

The way forward in water rescue

Run off from the recent unprecedented rainfall, meant many waterways were unable to cope. Up and down the country rivers burst their banks creating the worst flooding ever recorded, writes Graeme Owen.



The heavy burden being placed on the emergency rescue services soon became clear to everyone watching the story unfold. Responding to the situation they displayed the very best of professional dedication, but fire services and other rescue services were continually forced to improvise.

It soon became obvious that the right kind of flood rescue equipment just wasn't available. With all the predictions of radical changes in the weather pattern the need to secure the right equipment has now become an urgent necessity.

Fortunately exactly the right piece of kit for the job is now in production and currently undergoing evaluation by the Outreach Organisation, based in North Wales. The answer to many of the most difficult rescue scenarios you're likely to come across is the Carson 4xR, the first of a family of dynamically designed catamaran type rescue craft.

Unconventional yet effective

At first sight the 4xR looks very unconventional, but don't be fooled, this is a most effective piece of water rescue kit you'll find anywhere on the market – a bold statement unless you've seen it operating in serious conditions. The reasoning behind the design becomes much easier to understand when I saw the craft 'on active service'. What the professional rescue services always want to know – 'forget the sales talk, does it work?' The answer is – 'Yes it does!' And there are solid reasons why it does. In the first place the

4xR development team is steeped in the right kind of experience. The boat building/design team, led by Barry Carson, with its experiences of building rapid response craft for special forces, marine patrolling and fire services requirements have a great depth of knowledge. Put that together with their research into the flood rescue problems and you have a vessel that started from where you begin, how to best deal with a particular rescue situation?

Functional capability

Given that kind of pedigree, this process of design has come to incorporate just about every kind of functional capability you'd want to have on your very own rescue craft.

Benefits of the Carson 4xR include:

- Extremely stable even in fast white water conditions.
- Having the dynamic buoyancy of four independently inflatable tubes.
- It's rapidly deployed, four tubes - foot pump (hp air system available).
- It folds up into its own carrying valise and can be lifted by two persons.
- It is difficult to capsize, but if it does, it works equally well whichever way it sits in the water.
- Good load carrying capacity; as well as people – will safely accommodate stretchers or wheelchairs, or other equipment. (Note) If required several of the 4xR craft can be linked in train to move a greater numbers of persons such as in a flooded street.
- Very easy to operate whether under power (4hp outboard upwards) by paddle, or manoeuvred on lines.
- Has significant advantages rescuing casualties from water. Casualties can be lifted easily over the bow or stern keeping airways open. CPR can commence immediately on the hard raft floor.
- The design concept offers rescue capabilities on ice or sand/mud flats.
- Revolutionary design, Rugged construction and high visibility.



The crew's Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) needs have been addressed with the 'Carson Water Operators' Suit (together with its complementing 'Thermal' underwear) - a unique new unisex design of self donning suit with adjustable internal brace system to allow personal fit adjustment made by Derby based Packsome Clothing.

Wearer comfort

Developed in conjunction with the fire and rescue services, the main body of the suit has been made of a tri-layer, tough, breathable fabric and the shoulders have been made from Cordura stretch fabric to give the wearer maximum movement. The entire suit is easy and comfortable to wear as the sleeves and legs are articulated and an adjustable internal brace system enables the wearer to adjust the garment to fit comfortably. The knees and seat of the suit are toughened with a reinforced anti slip material that works equally well when the suit is wet.

Packsome clothing manufactures and supplies a wide range of specialist protective clothing that incorporates experienced design styles and garment structure, the very latest high tech fabrics, fastenings and accessories.

Reader Reply No.23

