Sailor Simon Grier-Jones, pictured at the helm on another occasion, fell overboard while sailing in the Solent and was successfully recovered following the activation of his Ocean Signal rescueME MOB1. Credit: Snow Leopard Racing

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Ocean Signal rescueME MOB1 with AIS Aids Speedy Recovery of Man Overboard in Chilly Springtime Waters of the Solent

When a guard rail gave way, plunging a 54-year-old sailor into the cold spring waters of the Solent in April, the rapid automatic activation of his Ocean Signal rescueME MOB1 sounded an alarm aboard his boat, alerting fellow crew members, while the display of his position on a chartplotter aided a speedy recovery. Ironically, the crew aboard his boat had been preparing to run a man overboard practise manoeuvre as part of an

examination when the accident occurred.

Simon Grier-Jones had been taking part in a two-day RYA Yachtmaster practical test on what he described as a “cold, damp and blowy” day.

He explained: “We were outside of Cowes breakwater, just about to perform a MOB drill as part of the Yachtmaster exam, when I was sent up to take down the jib and, as I was doing so, the guard rail gave way.”

The average water temperature in the Solent at that time of year is 9.8˚C, a temperature which can quickly lead to hypothermia. Grier-Jones described the water as “absolutely freezing”, and added: “It was very cold and I was very glad to get out.”

Although he was brought back onto the boat in about three minutes by his fellow crew, a call was also put out for the assistance of Cowes RNLI lifeboat crew due to the dangerous currents running by the breakwater and harbour entrance. A rapid launch brought the inshore lifeboat alongside with a doctor, who checked Grier-Jones over and called for an ambulance, concerned about how cold he was and the quantity of water he had ingested, which can lead to secondary drowning. However, once ashore, he was given the all clear and allowed to return to the boat.

Grier-Jones had just bought the Ocean Signal rescueME MOB1, fitted within a Spinlock deckvest lifejacket, in preparation for skippering his own boat, J/111 Snow Leopard, in this year’s Rolex Fastnet Race, one of the most challenging offshore races in Europe. The 2018-19 World Sailing Offshore Special Regulations require every crew member to carry a personal AIS device when taking part in Category 2 yacht races of extended duration.

Grier-Jones explained AIS and the slim size of the Ocean Signal rescueME MOB1 had driven his selection: “I thought the fact Ocean Signal’s rescueME MOB1 has AIS increases the chance you will get picked up by your own boat, which is your most likely means of rescue.”

Speaking about his experience, Grier-Jones said: “I would recommend the Ocean Signal rescueME MOB1 because it worked. And, as a consequence, all of the lifejackets I own are now armed with them.”

He added: “It was inbuilt into my Spinlock lifejacket, with no bulkiness, and just automatically worked. Even though it wasn’t a life-threatening situation, this incident was a good example of how well it does work.

“It gave me as a skipper more confidence about what would happen if someone went overboard. In an odd way, lots of lessons were learned from it and I now have first-hand experience of the process of picking someone up and getting someone out of the water. I am also very grateful to the crew for their quick actions, the RNLI and medical personnel, so I would like to send my thanks to all involved in my recovery.”

Looking ahead to his participation in this summer’s Rolex Fastnet Race, Grier-Jones noted how much more dangerous a man overboard situation could be at night, miles from shore, particularly in rough weather, and concluded his purchase of the Ocean Signal rescueME MOB1s with AIS for the entire crew would give him “peace of mind” as a skipper.

Ocean Signal provides a free replacement beacon for all owners of its rescueME and SafeSea devices who activate their PLB, MOB or EPIRB in an emergency.

For more information about the rescueME MOB1 and other Ocean Signal products,www.oceansignal.com.

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Notes for editor

About Ocean Signal rescueME MOB1

In the event of a person falling overboard, the rescueME MOB1 is automatically triggered the moment the life jacket is inflated, sending the first alert within 15 seconds. The device transmits an alert to all AIS receivers and AIS-enabled plotters in the vicinity, with the integrated 66-channel GPS ensuring accurate position data is sent back to the boat and any other assisting vessels for at least 24 hours. Secondly, the MOB1 will activate the DSC alarm on the vessel’s VHF radio to alert fellow crew members. The integrated strobe light with moulded lens ensures the survivor is easily spotted in poor light conditions.

The Ocean Signal rescueME MOB1 is the world's smallest personal locating AIS man overboard device with integrated DSC. It is designed to fit seamlessly into even the smallest lifejacket.

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About Ocean Signal

Communication and safety at sea specialist Ocean Signal™ is dedicated to providing the technology and quality of product that will set industry standards.

Ocean Signal's product portfolio consists of the rescueME range of products,

including the rescueME PLB1, the rescueME MOB1, the rescueME EPIRB1 and the rescueME EDF1 electronic distress flare, plus the AIS Alarm Box, and the SafeSea range of GMDSS products, including the E100 and E100G EPIRB, S100 SART and V100 handheld VHF radio, as well as the M100 and M100X professional MSLD and E101V float-free EPIRB with integrated voyage data record memory capsule. They provide both recreational and commercial mariners with simple to use, compact and affordable life-saving solutions. All products are engineered by a highly experienced team of marine electronics professionals.

Ocean Signal products are trusted by high-profile sailors, rowers, surfers and powerboat racing teams. Providing some of the world's best competitors and adventurers with vital safety and communication devices, the rescueME MOB1 and rescuePLB1 were integrated with the Spinlock lifejacket and personal equipment packs for the crews in the Volvo Ocean Race 2017-18 and the rescueME MOB1 was also selected to enhance safety standards for crew taking part in the Clipper 2017-18 Round the World Yacht Race. Ocean Signal has also sponsored the crew of Simply Fun with rescueME MOB1s, rescueME PLBs and a rescueME EPIRB1 in the 2016 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, the 16-man crew of Triton with rescueME MOB1s in the 2015 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race,record-breaking sailor Andrea Mura in the single-handed OSTAR race, Mini Transat 2015 solo sailor Lizzy Foreman, ocean rowing teams including Ocean Valour, Ocean Brothers and Carbon Zerow and solo rower Lia Ditton, Venture Cup offshore powerboat race team Cinzano, kite racer Gina Hewson and canoeist Adam Weymouth.

Safety and communication products from Ocean Signal offer exceptional value, meeting or exceeding international technical and safety standards. Careful design and innovation provide commercial shipping, fishing and recreational users the confidence that their Ocean Signal equipment will work to, and beyond, their expectations when it is needed most.