

Case NO - 1615

**JAMIE FISHER
DAVID TREVOR WILLIAMS**

**SILVER MEDAL
BRONZE MEDAL**

On Sunday 24th April 2005, while approximately 19 miles West of Muttonbird Islands the yacht Shady Lady with one elderly person aboard put out a Mayday alert. The boat was taking on water, the main pump was not working and the occupant who had been operating a hand pump for some 12 hours was unable to keep up with the water. In winds of 40 knots with wave heights of 5 metres the yacht was heeling 30-40 degrees in both directions.

MV Sea Emerald which was anchored at one of the Muttonbird Islands was asked to go to the assistance of Shady Lady. Aboard Sea Emerald were its skipper David Williams and his young crewman Jamie Fisher. They responded to the call, and some 3 hours later, after travelling through the atrocious conditions, reached the yacht which had no sea anchor and was beam on to the sea.

A helicopter which had also been called was overhead but, because of the dangerous conditions, was unable recover the exhausted yachtsman.

It was decided to try to tow the yacht to safer water where it would be possible to take him off by helicopter. This was achieved.

Sea Emerald had initially got a line aboard the yacht but the tow was lost when the equipment to which the owner had attached it failed under stress.

Jamie Fisher then volunteered to take another line across. Using an inflatable dinghy with limited freeboard and with the tow rope over his shoulder, he reached and boarded the yacht, He attached the rope to the mast.

In the course of this manoeuvre the tow rope became entangled with the propeller of Sea Emerald and it became necessary for David Williams to leave the wheelhouse of his boat to free it. There was a collision and both boats were damaged.

Throughout the 4 hour tow Jamie handled Shady Lady. In the trying conditions great skill was required from both seamen to avoid putting stress on the tow rope and causing it to break. Had this happened there was a real risk that the yacht could have foundered with possible loss of life.

The actions of Jamie Fisher and David Williams had undoubtedly led to the safe retrieval of the owner of Shady Lady from a life threatening situation.