



**Lifeboats**

# News release

11 May 2004

03SB0504

## **Burnham-on-Sea ceremony to name new RNLI lifeboat**

**The Atlantic 75 lifeboat that serves Burnham-on-Sea is to be officially named at a service of dedication on Saturday 15 May. Mr Jonathan Whitfield has donated the *Staines Whitfield* to the RNLI in memory of his parents. The event will also include the official opening of the new lifeboat station.**

The RNLI lifeboat provision for Burnham-on-Sea was given the stamp of approval in July 2003, some 73 years after the town's original station was closed when motor lifeboats were placed at Minehead and Weston-Super-Mare. Today's lifeboats, a 7.5m Atlantic 75 RIB and a 4.95m D class inflatable, have been in operation since last December when the RNLI took over the service formerly provided by Burnham Area Rescue Boat (BARB).

RNLI training divisional inspector, Howard Ramm, says:

'This event marks the successful end to four years of planning and extensive trials. Burnham-on-Sea lifeboat station is a welcome asset to the RNLI and good news for the town. The particular conditions here have also led to the development of a unique launching vehicle, the design of which will benefit other stations in the future. I thank everyone for their hard work and determination so far, in particular the members of BARB, and wish the volunteer team now on station the best of luck in the future.'

**ENDS.**

- The RNLI is a registered charity, which saves lives at sea.
- It provides, on call, the 24-hour service necessary to cover search and rescue requirements to 50 miles out from the coasts of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.
- There are over 230 lifeboat stations.
- The RNLI depends on voluntary contributions and legacies for its income.

### **Vision**

To be recognised universally as the most effective, innovative and dependable lifeboat service.

### **Royal National Lifeboat Institution headquarters:**

West Quay Road, Poole,  
Dorset, BH15 1HZ  
Tel 01202 663000  
Fax 01202 663167

**Registered charity numbers**  
**UK: 209603**  
**Republic of Ireland: CHY2678**

**Notes to editors:**

**Photographers and reporters are welcome to attend the ceremony, which begins at 4pm on Saturday 15 May at Burnham-on-Sea lifeboat station. Please report to Tamsin Thomas, Regional Media Relations Manager, by 3.30pm.**

**Programme of events – Saturday 15 May**

Tony Winterburn, Chairman of the Burnham-on-Sea Station Branch, opens the proceedings.

Jonathan Whitfield hands the lifeboat over to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

John Drake, a member of the RNLI Council accepts the lifeboat on behalf of the Institution and delivers it into the care of the Burnham-on-Sea station branch.

Martin Cox, Burnham-on-Sea lifeboat operations manager, accepts the lifeboat on behalf of the station.

Howard Ramm, training divisional inspector, gives a description of the Atlantic 75 lifeboat and its capabilities.

The Reverend Graham Witts of the Church of St. Andrews, Burnham-on-Sea, conducts the service of dedication.

Sir Benjamin Bathurst GCB DL officially opens the new Burnham-on-Sea lifeboat station.

Jonathan Whitfield names the Atlantic 75 lifeboat *Staines Whitfield*.

\*Subject to weather conditions the lifeboat is launched – followed by refreshments.

## **Brief history of the lifeboats at Burnham-on-Sea:**

### The First Lifeboat

1836 - following a shipping disaster, Sir Peregrine Ackland provided the first lifeboat.

### The Second Lifeboat

1847 – old lifeboat replaced with one built to the standards of the RNLI with 10-oars.

### The Third Lifeboat

1866 – RNLI takes over and the town of Cheltenham provides a 32ft 10-oared lifeboat to be called

*The Cheltenham.*

1874 – new boathouse built adjoining railway station.

### The Fourth Lifeboat

1887 – *John Godfrey Morris* lifeboat (34ft 10-oars) replaces *The Cheltenham.*

### The Fifth Lifeboat

1902 – *Philip Beach* lifeboat (35ft 10-oars) replaces *John Godfrey Morris.*

1930 – motor lifeboats placed at Minehead and Weston-Super-Mare. Burnham-on-Sea lifeboat station closed.

\*\*\* Gap of 64 years \*\*\*

### The Sixth Lifeboat

1994 – BARB lifeboat purchased from local fund raising goes on service.

2003 – RNLI returns, builds new boathouse and takes over operations with relief lifeboats.

### The Seventh Lifeboat

2004 – new Atlantic 75 *Staines Whitfield* arrives to go on service together with D class.

**For photographs please contact the RNLI  
press office on 01202 663510/3184/2218.**

**For all other enquiries please contact  
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Relations Manager, on 07786 668847 – or  
pager 07693 326456 – or  
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