

14 March 2023

RNLI volunteers saving lives on land and water ahead of The Gemini Boat Race

Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) volunteers Ella du Breuil and Rosie Allen are lifesavers on and off the water.

The volunteer lifeboat crew members from Chiswick RNLI will be on duty later this month (March 26) keeping the huge crowds safe on the banks of the River Thames during The Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge University Boat Clubs.

The pair have launched more than 400 times since they both signed up at the age of 17.

But it's not just on the water where the trained medics are keeping people safe.

Ella said: 'As well as being volunteer lifeboat crew I'm also a qualified paramedic. I've always been interested in sailing and the sea and had previously volunteered for the RNLI at a coastal lifeboat station, so when I moved to London in 2008 I took the opportunity to join Chiswick RNLI.'

'This year will be my 20th year as a RNLI volunteer, and I've recently qualified as a Commander on the Chiswick lifeboat so it's a very special year for me.'

Rosie said: 'I joined the RNLI on my 17th birthday after following in my dad's footsteps as crew. When I moved to London from the coast in 2002 the lifeboats on the Thames had just started operating and I thought what a great way to continue to be involved as a volunteer alongside my day job as an emergency practitioner at East Surrey Hospital.'

Since RNLI lifeboats were established on the Thames in 2002 - at Teddington, Gravesend, Chiswick and Tower - collectively they have launched more than 17,000 times, rescued almost 6,000 people and saved more than 600 lives.

Ella said: 'The RNLI has been saving lives on the River Thames for over 20 years now and it is always great to be involved with events like The Boat Race.'

'Our advice to those coming to enjoy the day is to be aware of your surroundings, as slips trips and falls can happen easily. If you do fall into the water unexpectedly, remember to float to live. Keep calm and try not to panic, lean back extending your arms and legs to keep your airway clear of the water and if you need to, gently move your arms and legs in a gentle motion to help you float. Once you have your breathing under control then consider swimming to a point of safety.'

'If you do see anyone in trouble, dial 999 or 112 and ask for the Coastguard and if you can, try and give a location as this will help rescue services get to those in difficulty quicker.'

RNLI lifeboat crews and lifeguards will be on the championship course along the Thames in two lifeboats and nine inshore rescue boats to provide safety cover and offer advice to the thousands of spectators watching from the riverbank.

The RNLI, which operates four lifeboat stations on the Thames covering a 57-mile stretch, is the official charity partner of The Gemini Boat Race 2023.

Wayne Bellamy, Station Manager at Chiswick RNLI said: 'We're proud to be the official charity partner of The Gemini Boat Race and to be part of the historic race between Oxford and Cambridge University Boat Clubs

'The partnership aims to raise funds to support the Thames' lifesaving service with all proceeds going towards the running costs of the four RNLI stations along the river.

'Our community safety teams have also been working with venues and schools along the course to provide lifesaving water safety training and encourage familiarity with throwlines.'

To support the Boat Race and RNLI Thames crews, you can donate to save lives here: rnli.org/boatrace

Notes to editors

- Interviews with Ella and Rosie available on request
- Collection of images and videos available for download [here](#).
- Where possible please include rnli.org.uk/boatrace

RNLI media contacts

For more information please telephone Dave Riley, RNLI National Media Officer on 07795 015042 or David_Riley@rnli.org.uk or RNLI Press Office on 01202 336789.

RNLI online

For more information, please visit the [RNLI website](#) or [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#). News releases, videos and photos are available on the [RNLI News Centre](#).

Key facts about the RNLI

The RNLI charity saves lives at sea. Its volunteers provide a 24-hour search and rescue service around the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland coasts. The RNLI operates over 238 lifeboat stations in the UK and Ireland and more than 240 lifeguard units on beaches around the UK and Channel Islands. The RNLI is independent of Coastguard and government and depends on voluntary donations and legacies to maintain its rescue service. Since the RNLI was founded in 1824, its lifeboat crews and lifeguards have saved over 143,500 lives.

The Gemini Boat Race

The Gemini Boat Race is on Sunday 26 March. It will be broadcast live on BBC One from 15:30 - 17:45

Race Times

16:00 77th Women's Race

16:15 48th Women's Reserve Race - Osiris v Blondie

16:30 58th Men's Reserve Race - Isis v Goldie

17:00 168th Men's Race

The Gemini Boat Race is free to attend.

KEY MESSAGES

The Gemini Boat Race Fan Parks will be open on race day from 12:00 -18:30 and are located in Fulham (Bishops Park) Hammersmith (Furnival Gardens)

Enjoy big screens showing live BBC coverage, delicious street food,

<https://www.theboatrace.org/spectator-information>

The Boat Race is one of the world's oldest and most famous amateur sporting events. The first Men's Boat Race took place on 10 June 1829 at Henley-on-Thames, Oxford winning this race easily, and their winning boat can still be seen in the River & Rowing Museum in Henley.

The Women's Boat Race was first held in 1927 on the Isis in Oxford but only raced intermittently until the mid-1960's. From 1977 until 2014 The Women's Boat Race was held at Henley-on-Thames. In 2015 the women's race moved to the Championship Course, taking place over the same distance as the men's race.