Lifeboatman gets a ducking on 200th call

by ALASTAIR WREFORD

VETERAN lifeboatman Andy Walton has completed his 200th service in the Port Isaac lifeboat – and celebrated with a ducking in the harbour and a champagne reception from colleagues!

The 200th call involved a search for a person in the water at Glebe Cliff, near Tintagel. It turned out that there had been no-one in the water but a dog was rescued and returned to its owner.

Mr Walton, now senior crewman with the lifeboat, moved to Port Isaac in August 1975, having previously lived in the Wolverhampton area. He joined the lifeboat crew on January 22, 1977, and went on the first of his many service calls in July that year.
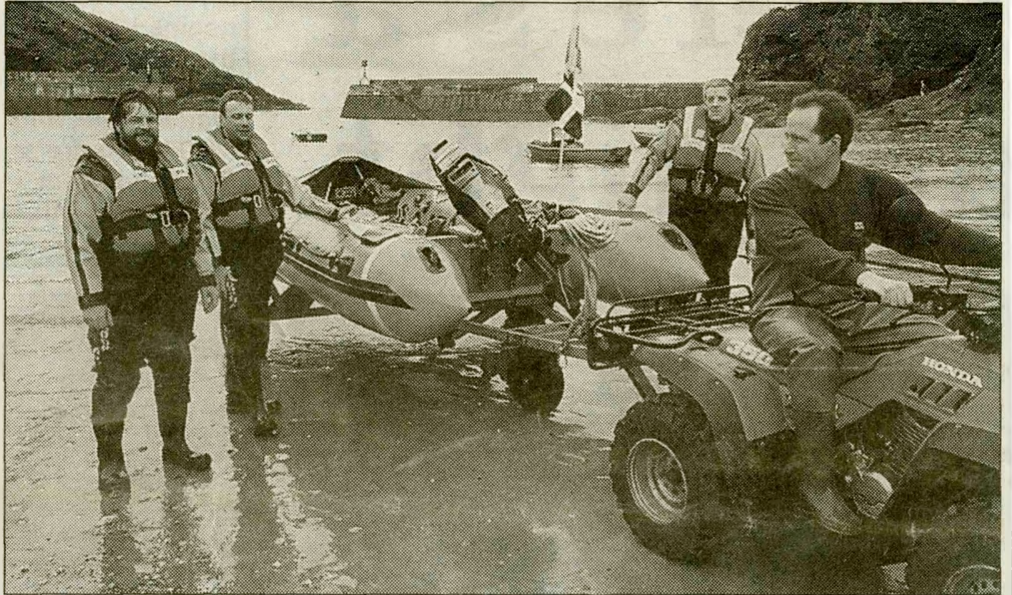
He went on to complete six services in his first year and then on August 14, 1978, was one of three crewmen who saved a young man in dangerous and dramatic circumstances at Bossiney, just north of Tintagel. For this service Mr Walton was awarded a vellum certificate by the RNLI.

He went on to complete his 100th service in April, 1991, and achieved his 200th on April 14 this year. His friends and fellow crew at Port Isaac were thrilled to welcome him back ashore that day, when he was first thrown in the harbour and then given a champagne celebration.

Mr Walton, who is nearing retirment age for lifeboatmen, has completed 20 years' service, qualifying for the RNLI's Gold Badge.

During his time in the crew, Port Isaac lifeboat has been launched on service 362 times. Since the station reopened in about 1968, the lifeboat itself has been launched 488 times.

Until last year the station at Port Isaac was "on service" in the summer months only, from March to October, but is now operational all year.

Andy Walton (left) returns from his 200th call with the Port Isaac lifeboat. Also pictured are Richard Hambly, Paul Pollington and Steve Taylor. Picture: Clive Hester.