough Head. Winched to the aircraft and delivered uninjured to the coastguard rescue team on the adjacent clifftop.
26 May	00:30 – 03:41	Search for overdue speedboat with 4 persons on board off Great Yarmouth. Extensive search carried out thermal imaging and night vision equipment until stood down when police located all the missing people safe and well on shore.
27 May	17:35 – 20:00	77 year old lady who had suffered a suspected stroke on marshland bordering The Wash. Carried to aircraft and taken to Boston hospital.
29 May	14:06 – 16:29	Diverted from training to a man who had fallen 15ft over the cliff edge at Scarborough South Bay golf course. The coastguard rescue team (CRT) were present and had lowered personnel to the casualty. The helicopter was landed at the scene and the winch paramedic was lowered to the casualty by the CRT. The casualty was stabilised and placed in a stretcher before being winched by the helicopter to the clifftop. The helicopter landed, the casualty was carried to the aircraft and he was taken to Hull Royal Infirmary.
31 May	22:56 – 01:40	Tasked to investigate an emergency beacon activation 105 miles north north-east from Kirmington. On arrival at the scene red flares were seen to be fired from a liferaft, with two other fishing vessels approaching. The liferaft contained the three crewmen from a 14-metre Whitby fishing boat that had capsized without warning. The helicopter crew elected to stand off while the three survivors were recovered from the liferaft by one of the fishing vessels, then the winch paramedic was lowered to assess the survivors' condition. Finding them to be fit and well (and each enjoying a large curry), he decided that they did not require hospital treatment so was winched back to the aircraft. The survivors were subsequently returned to Whitby by the Whitby lifeboat.
31 May	14:37 – 16:15	Tasked to 15 year old male cliff faller at Flamborough Head. The casualty was winched to the aircraft and taken to Grimsby hospital. The crew was then tasked to another incident.
31 May	16:32 – 16:39	Tasked from the previous mission to a person in the water at Goole docks. Stood down en route as the fire service had effected a rescue.
31 May	17:54 – 19:51	Injured person near Goathland, North Yorkshire Moors. The winch paramedic was winched to the scene, which was in a ravine in trees. Once the casualty had been 'packaged' and placed in a stretcher, the casualty and winch paramedic were winched to the aircraft and taken to Hull Royal Infirmary. The casualty had jumped from a waterfall into a pool but hit rocks; as well as the rescue helicopter, the incident was attended by volunteer rescue team members, ambulance personnel and the Yorkshire Air Ambulance.
31 May	01:10 – 02:06	Tasked to search for a missing person who had threatened to walk into the sea at Scarborough. Although the weather had been reported to be clear, by the time the aircraft arrived on the scene an extensive sea fog had developed. A radar letdown and approach to the coast was carried out but the weather made a visual search impossible, so the crew was stood down and returned to base.