**Exmouth Gig Club and the RNLI**

There was a lot going on over the weekend with the National Life Surf Lifesaving Championships on Saturday, Dawlish Air Show and, of course, the RNLI Open Weekend ably supported by Exmouth Gig Club!

At 32 feet long the “Pilot Gig” is an Ocean Going rowing boat that used to take a “Pilot” out to larger boats/ships that needed guiding into ports in and around Cornwall – the principal behind it was the boats would race out to the ships and the first one there would be awarded the contract! The sport of Gig Racing was born although they do not race out to ships now but against each other over prescribed courses, ranging from around 2 Kilometres to 8 and beyond.

The link with the RNLI is not that tenuous as the early boats were often used as a Lifeboat rescuing people off the coast of Cornwall. To demonstrate this at Mid-day on Saturday the 23rd the Exmouth Beach Rescue’s Jet ski dropped a dummy in the exe and the Exmouth Gig Boat was despatched to rescue it – safely navigating a sand bar, barely visible at low tide – once they had “rescued” the dummy they then returned it to the shore. The Jet Ski then returned it into the water for the RNLI’s Inshore Lifeboat to rescue it – needless to say the time difference was “a little less” demonstrating the vast improvement if affecting Rescues at sea.

It was not just the members of Exmouth Gig Club that were involved in the weekend but the public too with the opportunity for anyone who wanted to pit themselves against their peers with two static rowing machines set to time themselves over 500 metres – with the winners of the three categories (Best Male, Best female and Best Under 16) receiving £20 vouchers! At £1 a time it was well supported and combined with the sale of water bottles the profits were split between the club and the RNLI.

Whilst the extra revenue was welcome the two days were more about raising the profile of this New Club to the people in and around Exmouth and generating more members to this very exciting but social sport.

The two days were finished off by Ben Atkinson, the Chair of the club, taking the Ice Bucket Challenge! He and the rest of the committee would like to thank everyone for taking part in the two days, the members for being on hand to man the stalls, row out for the rescue etc. And to The RNLI for allowing us to share their event and for the Cranford Club for lending us two rowing machines!

For more information please visit our web site [www.exmouthgigclub.com](http://www.exmouthgigclub.com)!