

# Waterstart Waves

Volume 1, Issue 2

## Special points of interest:

- Training
- New Courses
- Volunteers
- New Boat News
- The Project

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## 2005: A New Boat Delivered

When we first started up the project just over a year ago we were unfortunate in not actually having a boat for our own exclusive use. After short periods of having first to hire the Andromeda, and then the Opportunity; both of which fell short of our specifications for a community boat, we are now glad to be able to report the details of our barge, which we hope many of you will be cruising on during the forthcoming months. The keys to our new boat, which we have named 'Waterstart' after the project itself, were handed over at an onboard



The official handing over ceremony, as depicted in the local press.

ceremony on December 17th 2004 when Peter McNestery of the Coalfields Regeneration Trust presented representatives of our staff, volunteers and trainees with a cheque for £225,000. The steel shell of the 55' x 10' broad beam boat was fabricated by J & P Boats Ltd. of Dewsbury and fitted out by

local boat builders Louis & Joshua here at Thorne. The vessel is licensed to carry a maximum of twelve people, plus three crew-members, and can accommodate up to four accompanied wheelchair users on each trip.

Being specifically designed for varied use as a community boat, the barge consists of a large, centrally-heated, classroom-configured cabin incorporating a galley area. On board; participants on our programmes are able to access up-to-date computer and audio-visual equipment to enhance their learning experience and produce a tangible record of their individual progression and achievement. Our rapidly expanding group of volunteer skippers and crew are all very impressed with the barge and its facilities and are pushing for every opportunity to take it out from its permanent moorings at Blue Water Marina, onto the canal, and among the local community.

## More Than Just A Community Boat

Although the barge and the canal are the most important resources utilised by Waterstart, many of our events and activities will be taking place in our local canalside towns and villages; within schools, libraries and community centres. We will also be attending all of the major

fairs and festivals, bringing along the boat whenever possible; but always arriving with our knowledgeable and enthusiastic volunteers who will be organising interesting and informative events and demonstrations. Already we are applying for funding to enable one of our keenest

volunteers to engage in outreach work, passing on her newly acquired computer and presentation skills to groups of isolated retired people in her local neighbourhood: work such as this being just as important in our achieving all of our outputs and objectives.

## New Interactive Website [www.waterstart.co.uk](http://www.waterstart.co.uk)

Since the end of February the new Waterstart website has been live; introducing the project and outlining our general aims and objectives. At the press of your computer mouse you'll be able to access detailed information about our training initiatives and forthcoming events; and additionally, download publicity material and any necessary legal documentation that your organisation may require when considering using the services and facilities we are able to offer. Particularly of interest to anyone likely to be cruising on

our community boat is the interactive location map for Blue Water Marina, from where the majority of our trips will depart. On the new Waterstart website, photographs of many of our staff and volunteers working with members of the local community are displayed, and we have provided useful links to a selection of webpages relating to our main client groups and funders. By using some of these specific links you'll be able to access a comprehensive repository of information about the inland waterways and related subjects. Natu-

rally, we are constantly updating, and adding to, our internet pages and would welcome your comments and suggestions. Our email address is: [waterstart@btconnect.com](mailto:waterstart@btconnect.com)



Home Page of our new high graphics website

*Volunteers and staff working together to make a real difference to people's lives.*

## Official Launch of Community Boat

Currently a new automated pedestrian swing bridge over the canal is being constructed and is due for completion in April 2005. Obviously, there will be an official opening ceremony performed when local (and possibly national) dignitaries will be present. This will be an excellent opportunity for us here at Waterstart to spread the word about our project and wel-

come everyone on board to see the community barge and its excellent facilities. Named



Thorne Town Crest

'Waterstart' after the project itself, it will be moored as close as possible to where

things are happening; newly re-painted in its bright blue livery, the boat with its attendant band of enthusiastic volunteers will be a striking addition to the day's proceedings; continuing the process of extending our growing network of contacts in the community and statutory sectors, and adding to making the event an enjoyable day out for everyone concerned.

## Water Safety Course: Local Venue Planned

A one day safety course aimed at those who work in a water based environment: training takes place in realistic, yet controlled and safe conditions. At the moment the course is delivered at the Water Safety and Rescue Training Organisation based at the Teesside White Water Course; but in the future we hope to be offering this course at a local venue. This training is very practical and is the actual foundation pro-

gramme for the official Water Rescue Course taken by agencies such as the Fire and Rescue Services, Police, and Mountain Rescue Teams for carrying out rescues in fast flowing water situations. Even strong swimmers will benefit from this very popular course, as appropriate training will be undertaken in identifying and acting upon any potentially hazardous situations or behaviour. These simple, yet effective, self-help survival tech-

niques you will have learned can contribute to eliminating



or minimising the likely hazards encountered when in close proximity to deep water. This course will be ready at the beginning of April.

## Canal and Countryside Crafts

In addition to operating our extensive, fully-accredited boat handling courses, community development programme and tendered services and contracts, we are now planning to organise a series of workshops and presentations on subjects closely related to life on the canal. Being based here at Thorne we are fortunate in having access to the expertise and experience of many people from varied, yet closely linked, backgrounds in the areas of boating, mining and agriculture. Tutored subject areas we are aiming to cover are

local history and heritage, roses and castles decoration (an art form specific to the waterways), rope work, rug making; and more generally, painting and drawing, photography, and possibly poetry and music workshops. At the moment, none of the course content of these activities has actually been finalised, but we are aware of a great deal of interest being expressed by local people and will be liaising with various interested community groups. In the meantime; if you're a tutor in any of these subjects, and would like to offer your services in

leading any educational or leisure activities we would like to hear from you soon.



Combining the dual heritage of the canals and countryside; a Roses and Castles style enameled milk churn

## A Personal Profile of a Volunteer

Shirley, one of our new volunteers started with the project in the middle of January; an exciting time for Waterstart. We had just got our boat out onto the canal and were ready to start taking bookings from community groups. During the course of a short interview one Thursday afternoon she told me how she's recently retired and at a bit of a loose end, and so decided to

do something positive with her time. Shirley is based at the office for two days a week, and never having had anything to do with boats previously, now finds herself on the barge most weeks; training for her Complete Crew Certificate whilst helping people from a variety of community groups to best enjoy their day on the canal. Additionally she has been

learning about computers; accessing the internet and producing power point slide shows. As for the future; she hopes soon to be able to share her newly acquired skills with her local community.



*At the moment ,  
all courses are  
offered free to all  
local residents  
regardless of age  
or circumstances.*

## Thanks to all of our Volunteers

Since the first local flyers and advertisements went out in the Thorne/Moorends area, we have been swamped by keen, willing, and committed volunteers. At times, it's been difficult to work them into some sort of rota system and give them all a fair chance to try their hand. We have a very diverse bunch of people ranging from many various backgrounds and all of them have thoroughly enjoyed their involvement with crewing on

the boat and assisting our skipper with the training. Thanks to our funding we have been able to offer advanced training to many of our own volunteers. Recently, three of our volunteers received their CCBM Skipper's Certificate after many months of intense training. They have since gone on to get First Aid at Work qualifications as well as obtain their CRB checks. Their continued involvement with the project has also suc-

ceeded in improving their limited social lives.



Volunteer Linda in training

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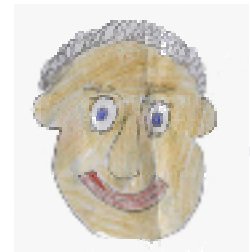
## View From The Tiller

*Neville, one of our regular skippers will be contributing his own humorous column to the newsletter in the future. Reflecting on his memories and recounting his personal anecdotes from many years spent on canal boats there'll no doubt be something to interest and amuse everyone.*



## Marvin (age 8) Sheffield Gingerbread

*"Hi Thankyou for a wonderful day out on the boat I had a wonderful lesson the crew are cool dudes very nice men I did the lock and steer the boat my mum was so relaxed I never hard her say donnot do that my she chilled out" [sic]*



## With Special Thanks to:



Using and promoting the waterways as a resource for regeneration and learning.

We're on the web.  
look for upcoming news

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## Late and Breaking News

*The weeks in the lead-up to Easter have been extremely busy, with the boat being used almost every day. After a certain amount of trial and error we have got the access ramps manufactured to our specifications, and were ready to welcome onboard our first passengers using wheelchairs and zimmer frames. This trip went particularly well, with all the equipment and procedures*

*functioning as expected to ensure that everyone had an enjoyable day out, travelling down the canal to Kirk Bramwith and back. At the moment we are busy in the office planning our forthcoming*



*ing 'Creative Crew' programme; whereby children*

*and teenagers will be able to spend a day on the barge trying out basic boating exercises and learning how to record their experiences, using computer-based graphics and image packages; even having their own space on our new website.*

