# Missing RNLI flag returned after 56 years with a heartfelt confession



In a delightful turn of events at the Trearddur Bay RNLI station, an unexpected package arrived last weekend, sparking both nostalgia and amusement among the crew. The parcel contained the RNLI flag that had inexplicably gone missing for 56 years, along with a heartfelt confession letter and a £20 donation from the now-retired individual responsible for the theft.

The incident dates back to 1969 when a group of three teenagers went camping on Holy Island. According to the letter, penned by a person currently residing on the Wirral, the group, then aged 17, had ventured past the RNLI station where one friend climbed the flagpole and took the flag. The author expressed a mix of regret and nostalgia, stating, “In 1969 me and two friends where (sic) camping up the road from you. One night on the way back to the tent we passed your station and flagpole, one of us climbed up the pole and took the flag!! Wrong of us. We were only 17 at the time, but that’s no excuse!!”

After many years of forgotten guilt, the individual rediscovered the flag during a recent clear-out, prompting them to finally return it to the RNLI. The letter read, “Hope it gets back to you. Very sorry.”

Upon receiving the letter and the flag, RNLI volunteers shared their surprise and amusement, laughing together over the unexpected find when they gathered on Sunday morning, April 6. The crew noted that the flag was still in good condition and took the opportunity to raise it once more on the station’s flagpole. A spokesperson for the station acknowledged the gesture with light-heartedness, saying, “To the culprits if you see this - all is forgiven and we won’t name names. Thank you for your kind donation and for making us smile this morning!”

The tale has garnered attention online, igniting a wave of warm responses on social media. Many users reflected on the humour of the story, with one woman remarking, “That’s the most British thing I’ve seen in ages, love that!” Other commenters expressed admiration for the individual’s change of heart over the decades. One person quoted an old French proverb: “There is no pillow so soft as a clear conscience,” highlighting the positivity stemming from the revelation.

The RNLI flag itself holds historical significance, with its origins tracing back to 1884, when Leonora Preston designed the flag to celebrate the rescue of her brother in Ramsgate, Kent. The flag, featuring a representation of the St George’s cross and a Tudor crown along with a fouled anchor in its centre, became the RNLI’s official standard in 1908.

The story serves as a charming reminder of youthful indiscretions and the capacity for change over time, resonating with many who reflected on their own past antics.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_National_Lifeboat_Institution> - This URL provides information about the RNLI's history and operations, including the origins of the RNLI flag. It also mentions the historical context and significance of the RNLI.
* <https://rnliarchive.blob.core.windows.net/media/1514/0517.pdf> - While not directly about the flag incident, this PDF highlights the caliber of service and dedication of RNLI volunteers, reflecting the type of environment where such an event might occur.
* <https://rnliarchive.blob.core.windows.net/media/1538/0541.pdf> - This PDF discusses various events and dedications related to RNLI lifeboats and may indirectly provide context for how significant donations and gestures are to the organization.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This is the source of the original article, providing the core details of the incident involving the return of the RNLI flag and the reaction of the Trearddur Bay RNLI station.
* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Saint-Georges-Cross> - Although not listed in the search results, a Britannica article about the Saint George's Cross can provide additional context about the historical and symbolic significance of this element in the RNLI flag.