

Chiswick RNLI Lifeboat News Release



The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea

23 March 2011

Chiswick RNLI Lifeboat tows 36 ton barge



Chiswick RNLI Lifeboat towing the stricken barge under Hammersmith Bridge

On Tuesday afternoon 22 March, Chiswick RNLI Lifeboat was on exercise in the Brentford area when the crew were tasked to a report of a vessel that had lost power and was drifting near Hammersmith Bridge. On arrival they found a large Dutch barge drifting beam-on in the centre of the river near Crabtree Wharf. The engine had stalled and would not re-start; it also appeared the vessel was unable to deploy its anchor.

Helmsman Gary Tiller decided to place crewman Craig Burn on the stricken vessel, who then arranged the tow line with the crewman Peter Knight. Chiswick RNLI Lifeboat was able to tow the 36 ton barge against the strong ebb tide under Hammersmith Bridge to its mooring at Dove Pier. Due to the size of the vessel and the strong tide, Chiswick's relief lifeboat was also launched to assist with berthing the vessel onto its mooring. A Marine Police vessel was also in attendance to assist if required.

Chiswick RNLI lifeboat Station Manager Wayne Bellamy commented "It was fortunate that the barge, drifting without power, passed under Hammersmith Bridge without causing any damage. The barge was floating towards Putney with many rowers and other river users out on the water on a fine day; if the Lifeboat had not halted its progress speedily, the incident could have become very grave. Towing a 36 ton vessel is well within the capabilities of the RNLI E-class Lifeboat that is used on the Thames, this rescue also demonstrated the need for fast response to prevent a minor incident turning into a major one."

Notes to editors

- The RNLI has 233 lifeboat stations including four on the Thames. Chiswick RNLI lifeboat became operational on the 2nd January 2002. Since then it has responded to over 1,700 emergency calls. The four Thames lifeboats together have responded to over 5,000 calls. To learn more about the lifeboat station go to www.chiswicklifeboat.org.uk or <http://www.facebook.com/ChiswickRNLI>
- The RNLI is independent of Coastguard and Government and is entirely supported by voluntary contributions.
- For more information or photos contact David Clarke, RNLI Volunteer Press Officer on 0795 121 0500