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Veterans survive river ordeal

# RESCUED OARSMEN 'LUCKY TO BE ALIVE'

By Neil McKay  
Chief Reporter

**VETERAN** oarsmen survived a life-threatening ordeal in the freezing River Tyne after their boat sank in rough waters yesterday.

Firefighters said the nine men were close to

breaking point before they were dragged from the river.

Eight fire engines and a brigade launch rushed to the scene and firefighters were helped with the dramatic rescue by staff from a nearby hotel.

The eight-strong all-male crew and a coxswain from the Tyne Rowing Club - average age 60 - were rowing upstream

from Tynemouth to Newburn when a series of large waves caused their 60ft craft, the *Sheriff of Nottinghamshire*, to start shipping water.

The crew, up to their chests in water, managed to propel the sinking craft towards the shore and tread water - without life-jackets - before they were rescued by the fire brigade.

Crew member Dr Ian

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