

craft such as kayaks and canoes although the MCA encourage all PLBs to be registered.

Here are some real life searches:

- An unregistered PLB broadcasting from London sparked three separate searches during July and August 2025. Activations were traced once to Ealing and twice to Paddington. Each time emergency services were alerted and stood down hours later with no one found to be in distress.

- A PLB dumped at a waste recycling centre was the source of an alert in Exeter which scrambled Dawlish Coastguard Rescue Team in January 2023. Without an update of its disused status and calls to registered numbers going unanswered, the search continued for about two hours until the PLB could be traced to a skip and destroyed.

- A boat in a box was the riddle deciphered by HM Coastguard, thanks to contact details registered to a PLB activated in Antigua in February 2023. A search wasn't required as it was quickly ascertained that the accidental alert was from kit inside a seagoing rowing boat packed up for return to the UK, having recently crossed the Atlantic.

The benefit of registering your PLB is simple. It gives you and everyone you're with a head start to being rescued from an emergency.

The registration process is free, takes just 15 minutes and could make the difference between life or death. You can do it online at no cost.

HM Coastguard will react to every beacon alert received. Registering your PLB helps them quickly work out when it's a false alarm with no one in danger or to focus resources when people are in real distress and need help.

To register a PLB or EPIRB with the UK Beacon Registry visit <https://www.gov.uk/register-406-beacons> , call 020 3817 2006 or email ukbeacons@mca.gov.uk.

New SAR bases

HM Coastguard have opened two new Search & Rescue bases using Augusta Westland 189 helicopters as are being used at some other of their ten bases. The new bases are at Oban and Carlisle to operate in summer months to assist locations where frequency of incidents has been shown to be higher. This seems to be a reversal of the policy of closing bases to save money and is to be welcomed.



Friends of Chris Blakey who have been following the story of the Austin 7 he drove to Tokyo may wish to know that it now occupies pole position in the Country Classics car museum in Taunton.



Seen at Great Bedwyn during DW, a fast C1 loading with compost and white wine. There's a story there somewhere.



Carlisle's new search and rescue helicopter.