

**Heroes of Peace:  
The Royal Humane Society and the  
Award of Medals in Britain,  
1774-1914**

**Craig Peter Barclay**

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## **Abstract**

The Royal Humane Society was founded in 1774 as Britain's first primary aid organisation. In addition to researching and disseminating information on the treatment of the apparently dead, it took practical steps both to prevent accidents and to reward individuals who saved others from drowning or asphyxiation. The Society and its work were widely admired and imitated both within the United Kingdom and overseas, whilst the medal which it established in 1775 to reward such deeds became the first British bravery medal to be widely distributed to both men and women of all social classes and also served as a model both for other societies and the Crown.

Unlike continental countries such as France, Britain had been slow to adopt the medal as a means of rewarding and encouraging bravery. Official interest in the use of medals to encourage loyalty to the Crown and to reward valour was prompted by the army's experiences in the Crimea, whilst the extension of such rewards to cover deeds of civil bravery was in part driven by public demand, although control of the distribution of these rewards remained firmly in the hands of middle and upper-class men, who imposed their own value systems on the deeds which they reviewed.

An analysis of both official and unofficial rewards shows that working class, female and non-white rescuers were under-represented. The tales of working class medallists were however of particular interest to the writers of improving tracts, who fashioned 'exemplary lives' around the bones of the stories of honoured workers. This in turn led to the creation of a new breed of working-class heroes, whose stories were widely distributed with the intention of providing acceptable role models for the labouring classes. This represented a radical departure from previous models of heroism, which had been sharply focussed on leaders and warriors drawn from the echelons of the ruling elite.

Until the outbreak of the Great War, the majority of bravery medals awarded each year were given by private societies in recognition of civilian bravery. This dominance ended in 1914, when conscription and wholesale slaughter altered forever the popular perception of courage.

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## **Declaration**

I confirm that this thesis is solely and entirely my own work and that it has not been presented or published elsewhere.

Craig Barclay

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# INTRODUCTION



*‘A noble deed, a splendid piece of self-sacrifice, have the same constraining attractiveness for the highest souls that beauty has for the artist; they are all messages from some distant fortress of God.’*

Arthur C. Benson<sup>1</sup>

## Heroes and Courage

Heroes - and by extension the study of heroism - were much derided in the latter part of the twentieth century, but recent work by Cubitt and Jones has gone some way to reviving interest in the field. In particular, Jones has argued convincingly that heroes are worthy of study, not so much as figures of influence but rather as mirrors of popular culture.<sup>2</sup> Cubitt has defined a hero as a man or woman who has been assigned with special significance by others.<sup>3</sup> Whilst such heroes may accordingly lack individual importance, they nevertheless cast valuable light upon the attitudes of the society which admired them.

Historically, a vast literature has been dedicated to the inter-linked themes of heroes and courage, ranging from the *Odyssey*<sup>4</sup> and *Illiad*,<sup>5</sup> through Carlyle’s *On Heroes*<sup>6</sup> to Jones’s *The Last Great Quest*.<sup>7</sup> Most have focussed on so-called ‘Great Men’ and, whilst some have addressed the lives of those whose heroism was based on academic or other achievements rather than physical courage, it is probably fair to say that a disproportionate percentage of the existing literature has celebrated the deeds of great leaders and warriors. Indeed, as Price has observed, by the middle part of the nineteenth century Carlyle’s writings on ‘Great Men’<sup>8</sup> and impressive state funerals had come to underpin ‘the

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<sup>1</sup> K. Stanaway, *Britannia’s Calendar of Heroes* (London, 1914), p. 37. Written on the occasion of the deaths of Daniel Thomas (an Albert Medallist), Thomas Lewis and Edward Watkins whilst attempting to save life at Dinas Colliery, 27 January 1884.

<sup>2</sup> M. Jones, ‘What Should Historians do with Heroes? Reflections of Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain’, *History Compass* 5/2 (2007), pp. 439-454.

<sup>3</sup> G. Cubitt, ‘Introduction: Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives’, in Cubitt, G. & Warren, A. (eds.), *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, (Manchester, 2000), pp. 1-26.

<sup>4</sup> Homer (trans. Fagles, R.), *The Odyssey* (London, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Homer (trans. Fagles, R.), *The Illiad* (London, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> T. Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroics of History* (Oxford, 1904 [1841]).

<sup>7</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott’s Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> See T. Carlyle, *On Heroes*.

contemporary understanding of heroes and heroic actions as central to society.’<sup>9</sup> Non-belligerent bravery has been largely ignored and writers have likewise devoted little ink to commemorating or discussing the bravery of working men and women. It is the aim of this work to go some little way to redressing this balance, and in so doing particular attention will be paid to the ways in which society chose to reward, recognise and celebrate courage during the long nineteenth century.

Much of the existing literature relating to lifesaving gallantry dates from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and takes the form of ‘improving’ tracts published by bodies such as the Sunday School Union.<sup>10</sup> Monographs were also printed by private lifesaving bodies as a means of promoting their activities,<sup>11</sup> whilst perhaps the most comprehensive volume on the subject, Wilson and McEwan’s *Gallantry*,<sup>12</sup> was published in 1939 with the unashamed purpose of promoting patriotism in the face of global war. As Sir Arnold Wilson observed in his introduction to the volume:

No society can safely ignore the public recognition of unselfish heroism in everyday life. We need heroes...<sup>13</sup>

In addition to such works, many of the societies associated with the recognition of courage published annual reports and maintained comprehensive archives. The human-interest aspects of lifesaving cases also served to ensure that they frequently received generous coverage in the local and national press, providing the researcher with a rich range of contemporary sources.

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<sup>9</sup> J. Price, “‘Heroism in Everyday Life’: The Watts Memorial to Heroic Self Sacrifice”, *History Workshop Journal* 63:1 (2007), p. 260.

Published on-line at <http://hwj.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/63/1/254> (6/2/2008).

<sup>10</sup> See for example F. Mundell, *Stories of the Lifeboat* (London, 1894); F. Mundell, *Stories of the Humane Society* (London, c. 1895); F.M. Holmes, *Firemen and their Exploits* (London, c.1897); and L.M. Lane, *Heroes of Everyday Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London, 1896).

<sup>11</sup> See for example L. Young, *Acts of Gallantry: Being a Detailed Account of Each Deed of Bravery in Saving Life from Drowning in all Parts of the World for which the Gold and Silver Medals and Clasps of the Royal Humane Society Have been Awarded from 1830 to 1871* (London, 1872); F. Parkmann, J. Homans, J.L. Gardiner, et al, *History of the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: with a Selected List of Premiums Awarded by the Trustees, from its Commencement to the Present Time, and a List of the Members and Officers* (Boston 1876).

<sup>12</sup> A. Wilson and J.H.F McEwan, *Gallantry: Its Public Recognition and Reward in Peace and in War at Home and Abroad* (Oxford, 1939).

<sup>13</sup> Wilson and McEwan, *Gallantry*, p. xiv.

## Charitable and Voluntary Bodies

The eighteenth century witnessed the growth of a vast number of clubs and societies inspired by the pursuit of science; the bolstering of religion; the succouring of the poor and needy; and the enjoyment of convivial company.<sup>14</sup> Amongst these bodies was the Royal Humane Society (RHS) which, following its foundation in 1774, was to become central to the process of formally recognising civil and working-class bravery in Britain. Focussing itself on ‘affording immediate Relief of Persons apparently dead from DROWNING’<sup>15</sup>, its subsidiary aims were neatly summarised in a press report of 1799 which highlighted the additional themes of patriotism, social care, rational thought and convivial entertainment which were central to its activities and success:

A Correspondent assures us, that the company which honoured the anniversary Festival of the Royal Humane Society, amounted to 400 and upwards of beneficent characters. When the KING’S health was drunk, as Patron of this excellent institution, almost unparalleled applause followed, which closed with “God save the King”, by Mr. Dignum, loudly and universally chorused. Solemn music, the City Marshall, Stewards, &c, introduced the living fruits of the Society; and as soon as the procession had arrived at the upper part of the room Mr. Greton’s ingenious Odes were recited by the young Orators. The first banner was carried by Mrs. Leigh of Newington. – “Behold my infant Child and Niece restored.” Mr. Lardner addressed the President “I thank you for my own life and for the lives of my three children.” After “Prosperity to the Humane Society” was proposed, Dr. HAWES stated the progress of the institution, its extensive utility, and made some judicious reflections on the preservation of the lives of shipwrecked mariners, This anniversary must truly be said to be “the feast of Reason” realized. About eleven of the company retired to enjoy in private the feelings which must arise in the breasts of those who by their philanthropy are a blessing to the indigent, a consolation to the afflicted, and the guardians of the lives of the people.’<sup>16</sup>

The RHS was also driven by religious conviction, for example actively seeking to combat suicides as a means both of saving souls and reducing parochial

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<sup>14</sup> See for example D. Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (Harvard, 1964); F. Prochaska, *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy* (New Haven & London, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> The Society initially titled itself: ‘*THE INSTITUTION for affording immediate Relief of Persons apparently dead from DROWNING*’.

<sup>16</sup> *The Times*, 22 April 1799, p. 3.



burdens. As an incentive to saving life, it adopted the practice of giving medals (initially to its own Medical Assistants, but later to the public at large) as rewards for saving life. In so doing it set a precedent which was to be followed not only by other societies, but also ultimately by the State.

As the nineteenth century progressed, several other national charitable/voluntary bodies were established (including the Royal National Lifeboat Institution<sup>17</sup> and the Society for the Preservation of Life from Fire<sup>18</sup>) with the specific intention of addressing the increasing perceived perils both at home and in the workplace. The development of these bodies coincided both with an increase in general anxiety about the dangers of the urban world<sup>19</sup> and the development of the Victorian cult of the hero.<sup>20</sup> Practical first-aid began to be provided in the workplace by members of the St John Ambulance Brigade, whose parent body, the Venerable Order of St John, established its own medal as a reward for ‘saving life from the many contingencies to which it is in these days exposed from the extensive use of machinery, and on railways and in mines.’<sup>21</sup>

### **Medals and Civil Bravery**

Thus, one of the key ways in which civil courage came to be recognised during the long nineteenth century was through the giving of medals. The granting of medals is today synonymous in the public mind with the rewarding of courage or merit and the phrase, ‘he (or she) deserves a medal’ is in common usage. But whilst the use of medals as a means of recognising brave and meritorious deeds has only a relatively short history in Britain, these small pieces of metal and

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<sup>17</sup> See for example O. Warner, *The Life-boat Service: A History of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution 1824-1974* (London, 1974); I. Cameron, *Riders of the Storm: The Story of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution* (London, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> See for example E.H. Gledhill, ‘The Society for the Protection of Life From Fire’, *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 19 (1993), pp. 51-56; R.W. Gould, ‘Medals of the Society for the Protection of Life From Fire’, *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 12 (1991), pp. 37-43.

<sup>19</sup> See for example R. Cooter, ‘The Moment of the Accident: Culture, Militarism and Modernity in Late-Victorian Britain’, in R. Cooter and B Luckin (eds.) *Accidents in History: Injuries, Fatalities and Social Relations* (Amsterdam, 1997), pp. 107-157; M. Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven/London; 1999), p. 84.

<sup>20</sup> See W.E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870* (Yale, 1957).

<sup>21</sup> *Order of St John of Jerusalem: A Brief Notice of its Foundation and its Constitution and of its Objects in England* (London, 1874), p. 11.

scraps of ribbon have, since the nineteenth century, attracted numerous devotees and inspired the development of a vast associated literature. Driven by the interests and needs of collectors and armchair warriors, much of what has been published has concentrated upon military awards, providing information of value to those researching specific types of medal, individual recipients and specific campaigns but little that is of value to those trying to understand the broader context in which they were created and awarded. Texts have tended towards the antiquarian – offering many bare facts but little analysis. Works which fall into this class include Bannister's *7000 Brave Australians*;<sup>22</sup> Boddington's *The Entombed* and *A Conquered Sea*;<sup>23</sup> Brown's 3-volume work *The British Historical Medal*;<sup>24</sup> and Cox's *Lifeboat Gallantry*.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless some of the extant literature is both extremely well-researched and of real value, with works such as Abbott and Tamplin's monumental *British Gallantry Awards*<sup>26</sup> representing the fruits of countless hours of research in primary archives. Furthermore, in recent years a small number of publications have been produced which have sought to place specific awards or groups of awards within a broader historical and social context. Works which fall into this category include Gooding's *Honours and Awards to Women*;<sup>27</sup> Fevyer, Cribb and Wilson's excellent *The Order of Industrial Heroism*;<sup>28</sup> and *Awarded for Valour*,<sup>29</sup> Smith's groundbreaking study of the Victoria Cross.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the bulk of the published literature relating to medals has concentrated upon military awards, and works relating to the rewarding of civilian gallantry are far scarcer. The origins of civilian awards can be traced

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<sup>22</sup> C. Bannister, *7000 Brave Australians: A History of the Royal Humane Society of Australasia 1874-1994* (Victoria, 1996).

<sup>23</sup> J. Boddington, *The Entombed: British Mining Disasters and the Rescuers' Medals* (Naramata, 1992) and *A Conquered Sea: An Illustrated Record of the United States Presidential Life Saving Medal and Related Awards* (Penticton, 1990).

<sup>24</sup> L. Brown, *The British Historical Medal 1760-1960: Vol. 1, The Accession of George III to the Death of William IV, 1760-1837* (London, 1980); *The British Historical Medal 1760-1960: Vol. 21, The Reign of Queen Victoria, 1837-1901* (London, 1987); and *The British Historical Medal 1760-1960: Vol. 3, The Accession of Edward VII to 1960* (London, 1995).

<sup>25</sup> B. Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry: RNLI Medals and How They Were Won* (London, 1998).

<sup>26</sup> P.E. Abbott, & J.M.A. Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards* (London, 1981).

<sup>27</sup> N. Gooding, *Honours and Awards to Women to 1914* (London, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> W. Fevyer, J. Wilson, and J. Cribb, J. *The Order of Industrial Heroism* (London, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> M.C. Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, (Basingstoke, 2008).

back to the establishment of a lifesaving medal by the RHS in 1775. During the period up to the commencement of the First World War, a range of other organisations boasting similar humanitarian aims came into existence. Following the precedent of the RHS, many of these organisations - and several others boasting different core aims but a shared interest in lifesaving - initiated their own medallic awards to recognise individual acts of bravery performed in the course of saving life. Many provincial societies proved to be short-lived, but at the end of the nineteenth century there was still a substantial national and international network of private organisations issuing gallantry awards - a network that was supplemented by medals presented by newspapers and magazines. Such organisations and their awards have received scant attention from historians, as indeed have officially-sanctioned lifesaving decorations such as the Albert and Edward Medals.

The development of interest in the field of lifesaving medals by collectors has nevertheless led in recent years to a growth in the publication of material relating to this hitherto largely neglected field. Substantial institutional histories such as Gawler's *Lloyd's Medals 1836-1989*<sup>30</sup> and Wills's *Zealandia's Brave*<sup>31</sup> have mined the archives of some of the key award-giving bodies, but these works have tended to focus upon the celebration of individual gallant acts and have not generally attempted to place the work of the bodies concerned within a broader social and cultural framework. The same can be said for the bulk of the material published in the *Lifesaving Awards Research Society Journal* which, whilst generally very thoroughly researched, has tended almost without exception to reflect the personal collecting and research interests of the contributing authors.

### **Royal Humane Society**

If the general literature relating to lifesaving awards is patchy, primary documentation relating to the Royal Humane Society is surprisingly plentiful,

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<sup>30</sup> J. Gawler, *Lloyd's Medals 1835-1898: A History of the Medals Awarded by the Corporation of Lloyd's* (Ontario, 1989).

<sup>31</sup> J.D. Wills, *Zealandia's Brave: The Royal Humane Societies in New Zealand, 1850-1998* (Christchurch, 2001).

with substantial runs of key records surviving. These include: RHS Sermons (1777- 1827); Letter Book: (incomplete run, 1830-1867); Medal Books (from 1774); Case Books (from 1823); Minute Books (1774-1784 & from 1823); Proceedings of General Courts (from 1820); Select Committee Minutes (1820-1833); and Ledgers (from 1840). All of these have been consulted. In addition, the Society has produced detailed *Annual Reports* since its foundation and has been subject to widespread media coverage, for example within the pages of *The Times*, *Strand* and *Gentleman's Magazine*. Furthermore, a number of volumes and papers have been published which relate directly to the Society its medals and its activities. Of these, the most significant are Mundell's *Stories of the Humane Society*;<sup>32</sup> Young's *Acts of Gallantry* (and its two successor volumes),<sup>33</sup> Bishop's *A Short History of the Royal Humane Society*;<sup>34</sup> Hine's paper 'The Royal Humane Society';<sup>35</sup> Williams' paper "'The Luxury of Doing Good": Benevolence, Sensibility and the RHS';<sup>36</sup> Barclay's *The Medals of the Royal Humane Society*;<sup>37</sup> and Coke's *Saved from a Watery Grave*.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, other institutional histories (such as Pearsall's *Lifesaving*<sup>39</sup> and Wills' *Zealandia's Brave*<sup>40</sup>) have on occasion made extensive reference to the RHS and its work.

Nevertheless, to date, little effort has been devoted to placing the roles of bodies such as the RHS as founts of honour within the broader social, philanthropic, religious and cultural frameworks of the long nineteenth century. Central to the purpose of this study will be the exploration of the process of rewarding non-military bravery during the period from the foundation of the RHS in 1774 and

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<sup>32</sup> F. Mundell, *Stories of the Humane Society* (London, c. 1895).

<sup>33</sup> L. Young, *Acts of Gallantry: Being a Detailed Account of Each Deed of Bravery in Saving Life from Drowning in all Parts of the World for which the Gold and Silver Medals and Clasps of the Royal Humane Society Have been Awarded from 1830 to 1871* (London, 1872); W. Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2: 1871-1950* (Chippenham, 1996); C.P. Barclay, and W. Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 3: 1950-2000* (London, 2001).

<sup>34</sup> P.J. Bishop, *A Short History of the Royal Humane Society* (London, 1974).

<sup>35</sup> K. Hines, 'The Royal Humane Society', *Pre-Hospital Immediate Care* 3 (1999), 37-45.

<sup>36</sup> C.D. Williams, "'The Luxury of Doing Good": Benevolence, Sensibility and the RHS', R. Porter & M.R. Roberts (eds.), *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1996), pp. 77-107.

<sup>37</sup> C.P., Barclay, *The Medals of the Royal Humane Society* (London, 1997).

<sup>38</sup> D. Coke, *Saved From a Watery Grave: the Story of the Royal Humane Society's Receiving House in Hyde Park* (London, 2000).

<sup>39</sup> Pearsall, R., *Lifesaving: The Story of the Royal Life Saving Society* (London, 1991).

<sup>40</sup> J.D. Wills, *Zealandia's Brave: The Royal Humane Societies in New Zealand, 1850-1998* (Christchurch, 2001).

the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. It will review the origins and aims of the RHS and its imitators; explore the motivations of the Society's members; and ask why the medal in particular came to be almost universally adopted by such bodies as a means of publicly recognising brave deeds. Moreover, it will examine the rewarding of courage within the existing cultural, religious and moral frameworks of the Victorian age.

The extent to which the growth of humane organisations can be linked to general patriotism - and more specifically to the Victorian cult of the hero - will also be examined, as will the extent to which the 'everyday heroes' of lifesaving were appropriated and exploited by religious groups, the media and others as suitable role models for youth and the labouring classes. Key recurrent - and frequently interlinked - themes which will be addressed will include religion, militarism/imperialism, class, gender, media and relationships between the State and private award-giving bodies.

## **Religion**

This key topic will be addressed primarily in chapters 1, 2 and 5. The industrialised nineteenth century was an age of evangelism, witnessing the breakdown of the established church's stranglehold on organised religion. Central to this development was the growth of forms of non-conformist Christianity which appealed to the urban poor and which – like the Royal Humane Society – were firmly rooted in rationality of the Enlightenment, placing greater emphasis on personal faith and action than on blind adherence to the hierarchies and rules of the Anglican Church. The evangelicals provided, in the words of Brown, 'a "moral package" of admirable social values and agencies suited to the regulation of lower orders which were now out of the reach of traditional forms of institutional control.'<sup>41</sup> C.G. Brown uses the term 'discursive Christianity' to describe one of the key forms in which the evangelising religion was manifested, arguing that:

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<sup>41</sup> C.G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (second edition) (London, 2009), p. 41.

Christian religiosity in the industrial era is defined by people's subscription to protocols of personal identity which they derive from Christian expectations, or discourses, evident in their own time or place. Protocols are rituals or customs of behaviour, economic activity, dress, speech and so on which are collectively promulgated as necessary for Christian identity.<sup>42</sup>

Brown contends that one way in which historians can identify and track how such discourses circulated and developed is through the study of such media artefacts as books, newspapers and magazines, which both reflected and helped to mould religiosity.<sup>43</sup> The examination of the surviving literature (such as society records and reports, newspaper accounts, popular books etc.) relating to civil bravery can accordingly throw valuable light upon on the complex and dynamic relationship between religion and lifesaving in Georgian and Victorian Britain.

At the core of this relationship during the late Victorian period was the promotion of the essentially middle-class construct of 'muscular Christianity' to young working-class audiences. This was no simple task for, as Stewart Brown<sup>44</sup> observes, the influence of religion on the life of the nation was in decline, as functions – such as the promotion of education and social welfare – previously undertaken by the Christian churches were progressively taken on other bodies. Springhall<sup>45</sup> has noted how much of the fictional literature used to promote Christian manliness to board school pupils drew upon middle and upper-class experiences and characters and, as such, was limited both in relevance and impact. The 'real life' tales of bravery and self-sacrifice recorded in the archives of the RHS and similar organisations in contrast offered a rich seam of working-class experience which could be mined and processed for a youthful readership. Central to the aims of this study will be the exploration of how late-Victorian

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<sup>42</sup> Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>44</sup> S. Brown, *Providence and Empire: Religion, Politics and Society in the United Kingdom, 1815-1914* (Harlow, 2008).

<sup>45</sup> J. Springhall, 'Building Character in the British Boy: the Attempt to Extend Christian Manliness to Working-class Adolescents, 1880-1914' in Mangan, J.A. & Walvin, J. (eds.), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1987), pp 52-74.

writers like Eva Hope,<sup>46</sup> Frank Mundell,<sup>47</sup> F.M. Holmes<sup>48</sup> and Laura Lane<sup>49</sup> made use of the tales of brave rescuers to promote Christian moral values to a youthful readership and the extent to which, in doing so, they drew upon the case-books of the RHS. Furthermore, the extent to which the RHS shifted from being an organisation firmly linked to the active promotion of Christian evangelism to one which was more comfortable passively supporting the propagation of Christianity through bodies such as the Sunday School Union will be explored.

### **Imperialism/Militarism**

This key topic will be addressed in chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Given that a primary role of the RHS was the presentation of medals, valid questions may be raised as to how closely the work of the society reflected any rise in popular militarism and imperialism which it might have arisen in the closing years of the nineteenth century. John MacKenzie has argued that the traditional wisdom that the British were indifferent to imperialism is not unassailable. He contends that, whilst grounded in fact, such a broad statement cannot capture the British experience in its totality and that during the latter part of the nineteenth century British culture came to be infused with an ideological cluster focussing on ‘renewed militarism, a devotion to royalty (and) an identification and worship of national heroes, together with a contemporary cult of personality and racial ideas associated with Social Darwinism’.<sup>50</sup> According to Mackenzie, this patriotic culture was in part directed by the proliferation of jingoistic (and frequently uniformed) social organisations and was further driven by popular patriotic songs and literature, as well as by increased public access to illustrated journals and cheap postcard images.<sup>51</sup> It can be no coincidence that both of these media were

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<sup>46</sup> E. Hope, *Grace Darling, Heroine of the Farne Islands: Her Life, and its Lessons* (London, 1875).

<sup>47</sup> F. Mundell, *Stories of the Lifeboat* (London, 1894); *Stories of the Fire Brigade* (London, c. 1895); *Stories of the Humane Society* (London, c. 1895).

<sup>48</sup> Holmes, F.M., *Firemen and their Exploits* (London, c.1897); *The Lifeboat and its Rescues* (London, c. 1900); ‘The Victoria Cross of Peace’, *The Quiver Magazine* (1904); reproduced in *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 30 (1997), pp. 28-34.

<sup>49</sup> L.M. Lane, *Heroes of Everyday Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London, 1896).

<sup>50</sup> J.M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Popular Opinion 1880-1960* (Manchester, 1984), p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, pp. 20-21, 30-31.

additionally populated by images and tales of ‘derring-do’ performed by lifeboatmen, firemen and heroic miners.

Bernard Porter argues that MacKenzie’s position with regards to the existence of an imperialist ‘ideological cluster’ represents an oversimplification of a more complex situation, especially when the concept is unjustifiably expanded upon by others.<sup>52</sup> Porter contends that whilst many cultural ‘fragments’ are often associated with imperialism – for example racism, patriotism, militarism and masculinism – they are not in themselves necessarily imperialistic. The same, he argues, can be said of the adventure story. That notwithstanding, Porter takes the view that these cultural ‘fragments’ existed in parallel with Britain’s late nineteenth century Empire and, whilst counterarguments might validly be made, ‘The likelihood... is that these pieces of culture used to be attached to (the) empire when it was standing’.<sup>53</sup> Porter further concedes that ‘There can be no doubt that Britain became a more imperialistic society from the latter years of the nineteenth century on.’<sup>54</sup>

At a superficial level, the most obvious manifestations of this are to be found in the sporadic late-Victorian outbreaks of public jingoism which accompanied Britain’s overseas military adventures in the Sudan, South Africa and elsewhere. Such popular jingoism frequently crossed social boundaries and was reflected in media ranging from officially-organised parades to popular music-hall compositions. These however, Porter argues, were transient manifestations and, for most of the population - with the exception of the ruling elite - the Empire remained largely an irrelevancy.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, Porter asserts that a shared investment in empire would have implied a common citizenship which would have inevitably undermined Britain’s rigid social structure and its clearly defined social roles. Thus, for Porter, class – not empire – was the glue which held

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<sup>52</sup> B. Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society and Culture in Britain* (Oxford, 2004), p. 137.

<sup>53</sup> Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*, p. 12.

<sup>54</sup> Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*, p. 199.



together Victorian society and it was only in the closing years of the nineteenth century that the working classes were encouraged to be patriotic.<sup>56</sup>

In response, McKenzie argues that Porter's contentions can be challenged, arguing that awareness of Empire was far more socially pervasive than Porter contends. By way of example, MacKenzie points out that, whilst Empire was seldom specifically mentioned in school history texts, much of the history taught in Victorian schoolrooms drew on implicit imperial parallels (for example with ancient Rome). Furthermore, the Empire also featured strongly in the teaching of geography and religion. McKenzie likewise argues that the Empire was much more prominently represented in popular culture - such as literature and theatrical productions - than Porter implies and that these represented potent conduits for facilitating the development of working-class investment in the imperial dream.<sup>57</sup>

For the upper- and middle-class products of Britain's public school system, the ultimate ideals of service were more firmly based around the notion of martial prowess and sacrifice. McClelland and Rose have noted the masculinising linkage between citizenship, militarism and empire and note the increasing appearance of these themes in literature aimed at middle-class boys in the latter part of the nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, McClelland and Rose contend that 'imperial nationalism infused elementary education in England from the 1880s' and argue that further evidence for the increased militarisation of youth can be seen in the growth of uniformed organisations such as Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts in the wake of the Boer War.<sup>59</sup>

The Boer War is of central importance to the work of Steve Attridge, who argues that the conflict can be causally linked to the development of lasting and broadly

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<sup>56</sup> Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*, p. 308.

<sup>57</sup> J.M. MacKenzie, "'Comfort' and Conviction: A Response to Bernard Porter, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36:4 (2008), pp. 662-63.

<sup>58</sup> K. McClelland & S. Rose, 'Citizenship and Empire, 1868-1926', C. Hall, & S.O. Rose, *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge, 2006).

<sup>59</sup> McClelland & Rose, 'Citizenship and Empire', p. 285-87.

socially based spirit of patriotism and nationalism.<sup>60</sup> Attridge's work was in turn critiqued by Richard Price, who highlighted the persistent problems of matching theoretical conceptualisation with historical periodisation.<sup>61</sup> For Price, the war and the celebration of 'Tommy Atkins' cannot have been the sole driver behind increased nationalism for, as he points out, soldier-heroes were well established as public figures throughout the nineteenth century. Price's alternative view places the development alongside the growth of popular politics, the class destabilisation caused by development of a more widely-based electoral system, and the increased external political and fiscal pressures being placed upon Britain by the development of industrial and military rivals. In Price's world, during the closing years of the nineteenth century the formerly subservient working-classes were transformed into a new and more assertive citizenry, and the promotion of a shared interest in and devotion to Empire provided potential means of minimising the risk of class conflict.<sup>62</sup>

John Price considers that the memorial to heroism in everyday life erected by George Frederick Watts in London in 1900 - and by implicit extension the lifesaving medals produced in the final decades of the nineteenth century - was 'absorbed into a heroic atmosphere that continued largely unchanged until the events of the Great War irrevocably altered ideas of heroism and heroic commemoration'.<sup>63</sup> He observes that Watts, a prominent advocate of the commemoration of 'civilian' heroism, was primarily driven by patriotism and a desire to advertise what he considered to be admirable national character traits. His monument in Postman's Park was intended to showcase to the world 'the honour of our nation'.<sup>64</sup> As Price observes, Watts celebrated the courage of individuals, but that celebration was of secondary importance to the promotion of national pride.

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<sup>60</sup> S. Attridge, *Nationalism, Imperialism and Identity in Late Victorian culture: Civil and Military Worlds* (Basingstoke, 2003).

<sup>61</sup> S. Price, 'One Big Thing: Britain, its Empire and Their Imperial Culture', *Journal of British Studies* 45 (July 2006), pp. 615-18.

<sup>62</sup> Price, 'One Big Thing', pp. 615-16.

<sup>63</sup> Price, 'Heroism in Everyday Life', p. 261.

<sup>64</sup> Price, 'Heroism in Everyday Life', p. 262, citing *Christian World*, 22 December 1898.

National pride was certainly under threat. By the late nineteenth century a widespread fear had developed that industrialisation – and in particular the growth of England’s industrial cities was leading to the enfeeblement of the English race. Threatened on the one hand by the rapid economic growth of both Germany and the United States, and on the other by increasing rates of infant mortality (which reached 163 per 1000 births in 1899),<sup>65</sup> the middle-classes feared that they were staring into the abyss. Faced with unassailable evidence of the lack of physical fitness of the urban working class population<sup>66</sup> and a series of military failures on the South African veldt, widespread near-panic ensued. One outcome of this panic manifested itself in the early twentieth-century quest for ‘National Efficiency’, a cult which was, according to Searle, reflected ‘a “cohering ideology”’; in other words, its slogans and catchphrases were both technocratic and militaristic. It was therefore able to appeal, simultaneously, to people from very different social backgrounds.’<sup>67</sup> Japan was likewise held up as a model by some advocates of ‘efficiency’, with the characteristics of loyalty and self-discipline attributed to the Japanese people being much admired.<sup>68</sup>

Such concerns lay in part behind Baden-Powell’s establishment of the Scouting movement, Baden Powell informing his young readers that the Roman Empire fell because ‘young Romans gave up soldiering and manliness altogether; they paid men to play their games for them... Don’t be disgraced like the young Romans, who lost the Empire of their forefathers by being wishy-washy slackers without any go or patriotism in them.’<sup>69</sup> To combat such risks, ‘Every boy ought to learn how to shoot and obey orders, else he is no more good when war breaks out than an old woman, and merely gets killed like a squealing rabbit, unable to defend himself.’<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, being prepared to act in an emergency was central to the Scouting ethos, Baden-Powell writing at length on the subject of

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<sup>65</sup> S.K. Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990* (London, 1999), p. 236.

<sup>66</sup> Some 1/3 of would-be recruits for the South African War of 1899-1902 failed to pass their military medical examinations and in 1903 on 2 out of every 5 volunteers failed to come up to the required standards. See Kent, *Gender and Power*, p. 237.

<sup>67</sup> G.R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought 1899-1914* (Oxford, 1971), p. xx.

<sup>68</sup> Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency*, pp.57-59.

<sup>69</sup> R. Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship* (London, 1908), p. 278.

<sup>70</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 11.

lifesaving medals in *Scouting For Boys* and urging that ‘every Boy Scout prepare himself to win one of these.’<sup>71</sup>

The coincident development of an array of novel lifesaving medals and of a new literature focussing upon them in the closing years of the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth centuries will be examined, in an effort to determine the extent to which the authorities and processes underpinning the awarding of medals sought to develop a shared vision of Empire, to allay fears and to reinforce the image of a virile and manly Britain in minds both of the award-givers and public. The designs adopted by a selection of popular publications to decorate a short-lived range of unofficial media-sponsored lifesaving awards will also be considered, as will the language used to describe lifesaving during the closing years of the nineteenth century.

## **Class**

This key topic will be addressed in chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. As Price has observed, perceptions of heroism in the Victorian age were heavily influenced by the writings of Carlyle and, in particular, by his emphasis on the deeds of ‘Great Men’.<sup>72</sup> In writing on the origins of the Watts Memorial, Price stresses the degree to which its originator endeavoured to break away from this exclusive categorisation and instead publically to record the extraordinary deeds performed by ‘ordinary’ folk (of both working- and middle-class origins) going about their everyday business.<sup>73</sup> The working classes had of course been regarded as a source of instability and danger by the ruling elite for much of the first half of the nineteenth century, but, as Hilton observes, whilst in much of the country fear of revolution persisted until at least the 1850s, ‘in metropolitan circles a new tone began to be heard long before then’.<sup>74</sup> Writers such as Dickens brought the experiences of the working classes to new readerships and, by so doing, served as a counterpoint to the traditional demonization of the poor.

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<sup>71</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 252.

<sup>72</sup> Price, ‘Heroism in Everyday Life’, p. 260.

<sup>73</sup> Price, ‘Heroism in Everyday Life’, pp. 269-70.

<sup>74</sup> B. Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?: England 1783-1846* (Oxford, 2006), p. 581.

Despite the well-established ‘anarchistic chauvinism’<sup>75</sup> displayed by some workers in response to class-specific interventionist legislation, common ground was increasingly to be found between the classes. As Hoppen summarised, by the mid-nineteenth century, ‘Neither the middle sort of people nor the manual works formed a single homogenous social group. Both, however, were more and more obviously beginning to see themselves as members of broad social categories in which common interest could sometimes... overcome the fissiparousness characteristics of relationships at the personal and microscopic level.’<sup>76</sup> The working classes were ‘neither out of sight nor out of mind’.<sup>77</sup>

It was thus against a backdrop of developing metropolitan liberalism that, from the mid-1830s onwards the RHS began far more frequently to reward brave deeds performed by members of the working classes. It was not alone in so doing and a review will be made of the extent to which the Society pioneered the rewarding of such proletarian bravery, and the degree to which its activities established a template which influenced other unofficial medal-giving bodies (such as the RNLI and Society for the Protection of Life from Fire) both in the UK and overseas and, ultimately by the British State.

Similarly, parallels will be drawn between the inspirational roles of Postman’s Park and the late-Victorian publications of Mundell, highlighting how both Watts and Mundell focussed their attention primarily on the labouring classes and youth audiences and accordingly used working-class role models to maximise the relevance of the exemplars selected. The nature of the acts featured in ‘improving’ compendia will be examined and mapped against overall patterns of medal-giving in an effort to determine to what extent the examples selected for inclusion in these volumes reflected actual patterns of award-giving. In addition, shifts in general patterns of medal-giving throughout the nineteenth century will be addressed (including the pioneering roles of the RHS and RNLI in rewarding working-class bravery), and the extent to which class-based biases affected these patterns will be discussed.

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<sup>75</sup> K.T. Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846-86* (Oxford, 1998), p. 101.

<sup>76</sup> Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, p. 581.

## Gender

This key topic will be addressed primarily in chapter 5. The foundation of the RHS in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century coincided with a period of flux and acute anxiety. Industrialisation and the growth of capitalism had served to undermine long-established political and social orders and a newly powerful bourgeoisie was actively seeking a novel ideology to underpin its ascendancy. In so doing, the increasingly dominant middle classes conflated gender with the prevalent social and political anxieties of the time; creating a new world-view which consigned women to the private world of the home and left men to deal with the public world of factory and marketplace. As Kent observes, men thus ‘developed a new ideology of justification for bourgeois, capitalist society, and a new evaluation of and set of expectations for men and women.’<sup>78</sup> Thus, by the 1830s, books on domesticity were reflecting a dominant bourgeois world-vision which separated the feminine domestic economy of the home from the male-dominated and politicised economy of the workplace. In the words of Davidoff and Hall, ‘books and novels assume a world in which the domestic sphere is occupied by women, children and servants, with men as the absent presence, there to direct and command but physically occupied elsewhere for most of their time.’<sup>79</sup> Such a neat division into ‘separate spheres’ was of course never a true reflection of reality, for whilst middle- and upper-class men might be able to afford to confine their partners to a largely domestic world, working-class women were forced to labour in order to earn enough to feed their families. By working, such women of course failed to conform to the new model of femininity, and were thus widely regarded - and feared - by their social superiors as immoral and corrupting influences.<sup>80</sup>

The men who founded the RHS were intimately linked to the evangelical movement and, Kent contends, these were precisely the type of people for whom the structured ‘separate spheres’ ideal ‘provided the building blocks upon which

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<sup>78</sup> S.K. Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990* (London, 1999), p. 54.

<sup>79</sup> L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men, Women and the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London, 1987), p. 181.

<sup>80</sup> Kent, *Gender and Power*, p. 74.

a stable, hierarchical, deferential social order could be constructed and sustained in the midst of industrial transformation and political revolution.<sup>81</sup> These ‘separate spheres’ went on to colour much of the Victorian life, with middle-class women being expected to perform the role of ‘angel of the house’, tasked with the role of nurturing their husband and children and with providing a safe haven from the harsh public world of commerce and industry.<sup>82</sup> Nowhere was this ideology more clearly manifested than in the middle-class evangelical community, which viewed the home as the ideal setting for the development of a godly life.<sup>83</sup>

In theory, one key effect of the ‘separate spheres’ ideology was to prevent middle-class women from pursuing any career other than that of governess without compromising their class status. This of course represented a male ideal rather than reality for the vast majority of women and, as Vickery has wryly observed, ‘The vast majority of middle-class housewives coped with heavy housework and quarrelsome servants, while simultaneously struggling with the nervous art of creative accounting.’<sup>84</sup> Moreover, whilst middle-class women did engage in extra-domestic work, such labour was generally philanthropic and not wage-based. Inspired by the likes of Hannah More, charitable activities were of course focussed on ‘feminine’ qualities - such as piety and nurturing - which did not threaten the ‘separate spheres’ model of society,<sup>85</sup> with causes such as the antislavery movement attracting much female support.<sup>86</sup> By the 1850s, however, increasing numbers of bourgeois women were challenging these life and career restrictions and campaigning for better access to higher education, for fairer treatment in the divorce courts and - most radically - for suffrage rights. It was a movement which gained momentum as the century progressed for, as Kent argues:

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<sup>81</sup> Kent, *Gender and Power*, p. 144.

<sup>82</sup> Kent, *Gender and Power*, p. 154.

<sup>83</sup> S. Steinbech, *Women in England 1760-1914: A Social History* (London, 2004), p. 42.

<sup>84</sup> A. Vickery, ‘Golden Age of Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women’s History’, *The Historical Journal* 36:2 (June, 1993), p. 389.

<sup>85</sup> Steinbech, *Women in England*, pp. 42-44, 51-60. Philanthropic work did allow many middle-class women to occupy positions of authority and - particularly in the case of charitable organisations - helped to reinforce class-based hierarchies. See also Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, pp. 429-36.

<sup>86</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 433.

Separate sphere ideology underpinned and gave stability to the structure that constituted bourgeois liberalism at home and imperialism abroad, but its promises, inconsistencies, and contradictions also made possible and legitimated the multiple resistances to it that challenged the classical, bourgeois liberal order of Britain at the end of the century.<sup>87</sup>

Improved educational opportunities allowed women to move into new professions - such as teaching and medicine - and the reality of even middle-class women engaging in paid work came increasingly to be accepted. That notwithstanding, Steinbech has correctly observed that many of the new careers that were opened up to 'respectable' women 'at once challenged and confirmed middle-class gender roles.'<sup>88</sup> Bourgeois women were increasingly to be encountered in the workplace, but the positions they occupied (such as nurses, doctors and teachers) generally reflected the nurturing roles previously assigned to them under old 'separate spheres' ideology. Indeed as Davidoff and Hall observe, in the middle of the nineteenth century teaching remained 'the only occupation in which middle-class women could preserve something of their status.'<sup>89</sup>

The thesis will examine the extent to which such developments were mirrored in the processes and practicalities of medal giving, examining and analysing the number of awards given and the nature of the deeds for which they were granted. The type of language used to describe deeds and medallists will be reviewed, with the intention of identifying the extent to which it served to stress the separateness of sexes and to reinforce bourgeois models of gender roles. In addition, questions will be asked as to whether the awarding of medals to women served to reinforce the middle-class dominated *status quo*, or whether such public recognition helped actively to raise the profile and status and women in the public realm. Due attention will also be played to the inspirational role created for female 'martyrs', who sacrificed their lives in an effort to save others from danger.

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<sup>87</sup> Kent, *Gender and Power*, p. 154.

<sup>88</sup> Steinbech, *Women in England*, p. 61.

<sup>89</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 293.



## Media

This key topic will be addressed primarily in chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5. The work of the RHS was both reflected in and promoted by the popular press. From the late eighteenth century, the *Gentleman's Magazine* regularly reported and promoted the Society's activities, whilst its affairs increasingly attracted the attention of *The Times* as the nineteenth century progressed. Moreover, during the latter part of the nineteenth century extensive press coverage was also given to the Society - and kindred bodies such as the RNLi - in the pages of magazines such as the *Graphic*, the *Illustrated London News* and the *Strand*.

Indeed, during the nineteenth century, the press came to play an important role not only in the recording of brave deeds but in the 'manufacture' of heroes and heroines. A prime example of the process is provided by the reporting of the story of Grace Darling, who (with her father) in 1838 was instrumental in rescuing the surviving crew and passengers from the wreck of the *Forfarshire*, which had gone aground on Northumberland's Farne Islands. Hugh Cunningham has made an extensive study of the press and literary commemorations of the wreck and has observed that, whilst initial local reports concentrated upon the facts of the case, once the role of Grace Darling as rescuer had been identified, the spotlight was redirected toward her.<sup>90</sup> The tale was taken up by the national press, with the young woman being described in singularly heroic terms, *The Times* of 19 September 1838 offering the opinion that her deed represented 'an instance of heroism on the part of a female unequalled perhaps, and certainly not surpassed, by any on record'. Such bold statements became commonplace, the RHS in awarding her a gold medal, posing the question: 'Is there in the whole field of history, or of fiction, even one instance of female heroism to compare for one moment with this?'<sup>91</sup> It is perhaps unsurprising that the RHS should have taken such a keen interest in the manipulation of Grace Darling's public face, for her main public sponsor, the Duke of Northumberland, was also President of the Society.

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<sup>90</sup> Cunningham, *Grace Darling*.

<sup>91</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, pp. 76-77.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the tale of Grace Darling was regularly being recounted in compendia of tales of heroic and dutiful women.<sup>92</sup> The purpose of such volumes was, in the words of Mrs Octavius Freir Owen to ‘teach women to endure - her chief lesson in this life! - and unselfishly to support others - her main prerogative.’<sup>93</sup> These ‘improving’ works were however targeted at a middle-class readership, and it was not until the closing years of the nineteenth century that Grace Darling became a truly national figure. This elevation was in part due to the popularity of Eva Hope’s 1875 biography, but her status was consolidated by the media attention refocused on her on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the wreck of the *Forfarshire*. The retrospective media attention devoted to Grace Darling’s deed serves to highlight the extent to which, during the 1880s and 1890s, an increasingly widely-read popular press was taking an ever more active interest in lifesaving and in the promotion of a culture of medal giving.

This was an interest which saw one manifestation in the invention of a new role for newspapers - that of *fons honorum*. No longer content with merely reporting deeds - and drawing inspiration from the work of the RHS and similar bodies - several periodicals initiated their own awards.<sup>94</sup> These were generally granted upon the recommendation of their readers. The active interest of the media in the rewarding of ‘everyday bravery’ thus served to promote a broader culture in which the giving of medals came to be widely recognised as an appropriate form of recognition. It also represented a rare opportunity for the working classes to have an input into the rewarding process.

Such media interest did not of course happen merely by happy chance. Riffenburgh has argued convincingly that newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic developed a symbiotic relationship with explorers, supporting their expeditions (both through cash and publicity) whilst themselves reaping the benefits of the increased sales generated by the creation of exciting and

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<sup>92</sup> See for example E. Staling, *Noble Deeds of Women* (London, 1835) and C. Bruce (ed) *The Book of Noble Englishwomen: Lives Made Illustrious by Heroism, Goodness, and Great Attainments* (London, 1875).

<sup>93</sup> O.F. Owen, *The Heroines of Domestic Life* (London, 1861), p. ix.

<sup>94</sup> Including *Quiver* (1885), *Answers* (1892), *To-Day* (1894), *Pluck* (1895) and *Golden Penny* (1901).

sensationalised narratives based around the exploits of carefully constructed hero-explorers.<sup>95</sup> The possibility that similar close relations existed between the RHS and sectors of the popular press from the late 1700s onwards will be explored, and any shifts in the nature of any such relationships will be noted. In particular the way in which both institutions stood to benefit from close collaboration will be examined.

David has addressed particular attention to the role of the media in the creation of Arctic heroes, noting that in the late 1880s the emphasis of reporting shifted from expeditions to individuals. Publications such as the *Illustrated London News* presented their readers with exciting tales of individual courage and endurance, which on occasion compromised accuracy in favour of a good story.<sup>96</sup> In this context, the work of authors of late-Victorian inspirational compendia (such as Frank Mundell and Laura Lane), will be explored and evidence for the parallel creation of ‘heroic lives’ based on acts of civilian bravery in their books reviewed. Such works were clearly aimed at specific target audiences and the stories they told (and the heroic lives they recounted) were created and manipulated to appeal to specific readerships. As Price observes, ‘Rather than there being a single universal concept of heroism that was accepted and appreciated by all, there were in fact a number of different constructions of the idea, assembled along different lines and from different perceptions.’<sup>97</sup>

Late Victorian inspirational authors were certainly familiar with the modern business concept of ‘market segmentation’ and, even if the term itself would have been alien to them, their methods would certainly have been appreciated by a modern marketer. The present study will examine how such writers exploited the brave deeds recognised by the RHS and its kindred bodies as the basis of their inspirational tales and will try to unravel the arguably symbiotic links between the Society and these authors.

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<sup>95</sup> B. Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism and Geographical Discovery* (London, 1993), pp. 5-7.

<sup>96</sup> R.G. David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination 1818-1914* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 107-18.

<sup>97</sup> J. Price, *Postman’s Park: G.F. Watts’s Memorial to Heroic Self-Sacrifice* (Compton, 2008), p. 69.

## **State**

The relatively late development of a state-sponsored system for the rewarding of civil bravery will also be scrutinised, with specific reference being made to the frequently reactive reasons for the institution of these awards (including external influences such as continental practices and internal drivers such as media coverage and public demand) and to the attitude of the broader public to the use of such awards as a means of recognising bravery. The role of medals as a means of encouraging loyalty and commitment to the state will be visited, whilst the often complex relationship between the State and the private sector will be explored, with specific reference both to the sponsoring of rewards by captains of industry and to the sometimes complex and symbiotic relationship between official awards and the unofficial decorations with which they co-existed.

Due attention will also be paid to the types of bravery (and types of hero) recognised by the state and private bodies, as will the extent to which decisions as to who was to receive such honours remained in the hands of a middle-class and upper-class elite. The thesis will examine the types of brave acts recognised, discuss how filters based upon middle- and upper-class values were applied in the consideration of cases, and map the extent to which the social class, gender and ethnicity of rescuers affected the likelihood of their deeds being formally rewarded.

In summary, it is intended that this thesis will be to make use of a broad range of primary and secondary sources to examine in depth the motivations and processes associated with the rewarding and celebration of ‘everyday heroes’ during the period 1776-1914 and to reposition the hitherto-neglected field of lifesaving medals firmly within the purview of social history.

# THE ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY



## *ORIGINS & DEVELOPMENT*

## **British Philanthropy**

As Prochaska has observed, ‘no people on earth can lay claim to a greater philanthropic tradition than the British’.<sup>1</sup> During the eighteenth century this propensity spawned a broad range of voluntary and charitable bodies that are inextricably associated with the rise of the urban middle classes. Those who pursued membership of these bodies were driven by a variety of motivations, including not only a desire to improve the lot of the poor - or otherwise less fortunate - but also to improve themselves (both morally and through the acquisition of knowledge) and to enhance their positions in the broader society. Religion also provided a powerful motivator, and it is significant that the Royal Humane Society (RHS) was closely linked from the outset not only with the established church but also with the Quaker movement.<sup>2</sup> Membership of these voluntary associations accordingly offered the promise of food for both the mind and the spirit. Moreover, membership allowed middle-class individuals to consolidate their position in the eyes of their peers, their social superiors and members of the lower orders.

The context for the unprecedented growth of charitable foundations was an England that was in the grip of profound social change, but where government was expected to take no role in caring for or supporting those in need. Indeed, the spectre of state interference in charitable endeavours was treated by many with suspicion, with the plight of the poor being viewed as an inevitable result of individual weakness and failure, which could be redeemed only through self-improvement. This was a world-view which could readily be extended to the world of the accident, with many incidents being attributed to the effects of alcohol or the laziness and carelessness of the victim. Suicides and attempted suicides could likewise be blamed on lack of religious conviction. The concept of

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<sup>1</sup> F. Prochaska, *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy* (New Haven & London, 1995), p. 1

<sup>2</sup> In addition to Cogan, who had trained as a cleric, early members included prominent Quakers such as the physician John Lettsom and leading representatives of the established church, including the Bishop of London.

discretionary charity fitted neatly into this model, with individual voluntary support being deemed an appropriate means of ensuring that an over-powerful state did not interfere with the nurturing of personal responsibility and the development of a family-focussed community.<sup>3</sup>

### **Accidents and the Problem of Death**

The *Gentleman's Magazine* carried a column entitled 'Casualties' from its first edition (1731). This recorded a prodigious number of frequently fatal incidents in a most matter-of-a-fact manner, stressing their randomness and the disturbing fact that 'little things could be lethal'.<sup>4</sup> To pre-Enlightenment eyes, these incidents were the products of Divine Providence and - as such - inevitable and unalterable. Furthermore, for many, they represented Divine punishments inflicted upon individuals whose behaviour or morals had exposed them to the wrath of the Creator. A belief in Providence could however cut both ways, and there was an equally prevalent tendency to attribute escapes from peril to the intervention of a Divine hand. This position was eloquently expressed by Richard Kay who, in relating his escape from serious injury when his horse fell from a bridge, observed that, 'Had we not been preserved by the special Hand of Providence we cou'd not have escaped being much bruised or taken up dead'.<sup>5</sup>

Although the Divine hand remained a shadowy presence, Enlightenment thought dictated that humans were able to do much to control their own fates. Common-sense precautions might be taken against the occurrence of many accidents and, if and when they did occur, practical steps could be taken to reduce their effects. Property for example might be protected by practical means, such as taking out fire insurance (the insured individual being able to call upon the assistance of the insurer's private fire brigade in the event of a calamity) and a whole range of medical emergencies could be addressed by following the first-aid advice

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<sup>3</sup> Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> R. Porter, 'Accidents in the Eighteenth Century', Cooter, R. and Luckin, B. (eds.), *Accidents in History: Injuries, Fatalities and Social Relations* (Amsterdam, 1997), p. 92.

<sup>5</sup> W. Brockbank & F. Kenworthy (eds), *The Diary of Richard Kay (1716-51) of Baldingstone, near Bury* (Manchester, 1968) p. 135, cited in Porter, 'Accidents in the Eighteenth Century', p. 94.

published in self-help guides, journals and magazines. Individuals thus gained ready access to a range of knowledge and services that might allow them to counteract the ill-effects of accidents or 'Acts of God'. Their lives, property and prosperity were no longer wholly outwith their control and many people had for the first time access to knowledge which would allow them to guide their own fate.

If widespread access to first-aid advice was an eighteenth century development, the latter part of the century also witnessed an increase in the professionalism and influence of the medical profession and the rise of the charity hospital. It has been argued that the growing influence of surgeons led to these hospitals - which had originally been established 'to serve medically useful and morally uplifting purposes in succouring the urban poor'<sup>6</sup>- coming increasingly to serve the needs of accident victims. As Porter summarised, 'In the age of the Enlightenment, secularization and self-help spurred first-aid. But the eighteenth century closed... ..with accidents falling out of lay hands and into the clutches of a modernizing medical profession and its modernizing institutions.'<sup>7</sup> It was within this dynamic context that the RHS had its origins.

Although we today recognise a firmly-drawn dividing line between the states of life and death, during the eighteenth century this division was less clearly defined. Tales of misdiagnosed death and premature burial were commonplace in Europe from the seventeenth century onwards; the earliest surviving English account being found in Francis Bacon's 1623 work, *Historia Vitae et Mortis*. Tales of premature burial elicited a widespread grisly fascination and throughout the seventeenth century pamphleteers produced and circulated gory - and allegedly factual - tales of luckless individuals who had been forced to endure the horrors of live interment, with particular prominence being given to the sad fates of the Newgate Butcher Lawrence Cawthorn and the hapless Mrs Blunden of Basingstoke.<sup>8</sup> Such fears were nurtured by the experiences of the plagues of 1604 and 1665, the poet William Austen observing in 1665 that:

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<sup>6</sup> Porter, 'Accidents in the Eighteenth Century', p. 97.

<sup>7</sup> Porter, 'Accidents in the Eighteenth Century', p. 99.

<sup>8</sup> J. Bondeson, *Buried Alive* (New York, 2001), p. 31.



Wisely they leave graves open for the dead  
'cause some too early are brought to bed<sup>9</sup>

During the eighteenth century the fear of premature burial reached epidemic proportions in some countries, most notably France and Germany. Although England largely escaped such hysteria, there can be no doubt that members of the RHS were aware of the risks of premature burial, a poem published in the *Transactions* for 1794 recording melodramatically that:

I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
Make thy two eyes, like stars, shoot from their spheres<sup>10</sup>

The reason for such widespread anxiety was rooted in the failure of doctors and others to agree upon a fool-proof indicator of death short of the onset of putrefaction. This had become the subject for vigorous debate during the mid eighteenth century after the publication of the French physician Jean-Jacques Bruhiers d'Albaincourt's two-volume thesis, *Dissertation sur l'Incertitude des Signes de la Mort*, which used a series of case studies to highlight the risks of premature burial and recommended the establishment of a series of model mortuaries where corpses could be kept under medical supervision until decay had set in or for a period of up to three days after the apparent signs of life had been extinguished. Only then, Bruhier advised, could burial safely take place. Although much of Bruhier's evidence was anecdotal or apocryphal, his work was translated into several languages and was to prove greatly influential across Europe. This was in part the result of its accessible content for, despite many medical men being reluctant to accept Bruhier's central argument that the signs of death were often uncertain, the work proved popular with an educated lay audience, who doubtless were enthralled by the frequently gruesome case studies that it contained.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> W. Austen, *Anatomy of the Pestilence* (London, 1665), quoted in J. Bondeson, *Buried Alive* (New York, 2001), pp. 34.

<sup>10</sup> *Transactions of the Royal Humane Society* 1 (1794), p. 441.

<sup>11</sup> Bondeson, *Buried Alive*, pp. 57-71.

As Bondeson notes, Bruhier's stress that physicians should devote particular attention to attempting to resuscitate those who had fallen victim to apoplexy, drowning, freezing or hysteria was clinically sound.<sup>12</sup> Death was no longer seen as something that was necessarily irreversible and it came increasingly to be recognised that – in some circumstances – life could be restored to those who had ceased breathing. This opened up the possibility that members of society could do something to preserve the lives of their fellows and proved to be a powerful driving force behind the boom in the establishment of humane associations that occurred across Europe during the latter part of the eighteenth century. The first of these was established in Amsterdam in 1767 and within a few years similar bodies had been founded in Venice (1768), Milan (1768), Paris (1771) and St Petersburg (1774).<sup>13</sup>

Interest in the science of resuscitation had been growing throughout the eighteenth century, and by the 1770s, tracts on the efficacy of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and even on the use of electricity to stimulate the heart had been published by the likes of John Fothergill<sup>14</sup> and John Hunter. Hunter was later to become a founder member of the RHS, whilst another early adviser of the Society, William Cullen, was responsible for a practical guide to resuscitation that had been put on public display in every market place and on every church door in his native Scotland.<sup>15</sup>

Another pioneer was Dr Alexander Johnson who, having moved to England from Holland in 1770, set about attempting to promote life-saving techniques through the publication and distribution of leaflets providing practical guidance. Johnson's approach largely bypassed the medical profession, a supporter noting that in promoting first-aid skills to the general public, 'It was the avowed design of Dr Johnson to DIVULGE the doctrine and practice, and to instruct the common people in it, who after all must be the principal practitioners, and on whose zeal and humanity the utility and prevalence of this art must ultimately

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<sup>12</sup> Bondeson, *Buried Alive*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>13</sup> Bishop, *Short History*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>14</sup> Fothergill read a paper on the subject of resuscitation to the Royal Society in 1745. See R. Pearsall, *Lifesaving: The Story of the Royal Life Saving Society* (London, 1991), p. 77

<sup>15</sup> Bishop, *Short History*, p. 2.

depend.’<sup>16</sup> For Johnson, any primary care movement had to be led by the public (who after all would be the first on the scene in the event of most accidents), a key apologist emphasising ‘that the chief end of such an institution would be injured or frustrated by being under the influence or direction of medical people.’<sup>17</sup> Perhaps in part as a result of his rejection of the role of the medical profession<sup>18</sup> in providing emergency aid, Johnson’s work was swiftly superseded by a body which, whilst recognising the importance of educating the masses in the fundamental techniques necessary to save life, was more firmly rooted in the professional classes.

### **Origins of the Royal Humane Society**

In 1773 Dr William Hawes, a London physician, took the first steps towards the formation of a society dedicated to the resuscitation of the apparently drowned.<sup>19</sup> His initial efforts comprised the offering of rewards from his own pocket to anyone who was willing to rescue an apparently lifeless person from the Thames between Westminster and London Bridges and take them to a place where efforts might be made to restore animation.

As his reputation for philanthropy spread, Hawes’ work came to the attention of a fellow doctor, Thomas Cogan. Cogan, who had served as a clergyman at the English Church in Amsterdam prior to training as a doctor in Leyden, had - like Alexander Johnson - been greatly influenced by the work of a pioneering Dutch-based humane society.<sup>20</sup> Established in Amsterdam in 1767, this society not only published guides to the treatment of the apparently drowned, but also awarded prizes to rescuers. After qualifying as a doctor, Cogan had practised in Leyden, Rotterdam and Amsterdam where, developing a fascination for the practice of

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<sup>16</sup> *Observer Londinensis* in *Gentleman’s Magazine*, July-December 1787, p. 1078.

<sup>17</sup> *Observer Londinensis* in *Gentleman’s Magazine*, July-December 1787, p. 1078.

<sup>18</sup> Johnson certainly does not appear to have gone out of his way to attract the support and admiration of fellow members of his chosen profession, publishing in 1776 a publication entitled *Free Thoughts on Quacks*.

<sup>19</sup> Pearsall, *Lifesaving*, p. 77.

<sup>20</sup> K. Hines, ‘The Royal Humane Society’, *Pre-Hospital Immediate Care* 3 (1999), 38.

resuscitation, he undertook to translate into English the proceedings of the Amsterdam Society.<sup>21</sup>



**1. Italian print of William Hawes, c.1780. (author's collection)**

**2. Thomas Cogan, c.1800.<sup>22</sup>**

Cogan who, having married a wealthy Dutch widow was far more prosperous than Hawes, was concerned that his contemporary had, for a whole year, been bearing the sole expense of providing rewards for the recovery of bodies from the Thames. Liaising with Hawes, the two men agreed that, as a first step towards the formation of a society on the Dutch model, each should bring a group of friends to a meeting to be held at the Chapter Coffee House in St Paul's Churchyard on 18 April 1774.<sup>23</sup>

Amongst the thirty-four founder members of the Society were to be found Oliver Goldsmith, better known as the author of *She Stoops to Conquer*, William Heberden, and the Quaker physician John Lettsom.<sup>24</sup> The actor David Garrick was an early supporter, whilst Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Bull, acted as

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<sup>21</sup> Bishop, *Short History*, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Reproduced in Bishop, *Short History*.

<sup>23</sup> Bishop, *Short History*, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> In addition to Cogan and Hawes, thirty-two gentlemen attended. The founders included eight medical men and six clerics, with Cogan having a foot in both camps. 'The Rise and Progress of the Society', *Royal Humane Society Annual Report* 1981, p. 13.

the Society's first President<sup>25</sup>. These were men who occupied prominent positions within London Society. Heberden (1710-1801) was well known not only for his bedside manner, but also for the significant research he undertook and published into such diseases as angina and arthritis.<sup>26</sup> Lettsom was even more celebrated. Both a gifted and popular physician and a notorious social climber, he was caricatured in the press as 'Dr Wriggle'.<sup>27</sup> His high profile and pioneering practices inevitably provoked some critical comment and, despite his contributions towards the founding of the Medical Society of London, he was on occasion the victim of printed attacks:

When patients for my help apply.  
I physics, bleeds and sweats 'em  
If after that they choose to die,  
Why, die they must - I Lettsom.<sup>28</sup>

He nevertheless accumulated a huge fortune through hard work and devoted himself tirelessly to innumerable social causes, ranging from the advocating of smallpox vaccination to supporting the Sunday-school movement.<sup>29</sup> That such distinguished medical pioneers should have sought to become involved with the fledgling Society is perhaps not surprising. The membership was devoted to improving society by the harnessing of science to combat death for, as Porter observed, 'Seeking to understand and change society, Enlightenment thinkers looked to science for their model... Medical men, for their part, were gazing at society'.<sup>30</sup> One of the key contributions of medicine to the advancement of Enlightenment thought was the manner in which it removed death from the realm of Providence to the realm of Science. The development of new and more effective scientifically-based medical methods and practices led to a widespread realisation that death was not an inevitability controlled by an omnipotent God, but rather a physical state which, in many circumstances, could be addressed or delayed by the intervention of man.

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<sup>25</sup> Bishop, *Short History*, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> R. Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind* (London, 1997), p. 256. Heberden's most significant publication was *Medical Commentaries on the History and Cure of Diseases* (1802).

<sup>27</sup> Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, pp. 255-56.

<sup>28</sup> S. Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society, 1839-1939* (Liverpool, 1939), p.8.

<sup>29</sup> Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, pp. 256. Lettsom could reportedly earn as much as £12,000 in a single year.

<sup>30</sup> Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, p. 302.

Initially the Society described itself simply as ‘THE INSTITUTION for affording immediate Relief of Persons apparently dead from DROWNING’, but from its earliest days it also concerned itself, as its Dutch counterpart did, with the spreading of knowledge about the process and practice of resuscitation. Thus, later in the same year, we find reference to the additional purpose of ‘diffusing a general Knowledge of the manner for treating Persons in a similar critical State, from various other causes; SUCH AS Strangulation by the Cord, Suffocation by noxious Vapours &c. &c.’<sup>31</sup> As such, the RHS was one of a number of voluntary associations that are closely linked to the improvements in medical knowledge and provision that were made during the eighteenth century.

### **Membership and Patronage**

From the outset the Society attracted a core segment of its membership from amongst ‘the great & the good’, with early members including not only the Lord Mayor of London and Bishop of London, but also members of aristocracy and well-regarded members of medical profession and scientific establishments such as Dr John Hunter and James Horsfall FRS.<sup>32</sup> Such distinguished membership notwithstanding, the annual subscriptions were set at a level (1 guinea for annual director; 5 guineas perpetual director) that, whilst high enough to exclude the lower orders, were nevertheless low enough to open access not only to the upper ranks of society but also to the middling classes. It accordingly afforded an opportunity for members of the middle classes to combine in the pursuit of aims that could be presented as purely altruistic and untainted by self-interest. Nevertheless, the Society’s regular social events afforded its middle-class members an excellent opportunity to mix with - and enjoy the reflected glory of - their social betters. The public nature of these events also offered participants a rare chance to advance their own claims to respectability and an esteemed place in society.<sup>33</sup> The Society’s supporters additionally enjoyed the privilege of being associated with an organisation that boasted a relatively open and transparent

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<sup>31</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1774, frontispiece.

<sup>32</sup> Bishop, *Short History*, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> The highlight of the Society’s Annual Festival in 1798 was a procession through the streets of London led by the Prince of Wales and a military escort.

management system. Not only were its activities the subject of a published *Annual Report*, but any of its directors had the right to access the Society's accounts and to influence its activities through the voting at its General Court.

A further attraction was of course the Society's Royal patronage. As Prochaska has observed, George III was an enthusiastic supporter of charitable causes, contributing a minimum of £14,000 per annum to charities and needy individuals.<sup>34</sup> He was nevertheless sparing in his formal support, granting his patronage to only nine charitable bodies.<sup>35</sup> The King's personal patronage of the RHS (he became Patron in 1783 and allowed the Society to use the title 'Royal' from 1787)<sup>36</sup> was accordingly perceived as a great honour and those associated with the Society could expect to bask in the reflected glory of its most prominent sponsor. Nor did the King neglect to provide practical support, granting the Society permission in 1792 to establish a Receiving House (or first-aid station) next to the Serpentine in Hyde Park to ensure that 'immediate and judicious medical aid might be afforded to persons accidentally drowned, or those desponding minds who adopt a dreadful resolution of terminating their existence therein'.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Society, Medicine & the Restoration of Life**

The new society was inextricably linked with the progressive and experimental form of medicine that was sweeping Europe. It was an exciting time to be a medical man and, as Porter has observed, discussion and intellectual conflict flourished as 'medical authors sought to set their discipline on scientific rails'.<sup>38</sup> A practically-focussed body from its inception, the RHS was very much a product of an age of scientific enlightenment, stressing that 'Philosophy holds up the torch of medicine, to illuminate its votaries, and direct their course in this

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<sup>34</sup> Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p. 13.

<sup>36</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 2002, p. 26.

<sup>37</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1794, p. 5. For a detailed study of the history of the Receiving House, see D. Coke, *Saved from a Watery Grave: The Story of the Royal Humane Society's Clearing House in Hyde Park* (London, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, p. 248.

new path of science.’<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, from its inception, the Humane Society sought to provide medical men and members of the public with up-to-date and ‘scientific’ guidance and advice through the media of detailed published reports and widely-distributed pocket guides to resuscitation.

Within this context, Hawes was happy to accept advice from leading figures in the field and in 1776 sought the guidance of the pioneering doctors Cullen and Hunter on the most practical methods by which an ordinary man, without access to specialist equipment, might seek to revive his fellows. Cullen recommended a range of possible treatments: the restoration and maintenance of body-heat; rectal fumigation; inflating the lungs by the use of bellows; bleeding from the jugular vein; treatment with stimulants and the application of emetics. A rather more practical (and less potentially harmful) approach was recommended by Hunter, who correctly recognised the importance of supplying oxygen and argued that the inflation of collapsed lungs was likely to restart a heart that had ceased to beat. For Hunter the priority was therefore to inflate the lungs (by use of bellows: mouth-to-mouth resuscitation being frowned upon), with the restoration of body heat being treated as a lesser priority. Hunter also advocated the delivery of stimulants to the nose, throat and rectum, but departed from Cullen in advising against the use of emetics, bleeding or blowing tobacco smoke up the rectum of the victim.<sup>40</sup>

Throughout its early existence the Society made a concerted effort to adopt scientific methods in its activities and to ensure that its work was adequately published and widely disseminated. Its *Annual Reports* were printed from 1774 onwards, recording not only the day-to-day activities of the organisation but also details of advances in the practice of resuscitation and the circumstances of individual cases recognised and rewarded by the society. In the early years many of these cases related to the treatment of rescued individuals by the society’s medical assistants or other members of the medical profession.

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<sup>39</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1795-96, p. 36.

<sup>40</sup> Pearsall, *Lifesaving*, pp. 80-81.



Reports such as these were used as a practical forum for sharing experience and acted as a means of disseminating information about successful resuscitations. The reports also facilitated the ongoing review of resuscitation methods, a process that not only helped to establish the experimental (and hence ‘scientific’) credentials of the Society, but also to develop ‘best practice’. Through the process of recording and publishing their practical experiences, the Society’s supporters were able to refine their techniques and improve their effectiveness. The changing status of bleeding as an approved treatment provides a good example. In 1774 the practice was ‘always proper’; in 1786 ‘only... necessary in some situations’; and by 1791 caution was being urged in its application.<sup>41</sup>

Practical experiments were also on occasion conducted, as in the case of the attempted resuscitation of Dr Dodd, a Governor of the Humane Society, who was executed for forging a bond to the value of £4,200 in 1777.<sup>42</sup> Dodd was a well-connected and popular man and a campaign calling for his reprieve, directed in part by his close friend Dr Samuel Johnson, resulted in the preparation of several petitions – including one bearing 23,000 signatures – begging for a Royal Pardon. The calls for mercy fell on deaf ears however and Dodd met his end on the Tyburn gallows before a vast crowd on 27 June.<sup>43</sup> After the body was cut down, an attempt was made by Dr John Hunter and a group of fellow experimenters to restore life to the body of the newly hanged malefactor, but this exercise proved wholly futile. Rumours that it had succeeded nevertheless continued to circulate for years thereafter: the *Aberdeen Journal* for example reporting on 19 June 1794 that life was restored after two hours of strenuous effort. Another report claimed that after his restoration Dodd had succeeded in escaping to France.<sup>44</sup>

In addition to the dissemination of information about resuscitation methods and new equipment via its *Annual Reports*, the Society established a network of some 250 local receiving houses across London, each equipped with the necessary

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<sup>41</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1774, p. 14; 1785-86, p. 203; 1791-92, p. 37.

<sup>42</sup> Pearsall, *Lifesaving*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>43</sup> J. Dobson, ‘John Hunter and the Unfortunate Doctor Dodd’, *Journal of the History of Medicine* (October 1955), pp. 369-78.

<sup>44</sup> Dobson, ‘John Hunter’, p. 373.

first-aid equipment to provide emergency care to a victim of drowning or other life-threatening accident.<sup>45</sup> These receiving houses were frequently generously maintained by the Society's local supporters, an example of this small-scale local philanthropy being provided by William Roome of Hackney, who maintained and funded a first-aid centre at his home in Margaret Street, equipped with drags, bellows for inflating the lungs, and 'a machine to convey the bodies to the nearest house.' Roome's home was fitted with a bell to ensure that no time was lost in summoning aid and he appears to have been kept busy, the Society's local medical assistant reporting in 1823 on 'the very meritorious conduct of Mr Roome, not only in this instance, but I can confidently say in fifty others; in which he has been most indefatigable in rescuing bodies from the canal'.<sup>46</sup>

The Society sought to publicise its activities and initiatives through the pages of its *Annual Reports*. These were not merely a vehicle for the publication of notes relating to individual cases of resuscitation. The Society also encouraged original research, awarding prizes to individuals who had undertaken important work and opening the pages of its *Annual Reports* to the publication of essays detailing significant work. From the 1780s essay prizes were presented, with early winners addressing topics such as the diagnosis of death<sup>47</sup> and the link between life and respiration.<sup>48</sup> Inventors were also granted medals in recognition of significant contributions to the field; details of their life-saving devices being reproduced in the Society's *Annual Reports*. Typical of such coverage was that devoted to an illuminated lifebelt invented by a Royal Naval officer named Thomas Cook, who received a silver medal from the Society in 1819. His invention was initially reported upon in the *Annual Report* in 1818,<sup>49</sup> under the heading 'Mechanical Inventions for the Saving of Life', with an extended illustrated supplement appearing in 1819 following the receipt by the Society of a working model of the device and several letters of endorsement from naval commanders.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Hines, 'Royal Humane Society', p. 38

<sup>46</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1824, Case 9523; RHS, *Resolutions to Committee A*, 17 December 1823; RHS, *Proceedings of General Courts*, 14 January 1824.

<sup>47</sup> RHS *Annual Reports* 1787-88, p. 234; 1789-90, p. 378.

<sup>48</sup> RHS *Annual Reports* 1787-88, p. 229.

<sup>49</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1818, pp. 65-67.

<sup>50</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1819, pp. 43-49.

Furthermore, in addition to reporting on new advances in the science of lifesaving, the Society's editors were happy to reproduce important work that had previously been published elsewhere, ensuring that the readership of the *Annual Report* was kept up-to-date with the latest developments in the areas of resuscitation and related fields. The Society's interest in the diagnosis of death was of course closely linked to the widely-held public fascination with the horrors of premature burial. Although initially less feared in Britain than in much of Continental Europe, some influential individuals at least were sufficiently concerned to take concrete steps to avoid the risk of being buried alive; the eccentric Miss Hannah Beswick for example considering a legacy of 20,000 guineas to her physician a prudent investment to ensure that her body be embalmed and kept under regular observation after her death.<sup>51</sup> It was also a topic which fascinated founder members of the RHS, William Hawes arguing that the onset of putrefaction represented the only infallible sign of the extinction of life in his 1780 pamphlet, *An Address to the Public on Premature Death and Premature Interment*.

But, if in time the Society came to be recognised almost universally as a valuable force for good, in its early days it met with opposition and ridicule from many members of the medical profession. A biographical sketch of Hawes published after his death recorded that he 'had to encounter both with ridicule and opposition'<sup>52</sup> and had to devote much effort 'satisfactorily to refute the falsehoods which were industriously circulated against him and the Society'.<sup>53</sup> In particular, the Society's focus on restoring the apparently dead was viewed with great suspicion, it being observed in the *Annual Reports* for 1808-09 that its pioneering work had initially met with considerable hostility, Hawes complaining that 'The tide of prejudice, for many years, ran very strong against a set of men, who presumed, or pretended, to bring the dead back to life.'<sup>54</sup> It was a widely-held prejudice which also attracted the comment of Dr Lettsom, who wrote that, 'At the commencement of the institution it excited more ridicule than

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<sup>51</sup> Bondeson, *Buried Alive*, p. 87.

<sup>52</sup> RHS *Annual Reports* 1808-09, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> RHS *Annual Reports* 1808-09, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> RHS *Annual Reports*, 1808-09, p. 5.

patronage; few individuals early entered into the original plan of the projectors'.<sup>55</sup> As Hawes himself had observed:

Our first object and chief difficulty was to remove the destructive incredulity that prevailed. Our attempts were treated, not only by the vulgar, but also by some of the learned, even by men of eminence as physicians and philosophers, as idle and visionary, and placed them on a level with professing to raise the dead.<sup>56</sup>

The Society also met resistance from those who felt that, by undertaking acts of resuscitation, its members were immodestly confusing their own temporal powers and actions with those reserved solely for God. For such critics, all claims that resuscitation could 'restore life' were *de facto* dubious. Dr Valpy's *Anniversary Sermon* of 1802 for example was severely criticised for suggesting that several Scriptural instances of the raising of the dead might be attributed to the use by the ancients of divinely-inspired methods similar to those employed by the Society. In describing the Prophet Elijah's restoration of a child, for example, Valpy postulated that, 'We cannot but perceive, in the human means, which the Prophet was directed by holy inspiration to employ, the principle, displayed to future ages, of reviving those who were apparently dead'.<sup>57</sup> Valpy's suggestion that a parallel might be seen between the biblical tale and the type of resuscitation encouraged by the Society was dismissed out-of-hand by an anonymous reviewer, who noted that in the biblical instance there could be no doubt that 'there was a real separation of soul and body; and in such a case all resuscitative arts are in vain.' As the reviewer complained:

It hurts our feelings not a little to see "Resuscitation", and other terms appropriate to the Humane Society applied... to the real miracles of scripture; but this was the natural consequence of the unfortunate and fundamental mistake of this discourse, that those miracles were really, though but in part, instances of resuscitation.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> J.J. Abraham, *Lettsom: His Life, Times, Friends and Descendants* (London, 1933), p. 148.

<sup>56</sup> William Hawes quoted in the obituary of John Beaumont Esq., *Gentleman's Magazine* 79, July - December 1814, p. 497.

<sup>57</sup> 'Dr Valpy's Sermon for the Humane Society', *Brit. Crit.* XXI, June 1803, p. 658.

<sup>58</sup> 'Valpy's Sermon', *Brit. Crit.* XXI, June 1803, p. 661.

In its early days, the RHS can accordingly be seen to have been looked upon with a degree of suspicion and hostility by some of the more conservative elements of society. By actively promoting cutting-edge practices in the resuscitation of the apparently dead it trod on the toes of elements of both the medical and religious establishments. In a broader society wedded to a belief in *laissez faire* and a non-interventionist State the RHS - its high patronage notwithstanding - was unlikely to be mistaken for a branch of the government.

### **Saving Money and Saving Souls**

Although the saving of life was a core driving force behind the Society's activities, it was not necessarily the sole motive. During its formative years the saving of souls - and money - were likewise deemed by the Society to be of paramount importance. Accidents could place a great burden upon the state and society, depriving employers of valued labour and leaving grieving wives and children dependent upon the parish for support. These risks were recognised by the RHS which, as a patriotic body, made it very clear that:

It is our duty as well as interest to replace the industrious poor in their sphere of usefulness, that they may again work for their wives and families; whereby they are snatched from misery and want, and the community relieved from a troublesome and expensive burden. These are a part of the important benefits to the publick, by the establishment of the Humane Society.<sup>59</sup>

A further example of the Society's attitude to the financial benefits of its work was provided in the *Annual Report* for 1803 which recorded, by way of example, 'Resuscitation at a capital Brewery. An industrious Man restored to his Wife and Seven Children. A serious parochial Burthen providentially prevented.'<sup>60</sup>

Attempts were made to quantify the value of these resuscitations to the government and to society in general. Whilst apparently at odds with the core humanitarian aims of the Society, these reflected the growing awareness of the value of life and property that was developing in the shadow of the nascent

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<sup>59</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1785-86, p. 82.

<sup>60</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1803, p. 76.

insurance industry and were used to argue unsuccessfully for the granting of a government subsidy to supplement the Society's income. The *Annual Report* for 1783 noted that:

It is an inquiry worth the attention of the legislature what sum of money the HUMANE SOCIETY has been the means of saving the public... Every person in society must be esteemed worth a certain sum; what the average value may be estimated at I am unable to determine, calculators being divided in their opinions; but I presume that the mean proportion of the inhabitants of Great Britain cannot be rated as less value than ONE HUNDRED GUINEAS each. Upon this calculation, the HUMANE SOCIETY has, under the Divine Providence, saved our country A HUNDRED AND TWO THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE POUNDS, within eight years - a circumstance sufficient to recommend the Society to the patronage and encouragement of government and of every real patriot.<sup>61</sup>

The RHS was of course not unique in placing a monetary value upon those whom it restored to productivity. In arguing for the establishment of charity hospitals for the urban poor, Bishop Secker had argued in 1754 that 'Religion, Humanity, common prudence, loudly require us to rescue' the sick.<sup>62</sup> Others were happy to place figures on the savings to be made via the restoration of the labouring poor, John Bellers estimating that the death of a single labourer capable of siring children could be equated to a financial loss of £200 'to the Kingdom'.<sup>63</sup> As Owen observes, 'The mercantilist was alarmed at the effect of the high death rate on the labour force of the nation and, when he considered it, uneasy with the loss of working time through illness.'<sup>64</sup> The same concern could equally be applied to accidental deaths and injuries.

The saving of souls was also recognised as a priority, W. Poutney, called to treat an 'industrious man with numerous family' celebrating his success in verse:

Ours is the joy, the heartfelt joy, to save

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<sup>61</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1783. The comments were published as a footnote to a sermon preached by the Rev. John Hadley Swain at St Martin's in the Field.

<sup>62</sup> T. Secker, *A Sermon Preached before the Governors of the London Hospital* (1754), p. 34, quoted in D. Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (Harvard, 1964), p. 38.

<sup>63</sup> J. Bellers, *Essay towards the Improvement of Physick*, reprinted in A.R. Fry, *John Bellers* (London, 1925) and quoted in Owen, *English Philanthropy*, p. 38.

<sup>64</sup> Owen, *English Philanthropy*, p. 38.

Friend, lover, parent, from th' untimely grave  
To snatch from death the victims of despair,  
And give the means of penitence, peace and prayer.<sup>65</sup>

The contribution of the church to the affairs of the Society during the first half-century of its existence included the regular preaching of high-profile sermons by prominent clerics as a core focus for the organisation's fund-raising programme. Moreover, whilst the methods of treatment used may have owed much to science, great stress was also put on the role of the Divine in preserving life. As well as accidental drowning and suffocation the Society took a keen interest in attempting to address 'the fatal effects of a most heinous crime, said by FOREIGNERS, to be almost peculiar to the country – SUICIDE'.<sup>66</sup> The curious belief that this represented a peculiarly English problem notwithstanding, the resuscitation of attempted suicides offered the Society an opportunity to save not only lives but also souls. The Society took evident pride in the success which it claimed not only in restoring suicides to life but also in ensuring that they did not repeat the attempt, the Rev. Doctor Valpy (who could himself claim the credit for restoring not only a naval officer but also 'a skilful cleric and an exemplary divine') claiming with evident satisfaction in the Society's Anniversary Sermon of 1802 that not one of the attempted suicides saved by the RHS had made a further attempt to end their own life.<sup>67</sup>

The hand of God was to be clearly seen in the actions of the Society's officers and supporters, whilst those who preserved life using the Society's methods might expect to gain benefit from their actions in the afterlife. This situation is ably exemplified by the words used by the Rev. Dr. Morgan to bless one of the Society's medallists in February 1802:

May the Divine Being, the author of all good, who infused into your mind so large a portion of Christian benevolence, increase it more and may he reward you with the peace of God, who passeth all understanding, which

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<sup>65</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* 73, January-July 1803, p. 222. Reproduces a letter sent from Hanbury, Bristol, to the Treasurer (Dr Hawes) of the RHS on 28 February 1803.

<sup>66</sup> *Transactions of the ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY 1774-1784*, p. xvii.

<sup>67</sup> See 'Dr Valpy's Sermon for the Humane Society', *Brit. Crit.* XXI, June 1803, p. 662. The sermon was successively delivered to congregations at Grosvenor Chapel, London; Holy Roads, Southampton; and St Helier, Jersey. It was also subsequently published as a 68-page octavo volume at the price of 1s 6d.

is the only foundation of happiness in this life and the sure presage of eternal bliss.<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, from 1782 the Society took an active role in promoting the moral improvement of those whose lives they had been instrumental in saving through the presentation to each survivor of a Bible, a prayer-book and a copy of a *The Great Importance of a Religious Life*.<sup>69</sup> These books came with a printed address from Dr Lettsom delivered in the name of the Directors that served to remind the rescued souls that their lives had been saved through the intervention of the Society as a Divine agent and that as an act of gratitude they were accordingly honour-bound to devote the remainder of their lives to pious and virtuous pursuits.<sup>70</sup> This focus on the preservation of the spirit was very much in keeping with the mood of the time and, as Hines has observed, the Society's clerical supporters were more than happy to exploit restored casualties by presenting them to the congregations when preaching fundraising sermons.<sup>71</sup> As the Society's *Annual Report* of 1786, stated:

It may be proper to observe that the Humane Society has extended its views beyond the grave: for in giving new life to the expired corpse, they have likewise endeavoured to re-animate the mind and awaken it to a sense of reverential gratitude to the Great Giver and preserver of Life.<sup>72</sup>

### **Status and Society**

Whilst it might be argued that the modest fees charged for membership and openness of its accounting procedures characterise the RHS as a relatively democratic, open and accountable body, it nevertheless existed in the context of a highly class-conscious society. The Society's success in attracting Royal patronage and the high social status of many of its members afforded an opportunity for the ambitious to mix with their betters. With an annual subscription fee pitched lower than the cost of 'a neat ostrich feather' to adorn a hat,<sup>73</sup> membership of the RHS represented a cost-effective entrée into higher

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<sup>68</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* 72, January-June 1802, p. 136, p. 168.

<sup>69</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1783-84, p. 168.

<sup>70</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1781-82, p. 154.

<sup>71</sup> K. Hines, 'Royal Humane Society', *Pre-Hospital Immediate Care* 3 (1999), p. 39.

<sup>72</sup> Hines, 'Royal Humane Society', p. 39, citing RHS *Annual Report* 1786.

<sup>73</sup> L. James, *The Middle Classes: A History* (London, 2006), p. 172.



society, offering ambitious individuals an opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism and virtue whilst simultaneously making potentially-beneficial social connections. In particular, the values of civic humanism espoused by the Society represented a bridge between the worlds of the upper and lower middle classes and afforded an opportunity for all members of the bourgeoisie to find common cause.

Furthermore, the Society's activities were well publicised through coverage in publications such as the *Gentleman's Magazine* and their celebrations were likewise highly public. Indeed, from its earliest years, the Society sought to maintain its profile within the journal's pages through the submission of numerous reports and letters. In October 1793 for example, William Hawes composed a brief report of the resuscitation of two children which was prefaced by a quite extraordinarily flattering and sycophantic address to the magazine's editor. Having praised a journal 'the avowed purpose of being a vehicle for all the intelligence that might arise to the Philosopher or Antiquary' for the manner in which its prompt publication of accounts of accidents and restorations has been instrumental in 'cutting off a large source of the most fatal calamities' he continues, 'Mr. Urban, I cannot help paying you a compliment, exacted from my lips by the force of truth, that there has scarcely been an instance of a periodical work preserving its celebrity with unfaded lustre for such a length of time:- I need hardly add my wishes for its long continuance.'<sup>74</sup>

It would have been a hard-hearted editor indeed who failed to publish such a letter with due prominence, and it was a wise correspondent who targeted his florid prose with such skill. The *Gentleman's Magazine* represented a key means of disseminating information on the work of the Society and it enjoyed a far wider circulation than other similar publications such as the *Tatler*. As Golby and Purdue wryly observe, the journal was not read exclusively by the middle classes, for 'The name is itself significant, for those secure in status of gentlemen would not need to be so flattered.'<sup>75</sup> Publications of this type thus represented a

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<sup>74</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, July-December 1793, pp. 876-877.

<sup>75</sup> J.M. Golby & A.W. Purdue, *The Civilisation of the Crowd: Popular Culture in England 1750-1900* (Stroud, 1999), p. 32.

conduit through which the Society could communicate with not only the middle classes but with the literate members of the lower orders including craftsmen, tradesmen and a growing number of women.

The RHS's celebrations were likewise intended to be extremely visible and events such as the Annual Festival enjoyed a high public profile (combining a parade, banquet and artistic performances) and on occasion attracted the attention of royalty: the Prince of Wales, for example, attending the 1798 celebration in the company of a substantial military escort.<sup>76</sup> Participating members of the RHS could thus publicly demonstrate their patriotic credentials. Furthermore, they could rest assured that they would not only be doing good, but that they would be seen to be doing so and that their reputation – which was often of key importance to their income and livelihood – would be duly enhanced.

But if it afforded opportunities for social improvement, the Society also offered its membership an opportunity for self improvement. The RHS was founded in an era when members of the middle classes were increasingly coming together to form associations – be they formal or informal – where ideas could be shared and arguments developed in convivial surroundings. The serious intellectual intentions of the Society are evident from its enthusiasm for publishing reports, guidance and debate and there can be little doubt that many members (both medical men and lay-persons) benefited intellectually from being close to the heart of what was, in effect, a nascent medical research institute.

Furthermore, in a status-obsessed society that viewed a well-rounded and cultivated mind as being a key indicator of a true gentleman, it is perhaps not surprising that RHS should express a desire to promote 'literature in general; the fine arts; the enthusiasm of fancy; and the beauties of classical composition'.<sup>77</sup> To this end, the membership threw itself into the task of composing poems and hymns celebrating the work of the Society which could be performed and festivals and published in the *Annual Report* in celebration of the 'fire of Genius'

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<sup>76</sup> *The Times*, 24 Oct. 1798.

<sup>77</sup> *RHS Annual Report 1789-90*, p. 337

that had been ‘kindled by the torch of Philanthropy’.<sup>78</sup> The same desire to embrace the broader cultural world was likewise reflected in the care which the leadership of the Society lavished upon the design of its medal: a subject discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

The Society should not however be viewed in isolation and, worthy though its objectives doubtless were, the RHS had been born, as had many other similar bodies, in a coffee house and it is likely that its meetings were not entirely devoted to weighty matters of science, art and religion. Oliver Goldsmith, one of the founding members of the Society, wrote a humorous account of a tavern-based meeting of the fictional Harmonical Club, recounting how, after the business of the day had been dealt with the gathering became markedly more informal, with members of different social strata and religions socialising in an atmosphere lubricated by alcohol and tobacco smoke<sup>79</sup>. As James reminds us, in the world of Georgian clubs and societies, ‘conviviality was inseparable from scholarship’;<sup>80</sup> and it was this irresistible combination that encouraged thousands of middle class men to join the plethora of bodies that thrived in the metropolis.

That there was much good sociable fun to be had at meetings of the RHS is amply recorded in contemporary press reports. At the Anniversary Meeting held in April 1809, for example, the announcement of generous donations to the Society was ‘rapturously received... by a circle of 300 Philanthropists, some of whom continued till a late hour to enjoy a rational conviviality – the feast of reason and the flow of soul’.<sup>81</sup> Likewise, at a meeting held in May 1820, it was noted that, after drinking to the health of the Society’s Stewards, ‘Several other toasts were drunk; and the company enjoyed themselves until a late hour’.<sup>82</sup>

There was of course a practical advantage to the Society in ensuring that its membership was well fed and watered at such festivals. A generous flow of drink and congenial company is apt to open the wallet of the most cautious diner and,

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<sup>78</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1789-90, p. 337.

<sup>79</sup> O. Goldsmith, ‘Life of Robert Nash’ in A. Friedman (ed.), *Collected Works* 3 (Oxford 1966), pp. 12-13.

<sup>80</sup> James, *The Middle Classes*, p. 182.

<sup>81</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine* 79, January-June 1809, p. 374.

<sup>82</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine* 90, January-June 1820, p. 464.

as Owen observes, ‘The annual dinner, with its assault on the pockets of the more or less befuddled diners, became an essential feature of the charity economy.’<sup>83</sup> Indeed, there is a strong suggestion that the Society’s fundraising efforts may have been even more blatant than most, it being recorded that whilst a procession of persons rescued from drowning walked around the dinner table with due solemnity:

Dr Cogan sang songs of his own composition, calculated to draw money from the company, who were invited to join in the chorus-  
A-begging we will go, will go,  
And a- begging we will go.<sup>84</sup>

But whether drunk or sober, in an age where doing good was considered to be a pleasurable activity in its own right, the making of generous donations to support the work of the Society would also have afforded the giver personal gratification. As Williams has observed, in an environment where sensibility was at the height of fashion:

The most exquisite raptures known to mankind were supposed to flow from the ability to feel the suffering of others, and to relieve it by acts of unselfish courage and generosity... the mere ability to feel for someone’s pain was a valuable characteristic, that somehow set you above the common, unfeeling herd – and was, in itself a source of intense delight.<sup>85</sup>

In such a context, the parading of the beneficiaries of such generosity would have allowed the Society’s supporters an opportunity to maximise their feelings of empathy and, by extension, their own sense of pleasure.

Thus membership of the RHS afforded a means for members of the middle classes to associate with their betters, it also allowed them to define their ‘separateness’ from the supposedly less-sensitive lower orders. Furthermore, whilst the Society was happy to support any lifesaving activity, irrespective of the class of the victim, demographic and work-related factors ensured that it was inevitable that the majority of those saved should be members of the lower

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<sup>83</sup> Owen, *English Philanthropy*, p. 48.

<sup>84</sup> J.J. Abraham, *Lettsom: His Life, Times, Friends and Descendants* (London, 1933), pp. 410-11.

<sup>85</sup> C.D. Williams, ‘“The Luxury of Doing Good”: Benevolence, Sensibility and the RHS’, R. Porter & M.R. Roberts (eds.), *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1996), p. 77.

orders. The Society's attitude to those whose salvation it had sponsored was highly paternalistic. The target for the work of the Society was clearly identified as 'the industrious poor'<sup>86</sup> and for those who had been saved there were tangible reminders of the debt which they now owed to God and their betters, each being presented with a bible and other improving literature. Those who had been saved were also expected to parade before their benefactors at the Society's major events. Typical of these was the anniversary dinner of 1830, when '150 gentlemen sat down to a very excellent dinner' at the London Tavern, the highlight of the evening's entertainment being the 'exhibition in the room of a number of persons, men, women and children, who had been rescued, since the last meeting, from watery graves'.<sup>87</sup>

### **Expansion and Influence**

The development of the role of the RHS during the Georgian era was ably recorded in its substantial and detailed *Annual Reports*, compiled initially by Dr Cogan and, subsequent to his return to Holland, successively by Dr Hawes (until his death in 1808) and Dr Lettsom.<sup>88</sup> These offer a detailed insight into the expansion of its activities, noting for example that whilst in 1774 a total of eight individuals were successfully resuscitated, by 1809 the total number of individuals rescued had risen to 3,213.<sup>89</sup> The Society was able to boast in its *Annual Report* of 1825 that it had been directly responsible for the saving of over 5,000 lives in the Metropolis and had thus 'contributed... to the preservation of the lives of very many most valuable members of the community'. Furthermore, it was able to claim to have given rewards (be they monetary or medallic) on almost 21,000 occasions, the Society viewing the granting of these as being of particular importance, noting that rescuers had been 'animated... by the rewards of the Society'.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1785-86, p. 82.

<sup>87</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* 100, January-June 1830, p. 360.

<sup>88</sup> Bishop, *Short History*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>89</sup> From a total of 15,165 recorded cases.

<sup>90</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1825, pp. ix-x.

The Society was convinced that its activities had a tangible effect upon the morals of the lower orders which, under its influence, were beginning to adopt the more elevated values of their social superiors, the *Annual Report* of 1776 declaring that:

The cheerfulness and alacrity with which publicans... administer every assistance in their power cannot be too much commended. This temper is becoming so general, that the man who rejects an application of such a nature, is now deemed by the whole neighbourhood as a monster of inhumanity.<sup>91</sup>

The Society's origins were Metropolitan and, in its early days, it focussed its activities on London, whilst doing what it could to inspire and encourage the establishment of similar societies elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Indeed, its influence extended far beyond Britain's shores, the *Annual Report* of 1825 proclaiming that:

By its impulse and example it has led to the formation of similar Associations for the Preservation and Restoration of Life in various places in Great Britain, in her Colonies, in several European nations, and on the American Continent. Many of these Institutions will become the future parents of others, and will contribute to multiply to an indefinite extent the practical benefits of the Royal Humane Society.<sup>92</sup>

But, if the nineteenth century was a period that witnessed the establishment of many overseas and provincial societies, much of the practical day-to-day work of the RHS focussed on the supply and maintenance of practical emergency aid provision in London.

The 1894 *Annual Report* described at length the facilities available at the Receiving House by the Serpentine (which kept two tons of water hot at all times for the purpose of providing warm baths to casualties)<sup>93</sup> and listed 40 police stations and almost 200 Apparatus Stations at other locations in London where rescue gear was available. Many of these were located in public houses, perhaps reflecting the fact that Rule XII of the Society stated 'That a sum not exceeding

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<sup>91</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1776, pp. 88-89.

<sup>92</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1825, pp. xii-xiii.

<sup>93</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1894, p. 17.

Two pounds be given to any publican or other Person who shall without delay admit to his house the body of anyone apparently Drowned with a view to its recovery, send instantly for medical assistance, and furnish the necessary accommodation.’<sup>94</sup>



**3. Nineteenth century print of RHS Receiving House, c.1840 (author's collection)**

Rescue equipment was also available at a small number of ‘Distant Stations’, including the piers of Portsmouth, Gorleston, Yarmouth and Sittingbourne.<sup>95</sup> The Society’s work also reached a broader audience through the continued publication of *Annual Reports* which, whilst less comprehensive than those produced in its early years, continued to print and distribute advice on first aid and resuscitation in addition to statistics on deaths by drowning.

Such practical developments were in part a reflection of a shift in the focus of the Society. At the beginning of Victoria’s reign, the RHS remained very much a Christian organisation. The Society’s senior Vice President was the Archbishop

<sup>94</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1894, p. 20.

<sup>95</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1894, pp. 131-140.

of Canterbury, and it boasted no fewer than three Chaplains.<sup>96</sup> The *Annual Report* for 1838, in addition to announcing the new Queen's agreement to act as Patron of the Society, acknowledges the kindness of six clerics for having delivered sermons on behalf of the Society or otherwise 'granted their pulpits' for the cause.<sup>97</sup> The spiritual fate of attempted suicides was of particular concern to members of the Society, the *Annual Report* lamenting an increase in the number of such cases:<sup>98</sup> Fortunately practical steps could be taken to redeem would-be suicides, the *Annual Report* noting that:

The Committee, having in many instances experienced the good effects of giving the Holy Scriptures in cases of attempted suicide, immediately after so manifest and merciful an interposition of Divine Providence, hope that the Society is not only instrumental in saving the lives of those unfortunate individuals, but in restoring them to peace of mind, so that they may, through repentance, receive mercy from their Creator, whom they had so rashly and wickedly offended.<sup>99</sup>

Indeed, the lengthy discussion of the role of the Society in the saving of suicides was couched almost entirely in Christian terms: '...for those who have again been brought back to life, the spark of Christian truth which has lain dormant within the breast may yet be kindled to warmth.'<sup>100</sup> The rescuer could also expect to gain spiritual advantage from his actions, for 'to be instrumental in saving but a single soul, was a sufficient recompense for the labours of a whole life'.<sup>101</sup> By the 1890s however things had changed. The list of Vice Presidents is devoid of clerics, and there are likewise no men of God listed on the Committee of the Society.<sup>102</sup> In 1894, the Society lists a single Chaplain, and no mention of God, Christ or religion is made in the *Annual Report*, a brief account of 'The Rise and Progress of the Royal Humane Society' focussing instead entirely upon the medical and scientific background of the organisation.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1838, pp. 1-2.

<sup>97</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1838, p. 8.

<sup>98</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1838, p. 6. The report records 43 cases of attempted suicide and 'and eight of self destruction', accounting for over a quarter of the cases reported (p. 5).

<sup>99</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1838, p. 29.

<sup>100</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1838, p. 6.

<sup>101</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1838, p. 6.

<sup>102</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1894, pp. 4-5

<sup>103</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1894, pp. 141-42.



Not everybody was satisfied with the services provided by the ‘scientific’ Society and occasional criticisms can be found in the press. One of these was penned under the pseudonym of ‘A Daily Reader’ by a keen swimmer who was highly critical of the Society’s failure to provide boat-cover on the Serpentine except during the summer. He argued that whilst the Society cared for ‘those who bathe when the sun is near the meridian’, hardy all-year swimmers were thus put at risk whilst the Society’s boatmen sat ‘with their boats at the boathouse every morning, idling their time with their hands in their pockets’. Having outlined the dangers - including both cramp and swan-attack - faced by the hardy swimmers who chose to bathe in the lake daily and in all weathers, ‘A Daily Reader’ further wondered, ‘Ought not the society to alter its name to the “Four Monthly Royal Humane Society”, or “The Warm-weather Royal Humane Society”’.<sup>104</sup>

This was an outspoken attack on the Society and its work, but the Society did not even have to come to its own defence, an editorial comment published adjacent to the letter responding eloquently in its defence, reminding the readership that:

Our correspondent appears to forget that he has no claim upon the Humane Society... A body of persons subscribe their money to reward those who save others from drowning, and undertake also to afford some means of assisting those who may choose to endanger themselves by bathing in summer or skating in winter upon the ornamental waters in our parks; but these persons have no right to expect from a public charity the means of extricating themselves from a danger to which they have voluntarily exposed themselves. If they are rescued, they have every reason to be grateful; if they are not their rashness and not the public charity is to blame...<sup>105</sup>

If the criticisms outlined by ‘A Daily Reader’ in 1846 represent an attack on the Society by a member of the middle classes, by the 1870s there were also those who wondered whether the Society should be doing more to protect the lives of recreational river-users in working class areas. Writing to *The Times* in August 1876 under the heading ‘A Homicidal River’, E.C. Hawkins lamented that, whilst the Society provided and maintained lifebuoys and drags at busy spots on

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<sup>104</sup> *The Times*, 6 April 1846, p. 5.

<sup>105</sup> *The Times*, 6 April 1846, p. 5.

the banks of the Lea in Hackney and had made arrangements for the treatment of persons recovered, ‘for want of funds no provision was made for a man or men to watch over the rowers and bathers and to use the buoys and drags.’<sup>106</sup> In the same edition of the newspaper H.D. Pearson expressed the opinion that the frequency of deaths from drowning in the Lea represented ‘one of the greatest scandals of London and its neighbourhood.’ Pearson further protested that concerns had been raised with ‘the different authorities most concerned’, but that ‘the Humane Society [had] not stirred in the matter.’<sup>107</sup>

Such criticisms suggest that, by the mid nineteenth-century, the RHS had become so familiar a presence that, in come to be viewed by many metropolitan eyes as being effectively an arm of government, tasked with a specific responsibility to intervene in order to preserve lives. Such attitudes of course paid little attention to the reality of the Society’s operations and failed to take into account the restrictions placed upon the Society’s activities by the limited availability of funds. Always ambitious, the remit of the nineteenth-century Society had expanded far beyond the Hackney Marshes, encompassing indeed all of those parts of the map then coloured pink. Funds however were sadly limited, a newspaper report of the Society’s annual dinner at the London Tavern in 1830 observing that, ‘The amount of the evening’s subscription was stated to be £650, - an amount, we are sorry to say, obviously inadequate to enable the society to effect that extent of benefit which it is its profession to do.’<sup>108</sup> Things were little better in 1899, an urgent ‘appeal to the general public for additional support both in subscriptions and donations’ being made at Annual General Court:

The number of cases brought before the committee continues to increase every year. Fifty years ago the number was 132. Last year it was 556, but whilst this increase has been fourfold they deeply regret that the number of subscribers has remained almost stationary and the donations have fallen off very considerably.<sup>109</sup>

Whilst the Society directed much attention to the provision of lifesaving equipment in the capital and devoted considerable effort to the publication and

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<sup>106</sup> *The Times*, 10 August 1876, p. 9.

<sup>107</sup> *The Times*, 10 August 1876, p. 9.

<sup>108</sup> *The Times*, 23 April 1830, p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> *The Times*, 20 May 1899, p. 10.

distribution of practical guidance, it nevertheless viewed itself primarily as a facilitator, taking little interest in actively supporting the training of members of the broader public in the implementation of the techniques which it advocated. A minor exception was the institution in 1882 of a competition designed to encourage school pupils to develop practical skills in swimming and water-based lifesaving techniques, but this was a competition that was restricted to a small number of public schools and training ships and had little or no impact in the broader community.<sup>110</sup>

Indeed, when in 1887 the Society was approached by William Henry and Archibald Sinclair with a proposal that it should use its staff and resources to support a broadly-based programme to teach lifesaving techniques it did not hesitate to reject their suggestion, protesting that it had already set up its own prize scheme and that ‘the committee can do no more without neglecting the legitimate work of the society.’<sup>111</sup> This was to prove a significant moment in the history of the RHS. Henry and Sinclair continued to pursue their vision, and in 1891 founded the Life Saving Society (since 1904 the Royal Life Saving Society), which was destined to develop into the world’s largest water-based lifesaving training organisation, dwarfing the organisation that had snubbed its founders. The Life Saving Society focussed its efforts on providing well-structured and practical emergency aid training to members of the public. In so doing it harked back to the dream of the eighteenth century pioneer Dr Alexander Johnson and mirrored the practice of the St John Ambulance Brigade.

The RHS’s rejection of the overtures of Henry and Sinclair was a reflection of a growing emphasis on its role as an award-giving body for, although it continued to maintain its Receiving House and to publish practical guidance,<sup>112</sup> as the nineteenth century progressed the Society proved increasingly content to allow newer voluntary bodies (such as the St John Ambulance Brigade, Royal National Lifeboat Institution and Royal Life Saving Society) to dominate the practical

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<sup>110</sup> In 1894 a total of only 34 schools took part, with 35 medals being awarded, including two to Rugby School where the competition ended in a dead heat. RHS *Annual Report*, 1894, pp. 12-13.

<sup>111</sup> Pearsall, *Lifesaving*, p. 8.

<sup>112</sup> In 1914, would-be lifesavers were being instructed to ‘learn, mark, and inwardly digest’ the printed instructions on resuscitation issued by the Society. See M.A. Holbein, *Swimming* (London, 2005 [1914]), pp. 86, 93-94.

front-line rescue and training provision niches. Instead the RHS concentrated its attention on the encouragement of lifesaving through the provision and promotion of a range of rewards such as medals, diplomas and certificates.

# THE ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY



## *MEDALS AND REWARDS*

## Origins of the Society's Medal

In the twenty-first century the Royal Humane Society exists primarily to reward brave deeds through the presentation of medals, diplomas and letters of commendation. This represents the continuation of a very long tradition of medal-giving - one which can be traced back to the earliest days of the Society.

At a General Meeting of the nascent RHS held at the London Coffee House in September 1775, the co-founder Dr Thomas Cogan raised for the first time the subject of establishing a medal to be awarded by the Society to those who furthered its aims. The establishment of such a laudatory medal was very much in keeping with the established practices of other forward-looking societies of the time (including the Royal Society of Arts) and, following a discussion amongst the membership, it was resolved that fourteen of those present should undertake to produce designs for consideration at a subsequent meeting of the Committee.<sup>1</sup> A design by Dr Watkinson was duly selected as the basis for the Society's medal,<sup>2</sup> the Committee further deciding in December 1775 'That Lewis Pingo should be the Artist to Engrave the Die for the Medal.'<sup>3</sup> The decision to entrust the task of producing the dies for the Society's medal to Lewis Pingo was significant. Lewis was born in 1743, the son of Thomas Pingo, who held the position of Assistant Engraver at the Royal Mint until his death in 1776. Lewis likewise pursued a career at the Mint, rising ultimately to the position of Chief Engraver, a post that he was to hold until his enforced retirement in 1815. During his long career he was responsible for engraving numerous coins and medals, as well as seals and gems.<sup>4</sup> At the time of his employment by the RHS, Lewis Pingo was at the height of his success and it is a reflection of the importance that the Society placed upon the success of their medal that they sought to employ a man of his stature rather than a jobbing engraver who would doubtless have been content to produce a pair of dies for a fraction of the cost.

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<sup>1</sup> RHS Committee Minutes, 20 Sept. 1775.

<sup>2</sup> RHS Committee Minutes, 1 Nov. 1775.

<sup>3</sup> RHS Committee Minutes, 5 Dec. 1775. It was further resolved 'That if the Artist made no material Objection The Medal should be Elliptical.' No record survives as to when the plan to produce an elliptical medal was abandoned in favour of a more conventional round award.

<sup>4</sup> H.W.A. Linecar, *British Coin Designs and Designers* (London, 1977), p. 84.



**1. RHS Medal, introduced 1776 (author's collection)**

On the obverse of the new medal was modelled the figure of a young boy endeavouring to blow life into a dying torch. Around this central motif was engraved the motto *LATEAT SCINTILLVLA FORSAN*, a rather tortuous piece of Latin which may be translated as ‘Peradventure a little spark may yet lay hid.’ In the exergue was placed a longer but simpler inscription which expands to read *SOC[ETAS] LOND[INENSIS] IN RESVSCITAT[IONEM] INTERMORTVORVM INSTITVTA MDCCLXXIV*, or ‘The society founded in London for the recovery of persons from a state of suspended animation 1774’.

The medal drew its inspiration from the Rococo and neo-classical idioms, pairing a chubby *putto* with obscure symbolism and an obvious delight in the clever use of an archaic language. It was the product of a well-educated and scholarly organisation and was designed to appeal specifically to others who shared the refinement and learning of its originators. It was in every way a product of its class and of its time. As Timothy Clifford has observed, albeit with some provisos, the medal, ‘is an invention of the classical world and it could therefore

be argued that any medal made in eighteenth or nineteenth century Britain was quasi-classical if not precisely neo-classical.<sup>5</sup>

In adhering to the classical tradition, the reverse design took the form of a Civic Crown or wreath, in memory of the reward given by the ancient Romans to those who saved the life of a fellow citizen. Around this was the inscription HOC PRETIUM CIVI SERVATO TVLIT, or ‘He has obtained this prize for having saved the life of a citizen.’ The centre of the wreath was left plain, to facilitate the personalisation of the medal through the inscription of the unique details of individual recipient. The use of the wreath motif was of the greatest significance to the founder members of the Society. Lauded by Aulus Gellius and the Elder Pliny, the honour had been earned by the great Augustus himself; the first emperor being granted the special privilege of displaying his crown over his residence. The Civic Crown was later to feature on coins of the emperors Claudius and Galba. Its appeal and prestige was further enhanced by the fact that it was made from leaves rather than from precious metals and was thus to be valued for the honour attached to it rather than for any intrinsic value which it might possess.<sup>6</sup> Well educated and widely read as the Society’s members were, the classical significance would not have been lost on them and, when Prince Ernest Augustus received a medal in 1798, the celebratory poem drew specific – and repeated – attention to the design’s classical allusions:

WHAT Prince deserves more just renown  
Than he who earns the Civic Crown?<sup>7</sup>

The design of the Watkinson/Pingo medal was of the utmost importance to the Society and when in 1811, it was suggested to the Committee that it should be modified, Lettsom leapt to its defence, writing to John Bowery Nichols<sup>8</sup> on 18 November:

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<sup>5</sup> T. Clifford, ‘Thomas Stothard RA (1755-1834) and the British Neo-classical Medal’, M. Jones (ed.), *Designs on Posterity: Drawings for Medals*, (London 1992), p. 138.

<sup>6</sup> D.M. Jacobson, ‘The Roman *Corona Civica* (Civic Crown) on Bar-Kokhba’s Silver Coins’, *Numismatic Circular* 116:2 (2008), pp. 64-66.

<sup>7</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1799, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Steward, Annual Governor and Sub-Committee member.



...every person whom I have consulted has expressed their approbation of our medal, which is scarcely rivalled in antiquity, and in my humble opinion is so perfect in the leading attributes of medallic expression, as to preclude any addition without injury.<sup>9</sup>

Lettsom need not have worried. Although the subject of minor reworking was discussed on a number of occasions,<sup>10</sup> the basic design settled upon in 1776 has remained unaltered to the present day. Indeed, the design proved so popular that it was later to be adopted by several of the smaller provincial humane societies for use on their own medals. That it should have proved so durable is worthy of comment, for the classicised representation of the restoration of life adopted was very much a manifestation of eighteenth-century values, reflecting Joshua Reynolds's belief that instructional art should draw upon the timeless values of the classical world and avoid flirtations with realism or fashion.



**2. Medals of the Humane Societies of Northampton [awarded 1830] and the Hundred of Salford [first awarded 1824] (author's collection)**

<sup>9</sup> Letter published in C. Lawrence & F.A. Macdonald (eds.), *Sambrook Court: The Letters of J.C. Lettsom at the Medical Society of London* (London, 2003), pp. 172-73.

<sup>10</sup> Most recently in 1999.

The exhibition of Benjamin West's *Death of General Wolfe* at the Royal Academy in 1771 shifted the fashion in heroic history painting towards realism, but it was an artistic revolution that was ignored by Britain's humane societies, and for much of the nineteenth century the design of lifesaving medals continued to draw heavily on the classical idiom, with rescuers being draped rather than clad. Such a conservative style of representation sought to avoid the risks of changing fashion and to celebrate higher values. As McNairn observed, 'Fashion was mutable and transitory; virtue, beauty and truth were immutable.'<sup>11</sup>

The striking of medals represented a significant innovation for, as Lambton Young observed in 1872, 'When the RHS was founded in 1774, its proposed recognition of these acts of salvage was at once seen as a necessity of the age, as up to that time no notice whatever had been taken of those brave persons who, at the risk of their own lives, had preserved their fellow creatures from death by drowning'.<sup>12</sup> Whilst containing more than a kernel of truth, Young's mid-Victorian comments do not however wholly accurately reflect the reality of the organisation's motivation a century earlier, for, during the formative days of the Society, medals were more likely to be awarded for displays of medical expertise than for acts of gallantry. The Society certainly pioneered the practice of granting rewards to members of all social classes, but the nature of the reward granted was, in the earliest years of the Society's operations, governed by social class rather than dangers faced.

Thus, during the early years of the Society's operations, the rewards granted to members of the lower orders would almost invariably be pecuniary in nature,<sup>13</sup> its payment being dependent upon the receipt of a formal recommendation from their social superiors. This reflected a feeling on the part of many within the Society that it was only through the promise of financial reward that members of the labouring classes might be induced to take actions which might lead to the

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<sup>11</sup> A. McNairn, *Behold the Hero: General Wolfe and the Arts in the Eighteenth Century* (Liverpool, 1997), p. 68.

<sup>12</sup> L. Young, *Acts of Gallantry: Being a Detailed Account of Each Deed of Bravery in Saving Life from Drowning in all Parts of the World for Which the Gold and Silver Medals and Clasps of the Royal Humane Society Have Been Awarded from 1830 to 1871* (London, 1872), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ranging from ½ guinea to 4 guineas. See *RHS Annual Report 1774*, pp. 7-8.

salvation of one of their fellows.<sup>14</sup> For members of the middle and upper classes however, the offer of a financial incentive would have been both unwelcome and insulting and it was for members of these higher social strata that the Society's honorary medallions were reserved. These silver and gold awards were well produced and their possession and display was intended to mark the recipient as a person of taste and sophistication.

### **Early Awards**

Numerous early medal awards were made to the Society's own Honorary Medical Assistants and other gentlemen of the middle and upper social orders in recognition of successful resuscitations, whilst - often perilous - rescues performed by members of the working classes were recognised by cash payments. The *Annual Reports* included frequent references to instances of medical skill which had resulted in the saving of life. The medical men responsible for penning these reports were frequently rewarded with the Society's medal - in some cases in recognition of the restoration of numerous individuals. Such was the case when, in 1802, the Society's honorary medal was awarded for the first time to a woman, a midwife named Mrs Anne Newby being recognised for her role in the resuscitation of 500 still-born babies.<sup>15</sup> The circumstances of incidents which led to the granting of medals were often covered in great detail in the appropriate *Annual Report*, with the salvor's own accounts of the actions taken being reproduced in full. Typical of such reporting was the publication in 1797 of the following account, received from Mr R. Summers, a Medical Assistant based at Chertsey in Surrey:

A Child of Mr. Smith, about three years of age, was playing by the side of a pond, and fell in, and was drowned. – A man came to the child's assistance, and conveyed it home. – On being sent for, I ordered the wet cloaths (sic) to be removed. I then inflated the lungs, and passed gentle Electrical Shocks through the Sternum. By persevering with the use of Electricity, dry Friction, and Inflation, signs of returning Life made their appearance, which happily kept increasing till the child was perfectly restored.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See for example the comments of Rev. Dr. Milne in RHS *Annual Report* 1787-88, p. 63.

<sup>15</sup> R. Pearsall, *Lifesaving, The Story of the Royal Life Saving Society* (London, 1991), p. 82.

<sup>16</sup> Letter dated 9 February 1797. RHS *Annual Report* 1797, p. 36.

The contribution of Mr Summers to the furtherance of medical science was duly honoured when on Tuesday May 23 1797, Joseph Thompson, Hon. Secretary of the Society, presented him and four other ‘successful medical assistants’ with silver medals as rewards ‘for the restoration of the lives of their fellow creatures’.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the *Gentleman’s Magazine* carried reports of many award ceremonies, frequently reproducing the laudatory speeches delivered to recipients of the Society’s honorary awards. Medallists were lavishly praised in print, Mr Wilkinson being told in 1802 that the honour conferred upon him ‘professedly bears unequivocal testimony to your professional skill, your exalted philanthropy, and your manly perseverance.’<sup>18</sup> Nor was the Society unaware of the benefits of such promotion, the same Mr Wilkinson being urged in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* to:

Think not that in this instance you have merely preserved a single life... Your successful efforts may excite the zeal, invigorate the exertions, and support the perseverance of others; and numbers yet unborn may, in the lapse of time, unconsciously experience the benefits of your work and labour of love.<sup>19</sup>

It was not without significance that many of the Society’s early medals were inscribed on the edge with the words ‘Go thou and do likewise’ in recollection of the parable of the Good Samaritan.<sup>20</sup>

In summary, the Society’s medal had been conceived as a means of rewarding those who furthered the organisation’s aims. The medal could accordingly be used by the Society as a means of recognising the benevolence and humanity of those whose social position would have rendered the receipt of a cash reward both unnecessary and demeaning. Many people in positions of influence tended towards the view ‘that the lower class of people are only prompted to preserve the lives of their fellow creatures by pecuniary encouragements’<sup>21</sup> and in the light

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<sup>17</sup> *The Times*, 24 May 1797, p. 30.

<sup>18</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine* 72, 1802, p. 135.

<sup>19</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine* 72, 1802, pp. 135-36.

<sup>20</sup> Surviving inscribed specimens include the silver medals awarded to Mr Brodie (1805) and Edward Owen (1808). The illustration of the gold medal awarded to Tsar Alexander of Russia reproduced in the Society’s *Annual Report* also features the inscription, but it is not present on the actual medal.

<sup>21</sup> *RHS Annual Report*, 1787-88, p. 63.

of this prevalent belief it was logical that the Society should use cash rather than ephemeral medals as its primary incentive to encourage working people to assist their fellows in times of mortal need. Accordingly, whilst the Society pioneered the rewarding of deeds of lifesaving bravery across the social spectrum, the award of medals was confined almost exclusively to gentlefolk and the receipt of a medal thus confirmed a person's position in broader society and served as a marker confirming both the recipient's altruism and moral superiority.

### **Publicising the Society: the Case of Tsar Alexander I**

The Society was well aware of the usefulness of these medals as promotional and publicity aids and they were on occasion presented with great ceremony to individuals whose contributions to the resuscitation for which they were being rewarded may have been nominal but whose public profile was high. Such recipients included George III's son Prince Ernest Augustus<sup>22</sup> and Tsar Alexander I of Russia, the former being rewarded with a gold medal in August 1798 in recognition of an 'exalted act of Benevolence', he having witnessed the resuscitation of a young woman by two of the Society's medical assistants and 'beneficently ordered, at his own expence (sic), care and attention to be paid till the perfect return to Health'.<sup>23</sup> The award ceremony itself attracted not insignificant press coverage, affording senior members of the Society not only the welcome opportunity to meet one of the greatest men in the land, but also to have the circumstances of their meeting recorded in widely circulated periodicals. Thus it was that the *Gentleman's Magazine* faithfully recorded that on 11 August 1798 a delegation comprising Dr Lettsom, Dr Hawes, Joseph Thompson Esq. and John Nichols Esq. 'had the honour of presenting to his Royal Highness Prince Ernest, at St James's, the gold medal which had been unanimously voted to his Royal Highness for his exalted philanthropy.'<sup>24</sup> The Society additionally benefited from the fact that the *Gentleman's Magazine* also reproduced the short address given by Dr Hawes on this occasion, an address

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<sup>22</sup> Later King of Hanover. At the time of presentation, the Duke still enjoyed considerable public popularity, having not yet gained a reputation as an extreme reactionary.

<sup>23</sup> RHS *Annual Reports* 1799, p 57.

<sup>24</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* 68, July- December 1798, p. 719

which highlights the extent to which the Society was conscious of its need to cultivate and flatter its Royal supporters, stressing that the medal would be:

... a standing monument to your Royal Highnesses's beneficence and philanthropy, so providentially exerted in the restoration to life of an unfortunate desponding suicide.<sup>25</sup>

In a speech that was doubtless written with publication in mind, Hawes went to great lengths not only to stress not only the Society's Royal patronage but also the high prestige of its honorary awards. The Prince was appropriately flattered and his actual role in the resuscitation was somewhat glossed over: few casual readers of the *Gentleman's Magazine* would have deduced from Hawes's address that the Prince had taken no part in the restoration, opting instead to contribute money to the victim's aftercare.<sup>26</sup>

Whilst this opportunity for the Society to highlight its patriotic credentials and directly associate its work with a member of the British Royal family was opportune and exploited to the full, within a few years an even greater prize came the Society's way. In March 1806 Dr William Hawes, the Treasurer of the RHS, received from James Grange, a Governor of the Society, a letter describing the role of Alexander I, the Tsar of Russia, in reviving one of his Polish subjects who had fallen into a river.<sup>27</sup> Grange's letter to the Society was read before an audience of in excess of three hundred Governors and other men of influence at the RHS's Annual Festival on 15 April 1806, where those present resolved unanimously to recommend that the gold medal of the Society should be voted to the Tsar. A flurry of activity followed, it being decided that the Marquis of Douglas and Clydesdale, the British ambassador in St Petersburg, be asked to make the presentation.<sup>28</sup> The Marquis in due course presented the Tsar with the medal, 'accompanied by a letter and other documents, communicating to His Imperial Majesty the ardent wish of the Society that he graciously condescended

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<sup>25</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* 68, July- December 1798, p. 719

<sup>26</sup> The man responsible for the resuscitation was Mr Nisbett, one of the Society's own Medical Assistants. He received a silver medal. See *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 16, 1992, p. 79.

<sup>27</sup> *RHS Annual Report* 1807, p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> C. Barclay, 'Alexander I of Russia and the Royal Humane Society' *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 36 (1999), pp. 3-10.

to be enrolled among its Members.’ The Imperial reply (which was written in French) was very positive:

It is impossible to deny myself the satisfaction of being enrolled among the Members of a Society, of which the objects and zeal are so interesting to humanity, and so congenial to the dearest feelings of my heart. I beg you will express to the Society the sincere regard and interest I take in its prosperity...<sup>29</sup>

The promotional opportunities afforded by this incident and the Society’s response to it were enthusiastically seized upon. A full account of the incident appeared in the Society’s *Annual Report* for 1807, as did representations of both the Tsar’s gold medal<sup>30</sup> and the rescue scene as portrayed on the snuffbox presented to Dr Wylie. Nor was the popular press ignored, the editor of the *Gentleman’s Magazine* being able to refer to previous extensive coverage of the incident when writing in May 1807 that ‘Our Readers will recollect with pleasure the philanthropic conduct of the Emperor of Russia... and the circumstances of a Gold Medal having been voted to that illustrious Sovereign by the Royal Humane Society, of London’.<sup>31</sup>

In 1814 the opportunity arose for the Society further to strengthen its links with its most prestigious member when, in June of that year, the victorious allied sovereigns met in London. The Society resolved that the visiting emperor should be presented with a diploma formally recording his admission as an Honorary Member, and to that end a deputation of 30 members visited the Tsar at his residence in Pultney’s Hotel on Sunday 19 June. The substantial party was received by Alexander with greatest of courtesy, and the Tsar took the trouble to be introduced to and to shake hands with all present.<sup>32</sup> Again the event received extensive press coverage, with the *Gentleman’s Magazine* listing many of the key members of the delegation and reproducing in full the formal address made to mark the occasion: an address which went to great lengths to emphasise that

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<sup>29</sup> Tsar Alexander to RHS, 28 February 1807. Published in RHS *Annual Report* 1808, pp. 11-12. The letter was also published, in its original French and reproduced in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* 77, January- June 1807, p. 398.

<sup>30</sup> The medal is preserved in the collection of the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. See L. Dukelskaya, *The Hermitage: English Art, Sixteenth to Nineteenth Century*, (Leningrad, 1979), inventory no. B3371.

<sup>31</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine* 77, January-June 1807, pp. 397-398.

<sup>32</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1815, pp. 48-53.

the Russian Tsar was not only a supporter of but was actually enrolled as a member of the Society, praising ‘the gracious manner in which your Imperial Majesty has been pleased to consent to be an Honorary Member of the Royal Humane Society’.<sup>33</sup> Within the pages of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, the coverage given to the meeting of the RHS’s delegation with the Tsar was given far greater prominence than were his meeting with representatives of other worthy groups. The Humane Society was granted no less than one and half columns of text, whilst the ‘Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress’ and the ‘Bible Society’ were restricted to a paltry five lines.<sup>34</sup>

For the Society this represented a very considerable coup. By taking the decision to present the monarch with a piece of paper formalising the membership which had been granted to him almost a decade earlier, it was able to link itself explicitly to the patriotic spirit then sweeping England in the wake of the defeat of Napoleon and to remind the public at large that it was a patriotic and philanthropic body that could claim the support of no less than two of the monarchs who had brought an end to French domination of Europe. Indeed, the address to Tsar Alexander drew an explicit parallel between the imagery of the Society’s medal (a child blowing life into the dying embers of a torch) and the defeat of Napoleon, rejoicing in the martial triumph ‘by which Nations, oppressed by a most hateful tyranny, have been emancipated, and by which the latent spark of Liberty has been fanned to the flame which now re-animates the world’.<sup>35</sup>

That the Society had gained enormous publicity from its relationship with the Tsar was in no way a happy coincidence. Every effort had been made to ensure that the organisation’s profile was maintained at the highest possible level throughout the Imperial visit. Much of London had been illuminated in celebration, but the RHS took the illuminations one step further, using gas lighting and a transparency to create a striking scene at their office. As John Lettsom recorded with obvious satisfaction, ‘The illuminations were brilliant,

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<sup>33</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine* 84, January-June 1814, p. 687.

<sup>34</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine* 84, January-June 1814, p. 687.

<sup>35</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine* 84, January-June 1814, p. 687.



and very general. At the house of the R. Humane Society the transparency representing a peasant restored by the Emperor of Russia, excited much attention.<sup>36</sup>

### **Medals and Rewards in the Victorian Age**

Tsar Alexander had earned his medal without exposing himself to physical danger, and it should be remembered that initially the vast majority of the medals granted by the Society were given to individuals whose role in a rescue or resuscitation had involved no personal risk. Indeed, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, most honorary medallions were presented to gentlemen whose prime role had been to organise or encourage members of the lower classes to attempt a rescue or who provided care of a type appropriate to their status (through providing medical assistance, advice, transportation or financial aid) once the body had been safely recovered.<sup>37</sup> Exposure to peril was not initially expected of medallists, it being considered worthy of comment as late as April 1830 that medals had recently been presented to several ‘individuals who had successfully exerted themselves, and even risked their own lives for preservation of their fellow creatures’.<sup>38</sup> The Society’s early medals were struck in silver or, very rarely, in gold, and were accordingly both intrinsically valuable and expensive to produce. The production of such valuable items accordingly significantly impacted upon the resources of the Society and their distribution had to be, for practical financial reasons, strictly limited. In 1837 however, the Society authorised the striking of medals in bronze for the first time.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Abraham, *Lettsom*, p. 427.

<sup>37</sup> A typical example is provided by W.F. Roome (Royal Humane Society Case no. 9523) who was rewarded for his role in resuscitating a boy who had been recovered from a canal in Hackney. Roome, who had equipped his own home as a first aid centre and who habitually carried a copy of the RHS instruction manual on his person, was able to render appropriate aid and support to the patient until medical aid arrived. Royal Humane Society *Resolutions of Committee A*, 17 December 1823 and *Proceedings of General Court* 14 January 1824.

<sup>38</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine* 100, 1830, p. 360.

<sup>39</sup> RHS Committee Minutes, 20 Dec. 1837. The sum of £7-10-0 was paid to the firm of Jerome to strike 60 bronze medals. Although no records survive to confirm it, it is probable that some bronze medals were struck earlier in the year as a total of 16 bronze awards were voted to various recipients in 1837, the earliest in May. See P. Helmore, ‘James Brown – First ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY Bronze Medal’, *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 50 (2004), p. 39; See also RHS *Annual Report* 1838, p. 18.



### 3. Post-1837 bronze medal (author's collection)

Although not discussed elsewhere in the Society's records, the production of bronze medals represents a significant development in its activities. With the introduction of a cheaper bronze award, the issue of medals could be greatly expanded and members of the lower social orders, who had hitherto generally been in receipt of monetary rewards, began to receive medals, the first of these being voted to James Brown, a Boatswain's Mate, for rescuing a private soldier in the employ of the East India Company from drowning in the South Atlantic.<sup>40</sup> Lower costs allowed more medals to be awarded and the type of medal issued (be it gold, silver or bronze) came increasingly to reflect the nature of the act being recognised rather than the social standing of the recipient. There were of course many exceptions, but the Society was laying the foundations for a notionally 'classless' honours system. In so doing, the RHS was reflecting broader societal changes. Within the metropolis, fear of working class immorality and revolution was decreasing<sup>41</sup> and members of the middling classes were coming to 'a rueful awareness that the working class was as much sinned

<sup>40</sup> Helmore, 'James Brown', p. 39.

<sup>41</sup> B. Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?: England 1783-1846* (Oxford, 2006), p. 581.

against as sinning'.<sup>42</sup> But, if the introduction of the bronze medal in theory opened up the Society's awards system to all, in reality the linked processes of making recommendations and granting rewards remained firmly in middle class hands.

The year 1837 also witnessed another subtle shift in the nature of the acts honoured by the Society. A new reverse die for the medal was produced, from which the motto "Hoc pretium cive servato tulit" (He has obtained this prize for saving the life of a citizen) was omitted.<sup>43</sup> Paired with the existing obverse die, this produced a new variety of the medal designed specifically to reward those whose efforts to save human life, however brave, had proved unsuccessful. Awarded in both silver and bronze, the new medal was given in far smaller numbers than its 'successful' counterpart. The introduction of this new variety of medal must mirror a sea-change in the Society's attitude to its role in promoting life-saving. During its earliest years the Society had been at great pains to stress the fiscal benefits to the parish and nation of encouraging the preservation of life. The new 'unsuccessful' medals recognised nothing more or less than the virtue and courage of an individual who was willing to risk his or her life in an effort to preserve the lives of his or her fellows.

### **Heroes and Courage**

The RHS continues to this day to reward brave acts, but hero-worship is out of fashion. In an often deeply cynical society, it is a widely-held twenty-first century position that, 'a hero is not a role model. On the contrary, it is the essence of a hero to be unique and therefore inimitable'.<sup>44</sup> This was certainly not the position in Britain during the nineteenth century however for, as Houghton observed:

Though it has always existed and is still alive today... hero worship is a nineteenth-century phenomenon. At no other time would it have been called the "basis of all public good, religious or social, for mankind". In

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<sup>42</sup> Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, p. 581.

<sup>43</sup> RHS Committee Minutes, 23 May 1837.

<sup>44</sup> L. Hughes-Hallett, *Heroes: Saviours, Traitors and Supermen* (London, 2004), pp. 2-3.

no other age were men so often told to take “the great ones of the earth” as models for imitation.<sup>45</sup>

The Victorian view in turn represented a marked shift from the rationalist eighteenth century attitude to heroic deeds, which tended towards the position that they were often the product of mercenary motives.<sup>46</sup> Inspired by a revived interest in epic poetry and fable, Victorian Romanticism turned such cold rationality upon its head, and the cult of enthusiasm fostered a reverential attitude towards those individuals who were, in Houghton’s words, ‘endowed with superhuman powers of heroic courage and endurance’.<sup>47</sup> Such ‘Great Men’ were, in short, quite distinct from - and greater than - any ordinary man or woman. The interplay between the public and the hero was of course also crucial, Cubitt characterising a hero as:

...any man or woman whose existence, whether in his or her own lifetime or later, is endowed by other, not just with a high degree of fame and honour, but with a special allocation of imputed meaning and symbolic significance – that not only raises them above the others in public esteem but makes them the object of some kind of collective emotional investment.<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, Cubitt has argued that the reality of the existence of a hero must necessarily be deconstructed and reassembled in a form that mirrors the cultural norms of the observer, arguing that, ‘What resonates is not the life as lived, but the life as made sense of, the life imaginatively reconstructed and rendered significant’.<sup>49</sup> Examples of the type of heroism which captivated the early-nineteenth century public were to be found in abundance: manifested in the exploits of the commanders of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and the noble characters of Sir Walter Scott’s medievalist fantasies. The stage was thus set for the growth of the cult of the hero.

Heroic conduct, to Victorian eyes, did not of course only encompass the performance of brave deeds. The status of hero could equally be accorded to an

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<sup>45</sup> W.E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870* (Yale, 1957), p. 305.

<sup>46</sup> Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, p. 306.

<sup>47</sup> Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, p. 306.

<sup>48</sup> G. Cubitt, “Introduction: Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives”, G. Cubitt & A. Warren, (eds.), *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, (Manchester, 2000), p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Cubitt, “Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives”, p. 3.

individual blessed with genius (whether it be scientific or artistic), revered leaders in the political social or religious fields, or moral champions. The cult of the hero could equally be called upon to reinforce the social order in an increasingly fluid society, Ruskin and Carlyle urging industrialists to imitate the ‘noble devout-hearted Chevalier’<sup>50</sup> and re-apply the paternalism of feudalism to the management of their factories, subsuming the pursuit of profit to the defence of their loyal workforce and society in general.

The dream of such idealised relationships between employers and workers occasionally manifested itself in the popular literature of the day, as in the case of Charlotte Yonge’s *Heartsease* (1854). In the novel, Lord St Erme placed himself in danger whilst visiting the coalface to inspect for himself the dangerous condition in which a previous lease-holder had left the mine. Whilst below ground, St Erme was entombed along with a party of the very miners whom he had been trying to help. But by taking control of the situation, St Erme succeeded not only in reinforcing the social hierarchy, but also ensuring that his men are rescued. Duly lauded by his workers as ‘King of hearts’, the noble lord ventured:

I would not but have had it happen. One seldom has a chance of seeing an Englishman’s gallant heart in obedient submission. Some were men who would not for the worlds have touched their hats to me above ground, yet as soon as I tried to take the lead, and make them think what could be done, they obeyed instantly, though I knew almost nothing compared to them...<sup>51</sup>

The Victorian hero was a source of inspiration, capable of ‘giving to the aspirations of the young and susceptible a noble direction.’<sup>52</sup> Even when performed in times of peace, heroic deeds were often described using the language of war. Indeed, the absence of any real danger did not necessarily render such martial language redundant, the music hall performer Fred Albert describing campaigning MP Samuel Plimsol thus:

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<sup>50</sup> Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, p. 319.

<sup>51</sup> C. Yonge, *Heartsease* (London, 1995 [1854]) pp. 371, 405. See also M. Sanders, ‘Accidents of Production: Industrialism and the Worker’s Body in Early Victorian Fiction’, H.G. Klaus & S. Knight (eds.), *British Industrial Fictions* (Cardiff, 2000), pp. 26-28.

<sup>52</sup> Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, p. 317.

In well known lays we sing the praise of men renown'd in war  
How heroes brave on land and wave have fought for us of yore;  
But I will sing of one who fought, though not in deadly strife,  
The noble object that he sought was saving human life.<sup>53</sup>

The majority of heroic role models had historically been members of the higher orders of society, but during the nineteenth century it became increasingly common for members of the working classes to earn public recognition for courageous acts performed in battle or in the process of rescuing their fellows from mortal danger. These men (and more rarely, women) represented an entirely new breed of hero and the increased availability of newspapers, journals and inexpensive books afforded invaluable media through which to promote the stories of such inspirational figures to a wide audience. Authors such as Laura Lane, Frank Mundell and Kay Stanway brought tales of 'workaday heroes' to a new - generally young and/or working class - readership. One aim of such writers was undoubtedly to 'improve' their audience, but they were also motivated by a genuine desire to commemorate and preserve the memory of brave deeds, Stanway for example regretting in the preface to *Britannia's Calendar of Heroes* the transience of recognition and expressing the hope that:

... by placing permanently on record some of the noblest acts of men and women to gain for them at least a small measure of the loving remembrance they so richly deserve.<sup>54</sup>

A similar desire to preserve in perpetuity a record of heroic self-sacrifice lay in part behind the creation of the Postman's Park memorial in London by the artist George Frederick Watts.<sup>55</sup> In originally suggesting the project, Watts had expressed the opinion that, 'it would surely be in the national interest to collect a complete record of the stories of heroism in every-day life'.<sup>56</sup>

G.F. Watts was ultimately to create a memorial which recorded the names and deeds of a selection of primarily working-class heroes and heroines who had

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<sup>53</sup> A. Albert, *A Cheer for Samuel Plimsoll* (London, 1876), reproduced in N. Jones, *The Plimsoll Sensation: The Great Campaign to Save Lives at Sea* (London, 2006), pp. 316-317.

<sup>54</sup> Stanway, K., *Britannia's Calendar of Heroes* (London, 1914), p. ix. The preface was completed in 1909.

<sup>55</sup> For an up-to-date history of the memorial, see J. Price, *Postman's Park: G.F. Watts's Memorial to Heroic Self-Sacrifice* (Compton, 2008).

<sup>56</sup> *The Times*, 5 September 1887, p. 14.

sacrificed their lives to save others. The memorial sought to honour the dead and use their deeds as a means of encouraging the public; but it did nothing to promote or preserve the memory of those whose bravery had not resulted in their early demise. When publicly worn and proudly displayed, medals inscribed with the name of a living recipient and the date of his or her brave deed might however also act as an effective and lasting memorial to heroic acts selflessly performed. The awarding of such medals to lifesavers was pioneered by the RHS, and it was from the ranks of the humble 'heroes of everyday life' lauded by Stanway and Watts that many of those honoured by the Society were ultimately to be drawn.

### **Origins of the Medal**

The recognition of acts of gallantry by the giving of distinctive badges has a long history. Ancient Greek warriors who distinguished themselves in battle could earn metal discs for attachment to their armour or horse-harnesses, whilst Romans might be awarded precious metal torcs and *phalerae* by the State as badges of honour. Metal crowns in the form of wreaths of laurel were granted as prizes for courage in battle, whilst the *Corona Civilis* (Civic Crown) of oak was available to those who, through their bravery, saved the life of a fellow citizen.<sup>57</sup> The origin of the modern medal may be traced back to the Italian Renaissance, but Nicholas Hilliard, an artist described by Mark Jones as 'the first man who can properly be called an English Medallist', did not produce his earliest medallic work until the 1580s.<sup>58</sup> Hilliard's medals differed from the majority of those produced elsewhere in Europe up to this time insofar as they were fitted with integral suspension loops, indicating that they had been designed to be worn rather than merely displayed in cabinets. As presented by Elizabeth I and James I, Hilliard's portrait medals usurped a role that had previously been served within the English court by the painted miniature portrait. Like the miniature, the possession of a medal provided the already high-ranking wearer with an unambiguous outward sign of status and Royal favour<sup>59</sup> and formed part of a nascent 'honours system'. As Cubitt has observed, a range of different means

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<sup>57</sup> J.D. Clarke, *Gallantry Medals and Awards of the World* (Yeovil, 1993), p. 8.

<sup>58</sup> M. Jones, *The Art of the Medal* (London, 1979), p. 69.

<sup>59</sup> Jones, *Art of the Medal*, p. 71.

(including the granting of honours and medals) have been adopted by societies as a method not only of regulating fame but also of selecting and celebrating heroic individuals. Furthermore, he notes that, 'Control over these elements can be a powerful instrument in the hands of an assertive political or religious authority or of a hegemonic social elite.'<sup>60</sup>

Within this context, the English Crown had, since the Middle Ages, been in the habit of rewarding martial gallantry amongst its military leaders through the awarding of titles and orders of chivalry. In the case of chivalric orders (particularly the Orders of the Garter and Bath), the elevation of the recipient to knightly status was advertised by the wearing of a distinctive badge. It was not until the Civil War that the officially sanctioned award of tokens for military bravery was extended to the lower orders with the establishment by Charles I of the Forlorn Hope Badge. Established in 1643, this was used by the king to reward those men who had 'done us faithful service in the Forlorn-Hope'.<sup>61</sup> Parliament likewise authorised the striking of medals in silver, bronze and lead for presentation to all of the soldiers who had served at the Battle of Dunbar.<sup>62</sup> This exceptional interlude notwithstanding, in England the presentation of medals continued, at least until the early nineteenth century, to be intimately linked to social class.

### **Georgian Awards**

In the post-Civil War period the award of medals, with few exceptions, continued to be restricted to members of the officer class and gentry. During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, for example, senior officers of both the army and navy could expect to receive ostentatious gold crosses and medals from the Government in recognition of their services.<sup>63</sup> These awards, which were worn on a chain or ribbon,<sup>64</sup> were highly valued. This was a reflection of their

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<sup>60</sup> Cubitt, 'Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives', p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> E. Besly, *Coins and Medals of the English Civil War* (London, 1990), pp. 39-41.

<sup>62</sup> J. Mackay & J.W. Mussell, *The Medals Yearbook* (Honiton 2000), pp. 115-18.

<sup>63</sup> Mackay & Mussell, *The Medals Yearbook 2000* (Honiton 2000), p. 103.

<sup>64</sup> The medals awarded to Flag Officers who were present at the 'Glorious First of June' were suspended from gold chains. All the other awards were worn suspended around the neck or from the recipients button-hole by means of a ribbon.



rarity and the fact that their distribution was strictly controlled. As Nelson observed, even in an age of patronage ‘Chains and medals are what no fortune or connections in England can obtain’.<sup>65</sup> In Britain, the use of medals and other badges as a means of rewarding bravery or merit can thus be seen to have been pioneered - albeit on a small scale – by the State. The expansion of this system to reward the bravery of ‘ordinary’ men and women was however to be undertaken by private individuals and by corporate bodies such as the RHS.

A peerage, baronetcy and knighthood might likewise be awarded to a successful officer. The officer-class were well aware of this, and there can be little doubt that such honours were keenly sought after, Nelson for example writing before the Battle of the Nile that, ‘Before this time tomorrow I shall have gained a peerage or Westminster Abbey.’<sup>66</sup> After the Battle of Camperdown, Nelson made it clear that he wished to be given the Order of the Bath and not a more prestigious baronetcy. A hereditary baronet had no distinctive badge to mark his status, but the holder of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath could wear a prominent gold and enamel cross, a red sash and a tinsel star. As Colley observed, ‘He got it and invariably wore it, just as he wore every other gong that he received from Britain and its allies’.<sup>67</sup> It was almost an addiction, and a weakness of which the much-decorated Nelson was certainly aware, writing to Earl St Vincent in 1801 that, ‘I feel myself, my dear Lord, as anxious to get a medal, or a step in the Peerage as if I had never got either, - for, “if it be a sin to covet glory, I am the most offending soul alive”’.<sup>68</sup>

Successful officers might also expect to receive rewards from ‘unofficial’ sources, in particular, Lloyd’s Patriotic Fund. The valuable prizes awarded by the fund varied according to the rank of the officer and, on occasion, the level of gallantry shown,<sup>69</sup> the recipients being reminded that, ‘REWARDS Await the Brave who shall Successfully Wield their swords in the cause of their Country, in

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<sup>65</sup> Quoted in O. Warner, *Life and Letters of Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood* (London, 1968) p. 75.

<sup>66</sup> T. Pocock, *Horatio Nelson* (London, 1987), p. 20.

<sup>67</sup> L. Colley, *Britons: Forging a Nation* (Yale, 1982) p. 183.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in A. Nicolson, *Men of Honour: Trafalgar and the Making of the English Hero* (London, 2005) p. 126.

<sup>69</sup> B. Southam, *Jane Austen and the Navy* (London, 2000), Appendix 2 p. 325.

Defence of British Security, Independence & Honor.’<sup>70</sup> No correspondingly elaborate prizes or distinctive badges were produced with which to reward low-ranking soldiers and sailors for acts of courage performed in the field, although the Lloyd’s Patriotic Fund did make cash gifts to suitable worthy ratings and non-commissioned ranks. This reflected a firmly-rooted establishment belief in the existence of what Nicolson, in writing of the early nineteenth-century Royal Navy, refers to as a ‘conceptual class division’, whereby only members of the higher orders of society were considered to be possessed of refined sentiments. It was a starkly divided world, where ‘Love and honour operated down to a certain social level; below that it was a question of discipline and obedience, lubricated by drink and occasionally interrupted by sex and war.’<sup>71</sup> In such a context, the granting of esoteric rewards such as medals to the lower ranks would be without purpose and provide little motivation to perform good or brave deeds.

A further class distinction was noted by Edward Mangin, a naval chaplain writing in 1812. Mangin was surprised to witness both the apparent indifference of the ratings onboard his vessel to the accidental death of one of their number and the equally marked casualness with which another rating responded to his rescue from a similar fate. The cleric was moved to question the apparent conceptual differences which existed between the gentlemen officers and the working-class ratings, pondering ‘whether bravery in men of the lower classes of society should not rather be determined insensibility; or is it that they have the sensibility of the enlightenment, but want expression?’<sup>72</sup> If the former were true, any apparently brave acts performed by members of the lower orders could be dismissed as mere by-products of a lack of awareness and imagination. This would again have rendered the granting of medals to servicemen who risked their lives in battle or in the course of rescuing their fellows inappropriate; as such actions might be deemed to be driven by a lack of appreciation of the dangers associated with the act rather than any conscious demonstration of bravery. For the educated classes however, blessed with ‘the sensibility of enlightenment’, the

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<sup>70</sup> Illustration of box label by J. Teed, sword-maker of Lancaster Court, Strand. Reproduced in B. Southam, *Jane Austen and the Navy* (London, 2000), p. 114.

<sup>71</sup> Nicolson, *Men of Honour*, p. 143.

<sup>72</sup> Nicolson, *Men of Honour*, p. 142.

hazards of the battlefield or shipwreck would have been all too obvious. For them alone existed the opportunity to display ‘real’ courage.

If such class considerations served to ensure that British junior servicemen were denied medals for valour, elsewhere in Europe provisions were frequently made for such recognition, the liberal award of France’s *Legion d’Honneur* (founded 19 May 1802)<sup>73</sup> to soldiers of all ranks being perhaps the best known example. Napoleon himself regarded the recipients of the honour as the core of a new meritocratic (and largely military) aristocracy which would replace the old discredited ruling class of pre-Revolutionary France. Crucial to the success of this new order were the badges which prominently adorned the chests of the *legionnaires*.



**4. Legion d’Honneur, founded 1802 (author’s collection)**

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<sup>73</sup> [www.legiondhonneur.fr/shared/en/en\\_ordresdecorations/en\\_fordredecoracion.html](http://www.legiondhonneur.fr/shared/en/en_ordresdecorations/en_fordredecoracion.html) (5/2/2011)

These badges were specifically designed to promote zeal in all who saw them, Napoleon, as First Consul, having little patience for those who argued that such trinkets were a throw-back to the discredited monarchy: 'I defy you to show me an ancient or modern republic in which there are no distinctions: You may call these baubles, well, it is with baubles that men are led.'<sup>74</sup> As Napoleon had predicted prior to the establishment of the Legion, the white enamel cross and red ribbon were eagerly sought after by men of all ranks as a mark of status and a sign of the approval of their country:

The soldiers who knew neither how to read nor to write were proud, as the price of having shed their blood for their country, of wearing the same decoration as men of great civilian talent, and these, on the other hand, attached all the more value to this reward for their work as it was the decoration worn by the brave.<sup>75</sup>

The value of orders, decorations and medals as incentives was thus widely recognised, not least by the Polish king Stanislaus II, who established in 1765 the Order of St Stanislaus with a motto that Nelson would have appreciated: '*Premiando Incitat*' or 'To Encourage by Rewarding'.<sup>76</sup> In Poland likewise, the year 1792 saw the establishment of the Order of Military Virtue (*Virtuti Militari*),<sup>77</sup> whilst in Russia it had been common practice since the beginning of the eighteenth century to present medals to junior soldiers and sailors who had distinguished themselves in battle.<sup>78</sup> Several nations also awarded government-sponsored medals in recognition of gallantry in saving life. An early French medal of this type was presented to Joseph Chretien by Louis XVI in 1785 in recognition of his having rescued two children who had fallen through ice,<sup>79</sup> whilst the Swedish crown instituted a medal 'For Meritorious Work' (*Illis Quorum Meruere Labores*) in the same year.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Speech of Bonaparte to Council of State, 4 May 1802. Quoted in Colonel Vache (trans. G.F. Lees), *Napoleon at Work* (Stroud, 2007 [1914]), p. 118.

<sup>75</sup> Vache, *Napoleon at Work*, p. 136.

<sup>76</sup> W. Bigoszevska, *Decorations et Ordres Polonais* (Warsaw 1989), p. 15; Romanov, *Orders of Imperial Russia*, pp. 55-57.

<sup>77</sup> Bigoszevska, *Decorations Polonais*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>78</sup> D. Romanov, *The Orders, Medals and History of Imperial Russia* (Rungsted Kyst, 2000), pp. 60ff.

<sup>79</sup> P.H. Demoge, 'Les Medailles d'Honneur Temoins d'Une Societe' *Ordres et Distinctions* 7 (1996), p. 24.

<sup>80</sup> C.P. Mulder, 'The Swedish Medal "Illis Quorum Meruere Labores" (For Meritorious Work), *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 1-3 (1987-88), pp. 65-67.

The apparent failure of the British to appreciate the morale-boosting benefits of medals could on occasion provoke genuine surprise, Napoleon expressing the opinion that ‘Such is not the way to excite or cherish military virtues’.<sup>81</sup> The deeply entrenched *laissez faire* attitude of the British Government to the awarding of medals was not however shared by all Britons. The Honourable East India Company (HEIC) made numerous awards to their soldiers, presenting medals to all of their troops who had participated in a series of campaigns in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>82</sup> Likewise, British military and naval personnel occasionally received privately-funded medals from commanding officers, prize agents and other admirers.<sup>83</sup>



**5. HEIC Medal for Seringapatam, 1799 (author's collection)**

Privately-made medals were also on rare occasions awarded in recognition of individual brave acts. One case of this type relates to a gold medal presented to

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<sup>81</sup> D.H. Irwin, *War Medals and Decorations* (London, 1910), p. 7.

<sup>82</sup> Western India and Gujerat (1778-84), Mysore (1790-92), Ceylon (1796) Seringapatam (1799), Egypt (1801), Indian Ocean (1810) and Java (1811). See MacKay & Mussell, *Medals Yearbook*, pp. 106-113.

<sup>83</sup> Mackay & Mussell, *Medals Yearbook*, pp. 107-112.

Lieutenant Latham of the Buffs by his brother officers in recognition of his heroism in saving the regimental Colours at the Battle of Albuhera in 1811. In this instance the recipient's Commanding Officer successfully sought official permission from the Commander in Chief for the distinction to be worn by its recipient whilst in uniform.<sup>84</sup> This official seal of approval greatly enhanced the prestige of the award, Latham's Colonel writing to him to confirm that his medal was permitted to be worn:

...by the special sanction of our illustrious Commander in Chief... which must be consoling to you in the highest degree for the loss of an arm, and the numerous wounds you have received, especially when you reflect that you have thus suffered in your faithful discharge of your duty to your king and country.<sup>85</sup>

Latham was of course an officer, and his medal was a gift from his peers, albeit one that had received the formal blessing of his Commander in Chief. The final stages of the Napoleonic Wars were however to witness a softening in the British state's attitude to the award of medals to members of the lower strata of society. In the wake of the Battle of Waterloo, the decision was taken to award medals to all participants, irrespective of rank.<sup>86</sup> Although no further general distributions were to be made until the 1840s, a precedent had been established. Furthermore, the Waterloo Medal and its successors were prominently worn both by soldiers and ex-servicemen. Thus, from 1815 (and to a greater extent from about 1850) onwards, the sight of working class chests adorned by medals became commonplace. The Waterloo Medal did not however recognise individual merit, but rather participation in a particular battle. Junior ranks might hope to earn promotion through acts of gallantry performed in the field, but the opportunity to receive medallic badges (particularly the various classes of the Order of the Bath) was restricted to the officer class.

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<sup>84</sup> A.J. Henderson, 'The Presentation of Medals', *Orders & Medals Research Society Journal* 33:2 (1994), p. 123, reproducing a letter of 4 January 1813 from H. Torrens to General Charles Leigh (originally reproduced in *The Soldier's Companion or Martial Recorder*, 1824).

<sup>85</sup> Henderson, 'The Presentation of Medals', p. 124, reproducing a letter of 2 August 1813 from Lt. Col. W. Stewart to Captain Lantham (originally reproduced in *The Soldier's Companion or Martial Recorder*, 1824).

<sup>86</sup> Many of Britain's allies adopted a similar liberal approach, with Waterloo medals being presented by the governments of Brunswick, Hanover, Nassau and Saxe-Coburg-Altenburg to their troops who had participated in the battle. See Mackay & Mussell, *Medals Yearbook*, pp. 120-121.



**6. Companion of the Order of the Bath, post 1815, and Waterloo Medal, 1815 (author's collection)**

The mass-distribution of the *wearable* Waterloo Medal was highly significant for, although some eighteenth-century medals had been produced with the intention of being worn, these had been very much in the minority. Commanding officers might have been presented with wearable gold medals from the Crown and militia officers may have gained hand-engraved awards from their commanders, but for the most part those medals which were privately struck in Britain prior to the end of the Napoleonic Wars were intended for limited private display rather than ostentatious show.

They fell into three basic classes: inexpensive base-metal medals which were produced for sale to the lower orders as souvenirs of key historical events; well designed pieces produced to grace the cabinets of middle and upper class connoisseurs; and presentation pieces (generally struck in precious metal and often named) normally given to members of the middle and upper orders by their peers to celebrate noteworthy achievements.<sup>87</sup> The original medals of the RHS fell into the third of these categories.

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<sup>87</sup> Eimer, *An Introduction to Commemorative Medals* (London, 1989), pp. 84-93.

## **Civilian Medals in the Nineteenth Century**

As the nineteenth century progressed however the production and distribution of medals became ever more prevalent. From the 1840s it became normal practice to award medals to British soldiers and sailors in recognition of their participation in military campaigns and - given the frequency with which such campaigns were fought - it is hardly surprising that that it became commonplace for medals to be seen gracing military chests. Furthermore, the development of steam-powered coining presses during the early years of the century ensured that manufacturers in Birmingham and London were able massively to increase the range and quantity of medals struck to mark all types of special occasions and anniversaries.<sup>88</sup>

Such mass-production led to the price of such souvenirs falling and the adoption of inexpensive 'white metal' alloys further served to reduce the cost of medals. Medals thus became affordable to a far wider cross-section of the population, becoming the souvenirs of choice of many people seeking to retain a tangible keepsake of military triumphs or Royal weddings. In imitation of the military, the medal was likewise embraced by churches, schools, employers and local authorities as an appropriate object for widespread (but controlled) distribution and as the century progressed medals came to be distributed almost universally as a reward for regular school attendance or outstanding achievements in Sunday school classes.<sup>89</sup> Even those joining working-class organisations took to wearing medals to mark their membership, provoking occasional critical comments from their social betters, as in the case of Lord Ellenborough's complaint to the House of Lords in 1854 that:

...seamen of the Tyne and other rivers in the north were holding aloof from service and combining in associations distinguished by medals. He wished brave men would give over such bad practices, and remember that the fittest medal for a sailor to wear was one won under fire in the service of his QUEEN and country.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Eimer, *Commemorative Medals*, p. 28.

<sup>89</sup> See for example [www.mernick.org.uk/attendance/medals/m\\_Intro.htm](http://www.mernick.org.uk/attendance/medals/m_Intro.htm) (6/5/2010)

<sup>90</sup> *The Times*, 24 March 1854, p. 8.



The organisation which probably provoked the ire of Ellensborough was the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society, whose sea-going subscribers bore medallions decorated with the head of Nelson and engraved with their membership numbers. But such medals were not the products of vanity or mere reflections of working-class solidarity: they were rather a practical tool which proved their holders entitlement to the benefits which they had earned through the payment of their membership subscriptions. Furthermore, in the event of disaster, the individually numbered medals might facilitate the identification of sailor's body.<sup>91</sup>



**7. SFMRBS Membership Medal, 1884 (author's collection)**

Equally, in the social sphere, prize medals ceased to be the sole preserve of middle and upper-class societies as less august bodies such as sporting clubs began to present them to their working-class members. Service personnel likewise had access to a vast range of awards instituted by the thriving temperance movement.<sup>92</sup> As the century progressed, bodies such as St John Ambulance Brigade, the Lifesaving Society and various railway first-aid

<sup>91</sup> N. Jones, *The Plimsoll Sensation: The Great Campaign to Save Lives at Sea* (London, 2006), p. 76.

<sup>92</sup> See D.A. Harris, *A Guide to Military Temperance Medals* (Ontario, 2001).

organisations also began to issue their members with medals to wear as visible tokens of their long service or success in passing proficiency examinations.<sup>93</sup> Medals came thus to be seen decorating not only the breasts and lapels of the higher orders but also working-class chests and watch-chains. The Victorian medal can accordingly be seen to have been progressively ‘democratised’ as the wearing of such decorations ceased to be intimately associated with class status.

Such nineteenth-century developments notwithstanding, at the time that the RHS was founded in 1774, there was no strong tradition within Britain of the State formally recognising individual acts of civil or military gallantry and self-sacrifice through the provision of medals or other badges. Furthermore, there was little tradition of medals (as opposed to orders of chivalry) being worn conspicuously by their recipients. Nevertheless, the ‘Long Nineteenth Century’ represents something of a ‘golden age’ for the art of engraving in Britain and the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw an explosion in the popularity of the medal as a portable art-form across a broad cross-section of society.

A number of factors impacted upon this rise in awareness. Significantly, the emergence of Neo-Classicism as a dominant artistic style focussed attention on the arts of Greece and Rome (including coins & medals) and spotlighted the development of a new type of Neo-Classical medal on the Continent, most especially in France.<sup>94</sup> The artistic movement also chimed perfectly with a broader society which was in the process of developing the cult of the hero and which increasingly looked to the world of ancient Rome for suitable role models.

The rise of social and political clubs - invariably eager to mark their role and identity within society - provided a lucrative market for a pool of skilled die-engravers who, having frequently learnt their trade in the button and token factories of Birmingham, were happy to turn their hands to the engraving of medal dies. Likewise, the emergence of entrepreneurial medal publishers brought the medium to new audiences that - thanks to mass-production and the

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<sup>93</sup> See C. Tozer, *The Insignia and Medals of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem* (London, 1975), pp. 59-76; J. Boddington, *A Medalllic History of the Royal Life Saving Society* (1983).

<sup>94</sup> See M. Jones, *The Art of the Medal* (London, 1979), pp. 100-106.

development of cheaper coining alloys (most notably 'white metal') - could now 'buy into' the previously exclusive world of artistic medals and acquire for themselves souvenirs of the great military, royal and political events of the day.

### **Medals and the Rewarding of Virtue**

The foundation of the RHS accordingly coincided with a moment in time when the medal was becoming increasingly significant in British society. Numerous organisations had instituted medals to be presented as prizes to those who had won competitions or promoted the interests of the awarding body. Such awards were often keenly sought after, Dr John Lettsom, one of the founders of the RHS, commenting upon learning that he had been awarded a prize medal for his 1791 essay on urban disease that 'though it is but ten guineas in metal, I value it above £500.'<sup>95</sup>

In deciding to institute a medal for presentation to those who had been instrumental in saving life, the Society had set a precedent that was to be followed not only by other social groups, but also by corporate bodies, the print media and ultimately, the State. But it was not a decision that was taken in isolation. The founders of the RHS were very familiar with - and drew direct inspiration from - the work of the humane society of Amsterdam and it is scarcely credible that they would not have been acutely conscious of that pioneering body's practice of awarding medals to lifesavers.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, and closer to home, many of Britain's grander societies had well established programmes for the presentation of medals to gentlemen who made significant contributions to the furtherance of their aims.

As previously discussed, in its early years the RHS primarily awarded medals to members of the higher social orders who had contributed - for example through the exemplary restoration of life of an apparently-drowned person - to the furtherance of the organisation's aims. On rare occasions medals were awarded to members of the lower middle classes in recognition of brave acts, but most

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<sup>95</sup> J.J. Abraham, *Lettsom: his Life, Times, Friends and Descendants* (London, 1933), p. 275.

<sup>96</sup> C.P. Barclay, *The Medals of the Royal Humane Society*, (London, 1998), p. 3.

practical lifesavers were members of the lower orders and had to be content with cash rewards.<sup>97</sup> This was a significant distinction, and one which met with the approval of Jeremy Bentham who opined that:

If rewards were established for virtue, when exhibited by the indigent classes, it would be improper to seek for striking instances of its display, or to suppose that they are actuated by sentiments of vanity, which operate feebly upon men accustomed to dependence, and almost constantly employed in making provision for their daily wants.<sup>98</sup>

Bentham believed that there was little point in using medals as a reward to encourage virtuous behaviour in the poor. This was however not the case with the higher social orders and, in an argument directed at a French audience, he was quick to draw attention to the medal-giving activities of the RHS and to argue how they might usefully be adapted and expanded:

The Humane Society, established in England for the purpose of affording assistance to persons in danger of drowning, and providing the means of restoration in cases of suspended animation, distributes prizes to those who have saved an individual from death. In this case, the reward is not, as in the French Academy, confined to the indigent classes alone: men of the first rank would consider it an honour to receive a medal commemorative of so noble an action... Greater *éclat* might, however, without adding to the theatrical effect, be given to these rewards, were an efficient report made of them to the king and both houses of parliament.

An institution of a similar nature, for the reward of services rendered in the cases of fire, shipwreck, and all other possible accidents would still further contribute to the cultivation of benevolence; and these noble actions, brought in the same manner under the eyes of the legislators, and inscribed in their journals, would acquire a publicity of much less importance to the honoured individual than to society in general. Indeed, though the reward applies to only one particular action, the principal object designed is the cultivation of those dispositions which actions indicate: and this can only be accomplished by the publicity which is given to the example, and the public esteem and honour in which it is held.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> As late as 1899 the RHS Annual Court enthusiastically endorsed the granting of cash rewards in addition to medals to poorer rescuers. *The Times*, 20 May 1899, p. 10.

<sup>98</sup> J. Bentham, *The Rationale of Reward: Book 1, Of Rewards in General*, Chapter XVI, p. 4. Reproduced in digital form from Bowering edition of 1843 at

[www.la.utexas.edu/research/poltheory/bentham/rr/rr.b01.c16.html](http://www.la.utexas.edu/research/poltheory/bentham/rr/rr.b01.c16.html) (28/11/2007).

<sup>99</sup> Bentham, *Rationale of Reward*, p.3

Bentham's opinion that the presentation of medals was unlikely to act as a positive incentive to members of the lower orders was not shared by all. Lieutenant E. Medley, a Royal Naval officer, expressed the opinion of many of these dissenters when writing to the RHS in 1833. Arguing persuasively (and successfully) that a medal be granted to a rating under his command, he was unequivocal in his support for the use of medals as incentives:

...that if seamen were rewarded by honorary distinctions instead of pecuniary grants from public societies, they would be found as careful and as proud of these tokens as any other class of people. Such a mark of distinction must be a never-failing passport to the good opinion of the officers under whom they may chance to serve, while it would operate as a powerful stimulus to foster exertion, and to dissipate an apathy too frequently prevailing when self-existence is required to be hazarded.<sup>100</sup>

A similar emphasis on the career-enhancing benefits conferred by the granting of medals to worthy members of the lower orders was expressed by an anonymous correspondent in the late 1820s. Writing to the RHS in support of the granting of an award to a man by the name of Wilding for his role in rescuing a seven year-old child from drowning, the correspondent observed that, 'If it is within your regulations to award a medal, it would not only be gratifying to the object of this application, but it would be a badge which would most probably influence the benevolent in giving employment to one who has been so successful in saving the lives of his fellow creatures.'<sup>101</sup> Partly in response to letters such as these, by the early years of the nineteenth century the Society was increasingly making use of its silver honorary medal as a means of recognising courage. This functional shift was accelerated by the introduction of a cheaper bronze version of the award in late 1837; the medals coming thereafter to be distributed with increased liberality amongst the members of the working classes.

If the receipt of a bravery award could prove a useful stepping-stone in the career of a worthy recipient, the high regard in which such awards came to be held by the public at large also created opportunities for the less scrupulous. In such

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<sup>100</sup> L. Young, *Acts of Gallantry: Being a Detailed Account of Each Deed of Bravery in Saving Life from Drowning in all Parts of the World for which the Gold and Silver Medals and Clasps of the Royal Humane Society Have been Awarded from 1830 to 1871* (London, 1872), p. 33.

<sup>101</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 13.

circumstances, it is not surprising that there were those who were willing to take advantages of public good-will and generosity. Typical of such tricksters was Samuel Green who was sentenced to 15 months hard labour as punishment for ‘obtaining money and food from a number of persons by false pretences’, having ‘represented that he had saved many lives, and had picked up a live shell and put it into a bucket of water, for which and other brave acts he was presented with a medal by Lord Alcester’.<sup>102</sup> Green further stated that he was shortly to be honoured by the RHS, having ‘saved on one occasion the lives of the Prince of Wales’s sons’.<sup>103</sup> Nor was Green’s case unique, Lord Llandaff and others being defrauded in 1909 by a confidence trickster who claimed to be raising funds to pay for the medical treatment of a young man who ‘had rescued a girl from drowning and received the Royal Humane Society’s medal’.<sup>104</sup>

That petty-fraudsters should have been successful in obtaining money by claiming to have been honoured by the RHS also strongly implies that members of the public drawn from all social strata were aware of the role of the Society in rewarding bravery and possessed an interest in its activities. Moreover, these cases and others like them provide evidence that those who had received (or claimed to have received) bravery awards were liable to be treated as celebrities and to benefit from the advantages which accompanied that status. The wearing of a medal marked the man (or woman) as exceptional.

### **The Crimean War and the Rewarding of Military Valour**

But if the distribution of bravery medals to members of all social classes was becoming the norm for life saving organisations as early as the late 1830s; divisions remained in the official system of honours available to Britain’s soldiers and sailors. Senior officers could still hope to gain the Order of the Bath, whilst more junior officer might aspire to a formal mention in their commanders’ despatches or to a brevet promotion. For the common soldier, there existed only the very limited possibility of promotion in the field. The

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<sup>102</sup> *The Times*, 20 May 1884, p. 14.

<sup>103</sup> *The Times*, 20 May 1884, p. 14.

<sup>104</sup> *The Times*, 6 October 1909, p. 2.

outbreak of the Crimean War threw the unsatisfactory nature of this situation into sharp relief. Britain was now involved in a major war for the first time since Waterloo and her sailors and troops found themselves serving alongside European allies from France and Savoy. Both of these powers possessed a state honours system which recognised the value of rewarding brave deeds and granted awards - the *Légion d' Honneur* and the medal *Al Valore Militare* - which could be earned by soldiers of all ranks.

In the absence of any system of censorship, the unfairness of this situation attracted substantial press attention, with the letters column of *The Times* being used as a conduit by those in the services who keenly felt the need to create a reward for valour which could be earned by any soldier or sailor, irrespective of their rank or status. Through the pages of *The Times*, the public were able to gain an insight into the attitude of serving troops to the current awards system. The continuing practice of rewarding the varying degrees of the Order of the Bath to senior officers, including rear echelons, particularly irritated front-line soldiers and even the promise of a campaign medal for all was treated by some with a degree of cynicism:

Sir, if you wish the young soldiers to fight as the old have done it is time that the British soldier should cease “to fight under the cold shade of aristocratic influence” – the honours and rewards should go where the bullets do: and the daring soldier or skilful officer, by whose conduct or daring the General wins the Cross of the Bath which sparkles on his chest should have something to show his friends besides a paltry medal that is worn as often by the coward as the brave. Promote merit, decorate courage, and then you will have skilful officers and brave soldiers.<sup>105</sup>

It was a campaign which was taken up in parliament and which was to result, on 29 January 1856, in a Royal Warrant being issued which established the Victoria Cross as Britain's premier award for military valour. The warrant had specifically stated that the new award should be ‘highly prized and eagerly sought after’ and this indeed seems to have been the case.<sup>106</sup> In an era when medals and decorations were habitually worn by those in uniform, possession of

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<sup>105</sup> Letter from ‘A VETERAN, Sept. 29’, published in *The Times*, Oct. 2 1855, p. 4.

<sup>106</sup> Warrant of 29 January 1856, reproduced in P.E. Abbott and J.M.A. Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards* (London, 1981), p. 44.

the Victoria Cross marked a man out from the crowd. The recipient of the Victoria Cross was thus assured of the respect and admiration of his peers and the public and possession of such an honour could have a very positive effect on the holder's career. As a personal gift from the Queen, it also helped both to cement the loyalty of the armed services to their monarch and to demonstrate Victoria's commitment to her fighting men.<sup>107</sup>

Young officers like Charles MacGregor were desperate to obtain the honour, writing to his father that 'I wanted most awfully to see some fighting and wanted nothing more than to get a chance of getting the Cross'.<sup>108</sup> MacGregor was never to see that particular dream come true, ultimately having to be content with a knighthood and the local rank of major general. For others the fantasy became reality, Captain Lord Beresford of the 9<sup>th</sup> Lancers for example gaining his reward after reportedly contriving to obtain a posting to Zululand 'with the resolution of qualifying for the Victoria Cross',<sup>109</sup> whilst Evelyn Wood's eventual receipt of the coveted decoration was the culmination of a concerted lobbying campaign by members of his family.<sup>110</sup> Prince Albert would certainly have disapproved of such lobbying, recognising that the appeal of awards was closely linked to their exclusivity and complaining of the *Légion d'Honneur* that its widespread distribution had rendered it little more than 'a tool of corruption in the hands of the French Govt...';<sup>111</sup> the medal itself having become 'almost... a necessary appendage to the French Dress.'<sup>112</sup>

Whilst the Victoria Cross might be earned in the 'red mist' of battle, the often equally hard-won medals awarded by the RHS and similar organisations during the nineteenth century were almost invariably given in recognition of deeds that conformed to an Aristotelian definition of courage. This model viewed a truly

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<sup>107</sup> M.C. Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 38-42.

<sup>108</sup> Quoted in I. Beckett, *The Victorians at War* (London, 2003), p. 42.

<sup>109</sup> Beckett, *The Victorians at War* (London, 2003), p. 35.

<sup>110</sup> Internal War Office Memorandum, 17 August 1860. Quoted in Williams, 'Canvassing for Glory', p. 11.

<sup>111</sup> Nottingham University, Newcastle Collection, NeC 9701b, Memorandum from Prince Albert to Duke of Newcastle, 22 January 1855. Reproduced in M.J. Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross* (Tunbridge Wells, 1975), pp. 275-76.

<sup>112</sup> Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, RA VIC/E5/18, Letter from Prince Albert to Duke of Newcastle, 22 January 1855. Reproduced in M.C. Smith, *Awarded for Valour* (Basingstoke, 2008), p. 38.



courageous act as being one that requires the deliberate application of practical reasoning in pursuit of a noble goal. For Aristotle an act - no matter how apparently brave - that was undertaken under the influence of a passion (such as pain or rage) could not be considered truly courageous. This was a philosophical view later to be echoed by Hemmingway, who defined true courage as 'grace under pressure'.<sup>113</sup> It is in fact the coolness with which many of the deeds recorded in the Society's record books were carried out that is particularly striking.

### **The Royal Humane Society and the Rewarding of "Everyday Heroes"**

Although Carlyle may have seen the key to heroism as lying in the application of intuition, speed and bold action, lifesaving medals were more frequently earned by those who displayed a conscious, deliberate and altruistic disregard for their own welfare. These were rewards for men who would enter a gas-filled sewer on more than one occasion to attempt the rescue of strangers; or who would leave the safety of their own beds in order to face mountainous seas in a desperate attempt to save the crew of a foundering trawler. This was a very different type of courage from that recognised by the award of military medals to those who risked their lives to defeat an enemy in the heat of battle. But such distinctions notwithstanding, contemporary parallels were often drawn between bravery on the battlefield and courage displayed in mines, factories and at shipwrecks:

Yet braver not the mighty dead  
Who for their country's freedom bled  
Amid the din and shock of war  
At Camperdown and Trafalgar.

Than those who, moved by pity's power,  
The Life-boat launch in danger's hour,  
And hasten o'er the billows dark  
To save the crew of the sinking bark.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> D.N. Walton, *Courage: A Philosophical Investigation* (Berkeley, 1986), pp. 31, 33.

<sup>114</sup> R.J. Mountjoy, 'The Lifeboat's Crew', originally published in *The Life-boat*, 2 November 1874, p. 199. Reproduced in J. Cumming & C. Vince, *The Lifeboat in Verse* (London 1938), p. 31.

This was the language of popular patriotism. Similar sentiments were frequently to be voiced at award ceremonies throughout the nineteenth century. Such a speech was made by Edward Glyn at the ceremony held in Newcastle on 20 May 1862 in honour of the miners who had risked their lives to rescue their colleagues in the wake of the Hartley Colliery disaster:

We have heard of medals being presented for feats of war; we have heard of medals being presented by the excellent Humane Society for the rescue of lives from shipwreck; we have heard, in London at least, of the presentation of medals for saving life from fire, but this is the first time that we have heard of medals being presented for the rescue of lives in mining operations. The soldier who wore upon his breast the Victoria Cross or the Waterloo Medal might well be proud of it. But I say that these men here today who wear this Hartley Medal might be as proud of it as if they had gained it at Trafalgar, or Waterloo, or Delhi, or Sebastapol.<sup>115</sup>

The RHS itself did not hesitate to draw direct favourable parallels, its Secretary, Lambton Young, observing in 1872 whilst reviewing the awards presented by the organisation between 1830 and 1871 that:

Amongst these there are acts of heroism which, had they been performed by a soldier or a sailor in the execution of his duty, in the face of the enemy, could not have failed earning the highest distinction that it awarded; how much more then should these deeds be commended, when it is borne in mind that the individuals who risk their lives in these noble acts do so simply through the promptings of a generous heart, wishing to aid their fellow creatures in distress, without any prospect of reward or promotion?<sup>116</sup>

It was a parallel which was reinforced by choice of language used by the Society at that time to describe the heroic actions that it recognised through the granting of medals and other awards. It is no coincidence that Young chose to grace his account of the brave deeds rewarded by the Society with the distinctly martial title *Acts of Gallantry*; nor that he should draw a specific parallel between the Society's medal and the Roman *corona civilis*, which he described as 'the most honourable of all military prizes.'<sup>117</sup> For Young and his fellows, bodies such as the RHS were engaged in a medical and scientific struggle with 'the angel of

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<sup>115</sup> J.E. McCutcheon, *The Hartley Colliery Disaster 1862* (Seaham, 1963), pp. 152-54.

<sup>116</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 1.

<sup>117</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 2.

death' that was analogous to an imperial campaign of conquest in which 'To the Royal Humane Society alone has it been given to carry the war into the enemy's territory, and annex a province of his empire.'<sup>118</sup>

Many of the medals were earned in this 'war' by the officers and men of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. An early example of the award of a RHS medal to a member of the armed services is provided by an account of the award of a silver medal to Mr Peter Quibilingo of the Royal Marines, in recognition of his having saved no fewer than eight seamen from drowning in a rescue that led to his own hospitalisation. Representations having been made to the RHS, a medal was duly voted to Quibilingo; the Vice President of the Society reassuring Dr Hawes that, 'A silver chain has been added, apprehensive that so fine a Medal would risque (sic) being lost, if suspended only from a ribbon.'<sup>119</sup> A detailed account of the presentation ceremony was reproduced in the Society's *Annual Report* for 1804 and this serves to emphasise the importance of the ceremonial aspect of such occasions:

The ROYAL MARINE CORPS of Plymouth was drawn up for the Parade, in the form of a square, with their band and drums, to witness the ceremony of investing the beneficent and philanthropic man with the Medal of the R.H.S.

Mrs. BRIGHT (the Lady of the Commandant) supported by several Ladies of the Corps, advanced to the centre of the square, and, having placed the medal and chain around his neck, addressed him in the following energetic and judicious speech:

"Mr. QUIBILINGO, You are present this day for the purpose of receiving a most distinguished and honourable reward, bestowed on account of your manly exertions and your successful efforts, at the time when, under the permission of Divine Providence, you preserved the lives of your fellow creatures at the imminent peril of your own. – It has been obtained for you from the R.H.S. by that great and good man, our Port Admiral, Sir John COLPOYS, K.B. I feel infinitely proud and happy, in assisting them and him, in bestowing on you this public testimony of your humane and meritorious conduct; but remember, a higher reward awaits you than is in the power of man to bestow – the approbation of the Almighty! – I have only to add, that you will now have the proud privilege of saying to

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<sup>118</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 2.

<sup>119</sup> See A. J. Henderson, 'The Presentation of Medals', *Orders & Medals Research Society Journal* 33.2 (1994), pp. 122-125; J. Wilson, 'Peter Quibilingo – An Early RHS Medallist' *Orders & Medals Research Society Journal* 35.3 (1996), pp. 208-211.

any of your fellow creatures and comrades around you according to the device of the motto on your medal, GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE”

At the conclusion of this well delivered and appropriate Address, the Band and drums struck up GOD SAVE THE KING. Mrs. BRIGHT and the Ladies retired and the ceremony ended.

THE EDITOR is highly gratified with the manner and publicity of delivering the Medal; the justice, as well as the importance of conferring such an Honorary Reward is thus properly and judiciously proclaimed.<sup>120</sup>

This account throws valuable light upon the values of the Society in general and its motivation in presenting medals in particular. The importance of maintaining the natural social order was clearly crucial to the Society. The supremacy of the monarch was specifically acknowledged through the emphasis given to the playing of the national anthem, whilst the stress placed on the key role of Admiral Colpoys<sup>121</sup> in securing Quibilingo’s reward leaves little doubt as to the paternalistic nature of the Society. The importance of maintaining the social order was again stressed by the key role played by Mrs Bright and the ‘Ladies of the Corps’ at the presentation parade, whilst Quibilingo was reminded that his actions, whilst noble, were nevertheless not wholly within his control and were subject to Divine sanction. It can however also be argued that the decision to arrange that the brave Quibilingo received his reward from the hands of a woman hints at a view that the courage of a life saver was in some way ‘softer’ than that of a more martial hero.

### **Medals and Social Order**

The case of Quiblingo demonstrated a clear appreciation of the importance of the medal as an ‘object of desire’, this being emphasised by the importance placed upon the provision of a strong chain to ensure its physical security. The medal was also recognised as having significant value as a source of inspiration. Its recipient, having been given a chain to ensure that his reward might prominently be displayed, was effectively set apart from his fellows, the inspirational motto ‘Go thou and do likewise’ providing an unambiguous call for his colleagues to be

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<sup>120</sup> Wilson, ‘Peter Quibilingo’, pp. 208-211.

<sup>121</sup> Colpoys was both Port Admiral and a Vice President of the RHS.

willing to imitate his commendable conduct. Finally, the importance of ceremony and associated publicity was referred to specifically by Dr Hawes, the editor of the RHS *Annual Report*, and there can be little doubt that the Society would have been very content with the obvious promotional opportunities afforded by such a high-profile ceremony.

Indeed, by the closing years of the eighteenth century William Hawes was enjoying a considerable level of success in ensuring that his organisation's methods and activities were well covered by the *Gentleman's Magazine*, where they sat alongside lurid tales of accidents and disasters from the metropolis and the provinces:

*Salisbury, Nov. 14* At the last night, a young woman, servant of Mrs Raikes, accidentally fell into the canal... At length she was taken out by some chairmen and, to all appearances dead, and carried to the surgery of Messrs. White and Still, where every proper assistance was afforded her, particularly those recommended by the HUMANE SOCIETY, which in about two hours restored her to life; and she is since perfectly recovered...

*Nov. 14* This morning at 10, at the White Hart, a public house in Southampton, a well-dressed man, between 30 and 40, put a period to his existence by a pistol... A small hole was made in the temple, whence a great effusion of blood ensued...

*Nov. 20.* John Locker, a servant of Mr Boyce, of Roundham, was incautiously driving a wagon into the yard of Mr Gill of Thetford, he was impaled by the shaft and carried some distance on it...<sup>122</sup>

Such reporting increased during the opening years of the nineteenth century, with greater emphasis being given to those incidents which resulted in the giving of medals or other rewards. This was a significant development for, as Bentham had suggested and the RHS clearly recognised, if the making of awards to rescuers was to be instrumental in encouraging similar behaviour in others, it was of the utmost importance that these brave acts and associated rewards were brought to the attention of the broadest possible audience. Such practice was fully in keeping with the opinion of the Society's founder member Oliver Goldsmith that accounts of historic examples of noble behaviour might serve to inspire virtuous and humanitarian behaviour in those exposed to them.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, 8, July-December 1798, p. 108.

<sup>123</sup> O. Goldsmith, 'Cultivation of Taste', in *The Complete Works of Oliver Goldsmith, Comprising his Essays, Plays and Practical Works* (revd. edn., Edinburgh, n.d.) pp. 377-78, cited

The giving of a medal can thus be seen as a means of encouraging virtuous behaviour; of emphasising and reinforcing the natural order of society; of celebrating the fitness and bravery of the salvor; and of the celebrating the benevolence of Divine providence. Moreover, the salvor, through his or her concern for the weak or imperilled and selfless devotion and willingness to lay down their life for others can be seen as embodying inspirational behaviours of both Christ and the Good Samaritan. The whole process can accordingly be thought of as an embodiment of the concept of ‘muscular Christianity’ which had been promoted by Dr Thomas Arnold and his followers as a model for middle-class life. Salvors played the game and, as James observes, ‘Playing the game well was good for the soul as much as for the body’.<sup>124</sup>

As Warren observes, during the Victorian era popular manliness was ‘associated with the straightforward qualities of directness, honesty, decency, duty and honour’ and ‘tied to a reworked Christian code of knightly conduct, itself placed within a newly articulated national tradition.’<sup>125</sup> Muscularly Christian lifesavers could be appropriated and held up as role models for the young, and by the late nineteenth century a vast range of literature celebrating patriotism and heroic deeds was available to excite and inspire the next generation of Christian empire-builders. As previously alluded to, titles such as Frank Mundell’s *Stories of the Lifeboat* (1894) and *Stories of the Fire Brigade* (c.1895) celebrated brave acts performed by firemen and lifeboat-men; whilst Kate Stanway’s *Britannia’s Calendar of Heroes* (1914) described a series of brave deeds for every day of the year and made no distinction between those performed on the field of battle and those performed in factories, mines and the home. What boy or girl could help but be inspired by the acts of willing sacrifice recounted in the tales of ‘A Norfolk Mother’s Heroic Death’ a ‘Gloucestershire Wife Martyr’ or ‘A Bristol Boy’s Self Sacrifice’?<sup>126</sup> Such works addressed a perceived need for literature

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in G. Cubitt, ‘Introduction: Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives’, G. Cubitt & A. Warren, (eds.), *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, (Manchester, 2000), p. 10.

<sup>124</sup> L. James, *The Middle Classes: A History* (London, 2006), p. 333.

<sup>125</sup> A. Warren, ‘Popular Manliness: Baden-Powell, Scouting, and the Development of Manly Character’, J.A. Mangan & J. Walvin, (eds.), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1987), p. 200.

<sup>126</sup> K. Stanway, K., *Britannia’s Calendar of Heroes* (London, 1914) pp. 32, 126, 198.

which would inspire youth; the contemporary historian Froude for example urging youngsters to follow ‘a real path trodden by real men’:

Read that: there is a man – such a man as you ought to be; read it, meditate on it; see what he was, and how he made himself what he was, and try to be yourself like him.<sup>127</sup>

Furthermore, whilst Muscular Christianity was originally primarily a middle-class concept which appealed to the very class whose members presented lifesaving medals, the mid-Victorian era also witnessed changes towards the definition of manliness amongst the working-class men who so frequently earned them. The development of a new male ideal was linked to the values of self-improvement advocated by Smiles and promoted by the organised labour movement, with the virtue of a new ‘respectable’ masculinity being lauded over that of the foregoing ‘rough’ manliness. The respectable man - often a sole family bread-winner and trades union member - was extolled for his social awareness and a class solidarity which was favourably contrasted with the less sophisticated behaviour of his rougher, more selfish colleague.<sup>128</sup> The new values were disseminated among the young through the medium of popular periodicals such as the *Boys’ Own Paper*.<sup>129</sup> Published by the Religious Tract Society, the journal exposed an estimated readership of in excess of one million working-class boys per week to the values of Muscular Christianity and provided helpful advice under titles such as ‘Some Manly Words for Boys by Manly Men’.<sup>130</sup> In a society where such manliness was admired, the receipt of a lifesaving medal provided a man with an immediate and highly visible means of raising his social status and asserting his position as a brave, respectable and loyal man who was willing to risk his own welfare for the good of his fellows and his community. Such status was however dependent upon the recipient being physically able to display his - or her - reward.

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<sup>127</sup> J.A. Froude, ‘Representative Men’, *Short Stories on Great Subjects* (London, 1888), pp. 583-84.

<sup>128</sup> T. Nicholson, ‘Masculine Status and Working-Class Culture in the Cleveland Ironstone Mining Communities, 1850-1881’, K. Laybourn (Ed.), *Social Conditions, Status and Community 1860- c.1920* (Thrupp, 1997), pp. 139-59.

<sup>129</sup> Founded 1879. A companion journal, the *Girls’ Own Paper*, was published from 1880.

<sup>130</sup> J. Springhall, ‘Building Character in the British Boy: the Attempt to Extend Christian Manliness to Working-class Adolescents, 1880-1914’ in J.A. Mangan, & J. Walvin, (eds.), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1987), pp. 65-66.

In 1867 the size of the Society's medal was reduced to correspond with those awarded to the armed forces and, in 1869, Queen Victoria granted official permission for these new medals to be worn on uniform. The medals of the RHS could henceforth formally be worn alongside the State's own rewards for bravery: the Victoria Cross, Distinguished Conduct Medal and Conspicuous Gallantry Medal. In truth, this merely served to formalise an existing position, for the RHS was already in the practice of fitting its awards with ribbons and there is ample evidence that many members of the armed forces were already in the habit of wearing their medals on uniform.

Official sanction of the practice however ensured that the wearing of the Society's medals became more commonplace, with the inevitable result that they came much more frequently to be seen by members of the public. Another associated innovation was the introduction of silver and bronze bars to be worn on the ribbons of individuals who had earned the Society's medal on more than one occasion.<sup>131</sup> The bars were hard-won and only 17 silver and 248 bronze were awarded up to 1917.<sup>132</sup> In a few exceptional cases, individuals earned multiple bars.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Marjory Robson, 'Clasps to the ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY Medals', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 24 (1995), pp. 4-20, hereafter cited as Robson, 'Clasps'.

<sup>132</sup> A complete summary roll of these recipients see Robson 'Clasps' and Marjory Robson 'ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY - Silver Clasps' *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 32 (1998), p. 74.

<sup>133</sup> A second silver bar has been earned on only one occasion. A total of thirteen 2-bar bronze medals have been issued, whilst four 3-bar and four 4-bar awards have also been made. A fifth bronze was awarded on only one occasion. For full citations see C.P. Barclay and W.H. Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 3: 1950-2000* (London, 2001).





**8. Post-1867 Medal with 2<sup>nd</sup> award clasp (author's collection)**

If the creation of a smaller and more readily wearable medal in 1867 raised the public profile of the Society, a further boost was to come a few years later with the establishment in 1873 of an exceptionally prestigious new award, the Stanhope Medal.<sup>134</sup> This gold medal remains to this day the highest honour bestowed by the RHS and is still presented annually in recognition of the most gallant rescue rewarded by the Society.<sup>135</sup>

The Stanhope Medal - which was issued with either a 'successful' or 'unsuccessful' reverse according to circumstances of the rescue being recognised - was identical in appearance to the Society's more commonly awarded bronze and silver awards, other than insofar as it was struck in gold and suspended from an ornamental plaque-shaped ribbon bar, embossed with the date of award and the words STANHOPE MEDAL.<sup>136</sup> Being struck in gold however, it emulated

<sup>134</sup> Founded in memory of Charles Scudamore Scudamore Stanhope. E. A. J. van Engeland, 'Chandos Scudamore Scudamore Stanhope - A Biography', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 27, 1996, pp. 52-53.

<sup>135</sup> RHS Committee Minutes, 18 Feb. 1873. The old 'large' gold medal had only been presented on a small number of exceptional occasions (including awards to Royalty and to Grace Darling) and had never performed a significant role in the Society's system of awards.

<sup>136</sup> Since the 1930s the medal has been suspended from a bar that is identical to that used on the Society's other medals. The use of 18 carat gold was abandoned in 1942 in favour of a 9 carat alloy.

the Crown's highest civilian award: the Albert Medal, first class. And just like Albert Medallists, holders of the Stanhope Medal were the subject of high esteem, the medal itself being favourably compared with the highest of military honours and being dubbed 'The Victoria Cross of Peace' by the *Quiver* magazine in 1904:

The deeds that have won the Stanhope Gold Medal will rank among the bravest records of the time. They rival the most valiant actions in war, and exhibit in a high degree the daring and the heroism which we place amongst the noblest virtues of mankind. So highly placed is the Stanhope, that it forms a brilliant complement to even the Victoria Cross itself.<sup>137</sup>

The first winner of the Stanhope medal was a seaman by the name of Matthew Webb who was recognised for his gallantry in diving overboard in a desperate attempt to save a sailor who had fallen overboard from a fast-moving steamship in mid-Atlantic. The presentation of the medal was prestigious and well-publicised, the Duke of Edinburgh pinning the award to his chest at a grand ceremony held at the Freemason's Tavern in London.

The recipient certainly recognised the importance of the award to his career, noting later that, 'I shall always look back on upon being the recipient of the first gold medal given away as being one of the most fortunate coincidences in what, I am bound now to admit, has been a somewhat fortunate career.'<sup>138</sup> Elevated to the position of minor celebrity Webb was able to turn his back on the merchant navy and devote himself instead to the art of swimming. In August 1875 he was to win further acclaim as the first man to swim the English Channel.

Whilst the Society's medals were given in recognition of exceptional bravery; for lesser acts, testimonials on vellum or parchment were awarded. In 1894 for example, a total of 621 awards were made as follows:<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> F.M. Holmes, 'The Victoria Cross of Peace', *The Quiver Magazine* (1904), reproduced in *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 30 (1997), p. 28.

<sup>138</sup> K. Wilson, *The Crossing* (London, 2000), p. 60.

<sup>139</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1894, p. 10.

**Table 1. RHS Awards 1894<sup>140</sup>**

Award	Number given
Gold Medal (Stanhope)	1
Silver Medals	9
Bronze Medals	118
Bronze Clasps (in lieu of additional Bronze Medals)	4
Testimonials on Vellum	306
Testimonials on Parchment	145
Pecuniary Awards with Certificates	38

The rewards recognised 527 individual rescues. Of these, 400 occurred in England; 51 in Ireland; 11 in Scotland; 13 in India; and 33 in the Colonies. A further 19 rescues took place in foreign countries, with either the rescuer or casualty being British.<sup>141</sup> Many of the recommendations were made via official channels. The 1899 Annual General Court reported that 37 recommendations had been received via the Admiralty; 51 via the military authorities; nine via the India Office; seven via the Colonial Office; three via the Foreign Office; and 34 via the police.<sup>142</sup> The Society also took great pride in the fact that it honoured lifesavers of both sexes:

The rescue of life, whether at sea or on our coasts, or from asphyxia in mines, wells, or other inland dangers, is constantly calling forth the best instincts of our race, and the devotion and bravery of not only men, but women also, often receive their only acknowledgement of meritorious conduct at the hands of the ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY.<sup>143</sup>

That making awards of this type had become central to the purpose of the Society is evident from the layout of *Annual Reports* of the period, wherein accounts of the rescues recognised during the course of the year generally occupy about half of the volume.<sup>144</sup> Thus, although in its earliest years the RHS had restricted the granting of its medals to its more respectable supporters and sponsors, by the latter part of the century this was certainly not the case. The Society's awards were widely distributed and had gained a status and desirability that extended far beyond the borders of Britain. Indeed, even an American writer such as Mark

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<sup>140</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1894, p. 10.

<sup>141</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1894, p. 10.

<sup>142</sup> *The Times*, 20 May 1899, p. 10.

<sup>143</sup> *The Times*, 20 May 1899, p. 10.

<sup>144</sup> See for example the RHS *Annual Report*, 1894, where the general list of cases occupies pages 26-104 of a 152 page report, with an additional five pages being dedicated to other medal related-topics.

Twain could write with some justification of ‘That reward which a sailor prizes and covets above all other distinctions, the Royal Humane Society’s medal.’<sup>145</sup> The RHS had come to be inextricably associated with the rewarding of courage and the celebration of heroism.

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<sup>145</sup> ‘Perils at Sea’, *The New York Times*, 26 November 1872. The article quotes a letter written by Twain to the RHS recommending that it recognise the gallantry of several seamen of the Cunard steamship *Batavia* who had risked their lives to rescue the crew of a sinking Newcastle barque in mid-Atlantic. Twain witnessed the rescue from the deck of the *Batavia*. None of those recommended by Twain received RHS medals.

## REWARDS FOR COURAGE, I



*PHILANTHROPIC AND COMMERCIAL*

## **Accidents and Philanthropy in the Victorian Age**

The RHS was of course not the only private body which actively rewarded bravery in the nineteenth century and other charitable bodies – as well as commercial bodies and private individuals – followed its lead. As David Owen observes, charity played a crucial role in the Victorian world. The Victorians were, he argues, interested in philanthropy for a broad range of reasons including, ‘sympathy and compassion for their fellows, the promoting of religion (and in some instances perhaps, to compensate for shaky faith), concern for the stability of society, social pressure brought to bear on them, or their own special ambitions.’<sup>1</sup> Such was the universality of charity in middle-class circles that critics were able to question the extent to which all these overlapping – and at times conflicting – ‘good deeds’ contributed to the good of society as a whole. In particular there was concern that the provision of a charitable safety net to the poor sick and needy would encourage idleness and undermine society, an early Victorian commentator complaining that, ‘any public institutions which lead [the working classes]... to depend upon the bounty of others in times of poverty or sickness, and which tend to encourage idleness and improvidence... are not public charities but public evils.’<sup>2</sup>

Such criticism did little to discourage philanthropy and much of Victorian society flung itself with abandon into charitable endeavours. Such good works could offer both spiritual and material benefits. At one level Richard Potter observed ‘What luxury it is to do good!’<sup>3</sup> and was content to be uplifted by the experience of contributing generously to the support of the poor. For other members of the upper and upper-middle classes, the culture of charity had become such a core element of Victorian life that philanthropy was rendered a social imperative. Progress within society was, in part, dependent upon an ability to ‘exhibit a decent interest in good works.’<sup>4</sup> Owen argues forcibly that the world of philanthropy mirrored the Victorian world at large and, as in the

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<sup>1</sup> D. Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (Harvard, 1964), pp. 166-67.

<sup>2</sup> The translator of Faucher’s *Manchester in 1844*, quoted in Owen, *English Philanthropy*, p. 168.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Owen, *English Philanthropy*, p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> Owen, *English Philanthropy*, p. 165.

eighteenth century, the social cache associated with the patronage of royalty or high nobility was of crucial importance to ensuring the success of individual charities in a competitive world.<sup>5</sup>

Whilst there is little doubt that some of the charitable work undertaken in Britain's cities was ill-focussed and deserving of criticism, such criticism is less easily applied those organisations that devoted their efforts to the preservation of lives from drowning or other perils. Their work could be seen to produce results and these results - in terms of lives saved - could be readily enumerated. Furthermore - with the exception of attempted suicides and a minority who got into trouble as a result of drunkenness or recklessness - the beneficiaries of their charity could not reasonably be perceived as the culpable victims of their own idleness or intemperance, but rather as the powerless victims of forces beyond their control.

The good deeds done by these societies were regularly reflected in the favourable press coverage that they received. From its earliest days, the activities of the RHS had been regularly covered in journals such as the *Gentleman's Magazine*. *The Times*, likewise, regularly reported the Society's activities, the level of such reporting increasing markedly as the nineteenth century progressed:

**Table 1. References to RHS in *The Times*<sup>6</sup>**

Date	News Stories	Editorial & Commentary	Advertisements	Average Coverage per Annum
1785-1799	8	-	5	0.86
1800-1824	11	1	19	1.24
1825-1849	102	18	13	5.32
1850-1874	160	24	15	7.96
1875-1899	404	15	7	17.04
1900-1914	244	4	11	17.26

Such coverage continued in the pages of various organs throughout the nineteenth century, the *Graphic* of Saturday 9 May 1874 for example celebrating

<sup>5</sup> Owen, *English Philanthropy*, pp. 165-66.

<sup>6</sup> *The Times Digital Archive*,  
[http://infotrac.galegroup.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/itw/infomark/0/1/1/purl=rc6\\_TTDA?sw\\_aep=dur\\_uni](http://infotrac.galegroup.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/itw/infomark/0/1/1/purl=rc6_TTDA?sw_aep=dur_uni), accessed 4/12/2010.

‘The Centenary of the Royal Humane Society’, by dedicating the entire front cover of the edition to a series of seven engravings illustrating the RHS’s diverse activities. Similarly, the *Strand Magazine* devoted no less than eleven pages to reproducing the likenesses of medal winners – together with the details of their deeds - during the period January- June 1893.<sup>7</sup>

Supporters of lifesaving charities were thus able to give their money in support of high-profile organisations whose activities were perceived to be broadly beyond reproach. The Society’s membership was furthermore able to bask in the reflected glory of those who had received its awards. Indeed, the implicit connection appears so strong that the *Strand Magazine* actually confused the membership of the RHS with the medallists:

The rewards which it bestows upon its members, who are distinguished for self-forgetting bravery which thrills the blood to read of, are merely the outward tokens of the admiration which is felt by every heart. Those members include persons of all ranks of life: men, women and children;... [who wear] the medal with conspicuous pride.<sup>8</sup>

But if the widespread support for lifesaving organizations during the nineteenth-century was in part driven by charitable impulses, fear and anxiety also had roles to play in defining what Roger Cooter describes as ‘the Moment of the Accident’.<sup>9</sup> Contending that ‘before the last third of the nineteenth century accidental injuries, whether occurring randomly or routinely, were seldom a matter of much public concern’,<sup>10</sup> Cooter argues that, although specific incidents might spark passing concern and comment, accidents in general had up until this point continued to be perceived as Acts of God. This view has been echoed by other authors, Schivelbusch for example observing that in the pre-industrial age the accident was merely ‘a grammatical and philosophical concept, more or less synonymous with coincidence.’<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, as most accidental deaths and

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<sup>7</sup> *The Strand Magazine*, vol. 5 (Jan.-June 1893), pp. 370-75, 446-50.

<sup>8</sup> *The Strand Magazine*, vol. 5 (Jan.-June 1893), p. 370.

<sup>9</sup> R. Cooter, ‘The Moment of the Accident: Culture, Militarism and Modernity in Late-Victorian Britain’, in R. Cooter and B Luckin (eds.) *Accidents in History: Injuries, Fatalities and Social Relations* (Amsterdam, 1997), pp. 107-157.

<sup>10</sup> Cooter, ‘The Moment of the Accident’, p. 107.

<sup>11</sup> W. Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: Trains and Travel in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Oxford, 1979), p. 133.



injuries occurred in industrial settings, they remained largely invisible to the middle and upper classes.

Cooter contends that the development of the railways opened up the risk of industrial injury to all social classes and the public nature of rail accidents ensured that they received a disproportionate level of press coverage,<sup>12</sup> contributing in part to a public perception of constant looming danger. Indeed, advances in technology could be perceived as increasing rather than controlling this danger, Schivelbusch for example observing that ‘the more efficient the technology, the more catastrophic its destruction when it collapses.’<sup>13</sup> Thus industrial and technological progress helped to engender broader concerns that the city had become a place of danger analogous to a battlefield and in turn fostered an increased public interest in ‘first aid’ and a boom in the production of relevant manuals and demand for the provision of first aid classes.

Cooter’s thesis has proved generally sound, although his argument that the ‘Moment of the Accident’ must be confined to the closing third of the nineteenth-century is vulnerable to challenge. There can be little doubt that the advent of the railways brought about a profound transformation in the way in which the public viewed accidents, but it is equally true that the concept of the ‘technological accident’ was firmly embedded in the national consciousness well before the late 1860s.

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<sup>12</sup> Cooter notes that in 1870 over 300 railway accidents received press coverage. During the same period only 35 mining accidents were covered. See Cooter ‘The Moment of the Accident’, p. 112.

<sup>13</sup> Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, p. 133.



**1. Prominent press coverage of an industrial accident:  
Cover illustration, *Illustrated London News* 15 March 1845 (author's  
collection)**

The fear that a railway engine or other piece of machine might destroy itself 'by means of its own power'<sup>14</sup> was well established during the early railway era and the widespread use of engine names suggestive of inhuman or unnatural energy is unlikely to have done much to comfort a nervous public.<sup>15</sup> Railway accidents were no respecters of social class and the improvements in communications which the development of a national rail network supported ensured that when accidents occurred lurid reports of their horrific consequences could swiftly be distributed throughout the land. The gentleman reading his copy of *The Times* over breakfast was as vulnerable as the third-class traveller, and even the more whimsical publications offered their readers stark reminders of the dangers of the new technology, with *Punch* encouraging its readers to sing (to the tune of 'Hickery Dickery Dock'):

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<sup>14</sup> M. Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven/London; 1999), p. 84.

<sup>15</sup> Typical of the names given to the Great Western Railway's rolling stock in 1839 were Vulcan, Atlas and Apollo. See Freeman, *Railways*, p. 64.

Smashery, mashery, crash!  
Into the “Goods” we dash:  
The “Express” we find;  
Is just behind –  
Smashery, mashery, crash!<sup>16</sup>

The nineteenth-century world could seem a very dangerous place; but the support (whether practical or financial) of the diverse organisations dedicated to the preservation of life offered Victorians an opportunity to seize back a degree of control in the struggle to tame the power of science and nature.

### **Shipwreck**

Although it had been the focus of the RHS’s efforts in its early years, drowning was of course not the only danger faced by the labouring classes. The rise of the factory had brought millions into close proximity with dangerous and unguarded machinery, whilst in the coalfields of the nation miners faced daily the risks of entombment or suffocation as they hewed the coal needed to keep the nation’s workshops running. Raw materials and manufactured goods were transported around the country via a network of perilous canals, or towed behind a huge fleet of intrinsically-dangerous steam-powered railway engines. Prior to the railway revolution the middle and upper classes had been to some extent insulated from these perils, but even great wealth and high social standing afforded no protection in the teeth of a storm. All supporters of bodies dedicated to saving lives at sea could accordingly take comfort from the fact that their subscriptions to funds and trusts providing relief to the shipwrecked were helping to ensure the safety of members of their own class, as well as providing invaluable assistance to Britain’s fishermen and mariners.

As an island nation, the story of Britain is inextricably linked to the sea. In the age of sail, shipwreck was a constant risk and catastrophes commonplace, the *Lloyds Lists* for 1793-99 recording no fewer than 2,967 merchant ships being

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<sup>16</sup> *Punch*, XXIII (1852), p. 157. Quoted in Freeman, *Railways*, p. 85.

wrecked at sea or driven ashore.<sup>17</sup> With no access to weather forecasts or lifesaving equipment, sailing ships were at the mercy of sudden storms that regularly drove single vessels or whole fleets to destruction, as in the case of the great storm of 21 September 1789 which saw 53 vessels lost in Douglas Bay, with the accompanying loss of 161 local herring fishermen<sup>18</sup>. Prominent incidents had an enormous effect on local communities and it is perhaps not surprising that, by the latter part of the eighteenth century there was increasing public interest in the development of means of reducing the level of carnage experienced both on the high seas and the nation's inshore waters.

Such catastrophes could on occasion prompt a widely-based public response and in some instances short-lived funds were established which arranged to have medals struck to recognize the bravery of those who had distinguished themselves at a wreck or other incident. A good nautical example is the medal awarded to the crew and passengers of the *Cambria*, which came to the aid of the blazing East Indiaman *Kent* in the Bay of Biscay in March 1825. In the age of wooden ships fire was a constant danger and the situation aboard the *Kent* was made all the more dangerous by the fact that she was carrying a large number of troops and a magazine containing over 100 tons of munitions.

The incident was one of high drama, as the crew of a small brigantine with the aid of a party of Cornish miners struggled in a storm to bring all of those aboard the stricken vessel to safety before she exploded. Despite the dangers of fire, explosion and tempest, the *Cambria* (under the command of Captain Cook) succeeded in rescuing 547 of those onboard the stricken vessel, including most of the wives and children who had been accompanying the troops en route to India. The *Kent* eventually exploded at 1.30 am on the morning of 2 March 1825. In all 82 lives were lost.<sup>19</sup> Upon returning to port, both survivors and crew were treated with great kindness by the people of Falmouth, with the local Quaker

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<sup>17</sup> T. Grocott, *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Eras* (London, 1997), p. vii. A further 3693 merchant ships were captured and held by enemy naval forces during the same period.

<sup>18</sup> I. Cameron, *Riders of the Storm: The Story of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution* (London, 2002), pp. 11-13.

<sup>19</sup> L. Brown, *The British Historical Medal 1760-1960: Vol. 1, The Accession of George III to the Death of William IV, 1760-1837*, (London, 1980), p. 305.

community taking the lead in organising the distribution of clothes and other essentials.<sup>20</sup> The grateful passengers and crew offered their thanks to God for their preservation, Major MacGregor, who had played a key role in the incident, recording that:

On the first Sunday after our arrival, Colonel Fearon, followed by all his officers and men, and accompanied by Captain Cobb and the officers and private passengers of his late ship, hastened to prostrate themselves before the throne of the Heavenly grace, to pour out the public expression of their thanksgiving to their almighty Preserver.<sup>21</sup>

Nor were the contributions of the mortal rescuers forgotten, and their fame quickly spread and cash and other rewards were donated by well-wishers. The rescued officers resolved to present Captain Cook with an ‘elegant cup of the value of 50 guineas’<sup>22</sup> and Cook and other members of his crew received generous cash gifts from the East India Company, the Royal Exchange Association and Lloyds. Even the government felt moved to respond, with the Secretary of War, Lord Palmerston, authorising cash payments to captain, crew and miners.<sup>23</sup> For several of those who had played a distinguished role in the incident there were also medals. Lt. Col. Fearon of the 31<sup>st</sup> Regiment was created a Companion of the Order of the Bath and received an honorary medal from the RHS. RHS medals were also presented to Captain Cook and two other army officers, Major MacGregor and Captain Cobb. But in this instance medals, funded by subscriptions given by members of the local community, were also presented to many of the less grand rescuers, the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* of 12 March noting that, ‘It is... intended to have a medal struck, to commemorate the heroic conduct of the Miners, to whose spirited resolve..., the preservation of the lives of the far greater part of those saved is attributed.’

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<sup>20</sup> *The Times*, 9 March 1825, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> D. MacGregor, ‘*The Loss of the Kent East Indiaman*’ (London, new edition, n.d.), p. 75. The volume was published in the Religious Tract Society’s ‘Shilling Illustrated Books for Adults’ series.

<sup>22</sup> *The Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 12 March 1825. Quoted in D. Fearon, ‘The Melancholy Loss of the *Kent*, East Indiaman – 1825: An Account of the Medal Struck to Commemorate the Event’, *Orders and Medals Research Society Journal* 27.4 (1988), p. 248

<sup>23</sup> Fearon, ‘The Melancholy Loss of the *Kent*’, pp. 248-49. See also MacGregor, ‘*The Loss of the Kent East Indiaman*’ p. 90.

The wreck of the *Kent* was an isolated incident, and the fund established to support the survivors of the fire and to reward their heroic rescuers was short-lived. Other practical life-saving initiatives would prove much longer-lived. Typical of these was a lifeboat-fund founded on 5 August 1802 at the Castle Eden Inn near Hartlepool in County Durham.<sup>24</sup> With the Mayor of Hartlepool, Sir Ralphe Millbanke Bt., in the chair, the 14 gentlemen at this meeting resolved to raise the funds necessary to build a lifeboat, carriage and boathouse for the town; the boat to be crewed by local mariners. Seven of those attending the inaugural meeting were clerics. A series of further meetings was held at various venues in and around Hartlepool and the business of fundraising was vigorously pursued by the Revds. John Brewster of Stockton and Benjamin Lumley of Hartlepool. Eventually the sum of £307-16s-6d was raised, boosted by a contribution of £50 from Lloyds of London, and with other donations coming from 99 private subscribers. Major donors included the Bishop of Durham - who gave 21 guineas - and Sir Ralphe Millbanke who gave 10 guineas.<sup>25</sup> A lifeboat 'of Mr Greathead's North country type' was duly installed in its own boathouse at the beginning of 1803.<sup>26</sup>

A pamphlet published by Messrs. Christopher and Jennet of Stockton in May 1808 provides valuable insights into the management of this small provincial lifeboat fund.<sup>27</sup> The fund was administered by a committee of nine gentlemen, including three clerics; a naval officer; a surgeon; and a councillor from Durham. Subscriptions were welcomed, with individuals contributing the sum of three guineas or more being 'entitled to attend and vote on the Committee'.<sup>28</sup> The pamphlet identifies a range of individuals and corporate bodies authorised to accept subscriptions and other contributions. Interest in the work of the trust was clearly not confined to the Hartlepool area and it is significant to note that subscriptions could also be paid in the major regional cities of Durham and Darlington. The leadership and core voting membership of the trust can accordingly be seen to be drawn from the church and professional classes, with a

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<sup>24</sup> B. Spaldin, *Hartlepool Lifeboats 1803-2003* (2003), p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Spaldin, *Hartlepool Lifeboats*, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Spaldin, *Hartlepool Lifeboats*, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Anon., *Life-boat, Hartlepool & Vicinity* (Stockton, 1808), pp. 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> Anon., *Life-boat, Hartlepool & Vicinity* (Stockton, 1808), p. 2.

considerable financial investment being required from those seeking to influence the trust's activities.

Whilst the management and leadership of the trust was controlled by the moneyed classes, members of all social orders could contribute to the support of the trust through donations made at an annual fund-raising sermon preached at the parish church in Hartlepool,<sup>29</sup> and curious visitors could also pay to be shown around the lifeboat and boathouse. It is significant that, whilst the Committee was solidly middle-class in its composition, the lifeboat-men were not, it being recorded that 'About 40 of the Fishermen have already enrolled their names, as willing to serve in the LIFE-BOAT, on the terms proposed by the Committee'.<sup>30</sup> These men were not however expected to be willing to risk themselves without the promise of a financial reward, and the 1808 pamphlet stresses that they would, 'on COMMON OCCASIONS receive Half a Guinea each, and on EXTRAORDINARY OCCASIONS from a Guinea upwards, as the Committee shall judge the merits of the Case.'<sup>31</sup>

The early years of the nineteenth century witnessed the establishment of numerous locally-organised philanthropic bodies like the Hartlepool Lifeboat Trust around the coast of the British Isles. The formation of these local bodies was motivated both by the reporting of specific disasters and by a general awareness of the perils facing all seafarers. Their founders had furthermore been able to draw upon the good-will and financial support of coastal communities which were all too aware of the need to provide a 'safety net' for local mariners as well as other seamen plying their trade in Britain's treacherous coastal waters. If locally-focused in their activities, the Hartlepool Trust had nevertheless been willing to look further afield for financial aid and had demonstrated some considerable success in attracting the support of wealthy sponsors.

The development of local lifeboat trusts can accordingly be seen in many aspects to both follow and mirror that of the RHS in the capital. The close involvement

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<sup>29</sup> Spaldin records that £14.16s.6d was raised at the service in 1808. See Spaldin, *Hartlepool Lifeboats* p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Anon., *Life-boat, Hartlepool & Vicinity*, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Anon., *Life-boat, Hartlepool & Vicinity*, p. 1.

of the church both through the sponsorship of individual clerics and the use of fundraising sermons was a prominent feature of both, as was the division between the roles of those who supported them: the lower orders being expected to undertake the risky work of rescuing those in peril; whilst their social betters provided the money necessary to support this work and retained managerial responsibility. Furthermore, the prominent role played by the clergy, civic leaders and titled members in the activities of both the Humane Society and the lifeboat trusts lent them a degree of social cache which reflected well upon their less distinguished sponsors.

But if there was a social element to the activities of these philanthropic bodies, it must not be forgotten that their primary purpose remained to preserve life. Again the parallels between the approaches adopted in Hartlepool and in the metropolis are striking: prize competitions were used to promote the development of new lifesaving techniques and apparatus; appropriate equipment was provided and maintained at the expense of the philanthropic bodies; and members of the working classes were encouraged to take an active part in the rescue of their fellows through the provision of a structured system of financial incentives. Nevertheless, although the early years of the nineteenth century witnessed the establishment of numerous local lifeboat trusts, much of the coast remained without the benefit of lifeboat cover and there was as yet no overarching body to manage or coordinate the available resources. The first steps towards addressing this deficit were taken by William Hillary, a Yorkshire-born Quaker philanthropist.

### **Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck**

Hillary was born in the Yorkshire Dales in 1771, enjoying a good education that was paid for by the profits of the sugar trade. Entering London society, he was appointed an equerry to Prince Augustus Frederick at the age of 23 and travelled extensively in Southern Europe in the company of his master.<sup>32</sup> Hillary was an idealist and was drawn to romantic and worthy causes. Having been greatly

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<sup>32</sup> Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, p. 6; Cameron, *Riders of the Storm*, pp. 22.



impressed by his visit to Malta, for example, he developed a fascination with the Order of St John that was later to see him intimately linked with the creation of the 'revived' Order in Britain. This romantic streak found an outlet during the Napoleonic Wars, when he raised and maintained at his own expense a 1,400-strong '1<sup>st</sup> Essex Legion of Infantry and Cavalry' to defend the county against the feared French invasion. The gesture earned Hillary a baronetcy, but nearly bankrupted him.<sup>33</sup>

In greatly reduced circumstances, Hillary moved to Douglas on the Isle of Man where he continued to take an interest in good causes, campaigning without success to have a lifeboat maintained in Douglas harbour. He was not however merely an armchair campaigner, and in October 1822 played a significant practical role in the rescue of the crews of the Royal Navy cutter *Vigilant* and several other vessels which had been overcome by a storm off the coast at Douglas. Hillary was inspired by the successes of that day and set about drafting the document that was to lay the foundations for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. His pamphlet, published privately in London in 1823, was entitled *An Appeal to the British Nation on the Humanity and Policy of Forming a National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck*. Dedicated to the King, it stressed the financial risks faced by those who were willing to set to sea in the hope of saving the lives of their fellow mariners, noting that the author had 'seen the noblest instances of self devotion; men who have saved the lives of their fellow-creatures at the peril of their own, without a prospect of reward if successful, and with the certainty that their families would be left destitute if they perished.'<sup>34</sup>

Given Hillary's own experiences and his awareness of the risks – physical and financial – faced by rescuers and their dependents, it is accordingly not surprising that his *Appeal* went on to propose that, in addition to a range of practical measures focused on the rescue of shipwrecked sailors, the nascent national society should undertake:

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<sup>33</sup> Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, pp. 6-7; Cameron, *Riders of the Storm*, p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> W. Hillary, *An Appeal to the British Nation on the Humanity and Policy of Forming a National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck*, third edition, (London, 1825), p. 10.

The bestowing of suitable awards on those who rescue lives from shipwreck, or those who assist vessels in distress; and the supplying of relief to the destitute widows or families of the brave men who unhappily may lose their lives in such meritorious attempts.<sup>35</sup>

Hillary's *Appeal* was a worthy undertaking and his printing of 700 copies for distribution to parliamentarians, Admiralty staff and other men of influence reflects his enthusiasm for the project.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately, as Cameron observed, with few exceptions, 'Everyone was sympathetic. No one was prepared to do anything.'<sup>37</sup>

The project might have foundered there had it not been for the intervention of the London MP Thomas Wilson who, recognising that neither the government nor the navy were likely to embark on an undertaking that would cost them money, encouraged Hillary - as a former royal equerry - to exploit his contacts at court and to direct his efforts instead towards obtaining the sponsorship of rich private individuals. This approach proved more successful and an appeal launched in 1824 led to the recruitment to his cause of many of the most influential men in the land, including two archbishops, six bishops, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Lord Mayor of London and both Peel and Canning.<sup>38</sup> A preliminary meeting was held at the London Tavern in Bishopgate on 12 February 1824.<sup>39</sup>

The most important name now associated with the nascent Institution was however that of King George IV, who by March 1824 had accepted the role of Patron. Royal patronage guaranteed social respectability and proved a powerful recruiting tool, attracting both members and money to the Institution. The membership could soon boast five royal dukes, the future King of the Belgians and numerous lesser nobles and other notables. The king was also instrumental in persuading the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, to accept the role of President

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<sup>35</sup> Hillary, *An Appeal to the British Nation*, p. 17.

<sup>36</sup> First published in 1823, the pamphlet was in the following years regularly reprinted with additions which reflected the development of the Institution.

<sup>37</sup> Cameron, *Riders of the Storm*, p. 27.

<sup>38</sup> Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>39</sup> Hillary, *An Appeal to the British Nation*, pp. 42-43.

on the Institution<sup>40</sup>. The formal inaugural meeting of the Institution was held at the London Tavern in Bishopgate on 4 March 1824. The higher echelons of society were well represented, with the Archbishop of Canterbury taking the chair. Other notables present included William Wilberforce, the inventor Captain George Manby, and the bishops of Chester and London.<sup>41</sup> Later in the month, Thomas Wilson, who had been appointed Chairman of the Institution, was able to report that, ‘His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury had communicated to him his Majesty’s most Gracious command that the institution is hereafter authorised to take the name of the “Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck”.’<sup>42</sup>

This unambiguous mark of Royal approval was a further encouragement to potential sponsors and in the first year of its existence the Institution was able to attract substantial financial support both from individuals and corporate bodies such as Trinity House and Lloyds.<sup>43</sup> The Institution’s appeals were couched in highly emotive terms and - like those of the RHS - were specifically intended to tap into patriotic and commercial sentiments, Hillary arguing that:

To all who revere the naval glory of Britain – to all who estimate the commercial greatness of their country, or who profit by its success – to all who feel the humanity of the policy of preserving the brave defenders of the state, and the hardy conductors of commerce, from those dangers, to which, in the exercise of their arduous duties, they are continually exposed – the Institution cannot appeal in vain.<sup>44</sup>

With over £9,000 in donations to call upon, the new institution was in a position to set about the purchase of life-boats and mortar rocket-throwing apparatus; as well as providing support for the victims of shipwreck and rewards for rescuers. The importance of the Institution’s founders and donors was celebrated in verse, Rev. Edward Dalton’s poem *The Sea* (1866) urging his readers to give:

Praise to the men, the noble of the land  
Whose love projected and whose wisdom planned

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<sup>40</sup> Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>41</sup> Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> B. Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry: RNLI Medals and How They Were Won* (London, 1998), p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> W. Hillary, *An Appeal to the British Nation on the Humanity and Policy of forming a National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck*, third edition (London, 1825), p. 57.

The LIFEBOAT INSTITUTE to strive and save  
By brave men's hands the wrecked and periled brave.  
Praise to the fair whose opened caskets pour  
Their aiding gold with bounty brimming o'er,  
To build, equip and launch these floating arks,  
And snatch the drowning from their foundered barks.<sup>45</sup>

The funds which poured in allowed the Institution to pursue a series of key projects, one of which was to provide rescuers with suitable rewards, Hillary explaining that the Institution invited 'to its aid the humane and the brave, urging them to rescue their fellow creatures, by... conferring honorary and pecuniary rewards for their generous efforts.'<sup>46</sup> At the inaugural meeting of the Institution, William Wilberforce, the famous anti-slavery campaigner and Yorkshire MP, had proposed "That medallions or pecuniary rewards be given to those who rescue lives in cases of shipwreck".<sup>47</sup> Financial compensation was also to be paid as a means of 'rendering every practicable relief to the widows and families of those who unfortunately may perish in their attempts to save the lives of others.'<sup>48</sup>

By June, the Institution's governing Committee had turned its attention to the design of the medallic award, drawing clear inspiration from the recent liberal distribution of the Waterloo Medal: the first of the modern campaign medals.<sup>49</sup> The creation of such an award had always been a priority. Indeed, the importance attached to the making of awards can be seen in the objectives that the Institution set itself in 1824:<sup>50</sup>

1. To make awards of medals or cash to those responsible for rescuing people from shipwreck;

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<sup>45</sup> Originally published in E. Dalton, *The Sea, the Railway Journey and Other Poems* (London, 1866). Reprinted in J. Cumming & C. Vince (eds.), *The Life-boat in Verse* (London 1938), pp. 23-24.

<sup>46</sup> Hillary, *An Appeal to the British Nation*, p. 56.

<sup>47</sup> Hillary, *An Appeal to the British Nation*, p. 49.

<sup>48</sup> Hillary, *An Appeal to the British Nation*, p. 56.

<sup>49</sup> Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 3, where he records that the Committee decided on 10 July that the medallion should be 'about the size of the Waterloo medal, - but need not be so thick'.

<sup>50</sup> Cameron, *Riders of the Storm*, p. 33.

2. To provide examples of Captain Manby's rescue apparatus<sup>51</sup> to all coastguard and lifeboat stations;
3. To provide new lifeboats around the coast.

Permission was obtained to use a representation of the King's head on the obverse of the medal<sup>52</sup> and a sketch by Henry Howard RA was selected to form the basis of the reverse design.<sup>53</sup> The Chief Engraver of the Royal Mint, William Wyon was chosen to cut the dies,<sup>54</sup> his work having been personally recommended by Howard.<sup>55</sup>



**2. RNIPLS/RNLI medal: signed "W WYON MINT", first awarded 1825  
(author's collection)**

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<sup>51</sup> This apparatus took the form of a specially-adapted mortar that could throw a line from the shore to ships in distress close to shore. This line could then be used to haul harness equipment aboard the stricken vessel and to facilitate the landing of the shipwrecked crew.

<sup>52</sup> Permission was granted via a letter to the Institution from Sir Robert Peel, 25 August 1824. See Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 3. The portrait selected for use on the medal was based on a portrait bust by the sculptor Sir Francis Chantrey.

<sup>53</sup> Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> O. Warner, *The Life-boat Service* (London, 1974), p.10; Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 3. Henry Howard RA was Secretary of the Royal Academy.

The reverse design, which was reminiscent of Delacroix's "The Barque of Dante", showed a naked mariner being pulled from the sea by the crew of a small boat, whilst the accompanying inscription, "Let not the deep swallow me up", quoted from Psalm 69, and alluded to the Christian values which had influenced the creation of the Institution. Significantly, the Institution's medals were struck at a smaller size than those issued by the RHS at the time and, perhaps once again drawing inspiration from the Waterloo Medal, were from the outset intended to be worn suspended from a length of blue ribbon. The first medals were often pierced to facilitate the fitting of a suspension ring and, as early as June 1825, the Committee had instructed that 'a gold or silver loop be attached to every medal'.<sup>56</sup> The presentation of a wearable medal bearing the Royal effigy was not without significance. As Prochaska has observed, 'in a hierarchical society, the humble subject looks on a royal medal with the same respect as a magnate looks on a peerage'.<sup>57</sup> From the outset the medals were thus intimately linked with patriotism and loyalty to the Crown. Moreover, they were accordingly highly valued and much sought after. Indeed their allure crossed class boundaries; no-one was keener to receive one than Sir William Hillary. Medals were intended to be granted to members of all social classes, the earliest gallantry awards being voted on 10 July 1824.<sup>58</sup> The Institution was likewise keen to cement the loyalty of its core supporters and the presentation to them of medals bearing the Royal effigy was an effective means of attaining this end. Almost as soon as the engraver William Wyon had completed the dies for the medal a programme of liberal distribution began, with gold medals being presented to key establishment sponsors:

**Table 2. RNIPLS: Early Honorary Gold Medals<sup>59</sup>**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Recipient</i>	<i>Role</i>
14 May 1825	HM King George IV	Patron
14 May 1825	Dr Manner Sutton, Archbishop of Canterbury	Presided over inaugural meeting
18 April 1826	Thomas Wilson MP	Chairman
May 1826	HRH Duke of Sussex	Vice Patron

<sup>56</sup> Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p. 41.

<sup>58</sup> Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 405.

Popular legend today celebrates Hillary as the founder of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, or RNLI, as the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck (RNIPLS) was renamed in 1854. Hillary's role was undoubtedly crucial and his enthusiasm for the establishment of a national lifeboat network was doubtless in part driven by his intense personal experience as a rescuer, but it was also a manifestation of a deeply-rooted inclination to pursue grand causes. The recruitment of the King as Patron established the new organisation's social cache and helped to secure an initial inflow of funds from the well-heeled and to secure the short-term financial security of the Institution, but the ambition of its purpose and a rapid decline in annual income thereafter was soon to highlight the risks of such a narrow funding base.

The granting of Royal patronage to the Institution had initially helped to encourage wealthy donors to contribute generously to the Institution's coffers, but the early rush of enthusiasm did not last and its income rapidly fell into decline. In 1831 the Institution's annual income had slipped to just over £800 and even the national publicity surrounding Grace Darling's rescue of the crew and passengers of the *Forfarshire* in 1838 did little to boost public support. In the absence of any active fundraising activities, the Institution's annual income had sunk to £354 in 1850, a situation that may to some extent have been exacerbated by the establishment in 1839 of the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society (SFMRBS) – a body that actively engaged itself in the raising of money to fund many of the same activities undertaken by the Institution.<sup>60</sup>

Drawing on both private sponsors and the modest annual subscriptions of tens of thousands of mariners, the SFMRBS enjoyed a far broader funding-base than the Institution and was able to support a range of core functions, including the provision of financial support to the families of drowned sailors and material assistance to seamen wrecked on the British coast. This represented a major undertaking, it being reported at the Society's annual general meeting in 1863

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<sup>60</sup> W. Fevyer, 'Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 30 (1997), pp. 53-69.

that it had afforded relief to 7,250 shipwrecked persons and 3,687 widows and orphans during the previous twelve months.<sup>61</sup>

Further practical assistance was provided to mariners from 1850 by the establishment of a number of SFMRBS-sponsored lifeboat stations. These continued to be managed by the SFMRBS for some years but, following the passage of the Merchant Shipping Act in 1854,<sup>62</sup> the decision was taken to pass the responsibility for this function to the RNLI.<sup>63</sup> Using its substantial funding base - in 1863 it raised £17,734-13s-5d from the subscriptions and other sources<sup>64</sup> - the SFMRBS was also able to support elderly and sick seamen were through the provision of a hospital at Belvedere in Kent.<sup>65</sup>

In addition to providing for the welfare of its membership the Society began, in 1851, to issue medals in gold and silver to recognise 'heroic or praiseworthy exertions to save life from shipwreck, etc., on the High Seas or coasts of India or the Colonies'.<sup>66</sup> The clear phrasing of the award's terms of reference sought to ensure that there would be no conflict with the work of the Institution in rewarding lifesaving acts around the coasts of Britain and Ireland, anticipating the agreement on the provision of lifeboats and post-rescue care subsequently reached between the two organisations in response to the Merchant Shipping Act in 1854.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Yorkshire Gazette*, 10 May 1863, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> The Act recognised the need for the Board of Trade to provide assistance to voluntary lifesaving organisations, but specified that such assistance should be channelled through a single organisation.

<sup>63</sup> Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, p. 38.

<sup>64</sup> Including 3 shillings each from 49,898 mariners. *Yorkshire Gazette*, 10 May 1863, p. 7.

<sup>65</sup> Fevyer, 'Shipwrecked Fishermen', p. 53-55.

<sup>66</sup> A. Wilson & J.H.F. McEwan, *Gallantry*, (Oxford, 1939), p. 63. At the 1863 Annual General Meeting it was reported that 125 lives had been saved and 17 medals awarded. *Yorkshire Gazette*, 10 May 1863, p. 7. See also Anon., *Heroism at Sea: A History of Awards for Skill and Gallantry at Sea Presented by the Society since 1851* (e-book, Chichester, 2009).

<sup>67</sup> Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, p. 38.





### 3. SFMRBS Lifesaving Medal, first awarded 1851 (author's collection)

Thus by 1854 the two organisations had established their own particular operational niches. Despite its financial difficulties, the Institution had continued to present gallantry awards throughout the 1830s and 1840s and even during the period 1850-51, when its income had dropped to little more than £1,000, it was still able to present 3 gold and 66 silver medals (including bars).<sup>68</sup> In some ways this appears to represent a curious state of affairs, as there were other pressing demands on the Institution's finances, Richard Lewis recording in 1874 that by 1849 many of its lifeboats had fallen into a state of dangerous disrepair and that, 'Funds, too, were often wanting to pay these brave men for their services, and the whole system was in such a state that among the Life-boats in the United Kingdom there were perhaps not a dozen really efficient boats.'<sup>69</sup> The decision to concentrate resources on the presentation of medals may however have been a pragmatic response by the Institution to its lack of funds. Seeking a purpose for itself and lacking the wherewithal to support its own lifeboats, it is possible that a

<sup>68</sup> Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, pp. 92-99.

<sup>69</sup> R. Lewis, *History of the Life-boat and its Work* (1874), cited in Cameron, *Riders of the Storm*, p. 46.

conscious decision was taken to focus its sparse resources on its less costly role as a *fons honorum*.

The 1850s however were to witness a restoration in the Institution's fortunes. This happy turnaround can in part be attributed to a rekindling of public interest in the coastal lifesaving service prompted by the considerable press attention devoted to the tragic loss of 20 life-boatmen off Tynemouth in December 1849.<sup>70</sup> Charles Dickens' novel *David Copperfield*, published in monthly instalments between May 1849 and December 1850, also served to raise public awareness of the danger and bravery inherent in seafaring; the heroic but ultimately futile sacrifice of Sam Peggotty exemplifying for a largely urban readership the noble qualities of the humbly-born coastal rescuer: 'Mas'r Davy, if my time is come't is come. If't ain't, I'll bide it. Lord above bless you, and bless all! Mates, make me ready! I'm going off!'<sup>71</sup>

More significant however was the wholesale rejuvenation of the organisation's committee, which recruited a team of knowledgeable and high-profile members including Algernon Percy, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland whose keen interest in maritime matters had earned him the nickname 'the Good Sailor Duke'. Royal patronage was likewise revitalised, with the Queen being persuaded to become an annual subscriber and the energetic Prince Albert accepting the position of Vice Patron. Furthermore, the Institution began to employ professional staff, including Richard Lewis, who took on the salaried post of Secretary.<sup>72</sup> The renewed interest in lifeboats was not confined to Britain and the period 1851-54 similarly witnessed the establishment of state-financed lifeboat services in Denmark, Norway and Sweden.<sup>73</sup> In Britain however there was no state-funding and the core task for Lewis was to raise the Institution's income. In this he proved to be remarkably successful, in part as a result of raising public awareness of the organisation's work through the publication of a new populist journal, *The Life-boat*. First printed in 1852 it was sold cheaply in order to ensure that it was

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<sup>70</sup> Evans, *Rescue at Sea*, p. 57.

<sup>71</sup> C. Dickens, *David Copperfield* (London, 2000 [1849-50]), p. 674, page reference taken from 2000 edition (Pub. Wordsworth).

<sup>72</sup> Cameron, *Riders on the Storm*, pp. 51-53.

<sup>73</sup> Evans, *Rescue at Sea*, pp. 44-45.

distributed as widely as possible. From the outset it was filled with inspirational tales of courage and danger, its specific purpose being to raise the profile and funding-base of the Institution by:

...laying before the public all the information respecting the construction and establishment of Life-Boats, the number of Shipwrecks, the exertions made to save Life and Property, and the prizes and medals awarded to those who have been most active in that noble service.<sup>74</sup>

The fund-raising efforts of Northumberland, Lewis and their colleagues proved to be singularly successful and the decline of the Institution was swiftly reversed. One of the key reasons for this reversal of fortune was the result of the Committee's recognition that for the Institution to survive it would have to broaden its appeal. The publication of *The Life-boat* celebrated the deeds of the Institution's medallists and brought an awareness of the risks run by mariners - and the courage of the lifeboat crews - to a broad and receptive audience for, if the birth of the railways served to shine a spotlight on the dangers of machinery and technological innovation, public awareness of the perils of the sea also grew during the course of the century. Public interest in shipwrecks was well-established and by the opening years of the nineteenth century major disasters would inevitably attract the attention both of newspaper editors and pamphleteers. The sinking of the East Indiaman *Abergavenny* in February 1805 was typical of such incidents, the wreck being covered in depth by numerous newspapers including the *The Times*; *Courier*; *Morning Chronicle*; *Morning Herald*; *St James's Chronicle*; *Observer*; and *Gentleman's Magazine*. The loss also prompted the rapid publication of several magazine articles; four privately published pamphlets (each claiming to provide a 'correct' or 'authentic' narrative); and poems swiftly penned by John Barlow and Laura Sophia Temple.<sup>75</sup>

Such public interest was not merely a Georgian phenomenon and, throughout the Victorian age newspapers and magazines chronicled the disasters which befell merchant and passenger ships and celebrated the bravery of those who placed

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<sup>74</sup> Cameron, *Riders on the Storm*, pp. 53-54

<sup>75</sup> A. Hayter, *The Wreck of the Abergavenny: One of Britain's Greatest Maritime Disasters and its Links to Literary Genius* (Oxford 2002), pp. 208-210.

their own lives in peril to preserve the lives of their fellows. Indeed, such actions perfectly encapsulated the Victorian ideals of patriotism, duty and self-sacrifice and were widely lauded as sources of inspiration and moral guidance:

The appalling calamity... gave the world some bright lessons of dashing gallantry and heroic sacrifice which will surely be enshrined in verse in the next edition of Dr. W.C. Bennett's heart-stirring "Songs for Sailors". What more soul-inspiring theme for a fresh stanza to our "Heroes of To-Day" than the true British bravery of Captain Knowles when, first seeing his young, newly wedded wife safely afloat in the "bosen's" charge, he turned to duty on the deck of the Northfleet, and sank a few minutes later with the doomed ship and 300 souls? Right warmly has the heart of the Queen and the Nation - ever one heart! - beat in sympathy with that young widow, whose name is now an affectionate household word throughout the land...<sup>76</sup>

For the popular balladeers of the Victorian age, death by drowning served as a recurrent theme, with tales of dutiful self-sacrifice proving particularly popular. The selfless discipline of the soldiers who lost their lives onboard the *Birkenhead*<sup>77</sup> spawned many ballads, whilst Bratton observes that, 'The most popular stories of all are the stories of rescue; children snatched from death under trains, sailors saved from the deep by Grace Darling or by the efforts of lifeboat crews, whose praises are sung again and again'.<sup>78</sup>

Major donors continued to represent a core funding stream, but the extensive coverage devoted to heroic rescuers in the pages of *The Life-boat* and the popular press also helped to ensure that the work of the Institution gained a far wider appeal. During the 1870s the Institution's fundraising efforts were further assisted by the campaign run by the MP Samuel Plimsoll, whose vigorous campaigning of behalf of the sailors forced by unscrupulous ship-owners to sail in unsafe 'coffin ships' united the outrage of the working classes with that of liberal members of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. Plimsoll's campaign focussed on showing sailors in a positive light, and its populist nature prompted

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<sup>76</sup> *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 1 February 1873, p. 73. In this article about the loss of the vessel *Northfleet*, the widow is referred to simply as 'Mrs Knowles' throughout.

<sup>77</sup> The troopship *Birkenhead* sank on 2 February 1852. The British troops onboard remained disciplined as the vessel sank, establishing the tradition of 'women and children first'.

See [www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/WomenandChildrenFirst.htm](http://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/WomenandChildrenFirst.htm) (6/2/2011);

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS\\_Birkenhead\\_\(1845\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Birkenhead_(1845)) (6/2/2011).

<sup>78</sup> J.S. Bratton, *The Victorian Popular Ballad* (London, 1975), p.68.

the composition of numerous musical works and poems which played heavily upon the dangers faced by Britain's sailors. Typical of this type of ditty was Lee and Green's popular song 'Our Sailors on the Sea' (1874):

The sailor little dreams when he  
Sets out upon the wave  
The worn-out ship in which he sails  
Will bear him to his grave...<sup>79</sup>

By his own account, Plimsoll's campaign had been inspired in part by his personal experience of surviving a voyage in dreadful weather and mingling with the families of those who had been lost in wrecked vessels when he came safely ashore. He was later to claim that, 'I resolved, deep down in my heart, as I stood on the beach at Redcar, to devote myself to this work. What was the difference between me and these poor, drowned sailors?'<sup>80</sup> More direct influences were perhaps W.C. Leng, the editor of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, and the enlightened Newcastle ship-owner and philanthropist James Hall who had already begun a campaign to address the dangers of over-laden merchant ships. Plimsoll benefitted from their experience,<sup>81</sup> whilst Leng and Hall gained, via Plimsoll, a voice in Parliament. And it was in his role as an MP that Plimsoll embarked upon his campaign in 1870, moving that additional clauses be inserted into the Merchant Shipping Bill that would restrict the overloading of merchant ships and prevent ship-owners from over-insuring their vessels. Widespread support for legislative change was encouraged by extensive press coverage, led by Leng's journal but swiftly taken up by other newspapers throughout the country.

Public sentiment was further aroused by a series of widely-reported shipping disasters, including in the loss of 22 lives in a gale off Bridlington in February 1871.<sup>82</sup> The Bridlington catastrophe culminated in a mass funeral attended by 4,000 mourners, and the dreadful loss of life and the courage of the lifeboat crews and local people who had risked their lives to save the imperilled sailors

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<sup>79</sup> F.W. Green and A. Lee *Our Sailors of the Sea* (London, 1874), reproduced in N. Jones, *The Plimsoll Sensation: The Great Campaign to Save Lives at Sea* (London, 2006), pp. 314-315.

<sup>80</sup> Speech at Exeter Hall, 22 March 1873, reproduced in Jones, *The Plimsoll Sensation*, p. 43.

<sup>81</sup> Jones, *The Plimsoll Sensation*, pp. 53-55.

<sup>82</sup> Jones, *The Plimsoll Sensation*, pp. 70-82.

further excited public interest and concern in what was already being portrayed by some elements of the press as an unequal struggle between the ordinary seaman and the power of capital in which ‘the weaker are sacrificed to the necessities of the stronger, and the seaman... dies for the sustenance of the capitalist.’<sup>83</sup>

Plimsoll and his fellow campaigners were at all times careful to stress the virtuous character of the British sailor, who was invariably portrayed as patriotic, generous, loyal and brave. This contrasted markedly with previous stereotypes, which had tended to portray seafaring folk as idle, feckless drunkards, a viewpoint which mirrored the public attitude to the military so astutely satirized by Kipling:

For it's Tommy this an' Tommy that an' "Chuck him out the brute!"  
But it's "Saviour of 'is country" when the guns begin to shoot."<sup>84</sup>

The success of this re-branding campaign can perhaps best be seen in the so-called ‘Great Plimsoll Meeting’, held in London’s Exeter Hall in March 1873. Advertised in *The Times* and promoted by organs such as the *Penny Illustrated Paper*, the meeting drew a huge crowd drawn from every social class. Those attending included parliamentarians, clergy and trades unionists and the key-note speaker was Lord Shaftesbury, who spoke of the urgent need to protect the lives of ‘those noble fellows who were being submerged beneath the waters of the ocean’ and who characterised British seamen as ‘the pride, the strength, and the security of Great Britain’.<sup>85</sup> As Jones observes, Shaftesbury’s speech ‘set up a sense of debt to seamen, which their countrymen were morally obliged to pay’.<sup>86</sup> One of the most obvious means by which such a debt could be paid was through the support of the RNLi and its efforts to save lives at sea and to reward brave rescuers. From the early 1890s ordinary people were encouraged to contribute to its activities through supporting the ‘Lifeboat Saturday Fund’, which enjoyed particular popularity in the larger towns and cities. The first Life-Boat Saturday was held in Manchester in 1891, having been inspired by Sir Charles Macara,

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<sup>83</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, 5 May 1870.

<sup>84</sup> R. Kipling, *Tommy* in T.S. Eliot (ed), *A Choice of Kipling's Verse* (London 1941), p. 174.

<sup>85</sup> Jones, *The Plimsoll Sensation*, pp. 114-15.

<sup>86</sup> Jones, *The Plimsoll Sensation*, p. 115.

who had been deeply touched by the loss of life that occurred when two RNLI lifeboats were lost whilst attempting to rescue the crew of the German barque *Mexico* in 1886. The initial event was a huge success, with 30,000 people attending and £5,000 being raised.<sup>87</sup> The Fund was subsequently rolled-out nationally and proved to be a significant fundraiser, for example contributing £16,397 to the RNLI's coffers in 1896, a sum representing 14% of the Institution's total income for that year.<sup>88</sup> Accordingly, as the nineteenth century progressed, donations and bequests began to flow into the RNLI's coffers in unprecedented quantities.

Simultaneously, the Institution set about encouraging would-be donors to make gifts in memory of loved ones or in thanks for services rendered. Individuals, clubs, cities and other benefactors were able to finance lifeboats and to name the craft that they sponsored. Owen records that, 'One clerical testator left £3000 for three lifeboats, all to be named for himself, while a Yorkshire cloth manufacturer left £5000 for a small fleet of five, to be named for a sister, three brothers and himself.'<sup>89</sup>

**Table 3. RNLI Income per Medal Issued: 1824-1914<sup>90</sup>**

<i>Period</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Medals Issued (including bars)</i>	<i>Income per Medal issued (to nearest £)</i>
1824-29	£26,751	107	£250
1830-39	£11,876	187	£64
1840-49	£2,311 (Figures for 1840-41 only)	147	£56 (based on 41 medals voted 1840-41)
1850-59	£34,967	225	£155
1860-69	£252,994	158	£1,601
1870-79	£327,118	94	£3,480
1880-89	£443,665	118	£3,760
1890-99	£789,986	156	£5,064
1900-09	£1,125,553	91	£12,369
1910-14 (5-yr. period)	£556,361	45	£12,364

The Institution's annual income, which in 1850 had totalled a risible £354, had risen to £117,036 by 1896, providing the wherewithal to support the large-scale

<sup>87</sup> Evans, *Rescue at Sea*, p. 79.

<sup>88</sup> Owen, *English Philanthropy*, p. 178.

<sup>89</sup> D. Owen, *English Philanthropy, 1660-1960* (Harvard, 1964), pp. 177, 474-75.

<sup>90</sup> Calculated from raw data published in Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry* and Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, Appendix VI, p. 301.

provision of coastal lifeboats.<sup>91</sup> The awarding of prizes and medals remained an important function (not least because of the positive publicity that such activities generated), but would never again be the central focus of the organisation's activities.

Their scarcity added to their lustre, with the gold medal being popularly referred to as "the Lifeboatman's VC" - equating it directly with the state's highest honour for gallantry, the Victoria Cross.<sup>92</sup> The medal had come to perform a variety of functions and, in addition to rewarding heroes and encouraging others to follow their example, it had come to play an invaluable role as a fund-raising tool in the hands of a well-organised and publicity-conscious charitable body.



**4. RNIPLS Gold Medal, awarded 1827(author's collection)**

### **Liverpool Shipwreck & Humane Society**

Although the foundation of the RNIPLS/RNLI was intimately associated with a maritime catastrophe off the coast of Jersey, the meeting which formally

<sup>91</sup> Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, Appendix VI, p. 301.

<sup>92</sup> [www.rnli.org.uk/who\\_we\\_are/media\\_centre/pressrelease\\_detail?articleid=142282](http://www.rnli.org.uk/who_we_are/media_centre/pressrelease_detail?articleid=142282) (6/2/2011); <http://www.gty.org.uk/en/small/item/GTJ75885/> (6/2/2011).



established the organization was held in London: close to the heart both of government and polite society. In this it mirrored the RHS which, in its early days, was likewise very much a creature of the metropolis. But, whilst the RHS was ultimately to take on the role of a national body it also, from the late eighteenth century onwards, inspired numerous provincial imitators. Amongst the earliest of these were the Glasgow Humane Society (1790); the Bath Humane Society (1805); and the Southampton Humane Society (1814). Indeed, in 1835, the RHS *Annual Report* was able to record the existence of no less than forty-six United Kingdom based humane societies, many of which were responsible for the issuing of certificates and, on occasion, medals in recognition of acts of gallantry in saving life.<sup>93</sup>

The most successful of these regional societies was based in Liverpool, where a manned lifeboat station had been established at the mouth of the Mersey as early as the 1760s.<sup>94</sup> Funded by contributions from ship-owners and underwriters, it provided a limited service which, as Evans observes, had been established ‘at the request of commercial interests with a humanitarian tinge.’<sup>95</sup> Efforts had been made in 1822 to establish in the city a humane society to assist with ‘the recovery of persons apparently dead from drowning in the town and port of Liverpool’,<sup>96</sup> but although this ambition was from the outset well-supported by medical men, it was not until 1839 that the scheme succeeded in garnering widespread public support.

On 7-8 January 1839 the port of Liverpool was struck by an unprecedented hurricane. Dozens of vessels of all types were lost and numerous buildings in the city severely damaged. The huge death toll - both on land and at sea - greatly moved the citizens of Liverpool, as did the courage of those who had set off in monstrous seas to attempt the rescue of endangered seamen and passengers. By Wednesday 9 January a notice had been distributed calling a public meeting at three o’clock on that very day ‘to concert measures for rewarding the intrepid persons who had been instrumental in saving the lives of their fellow-creatures

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<sup>93</sup> A. Wilson and J. McEwan, *Gallantry* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 35-39.

<sup>94</sup> C. Evans, *Rescue at Sea* (London, 2003), p. 20.

<sup>95</sup> Evans, *Rescue at Sea*, p.20.

<sup>96</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, p. 10.

from vessels outside the port.’<sup>97</sup> The net result of the meeting was that, over the following days, £5,000 was subscribed to the relief fund, a sum which, even after the payment of rewards to rescuers and relief payments to the distressed, left the organisers with a healthy surplus<sup>98</sup>. A meeting of the subscribers was called on 28 April 1839 and it was agreed that the surplus of £3,291 be invested to provide a sound financial basis for a permanent body that had already been provisionally named as the ‘Liverpool Humane Society for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck’.<sup>99</sup> The membership of the provisional committee reflected the commercial priorities of the city’s ruling elite. The clerics and medical men who had dominated the early RHS were absent, with the membership comprising four merchants & shipbrokers; three insurance brokers; two merchants; one stock & ship broker (who was also the agent for a fire insurance company); and one man described simply as a ‘broker’.<sup>100</sup> The permanent society defined its terms of reference at a meeting of subscribers held on 28 April 1839, agreeing that it should exist ‘for the purpose of saving human life, particularly in cases of shipwreck in the neighbourhood of Liverpool; that it hold out inducements to render immediate assistance to vessels of all nations, in distress near this port; and that it be called the Liverpool Humane Society.’<sup>101</sup>

It was further agreed that the society should provide support for rescued mariners of all nations and ‘That pecuniary or honorary awards be given to individuals instrumental in rescuing human life from danger, and that relief be granted to the widows and families of those who may perish in the attempt to save others’.<sup>102</sup> Perhaps in part to distinguish itself from the metropolitan body, the society soon began to refer to itself as the Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society (LSHS), the new expanded title being formally adopted in January 1840.<sup>103</sup> By this time

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<sup>97</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, p. 19.

<sup>98</sup> E. Gordon Williams, ‘The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society - A Brief History’, *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 21 (1994), p. 29.

<sup>99</sup> The provisional title had been decided upon as early as 10 January 1839. The title of ‘Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society’ was formally adopted on 15 January 1840. Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, pp. 29-31.

<sup>100</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, pp 27-28.

<sup>101</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, p. 29.

<sup>102</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, p. 29.

<sup>103</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, p. 31.

the society had also printed and circulated a thousand copies of a pamphlet outlining the society's 'rules for restoring life from suspended animation'.<sup>104</sup>

The LSHS can accordingly be seen to have been influenced in its early years both by the activities of the RHS in London and by a well-established local philanthropic tradition which had long recognized the importance of nurturing marine safety. The final prompt which led to the establishment of the permanent body was once again provided by a local disaster, but unlike the founders of the RNIPLS, the originators of the Liverpool society were able to call upon the formidable wealth of their own merchant class, members of which had a vested interest in minimizing the human and material costs associated with shipwreck. Control of the committee was accordingly held by a local social elite that reflected the commercial and mercantile interests of the city. It was perhaps a committee graced by fewer lords and royals than those of its metropolitan counterparts, but it accurately reflected the powerbase of the ruling class of the great port. The LSHS's independence represented an expression of civic pride - a pride evidenced by the prominent use of the 'Liverbird' motif on the medals which it presented in recognition of brave deeds.

January 1840 witnessed the membership of the LSHS vote to present its first medals to Captain Clegg of the *Huddersfield* and Captain Collins of the *Roscius*. The recipients had to be patient however, for the society's first medals were not actually physically available for presentation until 1844.<sup>105</sup> Designed by William Wyon, the original medals were large in size and not intended for wear. The Society was clearly keen to maintain very tight control of the disbursement of its rewards.

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<sup>104</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, p. 30.

<sup>105</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, p. 31.



#### **5. Reverse of LSHS medal, first awarded 1844 (author's collection)**

From the outset, strict rules were applied to the distribution of the medals, it being resolved in September 1844, in response to requests that medals be made available for inclusion 'as works of art' in the cabinets of collectors, 'That no Medal be sold for any purpose whatsoever.'<sup>106</sup>

Such restrictions notwithstanding, Wyon's highly sentimental work was nevertheless much admired, and popular demand dictated that both large-scale bronzed electrotype wall-plaques and printed copies of his design were produced to decorate the walls of Victorian lounges and parlours.

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<sup>106</sup> Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society, *Minute Book* 1, 28 September 1844.. A further request from the University of Leiden was turned down in 1854. See Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society, *Minute Book* 1, 28 March 1854.



**6. Wall plaque [c. 1850s] and print [1854] copying Wyon's design (author's collection)**

An oval wearable version of the Society's medal was introduced in March 1867,<sup>107</sup> but proved to be a short-lived innovation for. In 1869, the RHS had gained Royal permission for its medals to be worn on uniform by members of the armed services,<sup>108</sup> and the Liverpool society moved swiftly to produce a new medal which closely imitated that of the London-based society. On 23 September 1870 it was agreed that the secretary should obtain costs for new dies. The society's own records reflect the extent to which the practices of both the government and the RHS influenced this decision, stressing both that 'The size [of the medals was] to be the same as that of Government medals'<sup>109</sup> and that the size of the dies was to be 'identical with the medal of the Royal Humane Society)<sup>110</sup>.

The new medals were struck not only in gold and silver, but also in bronze, medals in the latter metal not hitherto having been issued by the society.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society, *Minute Book* 1, 30 March 1867. Yates and Hess, the medallists, received a total of £42.12s for producing new dies for the obverse, reverse and 'Liverbird' suspension.

<sup>108</sup> *Admiralty Circular* 11.C, 19 March 1869.

<sup>109</sup> Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society *Minute Book* 2, 23 September 1870.

<sup>110</sup> Mayer & Co. were awarded the contract. Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society *Minute Book* 2, 27 January 1871.

<sup>111</sup> The new dies cost £28, whilst the unit cost of medals worked out a £9 for gold medals, 19s for silver and 9s for bronze. Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society *Minute Book* 2, 27

They were issued with scroll suspenders and dark blue ribbons, again in imitation of the medals of the RHS.

Over the coming years the LSHS was to institute a number of other medals and their original award came to be referred to as the 'Marine Medal', as it was awarded for brave acts performed in water. These included not only rescues from the docks, canals and rivers of the Liverpool area, but also rescues performed by members of the crews of Liverpool-registered vessels on the high seas and the rescue by others of the passengers and crews of Liverpool-registered vessels. The year 1872 witnessed the establishment of two somewhat obscure awards: the 'Camp and Villaverde Medal' which commemorated two Spanish seamen who had displayed great gallantry in rescuing the passengers and crew of the steam packet *Tweed* in 1847; and the 'Bramley Moore Medal'. The latter award was funded by John Bramley Moore, the Mayor of Liverpool, who offered the gift of £200 of North Staffordshire Railway stock 'on condition that the interest be expended on Silver Medals bearing the Inscription "Bramley Moore Medal for Saving Life at Sea".'<sup>112</sup> Given the nature of the conditions attached and the fact that there was no evident need to add yet another award to the Society's ample range of medals recognising gallantry at sea, it must be presumed that this donation was in large part at least motivated by the vanity of the donor. In this of course he was doing no more than mirroring a trend that was common practice in the RNLI, where individual lifeboats were frequently named in honour of the sponsors who had funded their construction. Certainly the ongoing personal interest and influence of Bramley-Moore is evident from the fact that, even after the medal designs had been approved by the Society, they were 'submitted to Mr Bramley Moore for his inspection'.<sup>113</sup>

The role of the Society in rewarding civil gallantry was further expanded in 1882. Roger Lyon Jones, a former Liverpool councillor, had died in January 1875, leaving a bequest of nearly £300,000 to benefit local charities. From this legacy, the LSHS received the sum of £2,000, to be used to establish a trust fund

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January 1871. T. Jones, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society 1839-2002*, unpublished script for lecture delivered Banbury, November 2002, p. 8.

<sup>112</sup> Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society *Minute Book 2*, 25 October 1872.

<sup>113</sup> Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society *Minute Book 2*, 31 January 1873.

for the purpose of keeping ‘in memory the name of one who so largely benefited the charities of Liverpool’.<sup>114</sup> An additional windfall was received from the same source on 29 September 1882; £500 being granted to the Society for the purpose of founding a medal to honour ‘bravery in cases of rescue of life from fire and other dangers not specifically named in the original constitution of the society’.<sup>115</sup> Such deeds were already recognised by the awards of the Royal Society for the Protection of Life from Fire (RSPLF), but quotes were nevertheless promptly sought for the production of new medals.<sup>116</sup> Whilst it seems at first glance curious that the Liverpool society should have chosen at this point to embark upon the duplication of the work of another body, it is possible that the initiative was prompted by external events, the RSPLF finally abandoning in 1881 its role in maintaining fire-fighting services outside London and passing its few remaining provincial stations into the care of local authorities. Although these changes did not in fact affect the RSPLF’s continuing role as a nation-wide provider of gallantry awards, they may well have provoked concerns about future developments and thus proved an incentive to address an anticipated gap in provision.<sup>117</sup> Ultimately, the design of the medal was to reflect the prevalent popular artistic taste of the period, copying ‘The Rescue’ (1855), a sentimental and popular work by Sir John Everett Millais (1829-96) that was to be found in the private collection of a supporter of the Society.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, p. 37.

<sup>115</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, p. 39.

<sup>116</sup> Quotes were sought from Elkington & Co and JS & AB Wyon. *Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society Minute Book 2*, 24 November 1882.

<sup>117</sup> R.W. Gould, ‘Medals of the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire’, *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 16 (1992), pp. 36-37.

<sup>118</sup> *Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society Minute Book 2*, 29 December 1882. The painting is today to be found in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (ex Felton Bequest, 1924). See J.A. Walker, *Firefighters in Art and Media: A Pictorial History* (London, 2005), pp. 45-46.



**7. LSHS Fire Medal, first awarded 1883 (author's collection)**

Having already instituted medals for gallantry in saving life from fire and water (in addition to a medal awarded from 1885 to schoolchildren in recognition of their skills in swimming and lifesaving),<sup>119</sup> the Society proceeded in 1894 to tackle all remaining eventualities through the establishment of a General Medal 'for award in cases of bravery on land - the stopping of runaway horses for instance, or the rescue of life in mines'.<sup>120</sup> The specific reference to stopping runaway horses accurately reflects the circumstances in which the medal was earned, with the vast majority being presented for this reason.<sup>121</sup>

Although circular in form, there can be little doubt that the choice of obverse design was deliberately intended to mimic the highly-prestigious Victoria Cross.

<sup>119</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, p. 41.

<sup>120</sup> E. Gordon Williams, 'The General Medal of the Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 42 (2001), p. 22.

<sup>121</sup> Williams, 'The General Medal', p.22.



In imitation of Britain's highest government award for gallantry, it incorporated as its central an embossed cross *pattee* (with a crown and wreath of oak and laurel at its centre). The influence of the Victoria Cross was again clearly evident in the choice of ribbon suspender which, like its prototype, took the form of a straight slotted bar, decorated on the front face with sprays of laurel and fitted with a 'V'-shaped link below to facilitate its attachment to the medal disc. The ribbon design - which recalled that adopted by the Government for the India Mutiny Medal - comprised five equal vertical stripes of red-white-red-white-red. This bright and striking ribbon would have been particularly highly visible when worn displayed against the dark blue of a contemporary police uniform. Many of the medals were in fact destined to be earned by policemen, an exceptional recipient being Constable Ephraim Dyball, who earned the award no fewer than four times between 1900 and 1909, on each occasion for his bravery in tackling runaway horses.<sup>122</sup>



**8. LSHS General Medal, first awarded 1894, and Victoria Cross [copy]  
(author's collection)**

Writing on the occasion of the LSHS's centenary celebrations in 1839, Jeffrey reviewed the several thousand awards which the society had granted up to that

<sup>122</sup> Dix, Noonan & Webb (Auctioneers), *The Collection of Lifesaving Awards Formed by the Late W.H. Fevyer* (London, 25 September 2008), lot 149.

date, noting that they represented ‘a pageant of heroism and self-sacrifice which it is not possible to contemplate without profound emotion, and an acute realisation of the nobility of character never far below the surface in even the roughest and most ordinary of human beings.’<sup>123</sup> Jeffrey proclaimed that humane societies had played a key role in ‘encouraging selflessness, and a cool intelligent resource’ in rescuers and that the medals awarded by such bodies in recognition of gallant deeds were a prime motivator in encouraging such altruistic behaviour, being ‘rightly valued and usually, with a justifiable pride, passed on as heirlooms’.<sup>124</sup>

This is a reiteration of the widely-held view that the presentation of a medal served not only as a means of rewarding the rescuer, but also of encouraging both peers and future generations to emulate noble deeds. The medal in short, was perceived as a source of inspiration endowed with the power to modify the behaviour of others. Not for nothing had many of the earliest medals of the RHS been engraved with the words ‘Go and do thou likewise’.

### **Provincial Humane Societies**

The LSHS was of course not the only provincial body to take an active interest in lifesaving. During its formative years, the RHS focused its attention almost exclusively upon London. In 1809 the *Gentleman's Magazine* reported the case of a resuscitation in Oxford. The magazine noted that the RHS had chosen not to reward the rescuer on the basis of the location in which the incident had occurred, and reproduced a letter from the Society informing the unsuccessful applicant that, ‘In p. 71, Rule XII, of the Report is an express order that rewards shall not extend to any place more than 30 miles from the Metropolis’<sup>125</sup>. A commentator, signing himself as ‘One of the Humane Society’, explained that:

I consider this rule of the Society as a very beneficial consequence; as it tends to call into action the benevolence, not only of active charity by pecuniary aid, but also the more immediate superintendence of the effects

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<sup>123</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, p. 42.

<sup>124</sup> Jeffery, *The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society*, p. 42.

<sup>125</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* 79, January-June 1809, p. 494.

produced by it. Thus, if Oxford were to institute a Humane Society for its county, Cambridgeshire for its shire, and so, if one of these establishments were formed for every extended district... the labours of the immortal HAWES would be rendered still more useful to his native country...<sup>126</sup>

This policy would appear to have had the desired effect, spurring the foundation of a broad scattering of locally-focused humane associations, the 1823 *Annual Report* listing no less than 43 such bodies in the UK (as opposed to the 27 recorded in 1809), with similar bodies being established in Madras, Calcutta, Quebec and Jamaica. Their activities were greeted with enthusiasm, it being proudly recorded that ‘the success attending these has exceeded the sanguine expectations of the Founders and supporters’.<sup>127</sup> As the nineteenth century progressed, some of these provincial societies flourished, whilst others withered and died. What united many was civic pride, a factor identified by Owen as one of the key drivers of Victorian philanthropy:

For some charitable donors, civic pride was a powerful incentive. Old communities, such as the City of London, had long traditions of philanthropy, while newer cities strove, in their civic patriotism, to emulate and even surpass the more ancient centres.<sup>128</sup>

Typical of the small provincial bodies established in imitation of the RHS was the Bristol Humane Society, established ‘For the Recovery of persons Apparently Dead by Drowning, or any other species of Suffocation’.<sup>129</sup> Initially founded in 1775 by a group of local gentlemen ‘from a principle of Humanity’, it sought to raise subscriptions in order to publish treatment methods and pay rewards to rescuers. It appears initially to have enjoyed only limited success and by the latter part of the 1790s had been reduced to the status of being a branch of the larger Severn Humane Society.<sup>130</sup> The Bristol Committee reasserted their independence in 1807,<sup>131</sup> and the earliest surviving *Annual Report* of the revived Society records that ‘Three Hundred and Eleven Persons (were) restored to Life

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<sup>126</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* 79, January-June 1809, p. 494.

<sup>127</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1823, pp. 30-31.

<sup>128</sup> Owen, *English Philanthropy*, p. 164.

<sup>129</sup> Bristol Humane Society *Annual Report* 1815, p. 1.

<sup>130</sup> W.H. Fevyer, ‘Notes on the Bristol Humane Society’, *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 13 (1991), p. 47.

<sup>131</sup> Fevyer, ‘Notes on the Bristol Humane Society’, p. 47.

since this Society was first instituted, to the Annual Report in October 1815'.<sup>132</sup>  
 The Bristol Humane Society operated within an area 'Extending ten Miles around the said City'<sup>133</sup> and was motivated by both spiritual and temporal concerns, as evidenced by a poem reproduced in its *Annual Report* for 1816:

Ours is the joy, the heartfelt joy to save  
 Friend, Lover, Parent from the untimely grave;  
 To snatch from Death the victim of despair,  
 And give the means of penitence and prayer.<sup>134</sup>

The organisation and functions of the society were laid out in detail in the *Annual Report* of 1816 and subsequent reports. Key to the Bristol society's activities was the paying of rewards to those who contributed to the rescue, resuscitation or care of those who had faced death through drowning or asphyxiation. These were outlined in the 'Plan of the Institution' as follows:

**Table 4. Bristol Humane Society: Rewards**<sup>135</sup>

Action	Reward
First person to procure a drag or pole	Half crown (2s 6d)
First person to procure medical assistance	Half crown (2s 6d)
Active assistance in unsuccessful rescue/resuscitation	'A Reward not exceeding One Guinea' (21s) to be distributed
Active assistance in successful rescue/resuscitation	'A Reward not exceeding One Guinea' (42s) to be distributed
Receipt of body into house and provision of 'necessary accommodations'	'A sum, not exceeding Half-a-Guinea' (10s 6d) plus security against cost of burial
'every extraordinary case of danger, or exertion or success'	Undefined 'additional Reward'

Medals were also awarded in exceptional circumstances to rescuers or restorers. These were close copies of the RHS's honorary medal, reproducing almost exactly both its designs and inscriptions. Similarly in imitation of the RHS, the Bristol institution could call upon the services of a body of voluntary Medical Assistants and funded the maintenance of rescue equipment at a range of sites (primarily public houses) located close to docks, weirs and perilous stretches of water. It also paid for the fastening-up of chains around the quay every night and

<sup>132</sup> Bristol Humane Society *Annual Report* 1815, p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> Bristol Humane Society *Annual Report* 1815, p. 1.

<sup>134</sup> Bristol Humane Society *Annual Report* 1816, p. 1, 3. A variant of this poem also appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* 73, 1803, p. 222.

<sup>135</sup> Bristol Humane Society *Annual Report* 1816, p. 2.

sponsored swimming training in local schools. As a body, it was intimately linked with civic authority and the better-off members of the local community, the Patrons of the society being stated to ‘consist of the Right Worshipful the MAYOR, ALDERMEN, SHERIFFS and COMMON COUNCIL of the City of Bristol.’<sup>136</sup> The position of President of the Society was held *ex officio* by the mayor.<sup>137</sup> The other members of the Society comprised various officers, Medical Assistants, and Directors, the latter being defined as those who supported the Society financially with an annual donation of ½ guinea or a one-off payment of 5 guineas.<sup>138</sup> The Directors of the Society were not numerous, numbering less than 100, but during the early years of the nineteenth century they included many of the most distinguished members of the local establishment and boasted a pair of MPs and two baronets.<sup>139</sup> The Society was also supported financially by the Corporation of Bristol and the Society of Merchant Adventurers in the City of Bristol. In terms of membership and functions the Bristol society can thus be seen almost precisely to mirror – albeit on a more modest scale – the larger London-based RHS.

### **Fighting Fire**

The LSHS’s fire medal discussed earlier represented something of a rarity, the majority of humane societies concentrating their attentions primarily on the perils of drowning and asphyxiation. Fire nevertheless represented a real and visible hazard for many living in Britain’s cramped industrial cities. During the eighteenth century various insurance companies had established private fire brigades to protect the property of their policyholders and, in 1833, a cartel of eleven London-based companies merged their brigades to form the London Fire Engine Establishment.<sup>140</sup> The new brigade possessed a city-wide remit, but its priority was to protect property rather than save life. There was however a developing public awareness of the human cost of fires and, as early as 1817,

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<sup>136</sup> Bristol Humane Society *Annual Report* 1816, p. 2.

<sup>137</sup> Bristol Humane Society *Annual Report* 1816, p. 2.

<sup>138</sup> One guinea = £1-1s-0d (or 21shillings). After 1816 the guinea became a notional money of account, the guinea coin having been replaced in that year by a new £1 coin called the sovereign.

<sup>139</sup> Bristol Humane Society *Annual Reports* 1815-18.

<sup>140</sup> E.H. Gledhill, ‘The Society for the Protection of Life From Fire’, *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 19 (1993), p. 51.

correspondence published in *The Times* lamented the lack of public appliances to assist in the rescue of endangered souls from ‘imminent danger and the most dreadful deaths’.<sup>141</sup> By 1826, initial plans had been laid to establish a Society for the Preventing of Loss of Life from Fire. The principles of the new organisation were to be modelled on those of the RHS, the society’s secretary John Hudson explaining in 1828:

That such an establishment is most desirable for the safety and protection of this extensive Metropolis, has been proved by numberless instances of the destruction of human life, including all ages and descriptions of persons. The same philanthropic feeling, therefore, which prompted the establishment of a Humane Society for rescuing life from drowning, may naturally be expected to operate successfully in the support of a Society for preventing loss of life from Fire.<sup>142</sup>

Hudson’s optimism proved to be misplaced however, for within five years the new society had succumbed to a shortage of funds.<sup>143</sup> Public awareness of the human cost of fire remained high however<sup>144</sup> and, on 22 March 1836, a new society, ‘For the Protection of Life from Fire’, was founded in London, enjoying from the outset the active support of the insurance industry which provided the new body with administrative assistance and occasional cash subsidies.<sup>145</sup> Insurance agents were encouraged to recruit subscribers for the society and were rewarded with a 15% commission on the monies so raised.<sup>146</sup>

The prime purpose of the new society was to preserve life from fire through the provision of both trained personnel and specialist equipment. The society swiftly gained royal patronage, the young Queen Victoria accepting the role of Patroness in 1837 and subscribing an annual sum of 10 guineas to support the society’s work.<sup>147</sup> The society further claimed to have been granted the title of

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<sup>141</sup> Quoted in S. Holloway, *Courage High!: A History of Firefighting in London* (London, 1992), p. 38.

<sup>142</sup> Printed letter from the Secretary of the Society, John Hudson, 28 October 1828. Reproduced in Holloway, *Courage High*, p. 38.

<sup>143</sup> R.W. Gould, ‘The Medals of the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire’, *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 16 (1992), p. 32.

<sup>144</sup> See for example *The Times*, 21 August 1835.

<sup>145</sup> Gledhill, ‘The Society for the Protection of Life from Fire’, p. 53.

<sup>146</sup> Gould, ‘The Medals of the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire’, p. 33.

<sup>147</sup> Gledhill, ‘The Society for the Protection of Life from Fire’, p. 52.

‘Royal’ in 1843<sup>148</sup> and by 1865 operated 73 fire stations throughout London, each equipped with its own fire-escape and crew.<sup>149</sup> This figure later expanded to 80 in the metropolis, with a further 60 stations being located throughout the country.<sup>150</sup> Between 1843 and 1861 the RSPLF’s firemen attended 5,211 fires and rescued 670 individuals from peril.<sup>151</sup> The main practical aims of the society were to maintain a properly equipped and trained complement of fire-fighters; to assess new inventions relevant to the combating of fire and to diffuse information relevant to fire safety.

But, if the prime purpose of the society was initially to provide the wherewithal necessary to save life, it also issued a range of awards for gallantry, its final ‘sole object’ being to bestow awards ‘at the discretion of the Society, on such persons as shall distinguish themselves by their endeavours to save life from fire, with special reference to those cases occurring in the Metropolis or its environs.’<sup>152</sup> These awards were available not only to the society’s own fire-fighters, but also to members of the public, the secretary noting in his presentation of the society’s annual report at London’s Guildhall on 30 January 1854 that:

...the awards of the Society are not confined to the conductors or the men in its employ. Among the individuals complimented at the meeting, I noticed several members of the police and several private citizens. The managers of the Society, like those of the Royal Humane Society, are determined to let no deed of noble daring pass unnoticed.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Gould, ‘The Medals of the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire’, p. 33. Current research suggests that the adoption of the designation ‘Royal’ by the Society was not officially sanctioned (Dr Roger Willoughby, *pers. com.*, 4/3/2009).

<sup>149</sup> [www.victorianlondon.org/charities/preservationoflifefromfire.htm](http://www.victorianlondon.org/charities/preservationoflifefromfire.htm) (20/11/2003).

<sup>150</sup> Gledhill, ‘The Society for the Protection of Life from Fire’, p. 51.

<sup>151</sup> [www.victorianlondon.org/charities/preservationoflifefromfire.htm](http://www.victorianlondon.org/charities/preservationoflifefromfire.htm) (20/11/2003).

<sup>152</sup> *New York Times*, 16 August 1854, p. 4.

<sup>153</sup> *New York Times*, 16 August 1854, p. 4.



### 9. Post-1852 RSPLF Medal (author's collection)

The society's honours included certificates, watches, pecuniary awards and medals, and its award-giving function was to become an even more important role of the society after 1867, in which year management of all of its London-based fire stations fire-escapes and trained personnel were transferred to the Metropolitan Board of Works following the passage of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Act (1865).<sup>154</sup> Changes in the metropolis notwithstanding, the society continued for some time to support the provision of rescue equipment and trained personnel in cities outside the capital. By 1881 however this role had been entirely taken over by local municipal authorities and the society reorganised itself to focus on its role as a provider of gallantry awards. The Board appointed 10 new Trustees, all of whom held senior positions in the insurance industry and the decision was taken to cease to pursue external subscriptions.<sup>155</sup>

The members of Britain's municipal fire brigades had ample opportunity to perform acts of courage and to earn the Society's awards and their deeds were widely reported in the popular press. Captain Shaw's report on the work of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in 1872 recorded their attendance at over 1,500 fires, a

<sup>154</sup> Gledhill, 'The Society for the Protection of Life from Fire', p. 52.

<sup>155</sup> Gledhill, 'The Society for the Protection of Life from Fire', p. 53.



figure which fell a little below the average for the previous ten years. In 71 cases life was deemed to have been imperilled and members of the brigade were instrumental in saving 160 lives. This was however achieved at considerable cost, for although the entire brigade numbered only 396, some 100 injuries were sustained, three of which resulted in death. Shaw was quick to praise 'the unremitting zeal and attention' of his men, adding that, 'our list of wounds and injuries in 1872 is, as usual large; but so long as the men continue to work with the same spirit and enterprise as hitherto no diminution of accidents can be expected'.<sup>156</sup>

The death of individual firemen could on occasion lead to extraordinary outpourings of public grief. The most extreme example of this phenomenon occurred in 1861 when James Braidwood, the Superintendent of the London Fire Brigade, lost his life beneath a falling wall whilst fighting a vast fire in Tooley Street jute warehouse. It was a story of dramatic self-sacrifice which remained a potent symbol for decades following the incident. Writing circa 1895, in a publication funded by the Sunday School Union, the inspirational author Frank Mundell portrayed a heroic death: the brave leader, having striven tirelessly to defeat the fire, losing his life whilst giving succour and encouragement to his exhausted men. The accompanying illustration portrayed Braidwood in a suitably heroic pose; shielding his men from the falling masonry as he urges them - and an imperilled civilian - to safety.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 1 February 1873, p. 67.

<sup>157</sup> F. Mundell, *Stories of the Fire Brigade* (London, n.d., c. 1895), pp. 54-56.



**10. Death of Braidwood, illustration of c.1895<sup>158</sup>**

Braidwood's exemplary death caught the public imagination. His cortege was over a mile long and was attended by representatives not only of the City's fire brigades but also by members of the London Rifle Brigade, Tower Hamlets Volunteers and both the Metropolitan and City police forces.<sup>159</sup> Shops were closed along the funeral route and the bells of numerous churches rang out funeral peels. The Queen sent a personal 'message of womanly sympathy'<sup>160</sup> to the hero's widow, and messages of condolences were received from around the globe, Australian colleagues writing to report that:

On receipt of the sad news, our fire-bell was tolled, the British ensign hoisted half-mast high, and crape attached to the firemen's uniform, as a token of respect for one of the noblest and most self denying men that ever lived, who spent and lost his life in the service of his fellow creatures.<sup>161</sup>

As Curl observes, 'This extraordinary funeral celebrated a perceived hero in the Carlyelian mode, and was almost as grand as a state or royal funeral'. It was a

<sup>158</sup> Mundell, *Stories of the Fire Brigade*, p. 55.

<sup>159</sup> J.S. Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (Thrupp, 2000), p. 209.

<sup>160</sup> Mundell, *Tales of the Fire Brigade*, p. 57.

<sup>161</sup> Mundell, *Tales of the Fire Brigade*, p. 57.

‘good death’ in the classic Victorian mode, the non-conformist preacher Dr John Cumming celebrating that, ‘He died at his post of duty; and whether it was the battle-field, or at the head of the fire-brigade, the holiest place on earth on which to live or die was the post of duty.’<sup>162</sup> James Braidwood had given his life for the benefit of others and in the performance of his duty, and his heroic death resonated with the public; contemporary popular demand for mementoes of the man being met by the production and sale of coloured prints, Staffordshire-produced pottery figures and other souvenirs.<sup>163</sup>

His sacrifice was one that could be used to inspire both patriotism and to promote the cult of muscular Christianity. His tale was also appropriated by patriotic and religious propagandists and was still being reproduced in inspirational works half-a-century after his death, Kate Stanway’s unashamedly jingoistic *Britannia’s Calendar of Heroes* for example recounting his deed and celebrating his sacrifice in verse:

Not at the battle front –  
Writ of in story;  
Not on the blazing wreck,  
Steering to glory.

Death found – and touched him with  
Fingers in flying:  
So he rose up complete  
Hero undying.<sup>164</sup>

The presentation of gallantry awards was taken very seriously by the RSPLF, with the honours normally being presented by a distinguished establishment figure at a ceremony held at the Guildhall or Mansion House. Prominent individuals who agreed to perform this role included the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Wellington, who in June 1856 presented four medals, 87 testimonials and some pecuniary rewards.<sup>165</sup> The presentation of such awards to firemen reflected the high public esteem in which they were held. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth

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<sup>162</sup> The address was quoted on Braidwood’s Memorial Card: reproduced in Curl, *Victorian Celebration of Death*, p. 203.

<sup>163</sup> J.A. Walker, *Firefighters in Art and Media: A Pictorial History* (London, 2005), pp. 56-57.

<sup>164</sup> Verse by Miss Muloch, reproduced in K. Stanway, *Britannia’s Calendar of Heroes* (London, 1914), p. 172.

<sup>165</sup> Gould, ‘The Medals of the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire’, p. 36.

century, ‘The sight of the gallant men of the MFB<sup>166</sup>, galloping through London with, as Hilaire Belloc put it “Courage high and hearts aglow” warmed the hearts of the Victorian populace who respected them as heroes.’<sup>167</sup> Firemen inspired artists such as Millais to produce epic sentimental works recording their brave deeds<sup>168</sup> and encouraged members of the higher ranks of society - including no less a figure than the Prince of Wales - to don fireman’s garb and play the role of amateur fire-fighter.<sup>169</sup> Nor did they escape the attentions of the balladeers:

Our soldiers and sailors are gallant and brave  
And they well serve the Queen on the land and the wave.  
With nerves that are strong and hearts that are true,  
And we gladly give honour where honour is due.

But tonight I would ask you to think upon those  
Who go forth to fight the most deadly of foes:  
Who boldly, with danger and death undismay’d  
And our blessings are breathed for the Fire Brigade...<sup>170</sup>

The sentiments expressed in such ballads were reminiscent of those used to celebrate the deeds of the lifeboat-men, most tellingly insofar as the work of the fire-fighter was described as being analogous to that of a soldier in wartime. Firemen, like lifeboat-men, were thus portrayed as civilians at war. In such circumstances it must have seemed only natural to the Victorian citizen that their bravery should be rewarded by the presentation of medals at military-style parades.

### **Mining Disasters**

Whilst the sea, waterways and fire remained prominent sources of danger, perils of equal magnitude were faced on a daily basis by the thousands of miners who struggled underground to win the coal necessary to supply the factories of Victorian England. Disasters and accidents occurred with alarming regularity and an important part of the public response to these was frequently focussed on

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<sup>166</sup> Metropolitan Fire Brigade

<sup>167</sup> Holloway, *Courage High*, p. 90.

<sup>168</sup> For an in-depth survey of the evolution of the portrayal of fire-fighters in art, see J.A. Walker, *Firefighters in Art and Media: A Pictorial History* (London, 2005).

<sup>169</sup> D. Burgess-Wise, *Fire Engines and Fire-Fighting* (London, 1997), p. 51.

<sup>170</sup> *The Song of the Fire Brigade*, reproduced in Holloway, *Courage High*, p. 90.

the rewarding of brave rescue workers. One such incident occurred on Thursday 16 January 1862 at New Hartley Colliery in Northumberland. Whilst a shift-change was in process the beam engine of the pit's water pump fractured, a 21 ton piece of machinery tumbling down the mine's only shaft and causing it partially to collapse. Five miners died in the initial incident, and a further 215 were trapped in the workings below ground.<sup>171</sup> Rescue efforts were started immediately, but it took several days to remove sufficient debris to allow the would-be rescuers to enter the part of the mine where their colleagues were trapped. By the time help arrived it was too late, the trapped men and boys all having succumbed to the effects of gas. The disaster became a national news sensation. As the *Illustrated London News* reported, 'The village of New Hartley is a scene of misery, desolation and woe, as nearly the whole population has been stricken with death.'<sup>172</sup>

The protracted nature of the rescue efforts ensured that the disaster garnered a great deal of press attention and there was much concern for the fate of those dependents who, in many cases having lost the family breadwinner or breadwinners, faced penury. A Relief Committee was quickly established to provide support for the widows and orphans. Its fundraising efforts were officially launched on 24 January 1862 at a mass meeting held at Newcastle Guildhall. Those attending were stirred to loud applause by the speech of the Bishop of Durham, who drew a favourable parallel between the heroic conduct of the miners in the rescue party and troops on the battlefield, proclaiming that 'such men are our real heroes. Northumberland may well be proud of them. The whole country may well be proud of them. I would sooner shake hands with such men than with those who show bravery of another kind – not by saving but by slaying human beings.'<sup>173</sup> The Relief Fund gained the keen support of both rich and poor alike. On 5 February 1862 Newcastle Council recorded its appreciation of a personal gift of 100 guineas made by the Mayor, Joseph Armstrong.<sup>174</sup> The same meeting acknowledged its gratitude to the Lord Mayor

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<sup>171</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 25 January 1862, p. 81.

<sup>172</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 25 January 1862, p. 81.

<sup>173</sup> J.E. McCutcheon, *The Hartley Colliery Disaster, 1862* (Seaham, 1963), pp. 148-49.

<sup>174</sup> J. Boddington, *The Entombed: British Mining Disasters and the Rescuers' Medals* (n.d.), p. 2.

of London, who had succeeded in raising £8,000 for the fund in the Metropolis, whilst the *Illustrated London News* of 1 February recorded that:

The sum stated to be required for the permanent relief of the widows and orphans is £17,000; but the amount is likely to be soon exceeded. Several thousands have already been subscribed in Northumberland alone, and efforts are being made throughout the country to lessen the force of the calamity which has overtaken the sufferers of Hartley. Her Majesty has subscribed £200; the Earl of Durham's name is down for a similar amount; whilst the Duke of Northumberland gave £300. But the most pleasing feature of this movement is the heartiness with which it has been taken up by the working classes, and especially the miners of the country, who are eagerly putting down their mites in support of so commendable an object.<sup>175</sup>

But if much money was being raised to support the families of the victims, the efforts of those who had gone to their aid were not forgotten, and as early as 3 February *The Times*, assuming that cash would be more highly valued by working-class men than other rewards, noted that:

Some have proposed to strike a medal for them, others to present them with their portraits, with suitable inscriptions; but in all probability the testimonial will take the more acceptable shape of a donation of money.<sup>176</sup>

A total of £1,587 was raised to pay for the rescuers' rewards. The prediction of *The Times* that the presentation to the rescuers would take the form of a grant of money was to prove only partly correct, for the decision had been taken early on that the rescuers would also each receive medal.<sup>177</sup> A civic reception was held on 20 May 1862, at which 38 rescuers were honoured. There were many speeches, with numerous references being made to the symbolic importance of the honours gained. Typical of these were the words of the Rev. C.T. Whitley, the Vicar of Bedlington, who was moved to compare the miners to Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior*, reflecting: 'That is the manner of man we honour tonight, and one day some likely lads or comely lasses will say, "That medal was won by my grandfather in the pit at Hartley."' <sup>178</sup> A single gold medal was produced (for award to William Coulson, who had organised and led the rescue attempt).

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<sup>175</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 1 February 1862, p. 105.

<sup>176</sup> *The Times*, 3 February 1862, p. 9.

<sup>177</sup> Boddington, *The Entombed*, p. 3.

<sup>178</sup> McCutcheon, *Hartley Colliery Disaster*, pp. 152-53.

Individually-named silver medals were likewise received by Coulson's son, William Jnr. and 36 miners; the latter also receiving cash rewards of between £4 and £30, dependent upon the length of time they had spent underground. Whilst the medals were not intended for wear, it is clear that many of the proud (and working-class) recipients were keen to display them, for surviving specimens are almost invariably fitted with some form of suspension and ribbon.<sup>179</sup>

### **The Order of St John**

Although numerous similar rewards were produced on a one-off basis to reward specific acts of industrial heroism, it was not until 1871 that a permanently-established organisation created a medal to reward brave deeds performed in the nation's mines and factories. The body which took on this novel role was one which ostentatiously claimed a noble heritage and a long history of supporting humanitarian deeds. In reality however, the Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem possessed distinctly murky 19<sup>th</sup>-century origins and, in its early years, was forced to struggle for social acceptance.<sup>180</sup> Disowned by the legitimate Catholic Order of Malta, the English body's membership was frequently both eccentric and reactionary. Many early recruits, including the ubiquitous Sir William Hillary, were, as Riley-Smith observed, 'products of a romantic society obsessed by the middle ages and the virtues, as they saw them, of chivalry'.<sup>181</sup> As such, they belonged to a broader chivalric revival,<sup>182</sup> but they were also, as he less charitably notes, generally profoundly reactionary in their politics, Hillary's obsession with the independence of the Order for example being largely driven by his desire to develop 'a bulwark against new and unattractive "democratic" forces'.<sup>183</sup> Even a staunch supporter, Guy Stair Sainty, writing on behalf of the Order in 1991, conceded that without the recognition of the Order of Malta, 'the

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<sup>179</sup> Boddington, *The Entombed*, p. 4.

<sup>180</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century origins of the venerable Order in England, see for example D. Seward, *The Monks of War: The Military Religious Orders* (London, 1995), pp. 340-49.

<sup>181</sup> Riley-Smith, *Hospitallers*, p. 130; E. Siberry, 'A Victorian Crusade and the Victorian Perception of the Military Orders', *St John Historical Society Proceedings* 5 (1993), 42-48.

<sup>182</sup> See M. Girouard, *Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven and London, 1981).

<sup>183</sup> Riley-Smith, *Hospitallers*, p. 130.

early nineteenth-century English Priory was a purely private organisation.<sup>184</sup> A key step towards the longed-for official recognition and respectability was taken in 1861 with the appointment of the well-connected Duke of Manchester as Grand Prior. Of even greater significance was to be the role of Sir Edmund Lechmere, who served the Order successively as Secretary General (1866-88); Chancellor (1890-94); and Hospitaller (1894).<sup>185</sup>

The organisation Lechmere joined was little more than a private club with chivalric pretensions. Indeed, Lechmere had originally been wary of what had been described as a 'feeble and purposeless society'<sup>186</sup> but, once enrolled, it was largely due to his zeal and foresight that the Order found a useful role in broader society. Under his direction, and with the support of John Furley, the Order was by 1872, 'investigating the possibility of establishing an ambulance service in mining and pottery districts, which were the scenes of many accidents, and were considering how to start training courses for those whom we would now call paramedics.'<sup>187</sup> The product of these investigations was the St John Ambulance Association, which was formally established in 1877 and which, within the next decade, had spread throughout the Empire. Uniformed and organised on military lines, the inauguration of the new body coincided with what Roger Cooter has dubbed the 'Moment of the Accident'.<sup>188</sup> Cooter's contention is that at this time the industrial cities came to be widely viewed as urban battlefields as increased press-coverage brought the previously 'hidden' perils of manufacturing industry before an ever-wider audience. Within such a context, the decision of the Order of St John to concentrate its humanitarian provision on the management of accidents might therefore be viewed as a logical response to a perceived pre-existing need. Cooter however further argues that the quasi-military organisation of the resulting Ambulance Association represented an attempt by the retired and

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<sup>184</sup> Sainty, *The Orders of St John*, p. 71

<sup>185</sup> S. Miller, 'The Hospitallers of the Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem', *St John Historical Society Proceedings* 4 (1992), pp. 7-8.

<sup>186</sup> E.C. Dawson, 'The Life Saving Medal of the Order of St John', *St John Historical Society Proceedings* 5 (1993), p. 21.

<sup>187</sup> Riley-Smith, *Hospitallers*, p. 134.

<sup>188</sup> R. Cooter, 'The Moment of the Accident: Culture, Militarism and Modernity in Late-Victorian Britain', in R. Cooter and B Luckin (eds.) *Accidents in History: Injuries, Fatalities and Social Relations* (Amsterdam, 1997), pp. 107-157.



serving military officers who formed the backbone of the nascent body to 'militarise' a threatening urban environment.<sup>189</sup>

An alternative explanation may however be that these founders were drawing upon their own practical experience and that the military model merely provided a familiar and convenient means to ensure the efficient management of a large number of volunteers who were expected to behave in a disciplined and orderly fashion at times of great stress. That notwithstanding, it is notable that Lechmere, despite his central role in these developments, was a half-hearted soldier at best, never rising above the junior rank of captain in a part-time rifle volunteer company despite his high social status as a baronet and MP.<sup>190</sup> It is also crucial to remember that - as a self-styled chivalric order - the parent organisation was keenly interested in rank and status. What better way to consolidate and celebrate one's own position than to be seen to command a uniformed body of volunteers drawn in large part from the lower social orders? As Cooter concedes, a key purpose of the St John Ambulance Association was self-promotion and it soon began to expand its operations out of the workplace and take a keen interest in attending major events where its activities were subject to the gaze of 'approving witnesses'.<sup>191</sup>

Given the Order's interest in quasi-military traditions and enthusiasm for display and ceremonial, it was perhaps inevitable that it would soon look towards the production of medals. From its foundation, 'knights' of the Order had been proud to wear the white enamel cross that was its badge, and it was the innovative and inspirational Sir Edmund Lechmere who was to play the pivotal role in the establishment of the Venerable Order of St John's lifesaving medal. Lechmere had originally raised the possibility of instituting a lifesaving medal as early as 1869, whilst addressing a meeting of the Worcestershire Commandery at Hanley Castle. The question was raised with the Chapter at St John's Gate, Clerkenwell the following year, Lechmere discussing the setting up of an ambulance service and then going on to suggest that:

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<sup>189</sup> Cooter, 'The Moment of the Accident', pp. 117-21.

<sup>190</sup> Cooter, 'The Moment of the Accident', p. 116.

<sup>191</sup> Cooter, 'The Moment of the Accident', p. 113, quoting J. Furley, 'On the Carriage and Removal of the Sick and Injured', *International Health Exhibition* (London, 1884), p. 3.

...another useful branch of such a work would be the recognition by the Order... of those who had distinguished themselves by acts of personal bravery and humanity on occasions of accident or danger.<sup>192</sup>

Lechmere suggested that this might be achieved through the award of parchment testimonials or bronze medals, explaining that the Order 'would thus occupy the same position in reference to accidents on land as the Royal Humane Society does to those on the sea and on our coasts.'<sup>193</sup> In arguing for the establishment of a system of awards for gallantry in saving life, Lechmere thus drew specific comparisons with the RHS, whilst the author of an 1876 account of the Order's awards also referred to 'the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the Royal Shipwrecked Mariners Society' (correctly the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society).<sup>194</sup> Unlike the Order of St John, all of these had been granted Royal patronage: the RHS in 1783; RNLI in 1824; and SFMRBS in 1839. As such, each would have represented a worthy role model for the aspirant Order. It is also perhaps of some significance that the Queen had, in 1869, granted the RHS the great honour of allowing its gallantry medals to be worn by service personnel whilst in uniform.<sup>195</sup> Lechmere's arguments proved persuasive, and the institution of a medal was authorised by Statute in 1871.<sup>196</sup> It was not, however, until 15 December 1874 that the Chapter General of the Order of St John 'instituted Silver and Bronze Medals for saving life on land under conditions which endangered the life of the rescuer.'<sup>197</sup> Lechmere himself paid to have the dies cut.<sup>198</sup> The specific reference to 'on land' was clearly intended to ensure that the criteria for award did not clash with those applied by other bodies and, in particular, the RHS.

Lechmere had recognised that, were it to become involved in the practice of rewarding gallantry, the Order would have to establish its own niche and it was swiftly recognised that 'it appeared that when casualties occur in our mining and

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<sup>192</sup> *Order of St John of Jerusalem in England: Descriptive History of its Medals for Saving Life on Land by Special Acts of Bravery* (London, 1876), n.p.

<sup>193</sup> *Order of St John: Descriptive History*, n.p.

<sup>194</sup> *Order of St John: Descriptive History*, n.p.

<sup>195</sup> Admiralty Circular 11.C, 19 March 1869.

<sup>196</sup> C.W. Tozer, *The Insignia and Medals of the Grand Priory of the Most Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem* (London, 1975), p. 41.

<sup>197</sup> Dawson, 'The Life Saving Medal', pp. 21-22.

<sup>198</sup> Tozer, *Insignia and Medals*, p. 41; Dawson, 'The Life Saving Medal', p. 22

colliery districts, and men expose their lives to the greatest risk to rescue their fellow creatures, no recognition from any public body could be obtained, because it was not within the scope of any existing body to reward such merit.’<sup>199</sup> The Order observed that about a thousand miners lost their lives each year in colliery accidents and argued that, were it not for the courage shown by volunteer rescuers, this figure would be higher still. Workmen were saved from death and injury, but there were also social and economic benefits to be gained through the encouragement of such altruism for, ‘By this means many a valuable life has been saved, still to support those who must otherwise, as widows and fatherless children, have been dependent upon parochial or other charity.’<sup>200</sup>

The financial argument mirrored exactly that which had been made by the RHS in the late eighteenth century. In promoting the scheme - and again echoing the arguments of the older organisation – the Order was also happy to draw upon patriotic and nationalistic sentiment, arguing that, whilst most Englishmen act gallantly ‘in obedience to an instinct which seeks no return for a noble act beyond the conscientious feeling that they have done what is right and performed their duty’,<sup>201</sup> it would nevertheless be appropriate that they should receive some tangible reward that ‘they may bequeath to their children and grandchildren’.<sup>202</sup> Nor was the potential for positive media coverage ignored, Lechmere reminding his fellows that the absence of such a system of reward had ‘not hitherto been creditable to the English nation: and from time to time the public press has drawn attention to the subject, and urged the necessity for something to be done to remedy the defect’.<sup>203</sup>

As well as the humanitarian benefits of saving a fellow creature from an untimely end, the economic benefits of saving life were clearly recognised and acknowledged by the Order in its *Annual Report* of 1874, in much the same way as it was by other bodies such as the RHS. Little was made in the *Annual Report* of the Order’s chivalric pretensions however, although, in presenting the first life

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<sup>199</sup> *Order of St John: Descriptive History*, n.p.

<sup>200</sup> *Order of St John: Descriptive History*, n.p.

<sup>201</sup> *Order of St John: Descriptive History*, n.p.

<sup>202</sup> *Order of St John: Descriptive History*, n.p.

<sup>203</sup> *Order of St John: Descriptive History*, n.p., reproducing report originally published in the *Birmingham Gazette*, 23 November 1875.

saving medals to two gallant miners, Lechmere posed the question: ‘And who will say that chivalry is confined to one class? ...its impulse may beat in every breast whether that breast be the broadcloth of the gentleman or the working dress of the miner...’<sup>204</sup> The sentiments expressed by Lechmere here may seem to cross class boundaries, but in reality there remained a vast gulf between the membership of the Order and those whom it saw fit to reward with its medals. A miner might hope to gain the Order’s lifesaving medal, but he could never expect ever to be admitted to the Order proper. Membership of the Order was the preserve of the middle and upper classes (with senior grades being sub-divided into classes of ‘grace’ and ‘justice’ dependent upon the status of the pedigree of the holder). The Order of St John can accordingly be perceived as an integral part of a highly-structured class system, the status of its members being confirmed and reinforced by their ability to confer marks of approval on members of the lower orders.



**11. Lifesaving Medal of the Order of St John [type 2, introduced 1888] and badge of a member [Serving Brother grade, early C20th] (author’s collection)**

By 1914 the Order’s lifesaving medal had been won on fewer than 300 occasions. It could be argued however that the Order of St John had less need to

<sup>204</sup> Dawson, ‘The Life Saving Medal’, p. 22.

promote itself through its bravery awards than many other contemporary organisations. The Order had developed - like the RNLI - a genuinely valuable humanitarian function and its role as a *fons honorum* responsible for the distribution of gallantry awards had become secondary to its core operational functions. The uniformed working-class members of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Association were highly visible and universally recognised ambassadors for their more elevated masters and, by the latter part of the nineteenth century, the members of the Order were able to bask in the glory both of Royal recognition and public esteem.

### **Lifesaving, Medals and the Media**

Public appreciation of the work of the RHS and other humane societies was nurtured by the regular coverage which garnered it in the nineteenth century press. By 1800 it was estimated that about 75% of men could read and many had become eager consumers of both radical pamphlets and of the types of inexpensive 'improving' publications printed under the auspices of evangelical bodies such as the Cheap Repository Text Society.<sup>205</sup> The reading of newspapers had likewise become increasingly commonplace, with many circumventing the high costs which resulted from their publication by banding together and sharing copies.<sup>206</sup> Newspaper readership further increased as the century progressed; encouraged by the abolition of the newspaper tax in 1855, improvements in print technology and by the more efficient distribution of periodicals via the rapidly developing railway network. Furthermore, the middle years of the century also witnessed the growth of two new types of news media: the illustrated magazine and the inexpensive mass-market didactic periodical, the latter being particularly targeted at the aspirational lower-middle classes.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the majority of working class people were literate. Working class interest in reading was further encouraged by the Education Act of 1870 and, as Golby and Purdue observe, 'By the end of the century it would be common to find a newspaper or magazine being read in a

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<sup>205</sup> J. Flanders, *Consuming Passions: Leisure and Pleasure in Victorian Britain* (London, 2007), pp. 138-139.

<sup>206</sup> Flanders, *Consuming Passions*, pp. 138-139.

working class home.<sup>207</sup> These publications devoted huge quantities of space to the reporting of fires, industrial accidents and maritime disasters; frequently bringing the deeds of brave individuals to the attention of a very wide audience. In parallel, MacKenzie has noted the importance of journals such as the *Illustrated London News*, which, from 1842, brought images of great events and public calamities into upper and middle class homes (where they were doubtless also seen and enjoyed by servants) and the democratising effect of cheap photographs which - culminating in a 'postcard boom' of circa 1898-1918 - witnessed the mass collecting of postcard images of , amongst other subjects, lifeboats and images of both national and local lifesaving heroes.<sup>208</sup>

Lanterns slides, showing images of brave lifeboatmen and heroic fire-fighters also proved to be a popular late-Victorian innovation. Furthermore, from the closing years of the nineteenth century, the development of moving pictures was to offer the public an accessible new medium through which they might come closer to personally experiencing the drama of disasters and rescues. Modern public cinema is widely considered to trace its origins to a screening staged by the Lumiere brothers in Paris in December 1895 and, within months, the sensational new phenomenon had spread both to Britain and the USA. On both sides of the Atlantic the new medium was quickly embraced by the public, and cheap admission ensured that it rapidly came to be regarded as entertainment on a par with attractions such as the music hall.<sup>209</sup> As the contemporary commentator Laura Lane complained, the late Victorian period was 'a sensational age'<sup>210</sup> and, from the outset, dramatic moving pictures featuring both stormy seas and fire-fighting proved particularly popular.<sup>211</sup> Such films blurred the boundaries between entertainment and reportage, whilst projections portraying the aftermath of real-life accidents and disasters also appealed to audiences hungry for sensational drama.

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<sup>207</sup> Golby & Purdue, *The Civilisation of the Crowd*, p. 179.

<sup>208</sup> J.M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Popular Opinion 1880-1960* (Manchester, 1984), pp. 20-21.

<sup>209</sup> R. Robb, *Silent Cinema* (Harpenden, 2007), pp. 11-16.

<sup>210</sup> L. Lane, *Heroes of Everyday Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London, 1896).

<sup>211</sup> British Film Institute, *Early Cinema: Pioneers and Primitives* (London, 2005), DVD notes p. 4.

One of the earliest productions of the British film pioneer Robert Paul - shown at the Alhambra in August 1896 – made pioneering use of actors to recreate the rescue of a child from the River Thames.<sup>212</sup> Paul was also filming at Bow Creek on the Thames in June 1898 when a wave caused by the premature launching of HMS Albion carried away a wooden bridge upon which were standing some 200 spectators. Numerous lives were lost, the victims being primarily women and children, and no fewer than 21 awards were made by the RHS to rescuers.<sup>213</sup> Paul's boat was one of those which rushed to the aid of those struggling in the water, and his moving images of the landing of those pulled from the Thames was widely screened despite his fellow cinematographer Birt Acres complaining both vociferously and publicly about Paul's decision to exhibit his film of the catastrophe.<sup>214</sup> The heroes portrayed on screen and in print – who were often drawn from the labouring classes – could serve as role models for audiences and readers, their acts of self-sacrifice and benevolence mirroring those of Christ and the New Testament's Good Samaritan. Nor were newspaper editors and copywriters slow to demand that honours be granted to those whom they deemed worthy:

I wonder if this gallant sailor will have to wait till the 'hereafter'... before he is rewarded for the great day's work so modestly recorded? For example, we have a society which votes medals and thanks for saving lives at sea. How long shall Captain Kingstone, of the steam tug City of London; Captain Pritchard, of the pilot-boat Princess; and the Captain of the lugger Mary Anne, who amongst them saved eighty-five lives, go about undecorated?<sup>215</sup>

From performing the role of advocate, it was but a small step to the creating of new rewards and, by the late nineteenth century, a number of popular magazines and newspapers were making regular awards in recognition of acts of gallantry which had been brought to their attention. These often took the form of money, but a few publications also instituted medals, which were on occasion presented to individuals who had also been honoured by one of the national or provincial societies for the same deed. Whilst in some instances both well designed and

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<sup>212</sup> The film, under the title 'Scene on the River Thames Showing the Rescue of a Child from Drowning' is described in British Film Institute, *R.W. Paul: The Collected Films 1895-1908* (London, 2006), notes p. 6.

<sup>213</sup> RHS Cases 29525-29541; 29586- 29587.

<sup>214</sup> [www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/44977](http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/44977) (26.4.2009)

<sup>215</sup> *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 1 February 1873, p. 70, reporting the wreck of the *Northfleet*.

produced, these awards were often short-lived and appear in general to have been dependent for their survival upon the whim of individual editors.

Significantly, several journals invited their readership to submit recommendations on behalf of individuals whose actions they considered to be worthy of reward. Whilst the final decision on the making of awards remained with an authority figure - normally the editor - this system represented a significant advance in the democratisation of the award process, particularly in the light of the often predominantly working-class readership of such journals. An early newspaper-based award was issued by the Protestant periodical, *The Quiver*, which described itself as ‘an illustrated magazine for Sunday and general reading’.<sup>216</sup> The paper was actively involved in the supporting the work of the RNLI through the raising of funds for the purchase of lifeboats,<sup>217</sup> and publishing material that raised awareness of the Institution’s activities, including poetic works typified by Martha Haycroft’s highly sentimental ‘One More for the Lifeboat Crew’:

This kiss, my sweet, till again we meet  
And another I leave with you  
For the babe at rest on your brave, brave breast –  
God keep my little lad true,  
And strengthen his soul  
When the deep waves roll  
A call for the life-boat crew!<sup>218</sup>

Clearly, for such a religiously-focussed publication, working class heroes could provide valuable role models. In 1885 the magazine instituted a lifesaving gallantry award, to be presented in bronze, silver or gold to individuals recommended to the magazine by its readers. The medal, which was designed by Mrs A.M. Clausen, bore on the obverse a splendidly melodramatic representation

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<sup>216</sup> J. Boddington, ‘The Quiver Medals’ *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 23 (1995), pp. 4-38.

<sup>217</sup> J. Mackay and J.W. Mussell, *The Medal Yearbook*, (Honiton 2000), p. 262. The magazine was for example responsible for the funding of the lifeboats located at Southwold in Suffolk, Margate and Queenstown near Cork. See:

[ca.geocities.com/volturno@rogers.com/volturno51.html](http://ca.geocities.com/volturno@rogers.com/volturno51.html) (30.8.2006) and  
[www.searlecanada.org/volturno/volturno51.html](http://www.searlecanada.org/volturno/volturno51.html) (20/12/2010)

<sup>218</sup> Originally published in *The Quiver*, vol. XX 1885, p. 241. Reproduced in J. Cumming & C. Vince, *The Life-boat in Verse* (London 1938), p. 32.



of a naked man, carrying a small child and using his own body to shield the infant from the approach of a winged and hooded representation of Death.<sup>219</sup>

*The Quiver* was not the only periodical to take an active role in the rewarding of brave deeds. In February 1892 the magazine *Answers* announced its intention to establish an award to recognise acts of bravery.<sup>220</sup> The magazine stated that the award was intended to ‘foster the spirit of bravery for which the sons and daughters of Britain are famous throughout the world’ and to recognise some of the ‘thousands of brave acts that have been enacted during the present century that have received no tangible reward other than a fleeting newspaper paragraph.’<sup>221</sup> The author of the piece argued, perhaps unfairly, that this reflected a situation whereby ‘In almost every country but ours, personal daring receives public recognition in many forms’. Unlike the *Quiver* medal, the ‘Answers Medal for Bravery’ was to be available not only to those who had performed brave lifesaving acts on land or at sea, but also ‘to soldiers and sailors in case of war’. In the same edition of the magazine the readership was invited to submit applications for receipt of the award to the ‘Secretary of the Answers Order of Bravery’ at the publication’s Fleet Street offices.<sup>222</sup>

Awards were not however to be given lightly, and the readership was assured that, ‘In order to make the “Answers” Medal for Bravery one of the most coveted distinctions of the day, the greatest care will be taken to enquire into every case.’<sup>223</sup> That the recommendations made by members of the public were indeed subject to follow-up enquiries was again made absolutely clear in the case of Daniel Ryder, a London crossing sweeper, whose bravery in dealing with panicked horses on two separate occasions was brought to the attention of the editor by a member of the public. In this case and medal was presented, but only after ‘an interview with Mr Ryder, and careful investigation’.<sup>224</sup> Members of

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<sup>219</sup> The medal remained in use for almost 20 years. Although an attempt was made to revive the medal in 1912-13, it had effectively fallen out of use by 1904.

<sup>220</sup> *Answers*, 27 February 1892.

<sup>221</sup> *Answers*, 27 February 1892.

<sup>222</sup> *Answers*, 27 February 1892.

<sup>223</sup> *Answers*, 27 February 1892.

<sup>224</sup> *Answers*, 19 March 1892; for an illustration of this award, see Dix, Noonan & Webb (Auctioneers) *The Collection of Life Saving Awards Formed by the Late W.H. Fevyer* (London, 25 September 2008), lot 209.

the public could – and did – recommend individuals to receive an award, but the final decision as to their eligibility remained in the hands of the middle-class editor.

In keeping with the overtly patriotic wording of the editorial establishing the medal, its design was redolent of British Empire, being fitted with a military-style scroll suspender and hung from a blue-and-white striped ribbon. On the obverse a laurel wreath surrounded a British lion, crouching on a pedestal inscribed FOR BRAVERY, and illuminated by the never-setting Imperial sun. Recipients also received a framed diploma, signed by no less distinguished a personage than the journal's editor, whilst those who performed lesser acts of gallantry were to be awarded diplomas alone. The institution of the medal appears, initially at least, to have galvanised the journal's readership, a subsequent editorial reporting that, 'No sooner had we announced our new idea than letters poured in from all parts of the country... offering help and assistance in local investigations whenever necessary.'<sup>225</sup> By 1895 *Answers* had formed a close association with a publication entitled *Pluck*. The latter journal had been established as a weekly moral counterblast to the prevalence of the 'Penny Dreadfuls', entertaining and improving its readership with jingoistic and uplifting tales - both factual and fictional - of British heroism both at home and abroad.<sup>226</sup> From the outset the new magazine involved itself in the issue of awards, the first being announced as early as its second edition. Initially these were known as the 'Answers-Pluck Award', but by mid-1895 a separate 'Pluck Medal' had been instituted. This was struck in bronze, like the Victoria Cross, and likewise borrowed its patriotic central motif of a *cross patee* from the nation's senior award for military gallantry. It was however a short-lived initiative, with a total of only 71 awards were made prior to the medal's discontinuance in 1897.<sup>227</sup>

Yet another medal was presented under the auspices of the magazine *To-day*, which was published between 1893 and 1903. In September 1894 the editor, Jerome K. Jerome, suggested the establishment of a fund to pay rewards to

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<sup>225</sup> *Answers*, 19 March 1892.

<sup>226</sup> M.S. Leahy, 'The "Pluck" Medal'. *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 1-3 (1988), p. 79.

<sup>227</sup> Information derived from roll reproduced in Leahy, 'The "Pluck" Medal', pp. 80-84.

people who had ‘performed acts of bravery and put themselves at risk of injury or death’.<sup>228</sup> Initial suggestions that the fund be named the ‘Pluck Fund’ or ‘Recognition of Bravery Fund’ were rejected and the simple title ‘Gallantry Fund’ adopted. Initially the fund aimed merely to compensate rescuers for financial losses that they had incurred in helping others but Jerome soon expanded its brief, noting in October the intention to ‘issue medals to accompany cheques’.<sup>229</sup> That Jerome should have taken such a keen personal interest in the Fund should come as no surprise, for, although perhaps best known today as a writer of humorous fiction, his most popular work, *Three Men in a Boat*, includes a disturbing passage in which the heroes come upon the body of a suicide victim floating in the Thames:

Of course it was the old, old vulgar tragedy. She had loved and been deceived - or had deceived herself. Anyhow, she had sinned - some of us do now and then - and her family and friends, naturally shocked and indignant, had closed their doors against her.<sup>230</sup>

The passage stands out in an otherwise light-hearted and comic work as a stark reminder of dark realities of life for many in Victorian England. Jerome’s interest in such matters was not secular. Indeed, Jerome’s written work was in latter years ‘more and more coloured by emotional religion’, and, as his obituary in the *Manchester Guardian* observed, ‘The mystery of Christ was always in his mind’.<sup>231</sup> Like others of its ilk, the Gallantry Fund Medal was to prove a short-lived venture, the importance of the editor’s personal support being evidenced by the fact that the fund went into rapid decline after Jerome left the paper in 1897. It is clear nevertheless from the reports published in *To-day* that many of those who were given cash rewards were in desperate need of any support they might receive:

There is no fund, other than the Gallantry Fund, out of which little Barry could receive a shilling, even to cover damage or loss - a serious matter to him - that might have resulted from his plucky act. I propose, providing my enquiries prove satisfactory, of which I have little doubt, sending a

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<sup>228</sup> Anon., ‘The “To-day” Gallantry Fund Medal’, *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 20 (1994), p.42.

<sup>229</sup> *To-day*, 20 October 1894.

<sup>230</sup> J.K. Jerome, *Three Men in a Boat*, (London, 1994 [1889]), p. 160.

<sup>231</sup> ‘Death of Mr Jerome K Jerome’ obituary in *The Manchester Guardian*, 16 June 1927. Reprinted in *The Guardian*, 16 June 2008, p. 28.

five pound note out of the Fund to this plucky youngster. I think that it will be welcome in that little Woolwich home, of which he is at present the sole support.<sup>232</sup>

In other cases financial support was less needed and the Fund provided only a medal:

Duguid's conduct was fittingly rewarded by a purse of £30 given to him by the father of one of the children he rescued, but some of my Westmorland friends think he is entitled to a Today medal as a more public mark of admiration.<sup>233</sup>

Little is recorded of the reactions of recipients to being awarded the Gallantry Fund Medal, the sole exception being provided by Thomas Humphrey who was moved to write upon receiving 'the handsome bronze medal awarded to me by the Gallantry Fund' that he would 'prize it... all the days of my life.'<sup>234</sup> Only 31 medals appear to have been issued in total, many of the recipients also being honoured by other organisations, including the RHS (16 awards), Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society (1) and the journal *Pluck* (3).<sup>235</sup>

In keeping with the values of a more patriotic age, the obverse of the Gallantry Fund Medal was very 'British' in design, prominently featuring Britannia, the Union Flag and the ubiquitous lion. The reverse was likewise proudly nationalistic in design, being dominated by a wreath composed of the national flowers of England, Scotland and Ireland.

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<sup>232</sup> *To-day*, 15 September 1894, p. 178.

<sup>233</sup> *To-day*, 13 July 1895, p. 307.

<sup>234</sup> Letter to the editor published in *To-day*, 6 July 1895, p. 274.

<sup>235</sup> Anon, "'To-day' Gallantry Fund Medal', pp. 45-46; C.P. Barclay, 'The Gallantry Fund Medal', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 30 (1997), pp. 77-78.



## 12. Gallantry Fund Medal, first awarded 1894 (author's collection)

Struck in silver and bronze, it was intended for wear, being fitted with a suspension bar similar to that used on the Crimea Medal and a scarlet and white striped ribbon.<sup>236</sup> Exceptionally, no mention of the issuing newspaper appears on the medal, an omission that has been attributed to Jerome's determination that the award should be inclusive and that his publication should not be accused of exploiting the gallantry of others for the purposes of self-publicity and promotion.<sup>237</sup>

An altogether less discrete approach was taken by yet another publication which established its own bravery award. The *Golden Penny* was an uplifting journal, devoted to tales of adventure and general interest, which was published between 1895 and 1909.<sup>238</sup> During the course of its early existence it frequently reported on gallant acts and, in November 1901, announced in an editorial that 'Golden Penny will now award a silver medal to those whose acts are in the Editor's opinion of sufficient importance to be published in the paper.'<sup>239</sup> The awards were frequently announced to a chorus of stirring rhetoric, which played both

<sup>236</sup> W. Fevyer, 'The Gallantry Fund Award', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 16 (1992), pp. 54-55.

<sup>237</sup> Anon., "'To-day" Gallantry Fund Medal', p.43.

<sup>238</sup> M.S. Leahy, 'The Golden Penny', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 1-3 (1988), p. 21.

<sup>239</sup> *Golden Penny*, 6 November 1901.

upon public patriotism and upon the widely-held anxieties of the time regarding the health and sturdiness of the working classes and British youth:<sup>240</sup>

In awarding the Silver Medal for Bravery this week to ... two schoolboys from Hoxton, the "Golden Penny" is satisfied that the recipients are well worthy not only of this honour, but also of the bronze medal of the Royal Humane Society which has been awarded to them. These lads have proved that Hoxton lads are as ready as any others to risk even life on behalf of a drowning comrade... Quite everyday events, some might say. Well, they may be commonplace, but nevertheless they require as much real courage as has earned many a man the Victoria Cross.<sup>241</sup>

The penny-sized medals were only awarded between 1901 and June 1904. They were not fitted with any means of suspension and, whilst they were not intended to be worn, there is clear contemporary photographic evidence that at least some of their recipients had them fitted with unofficial suspensions and wore them with pride.<sup>242</sup> They bore as the main design yet another patriotic motif - a figure of Britannia 'borrowed' from George W. de Saulles design for Victoria's 'Old Head' coinage of 1895.<sup>243</sup>

In total, only 37 awards were made. A good example of one of the medal's recipients is provided by Mary Wheatland, 'The Grace Darling of Bersted',<sup>244</sup> who operated bathing machines on the seafront at Bognor from the 1860s until her retirement in 1909.<sup>245</sup> Wheatland, who was a strong swimmer, saved many bathers during the course of her career, earning her the RHS's bronze medal and two certificates. Indeed, such was her prominence in her lifetime that she was made the subject of an illustrated article in the *Illustrated London News*<sup>246</sup> which recounted several of her rescues, including that of 'a little foreign lady, whose cries she could interpret better than any of her articulate invocations as she floated towards her Continental home' and 'the heavy wife of a London brewer,

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<sup>240</sup> S.K. Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990* (London, 1999), pp. 236-37.

<sup>241</sup> The Golden Penny, 1903, cited in Dix, Noonan & Webb (Auctioneers) *The Collection of Life Saving Awards of the Late W.H. Fevyer* (London, 25 September 2008), lot 212.

<sup>242</sup> Numerous contemporary postcards survive showing Mary Wheatland, a bathing woman and local personality from Bersted near Bognor, wearing her medal and *Golden Penny* award.

<sup>243</sup> C.P. Barclay, 'G.W. de Saulles: Engraver to the Mint', *The Medal* 20 (1992), p. 65.

<sup>244</sup> A title accorded her by *The Illustrated London News* of 29 November 1879. In her lifetime she seems to have been known more commonly as 'Our Mary'.

<sup>245</sup> A brief account of Wheatland's life is provided in S. Endacott, *'Our Mary': The Grace Darling of Bersted* (Bognor Regis, 1987).

<sup>246</sup> *The Illustrated London News*, 29 November 1879

whose soul was drifting into eternity and her body across the channel.’ The newspaper was greatly impressed by Wheatland’s exploits, which had been brought to its attention by the vicar of Bersted, placing the portrait ‘of this modest heroine in humble life’ on its front cover. Her image was also reproduced on numerous picture-postcards, as was the reproduction of a newspaper cutting which evocatively described:

A little old woman... She is clad in a rough blue serge costume, on the bodice of which two lifesaving medals are pinned. A battered sailor hat, bearing her name in gold letters, is tied under her chin with black ribbons. The weather beaten face is crumpled up in a network of smiles.<sup>247</sup>



**13. Postcard image of Mary Wheatland, c.1910  
(author’s collection)**

Mary Wheatland was a working woman, and might thus not be expected to conform to the idealised feminine role laid out by the bourgeois ‘separate

<sup>247</sup> The postcard is reproduced in Endacott, *Our Mary*. The original newspaper article must have been published in or around 1907, as Wheatland is described as being 72 years of age.

spheres' ideology. It is notable however that her deeds nevertheless conformed to one of its stereotypes - as a bathing hut attendant she was exercising a duty of care to her clients by saving them from drowning - and the newspaper articles devoted to her concentrate on emphasising her good-nature and kindness.

Mary Wheatland received the *Golden Penny* medal on 7 February 1903, in recognition of her saving sixteen lives over a 54 year period.<sup>248</sup> By some accounts this seems an underestimate of her achievements, the *Bognor Observer* of 12 September 1923 recording that she was 'said to have saved more than 30 persons from drowning, often at great risk to herself'. The same article noted her awards, in addition to recording that she was 'the proud possessor of a silver medal, presented by a weekly newspaper to her for her bravery'. Mary Wheatland enjoyed a long and fruitful career as a lifesaver and both her nickname and her tangible rewards were hard-earned and well deserved:

Mary is aged and feeble now  
She has almost spent all her life  
Winning the name they gave her, how!  
By saving Thirty-Four lives<sup>249</sup>

### **Private Awards**

Although the vast majority of unofficial or semi-official British lifesaving awards were created and awarded by societies, private corporations or the press, a small minority owed their existence to the individuals who had been impressed by witnessing, reading about, or directly benefitting from heroic acts performed in the United Kingdom or on the high seas. Survivors occasionally presented their rescuers with medals as personal tokens of gratitude, the relative abundance of surviving specimens suggesting that such gifts were not uncommon, and in a number of instances - such as the wrecks of the *SS Republic* (1909) and *RMS Titanic* (1912) - subscription funds were set up by survivors or witnesses to provide medals for those who had materially contributed to the rescue efforts.

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<sup>248</sup> Leahy, 'The Golden Penny', p. 23.

<sup>249</sup> Extract from E.A. Mitchell, 'The Grace Darling of Bersted & Bognor' (1915). Re-printed in Endacott, 'Our Mary' (n.p). Emily Mitchell was Mary Wheatly's grand-daughter.



Sometimes the sponsors of such awards came from overseas, as in the case of the Maharajah of Burdwan, who was greatly moved by an account which he read in *The Times*<sup>250</sup> relating to the conduct of 450 orphans who behaved with impeccable courage and discipline when *HMS Goliath*, a training ship moored off Greys in Essex, caught fire. The Maharajah ordered the striking of silver medals for presentation to those who had particularly distinguished themselves, explaining in a letter to *The Times* that:

Having read with the greatest admiration the account of the heroic conduct displayed by some of the boys of the training ship Goliath on the occasion of the recent destruction by fire of that ill-fated vessel, I have felt a strong wish to present a silver medal to each of those who signally distinguished themselves on that occasion. I may have been forestalled in this wish, but I trust that I may be allowed to do something of the kind, as, coming from India, it will prove to the boys that deeds like theirs have not merely a local fame, but are marked and appreciated by their fellow subjects in the most distant parts of the Empire.<sup>251</sup>

The Maharajah, who had been unable to identify an appropriate authority with whom to communicate on this subject, enclosed a bank draft to cover the cost of producing the medals referred to in his letter. It was a gesture which was greeted with enthusiasm by *The Times*, which published an approving editorial drawing attention to the ‘tribute from the far East to British manliness’.<sup>252</sup> Silver medals were duly struck and were presented by the Lord Mayor of London on behalf of the Maharajah. Whilst the Maharajah of Burdwan’s initiative was focussed upon the recognition of individuals who had been involved in a specific disaster, other overseas benefactors established initiatives which were intended to provide more broadly-based and long-lasting schemes for the recognition of gallant acts.

### **Andrew Carnegie**

Another private individual who took an active interest in rewarding British bravery was the Scots-American entrepreneur Andrew Carnegie, who established the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust in Dunfermline in 1908. As his biographer observes, by 1900 Carnegie had amassed a vast fortune and was ‘looking for a

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<sup>250</sup> *The Times*, 1 January 1876, p. 7.

<sup>251</sup> *The Times*, 22 February 1876, p. 12.

<sup>252</sup> *The Times*, 22 February 1876, p. 10.

mission in life',<sup>253</sup> settling upon the promotion of his long-held commitment to international pacifism as a suitable point of focus for his efforts. In 1901 he sold his steel empire for the sum of \$492 million, \$300 million of which he added to his existing vast personal fortune of \$30 million.<sup>254</sup> With access to a vast fortune, he was well-placed to pursue a broad range of initiatives. These included promoting the development of a simplified phonetically-spelled form of the English language which he hoped would be adopted throughout the world; the construction of 'temples to peace' at a cost of over \$25 million;<sup>255</sup> the construction of 2,811 libraries;<sup>256</sup> and the establishment of a \$10 million endowment fund to be used 'to hasten the abolition of war'.<sup>257</sup>

These projects - in common with many other of his philanthropic works - were inspired by suggestions made to him by others. His commitment to honouring and supporting civilian heroes was entirely his own initiative. As early as 1886 he had contributed money to a fund set up to erect a monument to the memory of William Hunter, a youth who had lost his life attempting to save two young Dunfermline boys from drowning in the local loch, but the event which prompted the establishment of his first Hero Fund occurred in his adopted rather than his native land. The direct inspiration for the initiative was provided by the courage displayed by rescuers who lost their lives in the Harwick Mine disaster near Pittsburgh in 1904,<sup>258</sup> and Carnegie set aside the sum of \$5million to establish a Pittsburgh-based Hero Fund with a remit to provide financial support to individuals and their dependents who had suffered hardship (through death or injury) as a result of their efforts to save human life. Medals in gold, silver and bronze were also to be awarded. Whilst many others drew conscious parallels between courage shown on the battlefield and in civilian life, Carnegie had no time for military heroes and it was his intention from the outset that the deeds of

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<sup>253</sup> J.F. Wall, *Andrew Carnegie* (Oxford, 1970), p. 887.

<sup>254</sup> J.T. Baker, *Andrew Carnegie: Robber Baron* (Belmont, 2003), pp. 113-24.

<sup>255</sup> Wall, *Carnegie*, p. 890.

<sup>256</sup> Baker, *Andrew Carnegie*, p. 125.

<sup>257</sup> Wall, *Carnegie*, p. 898.

<sup>258</sup> *Report of the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust*, 1998, p. 7.

his 'Heroes of Peace'<sup>259</sup> should be widely publicised and should be used as a counterbalance to the attention given to military's 'heroes of barbarism':

We live in an heroic age. Not seldom are we thrilled by deeds of heroism where men and women are injured or lose their lives in attempting to preserve or rescue their fellows; such are the heroes of civilisation. The false heroes of barbarism maimed or killed theirs. I have long felt that such true heroes and those dependent upon them should be freed from pecuniary cares resulting from their heroism.<sup>260</sup>

His attitude to military heroism contrasted most markedly with his broad-ranging sentiments on the subject of civil gallantry, observing that, 'The sea is the scene for many heroic acts... No action is more heroic than that of doctors or nurses volunteering their services in the case of epidemics. Railroad employees are remarkable for their heroism.'<sup>261</sup>

Through the establishment of his American Hero Fund, Carnegie sought to eliminate the need for war by developing an alternative means for society to create and fete the heroes that he believed it craved.<sup>262</sup> Not everyone shared his sentiments, and his very extensive charitable work initially attracted some negative press comment,<sup>263</sup> as well as the attention of satirists such as Finley Peter Dunne, whose creation Mr Dooley lamented his inability to escape the attentions of the philanthropist:

...I'm a hayro fr' good an' all. I'm f'iver doomed to be a sandwich man an' parade th' streets advertisin' th' gin'rosity an' noble character of Andrew Carnaygie... They'se nawthin' a hayro with a medal can do f'r a livin' that ain't beneath him... Afthir awhile I'll be lurkin' in the corner iv the bridge an' pushin' me friends into th' river an' haulin' thim out f'r a medal. I'll become a habichool Carnaygie heroe, an' good fr' nawthin' else.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Carnegie repeatedly stated that he longed for a day when 'the only heroes we shall have will be the Heroes of Peace'. Wall, *Carnegie*, p. 397.

<sup>260</sup> J. Boddington, 'Carnegie Hero Fund Commission Life Saving Medal', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 1-3 (1988), p. 67, quoting from a speech given by Andrew Carnegie to the Hero Fund Commission in 1904.

<sup>261</sup> A. Wilson and J.H.F. McEwan, *Gallantry: Its Public Recognition and Reward in Peace and in War at Home and Abroad* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 70-71.

<sup>262</sup> Wall, *Carnegie*, p.894.

<sup>263</sup> D. R. Chambers (ed.), *A Century of Heroes* (Pittsburgh, 2004), pp. 227-28.

<sup>264</sup> Extract from F.P. Dunne, *Mr Dooley on Mr Carnegie's Hero Fund* (New York, 1904), reproduced in Wall, *Carnegie*, p. 895.

Although Carnegie had insisted that his original Hero Fund should recognise the achievements of ‘No bogus heroes. Must be the real thing’,<sup>265</sup> it had nevertheless prompted protests from those who felt that it would introduce a mercenary motive to the saving of life. Prior to establishing the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust for Great Britain in 1908, Carnegie accordingly took the precaution of consulting with the King, explaining his motives and intentions and gaining full royal approval.<sup>266</sup> Indeed, from the outset, Carnegie took steps to ensure that his own scheme worked hand-in-hand with the State honours system, instructing his Trustees that ‘When the King presents medals for heroism in peaceful pursuits in the United Kingdom, you will make immediate and careful inquiries into the circumstances of the recipients, and wherever needed, make provision for their wants, or those of their families...’<sup>267</sup> Carnegie took considerable care to avoid giving medals to those who had been honoured by the Crown. He was equally eager to ensure that his scheme did not come into conflict with the activities of those municipal authorities who granted pensions and/or gallantry awards to their employees, observing that, ‘Nothing could be further from my intention than to deaden or interfere with these most creditable provisions, doubly precious as showing public and municipal appreciation of faithful and heroic service.’<sup>268</sup>

Granted a Royal Charter of Incorporation in 1919, the Trust’s governing document remains to this day the original Trust Deed of 1908.<sup>269</sup> This defined the purpose of the Fund as being:

- ...to give financial assistance, if necessary, to:
- i) the dependents of persons who have died;
  - ii) persons who have been injured;
  - iii) persons who have incurred appreciable financial loss through the performance of acts of heroism in peaceful pursuits.<sup>270</sup>

The grants did not however come without strings attached, and the key proviso reflected both middle-class values and the personal morality of Carnegie who specified that, ‘No grant is to be continued unless it is being soberly and properly

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<sup>265</sup> Andrew Carnegie to John Morley, 29 December 1907. Quoted in Wall, *Carnegie*, p. 896.

<sup>266</sup> Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, p. 69.

<sup>267</sup> Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, p. 71.

<sup>268</sup> Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, p. 70.

<sup>269</sup> *Report of the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust*, 1998, p. 30.

<sup>270</sup> *Report of the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust*, 1998, p. 31.

used, and the recipients remain respectable, well behaved members of the community. No exceptions will be made to this rule...'<sup>271</sup> Carnegie's sense of fair play and belief in redemption were however not neglected for, even in cases where misuse of a grant was suspected, he specified that 'heroes and heroines are to be given at first a fair trial, no matter what their antecedents. They deserve pardon and a fresh start.'<sup>272</sup> One class of individual was not deemed worthy of a 'fresh start'. Carnegie's Trustees were not authorised to grant awards to members of the armed forces. It was a position which set Carnegie firmly apart from most other organisations and individuals who gave medals for lifesaving bravery. It was not however a position which he held alone. G.F. Watts, that other great champion of the celebration of 'heroism in every-day life',<sup>273</sup> had similarly stated that his memorial in London's Postman's Park would 'not commemorate the heroes of war, nor of the battle field or the warship.'<sup>274</sup> For Watts however martial heroes remained worthy of reward. They were not Carnegie's 'false heroes', but rather they did not need further commemoration as they could expect to receive recognition from other sources: 'those who do brave deeds in battle get their reward'.<sup>275</sup> Watts in short sought to offer civilians heroes and heroines the type of recognition afforded their military counterparts, whilst Carnegie rejected outright the concept of martial heroism.

Carnegie's primary motivation in establishing his Hero Fund may have been to relieve financial distress, but he also wished to provide tangible memorials of individual gallantry. In the case of the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust, the provision of certificates and medals has nevertheless always been of secondary importance to this prime function. Indeed, a total of only 73 medals were awarded between 1908 and March 1914. Of these, 26 were issued posthumously to the families of rescuers.<sup>276</sup> As well as medals, the Trust also presented diplomas for lesser acts

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<sup>271</sup> Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, p. 70.

<sup>272</sup> Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, p. 70.

<sup>273</sup> As Watt's himself stated in *The London Gazette*, 30 November 1858. See J. Price, *Postman's Park: G.F. Watts's Memorial to Heroic Self Sacrifice* (Compton, 2008), p. 9.

<sup>274</sup> G.F. Watts in an interview published in the *Daily Mail*, 7 July 1898. See Price, *Postman's Park*, p. 67.

<sup>275</sup> G.F. Watts quoted in the *Daily Chronicle* 20 July, See Price, *Postman's Park*, p. 67

<sup>276</sup> Information derived from roll published in F. Mann, 'The Carnegie Hero Trust Medallion', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 16 (1992), pp. 57-63.

of bravery; the 58 medals awarded up to June 1912, for example,<sup>277</sup> representing only a tiny proportion of the 919 incidents rewarded by the committee during the same period.<sup>278</sup> One of the reasons why so few medals have been awarded probably relates to Carnegie's insistence that the Trustees should 'endeavour as far as possible to guard against the duplication of awards and avoid encroaching upon the activities of other recognising bodies'.<sup>279</sup> The result of this guidance was that the Carnegie Hero Fund only rarely awarded its own medal to an individual who had been recognised for the same act by the RHS, Order of St John or other similar organisation.

Carnegie's medals, which were inscribed 'He Serves God Best Who Most Nobly Serves Humanity' reflected his rejection of the martial world and bore no trace of the patriotic symbolism seen on many other lifesaving rewards. Moreover, they were huge, heavy and most definitely not intended to be worn on the chest in 'military' style. In the production of medals Carnegie thus went to great lengths to reject militarism, eschewing entirely the parallels drawn by others between the heroes of the battlefield and the heroes of peace. Carnegie's medallists stood in opposition to the heroes of war, rather than alongside them.

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<sup>277</sup> Information derived from roll published in Mann, 'The Carnegie Hero Trust Medallion' pp. 56-73

<sup>278</sup> F. Mann, 'Carnegie Heroes – An Update', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 50 (2004), pp. 46-50.

<sup>279</sup> Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, p. 73.



**14. Carnegie Hero Fund Medal, first awarded 1908 (author's collection)**

In addition to the North American (USA & Canada) and British Trusts, from 1909 Carnegie also established commissions and funds to reward heroism in Germany, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.<sup>280</sup> Whilst none of his overseas Trusts enjoyed the same level of success as the North American prototype, Carnegie nevertheless took a keen personal interest in their activities, remaining at all times conscious of the importance of ensuring that the press were kept informed of the deeds which his Trusts rewarded as a crucial counterbalance to the pernicious propaganda of militarism. Nowhere was this interest more evident than in his dealings with the British Trust, the failure of its organiser immediately to capitalise on a publicity opportunity prompting him to write angrily that, 'A live Sec'y would know to use the unsurpassed act of Heroism in the *Scotsman*... Only utilise this incident and your success is assured – nothing could give you such a start.'<sup>281</sup>

<sup>280</sup> Boddington, 'Carnegie Hero Fund', p. 67; Chambers (ed.), *A Century of Heroes*, pp. 223-26.

<sup>281</sup> Andrew Carnegie to John Ross, September 1908. Quoted in Wall, *Carnegie*, p. 897.

Such a reaction was indicative of Carnegie's acute awareness of the power of the press and his enthusiasm for harnessing it in the furtherance of his aims. As Thomas Arbuthnott, the American Hero Commission's president, observed on the occasion of the centenary of Carnegie's birth in 1935, 'Deeds of heroism were matters of live interest. They were personal; they were full of color, and they had thrill enough to capture the imagination of almost any reader.'<sup>282</sup>

### **Humane Societies Overseas**

If the RHS can be viewed as a model for a wide range of other UK-based bodies, it equally served to inspire the foundation of a number of societies with similar aims and ambitions elsewhere in the world. The Society's *Annual Report* for 1823 noted that 'The Committee have great satisfaction in recording the Establishment of similar Humane Societies in various parts of the world' and listed the existence of bodies in Madras, Calcutta, Quebec, Jamaica, Pennsylvania, Boston, New York and Baltimore.<sup>283</sup> Coke provides a further partial list of such bodies, including the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.<sup>284</sup> That the officers of the RHS had no doubt as to the importance of their organisation's inspirational role is made quite clear by their claim that:

By its impulse and example it has led to the formation of numerous similar Associations for the Preservation and restoration of Life in various places in Great Britain, in her Colonies, in several European nations and on the American Continent. Many of these Institutions will become future parents to others, and will contribute to multiply to an indefinite extent the practical benefits of the Royal Humane Society.<sup>285</sup>

One of the earliest bodies to be established in the shadow of the London Society was the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The American society's origins can be traced to a blind English doctor by the name of Moyes, who had gained a reputation as a scientist and philanthropist in his

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<sup>282</sup> Chambers, *A Century of Heroes*, p. 228.

<sup>283</sup> Royal Humane Society *Annual Report* 1823, pp. 30-31.

<sup>284</sup> D. Coke, *Saved from a Watery Grave: the Story of the Royal Humane Society's Receiving House in Hyde Park* (London, 2000), p. 9. Note that Coke gives the date for the foundation of the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as 1785.

<sup>285</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1825, pp. xii-xiii.



adopted home of Boston, Massachusetts. Dr Moyes, in conversation with a group of clerical and medical friends, ‘suggested the outline plans of a society, similar to that of the British Royal Humane Society, incorporated... to restore to life persons apparently dead’.<sup>286</sup> As a result of this conversation, Rev Dr James Freeman, Dr Aaron Dexter and Royall Tyler made an approach to the Governor of the Commonwealth, James Bowdoin and, having gained his support, called an inaugural meeting of the putative society to be held at the Bunch of Grapes Tavern on 5 January 1786. The founding Rules of the Society, published in 1788, were quite specific in identifying the source of inspiration:

Upon these considerations, societies have been formed in various parts of Europe for promoting attempts to recover persons from apparent death, especially in cases of suffocation and drowning. The Humane Society established in Great Britain, in 1774 has been very successful. Within ten years from its institution, out of 1300 persons apparently dead from drowning, 790 have been restored to their friends and country. Many of them, no doubt, useful and valuable men... A Society is now formed for these salutary purposes in this Commonwealth.<sup>287</sup>

Modelling itself closely upon the parent body, the new society set about the recruitment of ‘the most respectable and influential of our citizens’, and the raising of funds. Anniversary meetings were arranged for ‘the pleasant month of June’ and were ‘honored by crowded assemblies, and attended by somewhat of the “pomp and circumstance” belonging to those days’.<sup>288</sup> In further imitation of the London Society, the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts set about paying rewards to those who had saved the lives of others, either through the risking of their own lives or through the appropriate application of approved means of resuscitation. The first cash reward was paid to Mr Andrew Sloane in February 1786; the sum of 28 shillings being given in recognition of his gallant efforts to save a boy who had fallen through ice. The second reward (made in 1787) recognised a resuscitation; Mrs Mary Capell also receiving 28 shillings as a reward for restoring a child who had fallen into a

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<sup>286</sup> F.B. Crowninshield, C.A. Curtis & A.T. Perkins (eds.), *History of the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1876), p. 3. This is a slightly updated reprint of a volume by John Homans and John L. Gardner which was originally published in 1845.

<sup>287</sup> Massachusetts Humane Society, *The Institution of the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: With Rules Governing the Said Society* (Boston, 1788) p. 7; reproduced in Clayton, *Rescue at Sea*, p. 17.

<sup>288</sup> Crowninshield et al, *Humane Society of Massachusetts*, p. 5.

water cistern.<sup>289</sup> These rewards were paid in accordance with Article XI of the society's byelaws, which stated that:

Any person within this Commonwealth, or any citizen of this Commonwealth, who shall by signal exertion or peril save or attempt to save human life, or any person who shall by signal exertion or peril save or attempt to save the life of a Citizen of this Commonwealth, may be entitled to receive a reward not exceeding twenty dollars in money, or either of the medals, or the certificate of the Society.<sup>290</sup>

During its earliest years, the perceived ready availability of cash rewards created some problems for the society, which received 'many mistaken or deceptive applications'. Whilst these were often motivated by nothing more sinister than a failure fully to understand the terms under which rewards were issued, claims were also made 'with collusion or intention to deceive, when the whole story was a fabrication, and no danger to any party existed.'<sup>291</sup> In 1799 the society endeavoured to address these instances by ensuring that the full scope and limitations of their system of rewards was well publicised, with due emphasis being given to the definition of the term 'signal exertion', which was defined as including 'the endangering of life, or the incurring of some damage by impairing of health, or injuring apparel, or other property.'<sup>292</sup> These rules were rigorously applied and where doubts existed as to the validity of individual claims existed, rewards were not made:

'Mr Heard reported, that, upon diligent enquiry... he had reason to believe that the several persons represented as having been saved from drowning, had intentionally thrown themselves into the Mill Creek, for the purpose of obtaining the Society's premiums. That he had therefore refused to award any compensation for the services thus pretended to have been rendered.' (1826)<sup>293</sup>

'Mr Inches... reported a state of facts in reference to the application of one Parker for saving out of the water one Joseph Foster, and it appearing doubtful whether the said Foster had ever fallen in, it was voted, nemine contradicente, that no premium be awarded'. (1828)<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> Crowninshield et al, *Humane Society of Massachusetts*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>290</sup> Reproduced in Crowninshield et al, *Humane Society of Massachusetts*, p 40.

<sup>291</sup> Crowninshield et al, *Humane Society of Massachusetts*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>292</sup> Crowninshield et al, *Humane Society of Massachusetts*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>293</sup> Crowninshield et al, *Humane Society of Massachusetts*, p. 61.

<sup>294</sup> Crowninshield et al, *Humane Society of Massachusetts*, pp. 62-63.

The society did not focus solely upon the rewarding of lifesavers. It also supported the acquisition and maintenance of lifeboats, the establishment of beach huts to provide shelter to shipwrecked mariners and the installation of line-throwing mortars and other pieces of lifesaving along the Massachusetts coastline. During its early years it also arranged for an annual series of lectures on lifesaving topics to be delivered to the membership by leading clerics or medical practitioners. The presentations were generally subsequently published and the individual lecturers were presented with an award called the ‘Dissertation Medal’, a total of 31 of these being disbursed prior to the suspension of the lecture programme in 1817.<sup>295</sup>

The rise of bodies such as the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts serves as a reminder that, by the early years of the nineteenth century, the lifesaving movement was a truly international phenomenon. In the English-speaking world the role of rewarding brave acts performed in the attempt to save human life continued to be perceived as a private function, to be performed by unofficial societies, albeit frequently under the patronage of royalty or other leading members of society.

Alternative perspectives nevertheless prevailed in much of the rest of Europe, with state-sponsored rewards being issued in Scandinavia, Germany, Russia, Portugal and elsewhere. In France - where martial courage was also more widely rewarded – radically different cultural and political attitudes to *le citoyen secoureur* had long ensured that the state took an active role in the rewarding and promotion of such deeds. Indeed the principle that acts of civil courage should be rewarded with *médailles d’honneur* had survived the toppling of the *Ancien Régime*, expanded under the Empire and further developed after the Restoration.<sup>296</sup> Moreover, from 1820, the role of the Interior Ministry as a *fons honorum* was augmented by that of the Maritime Ministry, which initiated its own *médaille d’honneur* not only as a means of rewarding French citizens but also for presentation ‘à des marins étrangers ayant rendu des services éminents

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<sup>295</sup> Boddington, ‘Humane Society of Massachusetts’, p. 6; Crowninshield et al, *Humane Society of Massachusetts*, p. 32.

<sup>296</sup> For a comprehensive review of the French lifesaving awards system, see, F. Caille, *La Figure du Sauveteur: Naissance du Citoyen Secoureur en France 1780-1914* (Rennes, 2006).

*en sauvant des marins français naufragés ou ayant participé au sauvetage d'un navire en danger de se perdu.*<sup>297</sup>



**15. French lifesaving award, presented to a British recipient in 1881 by the Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Colonies (author's collection)**

Such state-sponsored awards served to highlight the vast philosophical differences which existed between a British state which was loath to take on additional powers and responsibilities and a French style of government which was more comfortable with an interventionist stance. Britain was not to see the establishment of a state-sponsored lifesaving medal until early in the reign of Queen Victoria.

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<sup>297</sup> P.H. Demoge, 'Les Medailles d'Honneur Temoins d'Une Societe' *Ordres et Distinctions* 7 (1996), pp 24-55.

## **Imperial Role**

In the absence of such a state-sponsored system for rewarding brave deeds, Andrew Carnegie and the Maharajah of Burdwan represent two outsiders who took it upon themselves to recognise acts of civil bravery performed in the United Kingdom. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the committee of the RHS was equally happy to look beyond Britain's borders and to honour worthy acts performed elsewhere within the British Empire. It was a role which meshed neatly with a sophisticated hierarchy of Imperial political rewards which had, by the late Victorian period, become a key facet of an imperial administrative system which sought to promote imperial unity and maintain a complex social hierarchy. As Cannadine observes, 'The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were periods of unprecedented honorific inventiveness'.<sup>298</sup>



**16. Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire [instituted 1878]: A reward used exclusively to reward valuable services performed in India (author's collection)**

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<sup>298</sup> D. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London, 2001), p. 85.

The numerous new chivalric honours created during Victoria's reign were liberally distributed to those who maintained and serviced the Empire, with native rulers and imperial officials alike coveting both the gold and enamel baubles and the social status which they conferred upon their recipients:

Rustrum Beg of Kolazai – slightly backward Native State –  
Lusted for a CSI<sup>299</sup> – so began to sanitise  
Built a Gaol and Hospital – nearby built a City drain  
Till his faithful subjects all thought their ruler was insane...  
...Then the birthday honours came. Sad to state and sad to see  
Stood against the Rajah's name nothing more than CIE.<sup>300</sup>

The receipt of such an honour confirmed the recipient's place as part of an Imperial elite and served effectively to bind them to the Empire. At a less exalted level, the awards made by London's RHS were also highly regarded and, by the mid-1800s, were being granted in recognition of brave acts performed throughout the Empire. Indeed, as late as 1894 (by which time several imperial outposts had already established their own independent humane societies), the RHS was still able to report that, out of a total of 527 cases reported during the year, 13 occurred in India, 33 in the Colonies and 19 'in foreign countries where either the salvors or salvees were British subjects'.<sup>301</sup>

But if some viewed the receipt of a medal from the London-based RHS as a mark of membership of a broad 'imperial family', there were others who recognized the possibility of celebrating national patriotism through the establishment and promotion of alternative humanitarian associations in the most distant corners of Empire. Indeed, several of the organisations whose foundations had been inspired by the RHS were themselves in due course to receive Royal Patronage, including the RHS of Australasia (1874), the RHS of New South Wales (1877), the Royal Canadian Humane Association (1894) and the RHS of New Zealand (1898).

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<sup>299</sup> CSI: Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India (founded 1861).

<sup>300</sup> R. Kipling, 'A Legend of the Foreign Office', in *Rudyard Kipling's Verse: Definitive Edition* (New York, 1940), quoted in Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, pp. 89-90. CIE: Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire (founded 1878 as a lesser honour than the CSI).

<sup>301</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1894, p. 10.

In New Zealand, for example, the year 1860 witnessed the establishment of the colony's first lifeboat station at Timaru and the formation of a rocket lifesaving brigade at Oamaru. The major increase in shipping prompted by the opening-up of goldfields and new farming land in South Canterbury further prompted direct government intervention, the Colonial Government ordering a new lifeboat from Britain at a cost of £300 in 1862.<sup>302</sup>

Such practical initiatives notwithstanding, the local authorities did not take on responsibility for recognising acts of bravery performed along the coasts of New Zealand, this role initially being shouldered by the London-based RHS. Between 1854 and 1882 (when the expansion of an independent RHS of Australasia<sup>303</sup> allowed this responsibility transferred to Melbourne) a total of 51 awards were made by the London society in recognition of incidents which occurred off New Zealand's shores.<sup>304</sup> Even after 1882, the RHS continued to make awards to military, naval and merchant naval personnel in recognition of gallant deeds performed in New Zealand waters and also to make occasional awards to New Zealanders for services outside their homeland. In general however, the transfer of responsibility passed smoothly and New Zealand was content for the time being to rely upon the RHS of Australasia as its principal source of lifesaving gallantry awards.

By the closing years of the century however New Zealanders were becoming increasingly conscious of their own national identity. Furthermore, they were able to look to existing precedent for the creation of a specifically New Zealand gallantry award. On 10 March 1869 G.F. Bowden, the Governor-General of New Zealand, issued an Order in Council establishing a 'Decorative Distinction' as a means of rewarding gallant acts performed by Colonial troops and police officers who 'may particularly distinguish themselves by their bravery in action,

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<sup>302</sup> Evans, *Rescue at Sea*, p. 241.

<sup>303</sup> The Royal Humane Society of Australasia initially granted awards for rescues in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. For a history of the RHSA, see C. Bannister: *7000 Brave Australians: A History of the Royal Humane Society of Australasia, 1874-1994* (Victoria, 1996).

<sup>304</sup> J.D. Wills, *Zealandia's Brave: The Royal Humane Societies in New Zealand, 1850-1998* (Christchurch, 2001), pp. 65-81.

or devotion to their duty while on service'.<sup>305</sup> The medal was intended to be awarded in lieu of the Victoria Cross to locally-raised troops who were deemed ineligible for the imperial award and, in justifying the creation of this new decoration (later known as the New Zealand Cross) to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Governor-General argued that he was not usurping the Queen's position as *fons honorum*, but was rather establishing a purely local honour. By way of analogy, the awarding of medals by the RHS and Royal Geographical Society were cited.<sup>306</sup>

It was a highly controversial action which earned the Governor-General a chilly response from his masters in London, but the Order in Council was in due course approved by the Queen. In April 1895 the Earl of Glasgow, in his capacity as Governor-General, suggested that the provisions of the decoration be extended to cover brave acts performed in the course of saving human life. In order to distinguish the civilian from the military version, it was proposed to introduce minor design differences and a distinctive ribbon. In the event however the proposal immediately met with powerful opposition, Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, taking the line that the medals of the RHS and the RHS of Australasia already adequately covered the recognition of the types of act under scrutiny.<sup>307</sup> Chamberlain noted that he had 'given my best attention to your application, and can find no precedent for such a step as is now proposed'.<sup>308</sup> The Governor General's response to this rebuff was defiant, an Order in Council being issued on 12 March 1896 establishing provision for a 'Distinctive Decoration' to 'be bestowed on those persons who may have distinguished themselves in having saved, or in their endeavour to save, human life, or have performed some very intrepid action'.<sup>309</sup> That the proposed

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<sup>305</sup> Order in Council of 10 March 1869, reproduced in P.E. Abbott and J.M.A. Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards* (London, 1981), pp.230-31.

<sup>306</sup> Abbott and Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 231.

<sup>307</sup> Abbott and Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 232; O'Shea, *Royal Humane Society of New Zealand* citing *Appendix of the Journals of the House of Representatives, Vol. 1, 1896, A2*, p. 19, no. 17. It is interesting to note that, when the New Zealand Government established its own range of gallantry awards in 1999, the senior award for non-military bravery was named the New Zealand Cross. The revived award copies almost exactly the design of its Victorian predecessor, but borrows its blue ribbon from the George Cross.

<sup>308</sup> Joseph Chamberlain to Earl of Glasgow, 6 July 1895. Reproduced in Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, p. 35.

<sup>309</sup> *New Zealand Gazette* 1896/471. Reproduced in Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, p. 35.



decoration was to take the form of a medal was made absolutely clear, it being ordered that it was to 'consist of a medal with the name of the colony and the name of the recipient engraved thereon, to be suspended from a blue ribbon, or a certificate of merit'.<sup>310</sup>

Pursuing the cause of rewarding New Zealand's own heroes and heroines, the Governor General wrote to London on 7 July 1896, explaining that 'What my Government desires is to be placed in the same position as the Royal Humane Society, and to deal just as that Society does with the applications which may come before it'.<sup>311</sup> What the Earl of Glasgow appears to have had in mind was a directly Government-administered system of awards. The initial response from the Secretary of State for the Colonies was broadly supportive, but did not give the Governor-General everything he wanted. Instead, the Secretary of State advised the Earl that, if instead a humane society were to be founded in New Zealand, he would be willing to consider advising the Queen that it should be granted the title 'Royal' at some point in the future.<sup>312</sup> The Governor General was clearly not to be allowed to establish a government-administered award (which would have undermined the role of the Crown as *fons honorum*), but the way had been cleared for the establishment of a new humane society with jurisdiction over New Zealand. It may not have been a fully state-sponsored body, but it nevertheless owed its origins to the initiative of a Crown representative rather than to that of a private citizen.

The absence of a clear sign of Royal support was perceived as a serious problem for the putative society, especially as Chamberlain had made it quite clear the granting of the title 'Royal' would only occur if 'after a number of years experience of its working, its process should appear... to justify such a step'.<sup>313</sup> The Earl of Glasgow was keen to establish a new society with a distinctly New

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<sup>310</sup> *New Zealand Gazette* 1896/471. Reproduced in Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, p. 35.

<sup>311</sup> *Appendix of the Journals of the House of Representatives, Vol. 1, Sess. II, 1897, A1*, p. 3, no. 3. Cited in P.P. O'Shea, 'The Royal Humane Society of New Zealand', reprinted from *New Zealand Numismatic Journal* 13:1, (January 1971), n.p.

<sup>312</sup> O'Shea, *Royal Humane Society of New Zealand*, citing *Appendix of the Journals of the House of Representatives, Vol. 1, Sess. II, 1897, A2*, p. 13, no. 24.

<sup>313</sup> Joseph Chamberlain to Earl of Glasgow, 5 Nov. 1896. Reproduced in Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, p. 36.

Zealand identity, but he was well aware of the value attached to Royal patronage. His successor as Governor General, the Earl of Ranfurly was also acutely conscious of the importance that the new society should be seen to have the active support of the Queen, writing to Chamberlain to stress that his Ministers, ‘very reasonably point out that if such a society were established without the title of “Royal” any awards they might make would not be so much appreciated as those given by the Royal Humane Society of Australasia, and that, without having the privilege conferred upon such a society here, its chance of success would be prejudiced.’<sup>314</sup>

Ranfurly’s argument won the day and, having secured an undertaking from Chamberlain that he would advise the queen to grant the title ‘Royal’ once he had received and approved a copy of its rules and regulations, an initial meeting of the Humane Society of New Zealand was held in Christchurch on 14 October 1898.<sup>315</sup> The rules of the new society had been drawn up by a group of Canterbury citizens under the direction of a former MP named John Joyce.<sup>316</sup> The inaugural meeting passed a motion resolving to invite the Queen to bestow her patronage on the Society. The Queen declined to accept the position of Patron, but did consent to grant the coveted title of ‘Royal’. In her place, the role of Patron passed to the Governor-General, with the Prime Minister acting as Vice-Patron.<sup>317</sup> Other distinguished Vice Patrons included the Chief Justice and both the Anglican and Catholic bishops of Christchurch. The aims of the society were typical of those adopted by other similar bodies:

- To bestow rewards upon all who risk their lives to save those of their fellow creatures.
- To provide assistance, as far as it is in the power of the society, in all cases of apparent death occurring in any part of New Zealand.
- To restore the apparently drowned or dead, and to distinguish by rewards all who through skill and perseverance are, under Providence, successful.

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<sup>314</sup> Earl of Ranfurly to Joseph Chamberlain, 28 Oct. 1897. Reproduced in Wills, *Zealandia’s Brave*, p. 36.

<sup>315</sup> Wills, *Zealandia’s Brave*, p. 36.

<sup>316</sup> O’Shea, *Royal Humane Society of New Zealand*, n.p.

<sup>317</sup> O’Shea, *Royal Humane Society of New Zealand*, n.p.

- To collect and circulate information regarding the most appropriate methods and the best appliances to be used for such purposes, and for all humane acts and deeds of a like nature.<sup>318</sup>

The society in addition supported the promotion of swimming and lifesaving through the production and distribution of posters, the provision of lifebuoys and the support of lifesaving competitions; although the latter function rapidly decreased following the establishment of the Royal Life Saving Society in New Zealand in 1910.<sup>319</sup> The initial awards of the RHS of New Zealand's medals were made in July 1899 and from the outset the society set about establishing itself as the sole body with the authority to make awards in recognition of rescues made on New Zealand soil or in New Zealand waters. This proved to be a demanding task for, although the RHS of New Zealand enjoyed cordial relations with its sister body in London, relations with Australia were more strained. Correspondence between Richard Linn, the New Zealand society's secretary, and his Australian counterpart William Hamilton reveal tensions based upon conflicting views of jurisdiction and status. In the eyes of the Australians, the New Zealanders, who at the time of the initial contact had yet to attain their coveted 'Royal' title, represented the thin edge of a wedge, offering the older body the horrifying prospect of its 'gradual disintegration into a number of small local societies whose awards could not... carry the same prestige'.<sup>320</sup>

This was an attitude that could not help but raise the hackles of the fiercely nationalistic New Zealanders, Linn regretting 'a disposition by your Society of antagonism towards the newly formed Humane Society of New Zealand'.<sup>321</sup> The territorial dispute was to persist for many years, with the Australian-based society continuing to make awards in recognition of rescues made in New Zealand as late as 1918. Such squabbles over jurisdiction notwithstanding, the RHS of New Zealand embarked upon the process of producing and distributing its own awards. Medals were manufactured in gold, silver and bronze by G.T. White of Wellington<sup>322</sup> and a range of paper certificates and awards were

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<sup>318</sup> Reproduced in Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, p. 37.

<sup>319</sup> Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, pp 55-57.

<sup>320</sup> W. Hamilton to R. Linn, 22 Nov. 1898. Reproduced in Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, p 45.

<sup>321</sup> R. Linn to W. Hamilton, 1 Dec. 1898. Reproduced in Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, p 45.

<sup>322</sup> O'Shea, *Royal Humane Society of New Zealand*, n.p

established. By June 1915 a total of 418 gallantry awards of all types had been made by the Society, with a small but significant majority (58.4%) of the rewards taking the form of certificates or letters:

**Table 5. The RHS of New Zealand: Awards 1899-1915<sup>323</sup>**

<i>Type of Award</i>	<i>Number of Awards 1899-1915</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Stead Gold Medal</b>	3	0.7
<b>Gold Medal</b>	6	1.4
<b>Silver Medal</b>	73	17.5
<b>Silver Clasp (for 2<sup>nd</sup> award)</b>	3	0.7
<b>Bronze Medal</b>	89	21.3
<b>Certificate of Merit</b>	127	30.4
<b>Letter of Commendation</b>	97	23.2
<b>'In Memoriam' Certificate</b>	20	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>418</b>	

The dispute between the two Antipodean societies serves as a potent reminder of the significant patriotic and nationalistic symbolism with which Humane Societies and their awards might be imbued. In the absence of an official delegated honours system the desire to control what was in effect the regional *fons honorum* doubtless aggravated matters, but the more general role of humane societies as flag-bearers for nascent nationalism should not be underestimated. Just as the establishment of local humane societies in industrial and shipping towns of Britain could both mirror and encourage the development a sense of civic identity and pride; so might the wearing of regionally-specific lifesaving medals by soldiers, policeman and civilians contribute to the development of the national identities of Britain's overseas possessions.

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<sup>323</sup> See Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, pp. 153-272.

## REWARDS FOR COURAGE, II



***GOVERNMENT***

## **Board of Trade**

Prior to the commencement of Queen Victoria's reign, Britain possessed no state-sponsored medals with which to reward acts of valour performed on the field of battle or in the civil realm. It accordingly lagged far behind many of its European rivals, many of which already possessed well-developed systems for the recognition of such feats. By the early years of the twentieth century however this situation had been transformed, with the state supporting a diverse range of awards instituted to recognise gallantry displayed at sea; in mines; in factories; and by police officers working throughout the Empire.

As Britain's role as a maritime mercantile power grew during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, so the number of occasions in which British vessels and crews were forced to call upon the assistance of foreign rescuers increased. A system developed whereby the government, in the form of the Board of Trade, recognised the sacrifices made and risks taken by these foreign rescuers by the presentation of monetary payments or other gifts, such as appropriately engraved telescopes but, until the early years of the Victorian era, no medallic awards were available for presentation. This rather *laissez faire* approach contrasted with that of other nations, such as France, which had adopted a far more active role in the rewarding of maritime lifesaving and instituted appropriate medallic awards to recognise meritorious deeds. Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary, highlighted this deficit in a letter written to the Master of the Mint on 14 August 1839 lamenting 'the want of some suitable acknowledgement, other than a pecuniary Reward, to be presented in the name of Her Majesty, or Her Government, to Foreigners who have particularly distinguished themselves.'<sup>1</sup> Clearly, there existed an awareness in official circles that such a lack might undermine national prestige.

A medal, Palmerston proposed, would represent a 'suitable acknowledgement', and he accordingly instructed the Master of the Mint to produce a 'model of the

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<sup>1</sup> The National Archives MINT 1/36, *Royal Mint Record Books, 1839*: Palmerston to Master of Mint, 14 August 1839.

Medal which may be fit for this purpose'. It is evident that it was intended from the outset that the new medals should act as a highly visible token of the British government's largesse and Palmerston accordingly went on to stress that that quality was to be paramount, his letter instructing that the medal 'as a Work of Art, may do credit to the taste and skill of this Country'.<sup>2</sup> The official source of the award and its personal nature were likewise to be made explicit, the new medals 'having on one side the head of Her Majesty, and having on the other side a space for a short Inscription commemorative of the service and including the name of the Individual who performed it.'<sup>3</sup>

The obverse of the medal reproduced the Queen's portrait as requested by the Foreign Secretary, whilst the basic design element of the reverse stressed the official status of the award, incorporating an oak wreath, crown and the legend PRESENTED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. The new medal was not initially intended solely as a reward for maritime rescues. The cost of the awards was being covered by the Foreign Office from the Civil Contingencies Fund and medals were on appropriate occasions given in recognition of acts of gallantry or humanity performed on land. Indeed the net was cast fairly widely, medals being granted in recognition of such diverse deeds as 'endeavouring to save the life of a British citizen who had been attacked by lions at the Paris Hippodrome... and providing the site of a British cemetery in Brazil.'<sup>4</sup> Medals were likewise issued to members of the American Arctic Expedition as 'a token of gratitude for their generous services'.<sup>5</sup> This liberal situation proved to be short-lived and, although medals for lifesaving on land continued on rare occasions to be issued on the direct authority of the Foreign Office until the 1880s, the creation of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade in 1850 inevitably led to that Department gaining a near-monopoly in the identification of suitable cases to be forwarded to the Foreign Office.

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<sup>2</sup> TNA MINT 1/36, *Royal Mint Record Books, 1839*: Palmerston to Master of Mint, 14 August 1839.

<sup>3</sup> TNA MINT 1/36, *Royal Mint Record Books, 1839*: Palmerston to Master of Mint, 14 August 1839.

<sup>4</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 277.

<sup>5</sup> See Spink & Son, *Auction Catalogue* (20 May 1991), lot 107.

When the medals were first produced each was highly personalised, a unique reverse die being cut for every award, with the details of the incident appearing in relief between the wreath and the rim of the medal. The process of hand-cutting individual dies for each recipient mirrored the normal practice in France, but it proved to be a prohibitively time-consuming and costly process and in 1849-50 three new standard reverse dies were produced to cover the range of possible circumstances of award.<sup>6</sup> Each medal remained a unique and personal gift however, as details of the recipient and rescue were hand-engraved on the medal's rim.

The medals were originally struck in gold, silver and bronze and, following Palmerston's instructions that 'the most suitable size would be that of a gold piece of the value of about Five or Six Pounds sterling',<sup>7</sup> they measured 45mm (1.78 inches) in diameter. Although not issued with any form of suspension, from the outset some medals were converted for wear by their proud recipients. In response to this already well-established practice Palmerston, upon being informed in 1848 that a Sardinian recipient had expressed disappointment that his award had not been made 'to hang from the breast, the same as French medals already awarded for similar services',<sup>8</sup> stated on behalf of the British government that he had no objection to the medal being worn suspended from a red ribbon.<sup>9</sup> As a cost-cutting measure, in 1854 the Foreign Services Medal was reduced in diameter from 45mm to 33mm, henceforth being issued with an integral suspender and a red ribbon, in imitation of the Order of the Bath.<sup>10</sup> In addition a series of new reverse inscriptions was adopted to reflect the various types of the services for which the medal might be awarded.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Reverse inscriptions read: FOR SAVING THE LIFE OF A BRITISH SUBJECT; FOR ASSISTING A BRITISH VESSEL IN DISTRESS; and FOR SAVING THE LIVES OF BRITISH SUBJECTS.

<sup>7</sup> TNA MINT 1/36, *Royal Mint Record Books, 1839*: Palmerston to Master of Mint, 14 August 1839.

<sup>8</sup> TNA FO 83/769, *British Medals Awarded, for Saving Life at Sea*: Letter from the British Consul in Sardinia to the Foreign Office, May 1841.

<sup>9</sup> TNA FO 83/769, *British Medals Awarded, for Saving Life at Sea*: Letter from Palmerston to British Consul in Sardinia, 30 May 1841. See also Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 277. The medal referred to survives in a public collection in Liverpool.

<sup>10</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 278.

<sup>11</sup> Reverse inscriptions read: FOR SAVING THE LIFE OF A BRITISH SUBJECT; FOR ASSISTING A BRITISH VESSEL IN DISTRESS; FOR SAVING THE LIVES OF BRITISH SUBJECTS; and FOR GALLANTRY AND HUMANITY.



Unlike most other official British gallantry awards, the Foreign Services Medal was not instituted by a Royal Warrant. Rather, it was awarded by the British Government and it was in fact not until 1905 that the monarch accepted the role of approving all recommendations. One side-effect of the absence of an establishing warrant was that for many years the precise nature of the types of incident which might be rewarded was not formally designated, although it was generally accepted that those who were rescued from drowning had to have been engaged in a sea journey and that actions carried out in relation to accidents on pleasure boats were not eligible.

From 1887 the Board of Trade ruled that medals would only be awarded in recognition of ‘the rescue of life from shipwreck on the coasts of the United Kingdom, whether the ship be British or foreign’ or the ‘rescue of life from British vessels’.<sup>12</sup> Normally awards were made in recognition of demonstrable bravery, but ship’s masters and others might still on occasion receive a medal in recognition of services rendered to the crew of a stricken vessel. Until about 1895 the Board of Trade generally awarded medals in gold to officers and silver medals to ratings, but thereafter the type of medal awarded was defined by the severity of the risks run by the rescuer rather than by his (or very occasionally, her) social rank. The decision had a very marked effect on the pattern of awards:

**Table 1. Foreign Services Medal: 1841-1910<sup>13</sup>**

Date	Number issued: Gold	Number issued: Silver	Number issued: Bronze
1841-54	96	118	14
1857-1901	231	982	-
1902-1910	8	214	-

The institution of the Foreign Services Medal in 1839 provided a formal means for the rewarding of brave foreigners, but there was as yet no government-sanctioned medal with which to reward British subjects who performed similar feats. This changed however in 1854, the Mercantile Shipping Act establishing a Mercantile Marine Fund which could be drawn upon to pay ‘for rewarding the

<sup>12</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 278.

<sup>13</sup> Based on figures reproduced in Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 279.

preservation of life in such cases as the Board of Trade directs.’<sup>14</sup> These rewards normally took the form of money or useful nautical equipment such as sextants, binoculars or chronometers; but from this provision also grew the Board of Trade Medal for Saving Life (later known as the Sea Gallantry Medal) which was only to be awarded in cases of ‘gallantry involving risk to life or other very peculiar merit’.<sup>15</sup> Although frequently adapted for wear by their recipients, the original medals were not intended to be worn. Struck at 2.25 inches diameter in both silver and bronze they bore on the obverse a portrait of Queen Victoria and on the reverse a representation of shipwrecked mariners on a raft signaling to a distant boat. The designs, by Benjamin Wyon, were personally approved by the Prince Consort.<sup>16</sup> Two versions of the medal - with slightly different inscriptions - were struck to recognize brave deeds and humane actions respectively.<sup>17</sup>



**1. Board of Trade Medal for Saving Life [first awarded 1855]  
with unofficial suspension (author’s collection)**

<sup>14</sup> *Merchant Shipping Act*, 1854, Section 418. Quoted in Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 271.

<sup>15</sup> P.E. Abbott, ‘The Origins of the Albert Medal’, *Orders and Medals Research Society Journal* 41.2 (2002), p. 94 note 5.

<sup>16</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 271.

<sup>17</sup> AWARDED BY THE BOARD OF TRADE FOR GALLANTRY IN SAVING LIFE was used on ‘gallantry’ awards; AWARDED BY THE BOARD OF TRADE FOR SAVING LIFE AT SEA was used on ‘humanity’ awards.

The medals were primarily awarded by the Board of Trade in recognition of brave deeds performed at sea by British sailors or by foreign mariners serving onboard British ships. Coastguards and others who went to the aid of wrecked vessels were likewise eligible, but the Board was keen to ensure that the terms of eligibility remained under strict control. As one civil servant observed, it was not the intention ‘to transform the Bd. of T. into a Humane Society to reward any acts of daring done at sea, eg a person rushing into the surf & rescuing a drowning bather’.<sup>18</sup> The Board was clearly well aware of the role of the Royal Humane Society and sought to augment rather than to supplant it.

Whilst the Board of Trade Medal was initially issued in considerable numbers,<sup>19</sup> the institution of the more prestigious – and wearable – Albert Medal resulted in the distribution of the older award being brought to a halt in 1867.<sup>20</sup> Revived in 1876, silver Board of Trade Medals were henceforth to be given to those whose acts narrowly failed to earn them the Albert Medal. As with the Foreign Services Medal, the criteria under which the Board of Trade Medal for Saving Life could be awarded were defined in 1887 as being for the rescue of life from wrecks of any nationality occurring on the British coast and the rescue of life from British vessels. In 1903 Edward VII agreed to a proposal that the medal should be reduced in size (to 1.27 inches) and made wearable. Thereafter the medal, which was also re-named the Sea Gallantry Medal, was to be worn suspended from a red ribbon with white edges. The king took a keen interest in the award, approving all recommendations from 1905 and endeavouring when possible personally to present the medals to their recipients.<sup>21</sup>

The numbers of Sea Gallantry Medals awarded was never large and the standard of conduct necessary to earn a medal was high. As Wilson and McEwan observed, ‘the average number in either class over ten years is lower than the number of promotions to knighthood in many of the orders of chivalry’.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> TNA MT 9/288, *Rewards. Granting of Rewards and Interpretation of the Terms ‘Distress at Sea’ and ‘Peril of the Sea’ 1886*: Memorandum signed ‘ASP’, 2 October 1886.

<sup>19</sup> Circa 460 awards were made between 1857 and 1880.

<sup>20</sup> No formal decision relating to the suspension of awards of the medal between 1867 and 1876 can be traced.

<sup>21</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 272.

<sup>22</sup> Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, p. 383.

**Table 2. Sea Gallantry Medal 1856-1910<sup>23</sup>**

Date	Silver	Bronze	Notes
1856	Not known	Not known	9 issued, classes not recorded
1857-80	118	343	Awards suspended 1867-76
1881-86	62	120	Figures based on Royal Mint records
1887-1901	288	263	
1902-03	11	23	Edward VII, 'large' medals
1904-10	70	78	Edward VII, 'small' medals

Furthermore the number of rescues which were deemed by the Board of Trade to be worthy of recognition was very much smaller than the above table might suggest, for in many instances multiple awards of the Sea Gallantry Medal were given to the crews of small boats which had gone to the assistance of vessels in distress. Typical of such awards were the 15 medals granted to the rescuers of the crew of the Norwegian brig *Geir* (1893) and the 19 silver medals gained by the crew of the *Staffordshire* for going to the aid of the *Aidar* of Liverpool in January 1896.<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the nature of the award, very few medals were granted to women. Such awards were not unknown however, May Stout Hecterson (also known as May Stout Hecterson Moar) being recorded in the Board of Trade's annual *Wreck Return* for 1858 as receiving a silver medal in recognition of her role in rescuing two shipwrecked fishermen from the sea at Burray. This was an award which highlighted a tendency to duplicate awards, for her bravery also earned her the silver medals of both the RNLI and the RHS in recognition of the same deed.<sup>25</sup> Such duplication was by no means unusual, as cases of high seas or coastal lifesaving might very easily be reported independently to more than one award-giving body. Numerous instances accordingly occurred where individuals received two or more medals from official or unofficial bodies in recognition of a single brave act, and the Board of Trade Medal was frequently to be seen being worn alongside the medals of the RHS and its kindred institutions.

<sup>23</sup> Figures adapted from Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 275.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, pp. 387, 389.

<sup>25</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, pp. 226-27; N. Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry: RNLI Medals and How They Were Won* (London, 1998), p. 119.

But, if the creation of the Board of Trade Medal for Saving Life in 1854 had ensured the establishment of a means of rewarding civilian bravery at sea, no such facility as yet existed to reward acts of gallantry performed on the field of battle. The stimulus to address this deficit was to be provided by the Crimean War.

### **Origins of the Victoria Cross**

Whilst previous military campaigns had been heavily covered by the press, the campaign in the Crimea represented the first occasion on which journalists had accompanied an army on campaign and were able to report directly from the battlefield. Improved methods of transmission ensured that an eager audience in Britain could keep up-to-date with the triumphs and disasters experienced by their troops on campaign.<sup>26</sup> Formal censorship was effectively non-existent and journalists such as W.H. Russell of *The Times* did not hesitate to comment critically upon what they saw and experienced.<sup>27</sup> *The Times* was also happy to reproduce letters from serving soldiers and sailors which were frequently critical of the systems and leadership under which they served. A vast and eager home audience was thus allowed for the first time fully to experience the horrors of war and to appreciate the courage and self-sacrifice of the men of all ranks who found themselves engaged in a bitter war of attrition. In such circumstances it was perhaps inevitable that the old question of whether there was a difference between the quality of bravery shown by private soldiers and that displayed by their social superiors should be re-visited. Public opinions now swung behind the notion, long embraced on the continent, that courage did indeed cross social boundaries. This shift can be seen in the contents of a letter submitted to *The Times* in May 1855 by a correspondent writing under the pseudonym ‘One of the People’. Commenting on Lord Cardigan’s praise of the role of the officers who led the recent Charge of the Light Brigade, he observed:

...we out of doors smile when we read of this and say “It is the old story over and over again”. Seven hundred men achieved a gallant deed, equal merit being due to each who assisted in it. Among the 700 are 70

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<sup>26</sup> I. Beckett, *The Victorians at War* (London, 2003), pp. 171-75.

<sup>27</sup> Beckett, *The Victorians at War*, pp. 167-70.

noblemen and gentlemen and 630 “common fellows”. The former endeavour to monopolise all the glory and profit derivable from the feat...<sup>28</sup>

Unlike its French and Sardinian allies – or indeed its Russian enemies, Britain lacked any means to recognise the bravery of its rank-and-file troops. The need to provide adequate rewards for junior ranks was recognised by some within the services, and letters from the front drew unfavourable parallels between the experiences of British troops and those of their French allies:

A few days since, passing the camp of a Zouave regiment then assembled on parade for the distribution of the decorations of the Legion of Honour, three persons were brought forward for this distinction – a lieutenant, a sergeant and a bandsman. These men had each distinguished themselves in their respective positions, and were selected as having deserved such rewards. I envied the men who had thus earned and secured their decorations, and I envied the nation who had it in its power to recognise and reward merit wherever it existed, without reference to rank or station.<sup>29</sup>

Such comments did not fall upon deaf ears and indeed the complainants were to a large extent kicking at an open door. As early as 19 December 1854 Captain George Scobell, the Liberal Member of Parliament for Bath, urged the House of Commons to present an address to the Queen, encouraging her:

...to institute an “Order of Merit” to be bestowed upon persons serving in the Army or Navy for distinguished and prominent personal gallantry during the present war and to which every grade and individual, from the highest to the lowest, in the United services, may be admissible.<sup>30</sup>

Scobell, who as a retired Royal Navy officer would undoubtedly have been familiar with the awards of the RHS, did not pursue his motion, but his initiative had set in motion the events which would ultimately lead to the establishment of the Victoria Cross. The proposal was pursued by the Duke of Newcastle, who on 20 January wrote to Prince Albert, outlining the desirability of establishing such a gallantry medal:

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<sup>28</sup> *The Times*, 3 May 1855, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Letter from ‘AN ARMY SURGEON, The Camp, Crimea, Dec. 28’, published in *The Times*, Jan. 16 1855, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> *Hansard*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, cxxxvi, column 505.

I confess it does not seem right or politic to me that such deeds of heroism as this war has produced should go unrewarded by any distinctive outward mark of honour because they are done by Privates or by Officers below the rank of major, and it is impossible to believe that HM troops fighting side by side with those of the French do not draw an invidious contrast between the rewards bestowed upon themselves and their allies.<sup>31</sup>

Newcastle's approach was pragmatic, and he was quick to draw the Prince's attention to the various practical advantages to be gained through the availability of such a reward:

The value attached by soldiers to a little bit of ribbon is such as to render any danger insignificant and any privation light if it can be attained, and I believe that great indeed would be the stimulus and deeply prized the reward of a Cross of Military Merit.

There are some Orders that even Crowned Heads cannot wear, and it would be a military award of high estimation if this cross could be so bestowed as to be within the reach of every private soldier and yet be coveted by any General at the head of an Army.<sup>32</sup>

Newcastle was also conscious of the inspirational potential of medals when prominently worn, and nor were the potential benefits in terms of propaganda at home and the encouragement of recruitment ignored:

Such a reward would have more effect in the Army than the grant of Commissions, and the sight of one of these crosses on the breast of a Soldier returning home invalided would bring more recruits than any of the measures we can now adopt.<sup>33</sup>

The Prince was quick to recognise the merits of the proposal, and composed a detailed memorandum in response to Newcastle's letter, proposing 'That a small cross of Merit for personal deeds of valour be established' and 'That it be open to all ranks.' The Prince was wary of following the precedent set by the liberally-awarded French *Légion d'Honneur* urging that he 'would advise no reference to the Légion of Honour, the distribution of which is entirely arbitrary and guided by no principle, which is given indiscriminately to Soldiers and Civilians, and

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<sup>31</sup> Nottingham University, Newcastle Collection, NeC 9786, p. 33. Reproduced in M.J. Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross* (Tunbridge Wells, 1975), p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> Nottingham University, Newcastle Collection, NeC 9786, p. 33. Reproduced in Crook, *Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> Nottingham University, Newcastle Collection, NeC 9786, p. 33. Reproduced in Crook, *Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 13.

has long been made a tool of corruption in the hands of the French Govt'.<sup>34</sup> On 29 January 1855 Newcastle was able to report the intention 'to institute a Cross of Merit that would be open to all ranks in the future',<sup>35</sup> but it was not to be until 29 January 1856 that the Royal Warrant establishing the Victoria Cross (as the putative 'Cross of Merit' had become) was published.



**2. Victoria Cross [instituted 1856]: copy (author's collection)**

### **The Victoria Cross and the Saving of Life**

The first awards were announced in the *London Gazette* of 24 February 1856, with medals being presented by the Queen to 62 Crimean veterans at a ceremony held on 26 June.<sup>36</sup> The first recipient of the new Victoria Cross was Charles D. Lucas RN who, in June 1854, had thrown overboard from *HMS Hecla* a live Russian shell during the course of an attack on Bomarsund in the Baltic. Lucas received his Victoria Cross in recognition of a brave deed performed in the face of the enemy; but it was an action which also earned him the silver medal of the RHS in recognition of the fact that by this 'cool and courageous act in all

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<sup>34</sup> Nottingham University, Newcastle Collection, NeC 9701b, Memorandum, Prince Albert to Duke of Newcastle, 22 January 1855. Reproduced in Crook, *Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, pp. 275-76.

<sup>35</sup> *Hansard*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, cxxxvi, columns 1064-5. Following Prince Albert's advice, he referred to similar awards made by the governments of Spain, Prussia and Russia, but omitted all reference to France.

<sup>36</sup> P.E. Abbott & J.M.A. Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards* (London, 1981), p. 285.



probability a great saving of human life was effected.<sup>37</sup> Soldiers and sailors were eligible to receive the Victoria Cross for saving life, but only if their deeds were performed ‘in the presence of the Enemy’.<sup>38</sup>

In November 1857 a serious fire broke out onboard the troopship *Sarah Sands*, which was transporting soldiers of the 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot to India to help suppress the Mutiny. The resolute courage shown by the soldiers in fighting this potentially disastrous conflagration was widely reported both at home and abroad and was held up as a supreme example of the bravery and professionalism of the British fighting man. There was a strong public feeling that such courage should be appropriately rewarded, and a flurry of correspondence between Horse Guards and the War Office resulted in the proposal that a submission be made to the Queen recommending ‘that the statutes of the VC be amended to permit its being awarded for such acts of “conspicuous bravery” as those under consideration’.<sup>39</sup> The Queen was happy to accept the suggested revisions and a revised Royal Warrant of 10 August 1858 expanded the range of acts covered by the Victoria Cross to include:

...acts of conspicuous courage and bravery under circumstances of extreme danger, such as the occurrence of a fire aboard a ship, or the foundering of a vessel at sea, or under any circumstances in which, through the courage and devotion displayed, life or public property might be saved.<sup>40</sup>

This represented a substantial change in emphasis and the War Office almost immediately began to regret having taken so drastic a step. The highly unusual decision was taken not to publish the new Warrant in the *London Gazette* and, when a formal recommendation was received that the Victoria Cross be awarded to Private Walsh of the 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment in recognition of his singular conduct upon the *Sarah Sands* it was rejected on the grounds that the Warrant had no

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<sup>37</sup>RHS Medal voted 12 July 1854. Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, pp. 196-97.

<sup>38</sup> Victoria Cross Warrant, 29 January 1856. Reproduced in M.S. Smith, *Awarded for Valour* (Basingstoke, 2008), Appendix I, p. 207.

<sup>39</sup> National Archives WO 32/7345, *Application of Royal Warrant, 1858, Extending Grant of Cross for Actions Other than Before the Enemy. Case of Ship Sarah Sands and Fire at Fort Charlotte Bahamas*: Sir Henry Stocks to Major General Peel, 10 April 1857.

<sup>40</sup> Victoria Cross Warrant, 10 August 1858, Reproduced in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, Appendix III, pp. 210-11.

retrospective effect.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the only awards ultimately to be made in recognition of the *Sarah Sands* incident were the RHS silver medals voted on 13 January 1858 to Lieut. Colonel Moffat (Commanding Officer, 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment) and Captain J.S. Castle (Master, *Sarah Sands*) in recognition of ‘their laudable and heroic conduct on this occasion’.<sup>42</sup>

Reflecting War Office fears that the use of the decoration to reward acts of bravery performed off the field of battle would result in ‘making the Victoria Cross too cheap’,<sup>43</sup> the Warrant was hidden away, never published and never circulated. Lifesaving bravery was clearly less highly valued in the corridors of power than bravery shown in battle and even when senior army officers specifically requested copies of the elusive document they were flatly turned down, the Commanding Officer of British Forces in North America for example being bluntly informed by the War Office that ‘the Warrant in question has never been printed, or published in the *London Gazette*, and that it was not deemed expedient to circulate it’.<sup>44</sup> The ill-fated 1858 Warrant was effectively cancelled by a revised Warrant which was published in 1881 and which reaffirmed the rule that the Victoria Cross could only be earned in the face of an enemy.

In total only six decorations were awarded under the terms of the 1858 Warrant: to Private Timothy O’Hea for tackling a fire in an ammunition car in Canada; and to Dr Campbell Douglas and four men of the 24<sup>th</sup> Foot who went to the aid of comrades cut off by surf on the coast of the Andaman Islands.<sup>45</sup> Dr Douglas was also honoured by the Committee of the RHS, who presented him with their silver medal. The Society clearly thought that the honour in their gift was too lowly a reward for the deed performed, opining in his citation that:

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<sup>41</sup> Crook, *Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, pp. 141-42. This unhelpful opinion was not shared by the Commander in Chief of the Army, HRH the Duke of Cambridge. There is in fact nothing in the wording of the Warrant to state that it was not effective retrospectively. Indeed it had been specifically stated in the Commons by the Secretary for State for War on 30 July 1858 that the scope of the remit of the VC was to be expanded to include the men who served aboard the *Sarah Sands*.

<sup>42</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 219.

<sup>43</sup> Edward Pennington, Clerk of War Office, quoted in Crook, *Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 143.

<sup>44</sup> Crook, *Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 146.

<sup>45</sup> All the awards were gazetted in 1867. See Crook, *Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, pp. 144-45; W. Forsythe-Jaunce, A. Tennuci, & J. Crowdy, *The Medical Victoria Crosses* (Aldershot, n.d.) pp. 28-29.

...the hero of the day has fairly won by his courage, his cool daring, and by his personal exertions, at the risk of his own life, the distinguished honour of the Victoria Cross, or, if not this one, then the distinction of the Albert Medal, founded expressly to reward those who by their efforts save life at sea.<sup>46</sup>

Writing prior to the announcement of Douglas's Victoria Cross in the *London Gazette* of 17 December 1867, the author of the Society's citation displayed a sound awareness of recent developments in the state honours system, for on 7 March 1866 a Royal Warrant had instituted the Albert Medal as a new award for saving life at sea.

### **The Albert Medal**

The central purpose behind establishing the Albert Medal was a desire to make a wearable decoration available to British mariners as a replacement for the Board of Trade Medal for Saving Life which, at that time, still took the form of a large non-wearable 'table medal'. In the years following the institution of the Victoria Cross the Board of Trade had received numerous letters from members of the public urging that a new lifesaving decoration might be introduced which could be 'worn on the person'.<sup>47</sup> The Board of Trade proved sensitive to such external lobbying, eventually expressing itself to be:

...satisfied by the representations they receive that a decoration which could be worn upon the person, as the Victoria Cross is worn, would be prized more highly, and would be more of an inducement to those acts of gallantry and humanity which it has been the objects of these rewards to encourage.<sup>48</sup>

Indeed, as early as December 1864 the possibility of introducing a wearable version of the Board of Trade Medal had been under discussion at the highest level, Sir Charles Phipps writing to the Queen to advise that:

...it would be better, in peculiar exceptional cases, approved by the Sovereign, to give the present Medal of a smaller size and more valuable metal – with a sanction to wear it, during pleasure, and an engagement to

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<sup>46</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 279.

<sup>47</sup> D.V. Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour: A Complete Register of the Albert, Edward and Empire Gallantry Medals and How They Were Won* (Polstead, 1988), p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Abbott, 'The Origins of the Albert Medal', p. 93.

give it up in the event of the possessor subjecting it to disgrace through his bad conduct.<sup>49</sup>

The reference to forfeiture was significant and reflected a serious anxiety that those who earned a maritime gallantry award might not in all cases be wholly respectable, Phipps further cautioning the Queen that, 'It is not impossible that men who perform these gallant acts may be of irregular habits, and bad moral character.' There was clearly not inconsiderable anxiety that the granting of Royal awards to men of bad character might reflect adversely on the Crown as *fons honorum*.

Such concerns were based in part upon prevailing stereotypes of the nature of seafarers, but also reflected class anxieties. In particular soldiers and sailors could only be recommended for the grant of military decorations such as the Victoria Cross if their deeds had been witnessed by their commanding officers. The system thus ensured that gallantry awards remained entirely 'in the gift' of the political and officer classes. Phipps observed that such a rigid rank-based reporting structure was unlikely to be practicable in the granting of awards for gallantry at sea, it being likely that the bravery of seamen, 'must probably be attested by persons of their own class, and whose recommendation would be guarded by no official responsibility.' There was furthermore a manifest anxiety that any move to grant wearable medals might open the floodgates to innumerable claims, Phipps querying whether it would be possible to disregard the claims 'of those who had saved human life, at the risk of their own, in the hundreds of accidents that constantly occur'.<sup>50</sup>

The Queen took onboard the initial concerns raised by Phipps and the question was temporarily laid to rest. By January 1866 however it was firmly back on the agenda, the introduction of a new decoration to be called the Albert Medal being discussed. This time Phipps was of the opinion that the proposed conditions attached to the award addressed all of the major concerns raised in 1864, further observing that there was a clear public demand for such an honour and noting

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<sup>49</sup> Sir Charles Phipps to Queen Victoria, 10 December 1864. Reproduced in Wilson & McEwan *Gallantry*, pp. 82-83 from original in Royal Archives.

<sup>50</sup> Sir Charles Phipps to Queen Victoria, 10 December 1864. Reproduced in Wilson & McEwan *Gallantry*, pp. 82-83 from original in Royal Archives.

that, ‘The number of shipwrecks and great loss of life in the late tempestuous weather have probably caused a pressure in favour of this decoration.’<sup>51</sup> The vexed question of how to deal with recipients of ‘bad moral character’ who might subsequently bring the decoration into ill-repute was addressed via the inclusion of a provision in the Warrant to the effect that that:

In order to... preserve pure this most honourable Distinction, it is ordained, if any person on whom such Distinction is conferred be guilty of any crime or disgraceful conduct which in Our judgement disqualifies him from the said Decoration, his name shall forthwith be erased from the registry of individuals upon whom the said Decoration shall be conferred... and his Medal shall be forfeited.<sup>52</sup>

In the end such anxieties appear to have been overplayed, with only three recipients being considered for disqualification and no actual revocations being made.<sup>53</sup>

The first award of the new decoration was made to Samuel Popplestone, a Devon farmer, for his bravery in venturing onto exposed rocks in near-hurricane conditions in order to throw a rescue line to the crew of the stricken barque *Spirit of the Ocean*. Popplestone was also awarded the silver medal of the RHS.<sup>54</sup> This was the only award to be made under the original ‘single-class’ Warrant of 1866. Popplestone’s award was referred to in the Board of Trade’s annual *Wreck Return* for 1866, alongside the numerous other medallic and non-medallic rewards granted by the Government in recognition of lifesaving service, *The Times* recording:

In addition to pecuniary rewards, the following presentations were made by the Government in 1866 for saving life:- One Albert medal, one gold medal, five silver medals, one bronze medal, 12 gold watches, seven gold chronometers, 23 telescopes, four binocular glasses, 20 sextants, and one quadrant.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Sir Charles Phipps to Queen Victoria, 18 January 1866. Reproduced in Wilson & McEwan *Gallantry*, p. 83 from original in Royal Archives.

<sup>52</sup> Albert Medal Warrant of 12 April 1867.

<sup>53</sup> John Price: pers. com., 30/6/2009.

<sup>54</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 272.

<sup>55</sup> *The Times*, 25 December 1867, p. 10.

Designed by Jemmett Browne<sup>56</sup> and borrowing heavily from contemporary Masonic regalia, the jewel-like Albert Medal took the form of a crowned oval, the central motif being a VA (Victoria & Albert) monogram superimposed upon an anchor and disc of blue enamel. This was surrounded by a garter-band upon which was superimposed the inscription FOR GALLANTRY IN SAVING LIFE AT SEA. The reverse was left blank, details of the award being individually hand-engraved onto each medal.



**3. Albert Medal for Saving Life at Sea, 1<sup>st</sup> Class [instituted 1866] (author's collection)**

The relatively large area offered by the plain reverse of the medal ensured that the details of the deed for which it was granted could be recorded in considerable detail. Furthermore the status of the decoration as a direct gift from the sovereign could be emphasised, the engraved inscriptions invariably stating specifically that the medal had been 'presented' or 'awarded' by the monarch. This of course served to distinguish the new honour from the long-established Board of Trade medal, which bore an inscription proclaiming that it was 'awarded by the Board of Trade' and placed it more closely on a par with the Victoria Cross, which had always been in the Royal gift.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Wilson & McEwan *Gallantry*, p. 19.

<sup>57</sup> M.C. Smith, *Awarded for Valour* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 38-42.

Almost from the moment of its inception however, Sir Stafford Henry Northcote, as President of the Board of Trade, was engaging in discussions with his Cabinet colleagues, asking whether the original gold medal might be supplemented by a lesser award in the form of a certificate and ribbon.<sup>58</sup> The suggestion provoked at least one hostile response, the Foreign Secretary voicing the opinion that any increase in the availability of awards should be discouraged:

I object altogether to increase the number of decorations. We have too many already. The French have one only, and it is valued accordingly. Half of ours are worthless from their multiplication. Between two bad alternatives, I hardly know what to recommend, but at any rate don't let us increase the evil.<sup>59</sup>

Lord Stanley's objection demonstrated a poor grasp of France's diverse and generous system of official awards and his objections may also have been coloured by his over-familiarity with the Board of Trade's Foreign Services Medal. His reservations notwithstanding, no impartial observer could realistically have argued that there was an overprovision of official British medals available to reward civil gallantry. Stanley's Cabinet colleagues generally adopted a more accommodating stance, the consensus being that a second class medal should be struck, it being felt that a parchment certificate would be less highly regarded.<sup>60</sup> Accordingly, in 1867, a revised Warrant led to the Albert Medal being divided into two classes: a first class in gold and a second class medal in bronze. The granting of the Albert Medal of the First Class was to be 'confined to cases of extreme and heroic daring'. The Albert Medal of the Second Class - although granted in recognition of deeds 'not sufficiently distinguished to deserve' the first class medal - could still only be earned by those who, 'in saving or endeavouring to save the lives of others from shipwreck or other peril at sea endangered their own lives'.<sup>61</sup> Criteria for the award of the medal nevertheless remained strict and reckless acts were not rewarded: Walter Hill, the mate of the steamer, for example being denied a reward on the grounds

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<sup>58</sup> Memorandum from Northcote to Cabinet colleagues 21 January 1867. See Abbott, 'Origins of the Albert Medal', p. 94.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Abbott, 'Origins of the Albert Medal', p. 95.

<sup>60</sup> Abbott, 'Origins of the Albert Medal', p. 95.

<sup>61</sup> Albert Medal Warrant of 12 April 1867.

that he had abandoned his post at a crucial moment to save a passenger who fell overboard. As a civil servant wryly observed, Hill's was 'a gallant action if not a very wise one'.<sup>62</sup>

The budget for the production and distribution of the Albert Medal came from the Mercantile Marine Fund and the official view was also taken that, since that particular fund was raised via contributions from the shipping industry, the Albert Medal 'should not be given in respect of gallantry displayed in saving life in inland waters, or on the sea coasts, except in case of shipwreck.'<sup>63</sup> Rather, it was argued, such gallant acts 'may properly be rewarded by some special distinction of decoration, should such at any future time be instituted, applicable to cases of courage displayed in civil life; but hardly by the Albert Medal.'<sup>64</sup>

The Albert Medal was specifically intended to be 'highly prized and eagerly sought after'<sup>65</sup> and whilst it may well have been treasured by its maritime recipients, its establishment did nothing to address the absence of any officially-administered means of rewarding gallantry displayed in Britain's factories, mines and inland waterways. This was not however a situation which could continue indefinitely and the catalyst for change was provided by the public interest prompted by the protracted and heroic efforts made in 1877 to rescue five miners trapped by flooding at Tynewydd Colliery in South Wales. The rescue took the form of an exhausting nine-day operation, with teams of colliers working tirelessly in difficult and often dangerous conditions to dig through 35 metres of coal and rock to reach their entombed colleagues.

Such a dramatic and extended operation inevitably attracted a huge level of press attention, with the Queen taking a keen personal interest in the developing saga.<sup>66</sup> Special supplements of the *Graphic* and *Illustrated London News* encouraged

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<sup>62</sup> National Archives, London, MT9 (Code 6) 171/M888/80 *Refusal of Award of Albert Medal to Walter Hill*.

<sup>63</sup> Sir Stafford Northcote to Queen Victoria, 10 January 1867. Reproduced in Wilson & McEwan *Gallantry*, pp. 83-84 from original in Royal Archives.

<sup>64</sup> Sir Stafford Northcote to Queen Victoria, 10 January 1867. Reproduced in Wilson & McEwan *Gallantry*, pp. 83-84 from original in Royal Archives.

<sup>65</sup> Albert Medal Warrant of 12 April 1867.

<sup>66</sup> E. Besly, *For Those in Peril: Civil Lifesaving Awards at the National Museums & Galleries of Wales* (Cardiff, 2004), pp. 13-20.



morbid curiosity and helped to keep a curious public informed about both the conditions of the trapped miners and the heroism of the rescue parties:

It is difficult to imagine a form of death more appalling than slow starvation in the darkness of a tomb, and it is therefore no surprise that the story of the imprisoned miners... should have sent a thrill of horror throughout the whole country.<sup>67</sup>

*The Times* was likewise to pay generous tribute to the everyday heroism of Britain's miners, observing that, 'Every day in mines deeds are done and perils braved which, if not done every day, would be celebrated as among the most conspicuous instances of human fortitude'.<sup>68</sup> Following the happy outcome of the rescue efforts, it was perhaps inevitable that a public clamour should develop demanding that the rescuers be suitably rewarded. No appropriate reward existed however, the use of the Albert Medal being confined to the rewarding of maritime lifesaving and only being granted 'on a recommendation... by the President of the Board of Trade'.<sup>69</sup> Lord Beaconsfield recognised the problem and took urgent steps to address it, writing to the Queen on 23 April:

It seems clear that the Albert medal, as at present constituted, could not be extended to gallantry on land. What should be done? Should it be extended to land?

or

Should another medal for land, called the Victoria Medal, be struck? If so, an announcement might be made... of her Majesty's intention... to confer, whether the Albert Medal or the Victoria Medal, in the first instance, on the gallant Welsh miners who rescued their comrades.<sup>70</sup>

On 30 April 1877 - a mere ten days after the last of the miners had been brought to safety - a new Warrant extending the award of the Albert Medal to cover rescues on land was published. Thereafter the pace did not decrease, and by 16 May specimens of the new medals (first class in gold and second class in bronze) had been prepared for Royal approval.<sup>71</sup> Funding for the new 'land' awards could clearly not be taken from the Mercantile Marine Fund, the Treasury instead making money available from Class 7 of the Civil Service Estimates. The

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<sup>67</sup> *The Graphic*, 28 April 1877.

<sup>68</sup> *The Times*, 28 April 1877, p. 9.

<sup>69</sup> Albert Medal Warrant of 12 April 1867.

<sup>70</sup> Lord Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria, 23 April 1877. Reproduced in Wilson & McEwan *Gallantry*, p. 86 from original in Royal Archives.

<sup>71</sup> Wilson & McEwan *Gallantry*, p. 86.

extension of the criteria governing the award of the Albert Medal was met with a very positive reaction from the press and public, *The Times* commenting that:

...strange to say, all the acts of unselfish bravery performed on shore and in the arts of peace had hitherto remained without any formal recognition... A new order of merit has rarely been more honourably inaugurated, and a decoration has never been better earned. Not the least satisfaction, however, of those who receive it ought to be that they have been the means of drawing public attention and public honour to the whole class of brave and unselfish deeds of which they have furnished one of the most conspicuous instances.<sup>72</sup>



**4. Albert Medals for Saving Life on Sea & Saving Life on Land, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class [instituted 1867 & 1877] (author's collection)**

In the wake of the Tynewydd Colliery disaster a total of 25 miners were granted the new Albert Medal for land services: four receiving the first-class version and no fewer than 21 the second-class version of the decoration.<sup>73</sup> This was of course a highly exceptional case and it accounts for over 10% of the total awarded during the period 1866-1914.

<sup>72</sup> *The Times*, 8 August 1877, p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 9.

**Table 3. Albert Medal: 1<sup>st</sup> Class Awards 1866-1914<sup>74</sup>**

<i>Gold Medals</i>	<b>1866-76</b>	<b>1876-1914</b>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Navy/Royal Marines</b>	-	2	2
<b>Army</b>	-	3	3
<b>Civilian Sea</b>	8	7	15
<b>Civilian Land</b>	-	22	22
<b>Total</b>	8	34	<b>42</b>

**Table 4. Albert Medal: 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Awards 1866-1914<sup>75</sup>**

<i>Bronze Medals</i>	<b>1866-76</b>	<b>1876-1914</b>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Navy/Royal Marines</b>	7	17	24
<b>Army</b>	-	32	32
<b>Civilian Sea</b>	9	32	41
<b>Civilian Land</b>	-	94	94
<b>Total</b>	16	175	<b>191</b>

The medals were invariably hard-won, the citation accompanying the first-class medal awarded to William Henry Pearce for his role in averting a potential rail crash in 1905 giving some taste of the level of danger faced by the recipients:

While the passenger train was approaching Thornton Railway Station a boiler-plate of the engine collapsed, and steam and water were ejected. Both the driver of the engine, James Pead, who died later, and the fireman, William Pearce, were severely scalded. Pead was still exposed to the full force of the escaping steam when Pearce, at great personal risk, lifted him to a place of safety.

Pearce, having vainly tried to close the throttle valve, climbed to the front of the engine, exposing himself again to the escaping water and steam, and having reached the footplate of the engine, applied the automatic brake and brought the train to a standstill.<sup>76</sup>

The Albert Medal must not however be looked at in isolation. The introduction of this highly-prestigious decoration was to have a profound influence on the existing awards of some of the major societies. Although based in North-West England, the LSHS maintained a keen eye on developments in the capital and, when the Government announced the institution of the Albert Medal in March 1866, it moved swiftly to have its own award re-modelled in imitation of the prestigious new life saving honour.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Table adapted from Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 22.

<sup>75</sup> Table adapted from Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 22.

<sup>76</sup> Citation reproduced in Wilson & McEwan *Gallantry*, p. 101.

<sup>77</sup> D.V. Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour* (Polstead, 1988), p. 5.



**5. LSHS Medal [1867 type] and Albert Medal for Saving Life at Sea, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class [instituted 1867] (author's collection)**

On 28 April the Society wrote to the Liverpool medallists, Messrs. Yates and Hess, enquiring ‘as to the cost of reducing the dies of this Society to the size of the Albert Medal as shown on the previous page and of an oval shape.’<sup>78</sup> The revised medal was available in March 1867<sup>79</sup> and closely mirrored the oval form of the newly-established Royal award. Nor did these developments permitted to go unnoticed at the offices of the RHS. Society officers were forced to react swiftly when, in late 1866, an ADC to the Duke of Cambridge, the Commander in Chief of the Army, informed them of the Duke’s desire that the Society’s medal should be reduced in size.<sup>80</sup> The letter drew attention to the ‘cases of several soldiers to whom the Medal of the Royal Humane Society has been granted but who are not permitted to wear it in consequence of its size’ and it was suggested ‘that the proposed Medal should not exceed in diameter that which is now granted for Meritorious Service’, a specimen of which was helpfully enclosed.<sup>81</sup> Through this intervention, the agents of the State

<sup>78</sup> Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society, *Minute Book* 1, 28 April 1866.

<sup>79</sup> Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society, *Minute Book* 1, 30 March 1867. They received a total of £42.12s for producing new dies for the obverse, reverse and ‘Liverbird’ suspension.

<sup>80</sup> RHS Archive, W.F. Forster to RHS, 1 Dec. 1866.

<sup>81</sup> RHS Archive, W.F. Forster to RHS, 1 Dec. 1866.

unambiguously demonstrated their interest in the Society, its work and - most especially – its awards.

The motivation for the Duke making this approach can only be guessed at, but it is likely to be closely related to the fact that the institution of the Albert Medal had created a wearable lifesaving award which (as a reward for gallantry in saving life at sea) could be earned more readily by naval personnel than by the troops under his command.<sup>82</sup> The introduction of an officially ‘wearable’ RHS Medal would thus help to counterbalance the new award and ensure that medallic lifesaving incentives were available to all uniformed service personnel.



### **6. RHS Medal: post-1867 (author's collection)**

Formal permission for soldiers and sailors to wear the medals of the RHS whilst in uniform was granted in 1869.<sup>83</sup> Both the army and the Society benefited from the new arrangements and there can be little doubt that the arrangement was symbiotic, for the prospect of having its medals seen adorning the chests of serving members of the armed forces also represented a splendid opportunity for the Society to raise its public profile and promote its activities and values.

<sup>82</sup> Royal Warrant of 7 March 1866, published in *London Gazette* 13 March 1866.

<sup>83</sup> Army Order 40069/17; Admiralty Circular 11-C of 19 March 1869.

Official and unofficial lifesaving awards also continued to be awarded in parallel, medals of both types often being awarded in recognition of the same brave deeds. A good example of this phenomenon is provided by the wreck of the *Syria*, an immigrant ship which was wrecked on the Fijian coast in May 1884. The rescue efforts were led by Dr William MacGregor, a local colonial administrator, and immense courage was shown by many of the rescuers as they struggled to get some 400 terrified Indian passengers safely ashore. Ultimately MacGregor was to be awarded with the Albert Medal (2<sup>nd</sup> Class), but his was not to be the only medal to be earned that day. The final distribution of medals may be summarised as follows:<sup>84</sup>

**Table 5. Wreck of the *Syria*: Medallie Rewards<sup>85</sup>**

Name	Position	Award	Issuer
Wm. MacGregor	Colonial Administrator	Albert Medal (2 <sup>nd</sup> Class)	HM Govt.
<i>ditto</i>		RHSA Gold Medal	RHS of Australasia
<i>ditto</i>		RHSA Clarke Gold Medal	RHS of Australasia
John Fowler	Acting Supt. of Police	Sea Gallantry Medal (Silver)	HM Govt.
<i>ditto</i>		RHSA Silver Medal	RHS of Australasia
W.G. Johnston	Second Mate, <i>Syria</i>	Sea Gallantry Medal (Silver)	HM Govt.
Ratu Joshua	Police Sub Inspector	Sea Gallantry Medal (Bronze)	HM Govt.
<i>ditto</i>		RHS Bronze Medal	RHS London
Swami	Corporal of Police	Sea Gallantry Medal (Bronze)	HM Govt.
<i>ditto</i>		RHS Bronze Medal	RHS London
Apraim	Police Constable	Sea Gallantry Medal (Bronze)	HM Govt.
<i>ditto</i>		RHS Bronze Medal	RHS London
Emosi	'Native'	Sea Gallantry Medal (Bronze)	HM Govt.
<i>ditto</i>		RHS Bronze Medal	RHS London

In addition numerous pecuniary rewards were made to individuals who had contributed to the rescue efforts. The rewards finally granted reflect the range of both official and unofficial decorations, with most recipients (with the exception of Johnston, who was initially granted £10 rather than a medal) receiving both unofficial and official awards. In the case of the *Syria*, the granting of state-

<sup>84</sup> C.P. Barclay, 'William MacGregor and the Wreck of the *Syria*', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 30 (1997), pp. 38-44.

<sup>85</sup> Barclay, 'Wreck of the *Syria*', pp. 38-44.

sponsored awards was paralleled by the issue of medals by both the London-based RHS (to Fijians) and the Royal Humane Society of Australasia (to Europeans). The state and private award-giving bodies can be seen to have been working alongside each other, the medals presented by the former complementing rather than supplanting those granted by the latter.

This tendency towards duplication was not restricted to maritime awards. The Tynewydd Colliery rescuers, for example, also received awards from the RHS<sup>86</sup> and a range of other private individuals and organisations. Several of the awards were presented at a public ceremony held in the open air at Pontypridd on 4 August 1877. The event, which was attended by an estimated 30,000-40,000 people, culminated in the presentation not only of the Albert Medals; but also of a range of other awards given on behalf of the *Daily Telegraph*, Order of St John, Mansion House Fund and the British & Foreign Bible Society. The ceremony was highly patriotic in tone, the assembled crowd singing the National Anthem and ‘giving shouts for the Queen’.<sup>87</sup> It is clear that the recipients of these awards were sincerely grateful for the recognition which they received, the collier John William Howell being moved on 5 September to write a charmingly modest and self-deprecating letter to *The Times*:

... I beg to say that as long as I live, I will look on my rewards with great pride and feel very thankful for the liberality and good opinion of the British public; for I consider that none of us deserved as much as we received, because we did our duty, as every man ought to.<sup>88</sup>

The extension of the Albert Medal to cover brave acts performed in Britain’s mines was welcome, but the very strict criteria governing its award meant that it was only given on very rare occasions; seven mining disasters resulting in a total of only 11 first-class and 43 second-class medals being awarded between 1877 and 1895. Unofficial bodies were far more generous in the granting of medals in recognition of bravery underground and these were frequently awarded to miners

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<sup>86</sup>RHS Case no. 20235. Silver Medals were granted to the recipients of the Albert Medal First Class (Thomas Daniel, William Beith, Isaac pride and John W. Howells). See W.H. Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2: 1871-1950*, (Chippenham, 1996), p. 45.

<sup>87</sup>Besly, *For Those in Peril*, pp. 13-20.

<sup>88</sup>*The Times*, 8 September 1877, p. 7. The correspondent signs himself John William Howells.

by bodies such as the RHS, the Order of St John of Jerusalem or by local humane associations and private individuals.

### **The Edward Medal**

Such unofficial awards notwithstanding, by the opening years of the twentieth century there was nevertheless increasing awareness in official circles that there was a need to institute a government-sponsored decoration specifically to reward brave British miners and quarrymen. Championed by Sir Henry Cunynghame, assistant under-secretary at the Home Office, the possibility was raised that a new medal might be established to recognise brave deeds where the risk of death did not outweigh that of survival.<sup>89</sup> Private enterprise was involved in the project from the outset, Mr A. Hewlett, a leading colliery owner, offering to pay £600 to help defray the costs of establishing a new medal on the understanding that it be awarded exclusively in recognition of bravery in mines and quarries.<sup>90</sup> Such private intervention was unprecedented, but the offer was accepted. The medal was originally intended to be awarded only in recognition of deeds performed in the United Kingdom, but the Home Secretary, H.J. Churchill, was lobbied to extend the scope of the award to cover the whole of the Empire. This he was content to do, subject to external funding being provided to cover the additional costs which would be incurred by such an extension.

These funds were eventually provided by Sir Malcolm McEachern, an Australian, who personally pledged the additional £400 required.<sup>91</sup> The new Edward Medal was formally established by a Royal Warrant of 13 July 1907, it being ordained that: ‘the Medals shall only be awarded to those of Our Faithful Subjects and others who, in saving or endeavouring to save the lives of others from perils in Mines and Quarries within Our Dominions and territories under our protection or Jurisdiction, have endangered their own lives.’ The medals were struck in silver and bronze and bore on the obverse side a portrait of the

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<sup>89</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 131.

<sup>90</sup> Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 57.

<sup>91</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 131.



king by George W. De Saulles.<sup>92</sup> The reverse was the work of the sculptor William Reynolds-Stephens and portrayed a miner in the act of coming to the aid of an injured colleague. The inscription simply read 'FOR COURAGE'. It was a well-executed and well received piece of work, Sidney Harris, private secretary to the Home Secretary explaining to the King's private secretary in 1911 that , 'The miner's medal... is considered a very successful design.'<sup>93</sup>



**7. Edward Medal for Mines & Quarries, [first awarded 1908] (author's collection)**

The first Edward Medals were awarded to Francis Chandler, a sixty-year-old miner who three times crawled through scalding steam to rescue co-workers injured by the failure of an underground boiler<sup>94</sup> and to Henry Everson, in recognition of his gallant conduct in rescuing a colleague from a flooded mineshaft near Gelliager in South Wales.<sup>95</sup> The King took a keen personal interest in the new award and personally presented the medals to Chandler and Everson at Buckingham Palace on 27 February 1908, the event being deemed of

<sup>92</sup> Replaced in 1911/12 by a portrait of George V, following discussion of the possibility of retaining the portrait of the monarch after whom the award was named.

<sup>93</sup> Royal Archives GV 2858: S. Harris to Lord Knollys, 25 February 1911. Reproduced in P. Attwood, 'Kathleen Scott: The Sculptor as Medallist', *British Numismatic Journal* 60 (1990), p. 124.

<sup>94</sup> Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, p. 120.

<sup>95</sup> Besly, *For Those in Peril*, pp. 28-31.

sufficient public interest to warrant the publication of a large engraving in the *Illustrated London News* of 7 March 1908. The high status immediately accorded the new award was emphasised in the title of this illustration, which labelled the award as ‘The Miners’ Victoria Cross’.

The Home Office was keen to establish high standards. The award to Everson was the subject of much discussion and questions were raised as to whether the level of risk incurred was sufficiently great to warrant the granting of the prestigious new medal. A suggestion was even raised that ‘a handsome letter’ would suffice; but after lengthy consideration it was decided that the he had indeed ‘exposed himself to serious risk’, the level of gallantry displayed being ‘conspicuous even when measured against the standard of bravery amongst miners’.<sup>96</sup> No such qualms appear to have been associated with the medal awarded to Chandler who, although badly injured, survived the ordeal. In October 1907 however the King was asked to approve the granting of a posthumous award to George Huddleston Lamb, who had lost his life trying to save others from a fire in a Canadian mine. Although no reference to the granting of such awards existed in the Warrant establishing the Edward Medal, the King agreed to the making of this posthumous issue, thus establishing the precedent that the medal could be granted to both living and deceased recipients.<sup>97</sup>

When originally proposed, the question had been raised as to whether the Edward Medal should be used to reward bravery displayed throughout the industrial field. This very broad scope was initially rejected on the insistence of Mr Hewlett, the core funder of the original award, but by 1909 he had withdrawn his opposition, subject to the condition that such an extension be paid for by additional funds rather than from the money which he had previously given. Following the precedent of private sponsorship established in 1907, a group of

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<sup>96</sup> TNA HO 45/16060, *Edward Medal: Henry Everson*: Expert advice to Home Office from William H. Pickering, 29 October 1907. William Henry Pickering (1858-1912) was Chief Inspector of Mines for the Yorkshire and North Midlands District. See Besly, *For Those in Peril*, p. 29.

<sup>97</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 131; Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, p. 120.

five leading industrialists<sup>98</sup> duly agreed to contribute £500 each and the Warrant covering the Edward Medal was duly extended to cover awards to those ‘who in the course of Industrial Employment endanger their own lives to save the lives of other from perils incurred in connection with such Industrial Employment’.<sup>99</sup> The definition of ‘Industrial Employment’ appears to have been treated in a somewhat cavalier fashion, and awards were subsequently made in recognition of brave acts performed on farms (4 awards) and in sewage works (3 awards) as well as in factories and workshops.<sup>100</sup>

A distinctive reverse design by the sculptor Kathleen Scott<sup>101</sup> (nee Bruce) was selected for use on the new award, but questions can reasonably be asked as to whether her appointment might have owed more to her being the sister-in-law of the Deputy Master of the Mint than to her suitability for the task assigned her, R.F. Reynard of the Home Office later grumbling that, ‘She was a pupil of Rodin, and, if only on that account, would not, I think, have received the training for designing *Medals*.’<sup>102</sup> In the event Scott’s reverse, which was based around a broken beam and run-away fly-wheel, proved to be short-lived, being unfavourably compared with Reynolds-Stephens’ work: ‘The design for the other Edward Medal was executed by an artist of less repute, and has been the subject of a considerable amount of criticism.’<sup>103</sup> Its replacement was the work of the designer Gilbert Bayes, who in 1911 replaced Scott’s clumsy design with an allegorical personification of Courage, holding a laurel branch and standing in front of a generalised industrial background.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Sir Hugh Bell; Lord Airdale; David Colville; R.A. Hadfield; Sir William Lewis.

<sup>99</sup> Royal Warrant of 1 December 1909.

<sup>100</sup> Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>101</sup> Later Lady Scott, she was the wife of the polar explorer Robert Falcon Scott.

<sup>102</sup> Royal Archives GV 2858: R.F. Reynard to Sir F. Ponsonby, 13 January 1911. Reproduced in Attwood, ‘Kathleen Scott’, p. 124.

<sup>103</sup> Royal Archives GV 2858: Harris to Knollys, 25 February 1911. Reproduced in P. Attwood, ‘Kathleen Scott’, p. 124.

<sup>104</sup> P. Attwood, ‘The Medals of Gilbert Bayes’, *Numismatic Chronicle* 152 (1992), pp. 143-44.



**8. Edward Medal for Industry**  
**First [1910] and second [1911] designs (author's collection)**

Like the Albert Medal before it, the Edward Medal was issued in very small numbers, with 218 being Gazetted between 1908 and 1914 out of a total of 584 awarded between the institution of the award and its abolition in 1971.<sup>105</sup>

**Table 6. Edward Medals: 1908-1914<sup>106</sup>**

London Gazette	Mines Silver	Mines Bronze	Industry Silver	Industry Bronze	Total
<b>1908-10</b>	29 (inc. 1 bar)	78	2	5	114
<b>1911</b>	2 (inc. 1 bar)	35	1	11	49
<b>1912-14</b>	4	24	2	25	55
<b>Total</b>	35	137	5	41	<b>218</b>

The nature of rescue work in mines (and to a lesser extent elsewhere in the industrial landscape) ensured that in many instances more than one salvor was granted the Edward Medal in recognition of their role in the same rescue, the maximum number of awards made for the same rescue being the 66 (two first-class and 64 second-class) granted to members of the working parties who

<sup>105</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, pp. 135-36.

<sup>106</sup> Table from data published in Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards* and Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*.

struggled to save miners trapped by an explosion at Wellington Pit in Cumberland in May 1910.<sup>107</sup>

Furthermore, there was again also a marked tendency for the official medals to be duplicated and supplemented by the granting of awards by humane societies and other similar bodies. An example of this practice – albeit taken to extremes – is afforded by the Hulton Colliery explosion of 1910 which, at the time of its occurrence, was the greatest single mining disaster to have occurred in England. In total 160 men received medals of various types in recognition of the courage they displayed in voluntarily entering the ravaged pit in a desperate effort to save the lives of their trapped colleagues. In all a total of over 350 colliers lost their lives,<sup>108</sup> the Mayor of Bolton speaking eloquently of the bravery of the rescuers:

True courage is to look fear in the face and not to lose mastery of yourselves. These men, whilst recognizing the greatness of the risk they ran, controlled natural fear with the hand of courage, and calmly did what was considered right. The men had no thought of themselves, going to the pit without hope of reward, not seeking fame, but as a duty towards their fellows.<sup>109</sup>

The Hulton Colliery disaster resulted in the awarding of no fewer than ten second-class Edward Medals. These were not however the only medals granted and the final roll of honour included:

**Table 7. Hulton Colliery Disaster 1910: Awards Granted<sup>110</sup>**

<b>Award</b>	<b>Number issued</b>
Edward Medal, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class (Mines)	10
Bolton & District Humane Society Medal	160
Life Saving Medal of the Order of St John, Silver	1
Life Saving Medal of the Order of St John, Bronze	20
RHS Medal, Silver	1
RHS Medal, Bronze	25
RHS Medal, 'In Memoriam' certificate	2
Carnegie Hero Trust, Pecuniary Reward	8

<sup>107</sup> Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 60.

<sup>108</sup> The death toll is given as 358 in Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 60 and 370 by J. Boddington, *The Entombed* (Naramata, 1992), p. 23.

<sup>109</sup> Alderman T.J. Cooper quoted in Boddington, *The Entombed*, p. 23.

<sup>110</sup> Figures derived from Boddington, *The Entombed*.



**9. Bolton & District Humane Society's Hulton Colliery Medal, 1910  
(author's collection)**

Many of the men received multiple awards, with several of the most conspicuous rescuers receiving medals not only from the Crown, but also from the Bolton and District Humane Society, RHS and Order of St John. This practice had previously attracted the attention of the Home Office which, in response to learning of the award of a RHS medal to Henry Everson (in recognition of the same deed which had earned him the Edward Medal in 1908), had sought the King's opinion on whether it was acceptable to wear two medals granted for the same act. The king's ruling was: 'that unless circumstances were very exceptional, no individual should be allowed to wear two medals in respect of the same occurrence.'<sup>111</sup> Letters explaining the Royal ruling were sent by the Home Office to Everson, the RHS and the LSHS on 26 March 1908.<sup>112</sup> The ruling appears to have been interpreted as relating solely to the wearing (as opposed to granting) of multiple awards and the latter practice continued unabated. It had however, as Besly observes, resulted in 'a move towards closer coordination between the Home Office and other awarding bodies'.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>111</sup> TNA HO 45/16060, *Edward Medal: Henry Everson*: Ruling of 10 March 1908. As outlined in Home Office to RHS/Home Office to LSHS, 26 March 1908.

<sup>112</sup> TNA HO 45/16060, *Edward Medal: Henry Everson*: Home Office to RHS/Home Office to LSHS, 26 March 1908.

<sup>113</sup> Besly, *For Those in Peril*, p. 31

But if the Hulton Colliery Disaster saw an exceptional level of duplication of awards, it was not the colliery rescue which witnessed the granting of the greatest number of Edward Medals. That honour was gained by the men of the Wellington Colliery at Whitehaven in Cumbria who were granted no fewer than two first class and 64 second class medals for their fearless efforts to rescue colleagues following a catastrophic fire on 11 May 1910. Such instances of multiple awards were not solely a response to the nature of the rescues they celebrated, but were equally a reflection of the close-knit communities from which the rescuers and victims were drawn. As Henderson observes:

Mining communities are well known for their supportive feelings, miners operating the “butty” system at work in which they are mutually self-supporting and protective. With their intense loyalty to each other, rescue operations often involved many men working to exhaustion and beyond.<sup>114</sup>

Mining communities were likewise not slow to pursue awards on behalf of their members. Petitions were frequently produced in pursuit of claims and such active lobbying could on occasion directly result in awards being granted, with the Edward Medals awarded to William Evans in 1909 and Dr. Edwin Dando in 1910 being the products of such campaigning.<sup>115</sup>

The motivation behind the institution of the Edward Medal was succinctly explained in a press release issued in December 1909:

The Albert Medal remains the reward for acts of the highest devotion and courage in civil life. His Majesty’s purpose in establishing the new medals is to provide recognition for actions of exceptional bravery in dangerous callings, which, owing to the rarity of the award of the Albert Medal, might otherwise have been unrecognised.<sup>116</sup>

The occasion which prompted the publication of this statement was the extension of the Edward Medal to cover acts of gallantry performed in factories. Simultaneously, an entirely new medal was instituted with the intention of providing a means of recognising gallant acts performed by police officers and

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<sup>114</sup> Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 58.

<sup>115</sup> J.C. McDonald, *Darran House, Deri: The Mine, the Medal and the Men* (Wigtown, 2009), pp. 23-27. Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>116</sup> Reproduced in Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, p. 90.

firemen. This new decoration, named the King's Police Medal, was to be awarded in recognition of either courage or merit; the first regulations specifying that qualifications for the grant of a medal were to include the display of 'Conspicuous gallantry in saving life and property'.<sup>117</sup>

### **King's Police Medal**

The King's Police Medal was formally established by a Royal Warrant of 7 July 1909. The medal had been lobbied for by the Association of Chief Constables and was to be available to police and fire officers throughout the Empire.<sup>118</sup> A portrait of King Edward VII was selected for the obverse of the new medal, with a competition being held to find a suitable reverse design. The Home Secretary was keen that the reverse of the medal should be simple and allegorical, but the India Office cautioned that an award which was to be available to officers of a wide range of religions and cultures should steer clear of nudity and overt Christian symbolism.<sup>119</sup> The reverse design finally adopted was by Gilbert Bayes and portrayed a clothed and helmeted watchman standing outside the walls of a city. Armed with a sword and with a lamp at his feet; the watchman was shown leaning upon a shield inscribed with the words 'TO GUARD MY PEOPLE'.

The new medal was not instituted solely as a means of rewarding gallantry and many were awarded in recognition of other outstandingly meritorious services. As with the various unofficial lifesaving awards previously earned by policemen, these new medals were to be worn by officers whilst on duty. In this way, they also served as a prominent visual reminder to the general public that constables could act as saviours and servants - as opposed to oppressors - of working people. This might offer a powerful counterbalance to the widely-held nineteenth-century perception that constables were at best incompetent and at

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<sup>117</sup> Issued in name of H.J. Gladstone, Whitehall, 7 July 1909. Reprinted in Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 188.

<sup>118</sup> Attwood, 'Gilbert Bayes', p. 139.

<sup>119</sup> TNA MINT 20/387, *King's Police Medal 1909-10*: W. Byrne to Ellison-McCartney, 21 August 1909. TNA HO 45/10539/154893, *King's Police Medal: Its Institution*: Arthur Hirtzel to R.F. Reynard, 18 August 1909. Cited in Attwood, 'Gilbert Bayes', p. 139.



worst agents of the middle classes who existed outside the communities which they policed.



**10. King's Police Medal, 1909 (author's collection)**

The police themselves were certainly keenly aware of the low regard in which they were held by many in society, John Kempster, the publisher of the *Police Review and Parade Gossip*, observing in January 1893 'a tendency, all too prevalent, as evidenced on the stage and in the comic Press, as well as on the footpath, to treat a policeman with less regard for his own self respect than should prevail amongst men towards their fellow-men in all walks of life.'<sup>120</sup> Such views notwithstanding, there is little doubt that, as Taylor observes, 'a more benign image of the police existed among certain working-class men and women who grew up in the 1890s and 1900s'.<sup>121</sup> It may be that the prominent display of both official and semi-official lifesaving medals contributed significantly to this perceptual shift, for there can be little doubt that positive press coverage of brave deeds 'added to the perception of the police as servants of the public, prepared to

<sup>120</sup> *Police Review and Parade Gossip*, 2 January 1893, p. 1. quoted in C. Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History* (Harlow, 1991), p. 101.

<sup>121</sup> D. Taylor, 'Policing and the Community: Late Twentieth Century Myths and Late Nineteenth Century Realities', K. Laybourn (ed.), *Social Conditions, Status and Community 1860- c. 1920* (Thrupp, 1997), p. 120.

put considerations of public good above those of personal safety'.<sup>122</sup> The Edwardian policeman who wore a gallantry medal on his chest can thus be seen as a living exemplar of a new kind of policing.

The first awards of the King's Police Medal were announced in the *London Gazette* on 1 January 1910. Those earned by Metropolitan Police officers included six gallantry medals. Four of these awards recognised bravery shown in the tackling of armed criminals, whilst two were given to policemen who had risked their lives to save other from drowning. The award of the King's Police Medal to officers of the Metropolitan Police during the period 1910-1914 may be summarised as follows:

**Table 8. King's Police Medal: Bravery Awards to Metropolitan Police 1910-14**<sup>123</sup>

<i>London Gazette</i>	Lifesaving: Land	Lifesaving: Fire	Lifesaving: Water	Non-Lifesaving
1910	-	-	2	4
1911	3	1	2	6
1912	1	1	1	1
1913	2	3	1	1
1914	2	2	1	2
<b>Total</b>	8	9	7	14

The large numbers of medals awarded for non-lifesaving gallantry is in part attributable to the making of multiple awards in recognition of the bravery shown by police officers on the occasions of the 'Tottenham Anarchist Outrage' of 23 January 1909 (3 medals, Gazetted 1910) and the 'Sidney Street Siege' of 3 January 1911 (5 medals, Gazetted 1911).<sup>124</sup> Of those awarded in recognition of lifesaving gallantry on land, seven were given for incidents involving runaway horses, whilst one was given to an officer who vainly tried to rescue a worker suffering from asphyxiation in a sewer. These were of course precisely the types of incident for which police officers had previously been recognised by the granting of awards by the RHS and its kindred bodies.

<sup>122</sup> Taylor, 'Policing and the Community', p. 120.

<sup>123</sup> Data extracted from J.R. Lawrence, *From the Beat to the Palace: 175 Years of Gallantry* (Studley, 2005), pp. 27-45.

<sup>124</sup> Including three posthumous medals awarded to officers who lost their lives attempting to arrest the anarchists prior to the siege.

The creation of the Kings Police Medal did not however lead to the cessation of the practice of national and local societies granting their own lifesaving forawards to police officers. In particular, the medals of the RHS; the Society of the Preservation of Life from Fire; the Carnegie Hero Fund; and (in Lancashire) the LSHS continued to be awarded to policemen in substantial numbers.

By way of example, between 1910 and 1914 six Metropolitan Police recipients of the King's Police Medal received additional rewards from the RHS; whilst five were also rewarded by the Society for the Preservation of Life from Fire. During the same period medallists also received four awards from the Carnegie Hero Fund.<sup>125</sup> The King's Police Medal can thus be seen to complement - rather than supplant - an existing unofficial system of rewards.

## **World War One**

The nineteenth century can be characterised as a period when medals and medal giving bodies proliferated. 'Everyday heroes' were frequently the focus of attention of award-giving organisations and accordingly, at the dawn of the twentieth century, Britain was in possession of a comprehensive range of medals (both official and unofficial) with which to reward civilian courage. Sponsored by humanitarian societies, commercial bodies, the press, and - most significantly - the State, the proliferation of rewards reflected a new culture both of medal-giving and of medal-wearing.

The array of awards available to recognise courage on the battlefield was however more limited, with the principle available honours being the Victoria Cross (all ranks), Distinguished Service Order (officers), Distinguished Service Cross (naval officers); and Distinguished Conduct Medal (army junior ranks).

The outbreak of war in 1914 accordingly placed the honours system under considerable strain and the state's response was to institute a range of new gallantry awards including the Military Cross (1914), Distinguished Service

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<sup>125</sup> Data extracted from J.R. Lawrence, *From the Beat to the Palace: 175 Years of Gallantry* (Studley, 2005), pp. 27-45.

Medal (1914), Military Medal (1916) and Distinguished Flying Cross (1918).  
 Many of these new awards were destined to be awarded in large numbers:

**Table 9. Naval and Military Awards for Gallantry: 1914-20<sup>126</sup>**

Decoration	Issue period	Number Awarded	Notes
Victoria Cross	1914-19	633	Land, Sea & Air: All ranks
Distinguished Service Cross	1914-20	1,694	Sea: Officers
Military Cross	1914-20	37,104	Land: Officers
Distinguished Service Medal	1914-20	4,121	Sea: Ratings
Distinguished Conduct Medal	1914-20	25,101	Land: Other ranks
Conspicuous Gallantry Medal	1914-19	108	Sea: Ratings
Military Medal	1916-20	121,566	Land: Other ranks
Distinguished Flying Cross	1918-19	1,151	Air: Officers
Distinguished Flying Medal	1918-19	106	Air: Other ranks
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>191,584</b>	-

Nor did this represent the total number of medals awarded to crown forces in recognition of bravery in combat. For example, Indian troops were eligible for their own awards, with 1,126 receiving the Indian Order of Merit (1914-21) and a further 3,197 troops being granted the Indian Distinguished Service Medal (1914-20).<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, several awards could be awarded either in recognition either of bravery (combatant or non-combatant) or distinguished service:

**Table 10. Naval and Military Awards for Distinguished Service or Gallantry: 1914-20<sup>128</sup>**

Decoration	Period of issue	Number Awarded (inc. bars)	Notes
Distinguished Service Order	1914-19	9,922	Land, Sea & Air: Officers
Royal Red Cross	1914-20	6,099	Female nursing personnel
Meritorious Service Medal	1916-20	25,863	Land: Other ranks
Air Force Cross	1918-19	681	Air: Officers
Air Force Medal	1918-19	104	Air: Other ranks
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>42,699</b>	-

Many of these gallantry and distinguished service awards could be - and were - used to recognise lifesaving acts performed behind the lines or under fire (such

<sup>126</sup> All figures follow Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*. Other authors cite slightly higher numbers for some awards.

<sup>127</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, pp. 152, 168.

<sup>128</sup> All figures follow Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*.

as the rescue of a wounded comrade from no man's land); but specialist life saving awards nevertheless also continued to be issued both by the Crown and private bodies. The quantity of lifesaving medals granted during the period of hostilities was however - as might be expected - vastly exceeded by the number of medals issued in recognition of combat services.

**Table 11. Official Lifesaving Awards: 1914-19**

Decoration	Period of Issue	Number Awarded (inc. bars)
Albert Medal <sup>129</sup>	1914-19	196
Edward Medal <sup>130</sup>	1914-19	115
Sea Gallantry Medal <sup>131</sup>	1914-19	181
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>492</b>

A great many of the Albert Medals and Meritorious Service Medals awarded recognised bravery shown when accidents occurred during grenade and bomb training. Indeed, such was the prevalence of recommendations made for such awards that in September 1917 the War Office felt the need to print 2,000 copies of a letter providing guidance to commanding officers on the need to ensure that soldiers were only recommended for gallantry awards in the event of exceptional circumstances, it being noted that 'in respect of incidents at bombing Schools in particular, there is a tendency for recommendations to become stereotyped'.<sup>132</sup>

The letter also required commanding officers to ask a series of key contextual questions prior to considering recommending individuals for the receipt of bravery medals. In particular, they were required to consider:

Would the act, had it been performed in the stress of battle, have attracted sufficient attention to justify recommendation for reward? In other words, is every officer or soldier who picks up and casts away an enemy unexploded bomb to be rewarded?<sup>133</sup>

The same letter reminded senior officers of the various types of official medal (Albert Medal; Edward Medal; Sea Gallantry Medal; and Meritorious Service Medal) which could be given 'in recognition of services of a gallant nature not in

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<sup>129</sup> Figures calculated from Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry* and Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*.

<sup>130</sup> Figures calculated from Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, pp. 154-55, 188-207.

<sup>131</sup> Figures calculated from Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, pp. 397-400.

<sup>132</sup> War Office Letter 0137/4286 (AG 10) of 15 September 1917; reproduced in J.D. Sainsbury, *For Gallant Performance of Military Duty* (London, 1980), pp. 17-18.

<sup>133</sup> War Office Letter 0137/4286 (AG 10).

the presence of an enemy'. Recommending officers were not however to be allowed to pick-and-choose which type of medal was to be awarded, and it was stressed that such decisions were normally to be taken at the highest level, field commanders being advised that 'the recommendation for a reward should not particularise the award unless there are outstanding features which render such a course desirable'. Furthermore, the circular of September 1917 advised that acts of bravery performed outside the combat zone could also be rewarded with RHS or RNLI medals and that 'the above mentioned non-official medals may be accepted and worn in addition to one of the official medals awarded in respect of a particular act of bravery' - guidance which effectively overturned Edward VII's ruling of 1908 that, under normal circumstances, 'no individual should be allowed to wear two medals in respect of the same occurrence.'<sup>134</sup>

The net result of the circulation of this letter was effectively to subsume the medals of the RHS into the official honours system, with a significant percentage of recommendations received by the Society coming directly from the War Office or Admiralty. The very high standards required to earn these medals served to ensure that the numbers issued remained low however and, whilst annual grants during the war years exceeded those made during peacetime, the Society avoided profligacy. Indeed, the total number of RHS medals of all types awarded during the war was 1,114: a figure which, whilst significantly exceeding that for official lifesaving medals, was nevertheless dwarfed by the 121,566 Military Medals given to army privates and NCOs during the period 1916-20.

**Table 12. RHS Medals: 1914-19<sup>135</sup>**

Decoration	Period of Issue	Number Awarded (inc. bars)
Stanhope Gold Medal	1914-19	6
Silver Medal	1914-19	58
Bronze medal	1914-19	1050
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>1114</b>

Small though the numbers awarded were, the War Office letter of 15 September 1917 had served to reinforce the status of the RHS's medals as honours which

<sup>134</sup> TNA HO 45/9434/63549A, *Albert Medal: Extension of the Institution of the Albert Medal to Cases of Gallantry in Saving Life on Land*: Ruling of 10 March 1908.

<sup>135</sup> Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2, pp. 14-16, 130-42; Royal Humane Society *Annual Reports* 1914-19.

could be awarded on the recommendation of the State and which could be proudly worn by their recipients whilst in uniform. During the nineteenth century, recommendations had regularly been forwarded to the Society via the War Office as well as the Admiralty, but army recommendations were markedly less numerous, the year 1894 for example witnessing the granting of awards to 14 individuals on the basis of War Office reports, with Admiralty recommendations resulting in 28 rewards being granted.<sup>136</sup>

This contrasts markedly with the situation on 1915, when soldiers received 8 silver and 90 bronze medals, with an additional 6 silver and 58 bronze awards being given to Royal Naval personnel. As only a total of 256 medals of all types were voted in 1915, military and naval awards account for over 63% of all medals awarded during the year; whilst additional awards were made on the basis of recommendation of the Colonial Office and other government departments.<sup>137</sup> The boundary between private and public lifesaving awards had effectively been blurred.

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<sup>136</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1894, p. 10.

<sup>137</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1915; Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2, pp. 15, 132-35.

## MEDALS AND MEDALLISTS



***CLASS, GENDER, AGE, RACE &  
EMPIRE***



## Medals and Class

### Working Class Heroism: “Our Heroes of To-day”<sup>1</sup>

The nineteenth century was an age of heroes. Statues and other monuments commemorating the brave deeds of the Empire’s gallant sons were to be found in almost every city in Britain. With few exceptions these commemorated the lives and deeds of the nation’s leading men – sailors, soldiers and politicians – whilst the heroism of the less exalted members of society went un-remarked and unrecorded. An exception to this general rule is to be found in London, where the Watts Memorial to Heroic Self Sacrifice in Postman’s Park records the self-sacrifice of those from all walks of life who gave up their own lives in an effort to save others.<sup>2</sup>

The memorial was the brainchild of the artist George Frederick Watts who, as early as 1887, had recognised a need for such a memorial. Work on the monument commenced in 1899, the memorial being formally opened the following year. In its initial form the structure was modest, with only four individuals being commemorated. Its inaugurator’s intentions were far more ambitious however, and Price records that, ‘Watts compiled grand lists of names from newspaper reports of heroic incidents all across the country and hoped one day to commemorate every one of them.’<sup>3</sup> Watts was conscious of the transience of the press coverage afforded to such acts of self-sacrifice and was keen that such acts should not be forgotten. In particular, he was eager to ensure that the willingness of the men and women recorded by the monument should act as a source of inspiration for others, explaining in the *Daily Mail* of 7 July 1898 that, ‘it is our duty to encourage what is good and vigorous and noble. I hope that the memorial to humble heroes will not be without value in that direction.’

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<sup>1</sup> Title of poem by W.C. Bennett, *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 1 February 1873, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> J. Price, “‘Heroism in Everyday Life’: the Watts Memorial for Heroic Self Sacrifice”, *History Workshop Journal* 63:1 (2007), pp. 254-78. Published on-line at <http://hwj.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/63/1/254> (6/2/2008).

<sup>3</sup> Price, ‘Heroism in Everyday Life’, download p. 4.

In choosing to commemorate the deeds of those who sacrificed their lives to save others, Watts envisaged a new type of inspirational public memorial which celebrated worthy heroic individuals, irrespective of their social background.

### **Working Class Heroes and Exemplary Lives**

The medals of the RHS were however already performing a similar purpose, the wearer of such a decoration being transformed into a living manifestation of his or her brave deed. Indeed, the nineteenth century witnessed a proliferation both of bravery medals and of medal-giving bodies. Drawing inspiration in part from the work of the RHS, a broad range of philanthropic, civic and commercial bodies established novel awards with which to recognise a wide range of brave deeds. Even the State, which had initially drawn back from taking an active role in the rewarding of martial or non-martial bravery had, by the second half of the nineteenth century, succumbed to political and public pressure and instituted a range of bravery medals. Heroes could now wear badges of honour.

Civilian medallists from all walks of life could perform an inspirational function; particularly if the transient brave deed for which they had earned the medal were to be accepted by the viewer as the ultimate manifestation of a heroic and worthy life. Those who wore lifesaving medals might accordingly be perceived as paragons of society by an audience who built a heroic narrative around the badge they displayed. Popular literature served to underpin such generalisations, and bodies such as the Religious Tract Society published and distributed volumes celebrating not only the deeds of Britain's heroic lifesavers, but also the worthy lives they had led. Such writing was certainly significant for, as Cubitt has observed, a hero is a product not only of heroic deeds but also of the manner in which those deeds are reported, for 'a person becomes a hero, at least in part, by having his or her life and actions and character described in the conventional terms which govern the acclamation and celebration of the heroic within a particular culture.'<sup>4</sup> Cubitt further argued that heroic lives are an imaginative social construct:

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<sup>4</sup> G. Cubitt, "Introduction: Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives", G. Cubitt & A. Warren, (eds.), *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, (Manchester, 2000), p. 5.

...lives, in short, that are not just heroic in isolated detail, but that constitute in some sense a heroic totality. Heroes may be celebrated for particular actions or traits of character, but they are celebrated in a way that implies the essential consistency of action with character, and the dramatic unity of the successive stages of individual existence.<sup>5</sup>

Heroes are thus afforded their special status because their heroism is an inevitable result of their worthy and heroic lives. The classical heroes of Greece and Rome were possessed of an intrinsic ambiguity, combining the attributes of a deity with the vulnerability of a mortal. Within a western Christianised context, a similar dichotomy is to be found in the life and deeds of Jesus, who abandoned the advantages of divinity to sacrifice his life on the cross in order to redeem mankind.

Few of those who aspired to risk their lives to save others (whether in conscious imitation of Christ or otherwise) fall into the category of what Carlyle would have described as ‘Great Men’. Such more humble heroes may not have shaped history, but their lives might nevertheless be portrayed as exemplary. Indeed, as Cubitt notes, exemplarity need not be linked to significant historic achievement, being rather ‘the relationship which pertains when one human existence is taken as a model or the bearer of significant truths for the moulding of others.’<sup>6</sup>

The portrayal of exemplary lives in their entirety was considered by some such as Dryden to be an exceptionally effective technique for encouraging a positive didactic moral effect.<sup>7</sup> Exemplars should ideally be individuals with whom their audience might identify:

Exemplarity involves a perception not just of excellence, but also of relevance - and thus, in a sense, of similarity. Those whom we take as exemplars may be better than we are, but not than we might in principle become – not better in some absolute way that implies a difference of kind, but better relative to some common standard against which we hope to improve.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Cubitt, “Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives”, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Cubitt, “Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives”, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Cubitt, “Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives”, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Cubitt, “Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives”, p. 11.

Exemplarity was at the core of Samuel Smiles's pioneering book, *Self-Help*,<sup>9</sup> which was first published 1859. Promoting the construct of a 'manly character' based on 'self-restraint, perseverance, strenuous effort, [and] courage in the face of adversity',<sup>10</sup> it celebrated the labours of self-made men. Drawing examples primarily from the industrious middle-classes, Smiles held up characters such as David Livingstone as exemplars for the aspirational working-classes. The work proved to be extremely popular, remaining in print well into the twentieth century and its approach to the exploitation of admirable lives as a means of encouraging self-improvement influenced numerous other writers.

Such authors frequently recast the lives of prominent public figures such as Grace Darling. The tale of James Braidwood also proved popular, being featured in several late-Victorian works. The anonymous author of *Everyday Heroes*, an inspirational volume published in 1900 by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, was typical of those who sought to weave a fully-formed 'heroic life' around the bare bones of his tale. In this telling of Braidwood's tale, he not only sacrificed himself to save his men, but also: 'for many years supported two maiden sisters'; possessed 'deep Christian feelings'; 'undertook quiet good deeds, quietly wrought out in the poorer districts of London'; 'took special interest in the ragged schools of the metropolis'; and was 'a model husband and father'.<sup>11</sup> The anonymous author sought to ensure that the tale of Braidwood was relevant to a primarily working-class target-audience. In so doing, he (or she) was pursuing a well-trodden path.

One of the most prolific of the late-Victorian inspirational writers was Frank Mundell who, in the mid-1890s, penned a series of uplifting volumes - including *Stories of the Humane Society*, *Stories of the Fire Brigade* and *Stories of the Lifeboat* - on behalf of the Sunday School Union. Accessible works such as these both appropriated and celebrated the heroism of ordinary men and women and, through their wide distribution, helped to serve as their memorial. The heroes whose deeds were recorded were in no material way different from their

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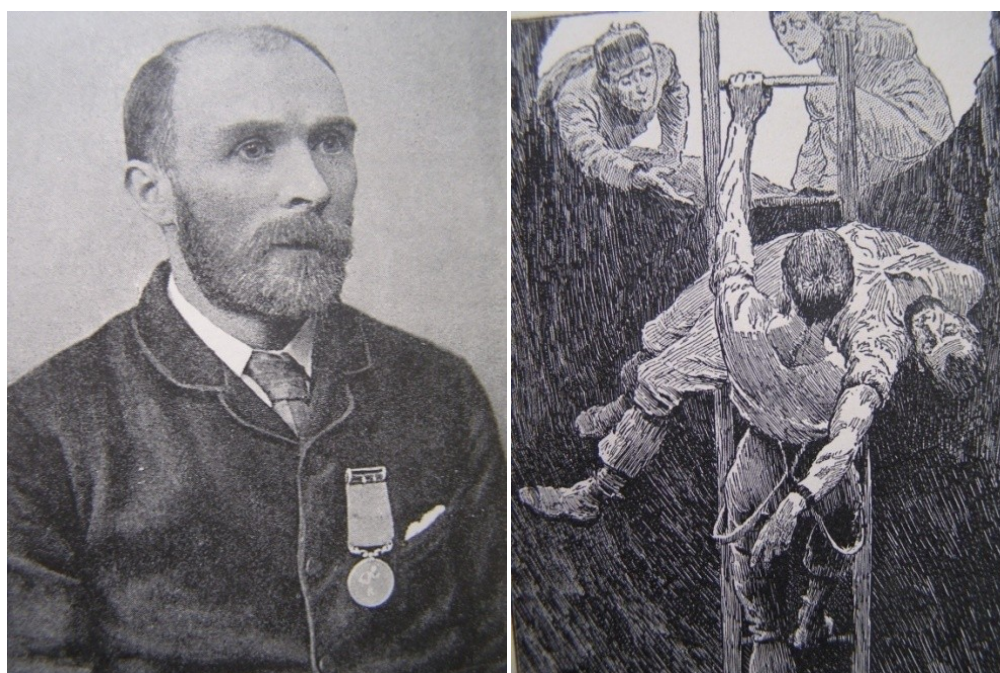
<sup>9</sup> S. Smiles, *Self-Help: With Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance* (London, 1859).

<sup>10</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford, 2003), p. 26.

<sup>11</sup> Anon., *Everyday Heroes: Stories of Bravery During the Queen's Reign 1837-1900* (London, 1900), pp. 55-56.

readers and the style of writing helped to ensure that the reader empathised with the central characters. One of the tales related by Mundell was that of William Brimelow, a Bolton man who saved a fellow workman from suffocation in a gas filled furnace cupola. As related by Mundell, it was an act of selfless courage which earned him the silver medal of the RHS but cost him his health:

...for since that day he performed, what has aptly been described as one of the most heroic feats of modern times, he has not known what life really is. Months of weakness succeeded long days of pain, and the occasion which found him a hero left him an invalid.<sup>12</sup>



**1. William Brimelow [images published c.1895]: man<sup>13</sup> and deed<sup>14</sup>**

Mundell's book portrayed Brimelow as making a Christ-like sacrifice, but he is nevertheless unquestionably an ordinary man. Indeed, great emphasis was placed upon his modest lifestyle:

The news of the occurrence soon spread throughout the foundry, and reached the ears of William Brimelow, the son of the proprietor, a man known as a quiet, home-loving fellow, "who liked to listen rather than to talk." Few, if any, of his friends suspected he was a man made for some great emergency, but such indeed was the case, as the result proved.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> F. Mundell, *Stories of the Humane Society*, (London, c. 1895), p. 138.

<sup>13</sup> L.M. Lane, *Heroes of Everyday Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London, 1896), opposite p. 219.

<sup>14</sup> Mundell, *Stories of the Humane Society*, p. 135.

<sup>15</sup> Mundell, *Stories of the Humane Society*, p. 134.

Brimelow was thus portrayed as the embodiment of a range of Victorian virtues: a modest and sober soul who was nevertheless capable of acting with calm and selfless courage when the need arose. His status as the son of the proprietor of the furnace where the accident occurred was referred to in passing; but the account contained no hint that this might have imposed upon him a special duty of care for those employed there. Rather, Mundell chose to emphasise his position as one of the workers, explaining that, ‘His fellow workmen lamented what they considered his rash action, and thought sadly that two homes would now be desolate instead of one.’<sup>16</sup> Brimelow can thus be seen to have been portrayed as a sober and virtuous individual who, whilst not compelled by duty to act, nevertheless felt driven to go to the aid of one of his fellows when the unfortunate man found his life imperilled whilst engaged in everyday activity. Such heroes were part of the normal mass of humanity, but paradoxically somehow elevated above it. As Dr. W.C. Bennett observed in his poem, ‘Our Heroes of Today’:

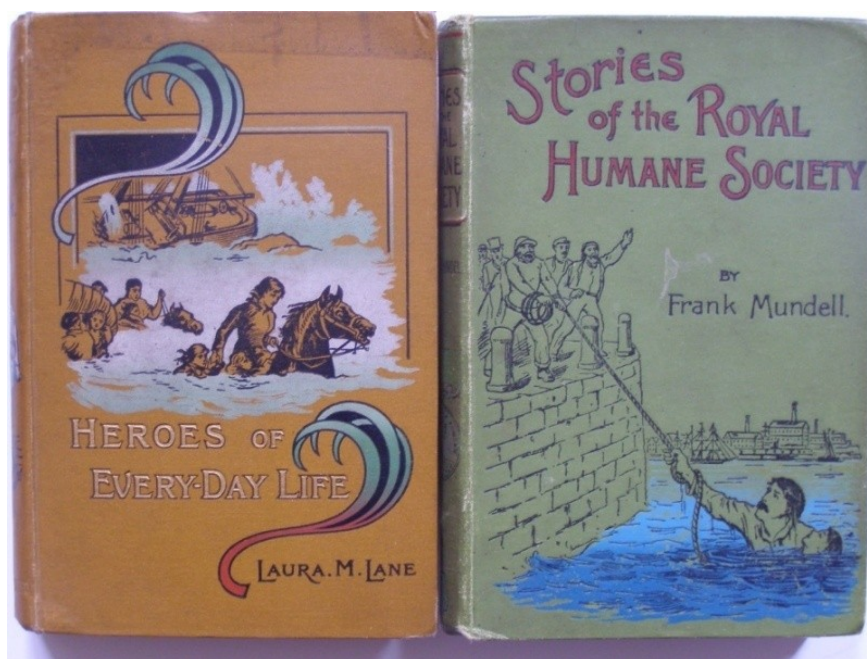
Heroes and saints! And do they say  
The past had these alone?  
Brothers, have we not both to-day,  
And both the people’s own?  
Theirs may be homes in lanes and streets,  
But theirs are deeds one hears  
With blood that quicker, nobler beats,  
And the proud praise of tears.  
If e’er your heart ignobly faint  
At great deeds in your way  
Then think of many a living saint  
And hero of to-day.<sup>17</sup>

But if the writing of exemplary lives might be thought of as a specialist art, the master of the medium was perhaps Laura Lane, whose book *Heroes of Everyday Life* provided its readers with 255 pages of lives to emulate. She was absolutely clear as to the purpose of her work and the audience at which it was aimed.

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<sup>16</sup> Mundell, *Stories of the Humane Society*, p. 134.

<sup>17</sup> Reproduced in *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 1 February 1873, p. 73.



## 2. Tales of late nineteenth century lifesaving (author's collection)

Lane was acutely concerned for the moral welfare of her audience, bemoaning in the preface to her book that, 'We live in a sensational age. Sensational fiction, sensational journalism, sensational speech-making – these are the everyday features of our times.'<sup>18</sup>

Lane sought to offer an alternative to her readers which harnessed and redirected this love of the dramatic, explaining that, 'To lovers of the sensational I offer a new, and at the same time healthy, gratification of their taste.'<sup>19</sup> Her target audience was likewise clearly identified, the author explaining that:

Such as they are, I venture to dedicate these stories of heroism in everyday life to the working men and boys of Great Britain. Whatever may be lacking in the completeness of my work, there is certainly no lack of love, no lack of sympathy with the great working class.<sup>20</sup>

The tone of Lane's preface strongly suggests that her work was at least partly motivated by a feeling of social anxiety and by an associated evangelical desire to encourage patriotism and stability through the promotion of Christian values in the working classes:

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<sup>18</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, p. vii.

<sup>19</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, p. vii.

<sup>20</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, p. vii.

We live in a transition period. The old order is passing away and giving place to new. This is inevitable. Change and decay are written in all human institutions. But in all changes that are surely coming (political and social), let us not forget one broad principle – namely that it is “Righteousness” (and righteousness alone) “that exalteth a nation.” No material advantages can prove of lasting value unless they are accompanied by the growth and development of the higher nature. “What can it profit a man if he gain the world and lose his own soul?”... And if this little book of mine shall help towards a better understanding of the nobility of nature that lies hid beneath many a toil-stained jacket, my labour will not have been in vain.<sup>21</sup>

Such a preface might be expected to introduce a book which, at the time of its publication, was somewhat anachronistic for, as Springhall has observed:

Popular juvenile literature, embracing magazines and novels, exemplifies... a basic shift in the concept of manliness during the second half of the nineteenth century and after, moving away from the strenuous moral earnestness of Dr Thomas Arnold... to a greater emphasis on patriotism and athleticism.<sup>22</sup>

But whilst Lane’s preface to *Heroes of Everyday Life* did indeed make emphatic reference to the Christian faith, her writing nevertheless concentrated on the dramatic and created action heroes whose brave deeds were very much in tune with those performed by the fictional heroes of the popular novels penned by G.A. Henty and Arthur Marryat.<sup>23</sup> Thus, whilst many of the tales related by Lane expressed an explicitly Christian message, the message was not generally allowed to interfere with the flow of the narrative. Crucially, the tales of bravery related by Lane in *Heroes of Every-Day Life* were generally those of working class men and women who had risked all for the sake of others. Equally significantly, most of her heroes had received medals in recognition of their valour:

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<sup>21</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, pp. vii-viii.

<sup>22</sup> J. Springhall, ‘Building Character in the British Boy: the Attempt to Extend Christian Manliness to Working-class Adolescents, 1880-1914’ in Mangan, J.A. & Walvin, J. (eds.), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1987), p. 61.

<sup>23</sup> Arthur Marryat was himself a RHS medallist.



**Table 1. Laura Lane: *Heroes of Everyday Life*<sup>24</sup>**

Name	Gender	Occupation	Award/Memorial
Alfred Collins	M	Fisherman	RHS
Elijah Hallam	M	Miner	OSTJ
Fred Vickers	M	Miner	OSTJ
Walter Cleverley	M	Not noted, but stress placed upon his having been dockyard apprentice	RHS
Alice Ayres	F	Domestic	Postman's Park
Frank Shooter	M	Bathing Superintendant	RHS
PC Cole	M	Police Officer	AM; gold watch
PC Cox	M	Police Officer	Gold watch
David McCulloch	M	Farm labourer	RHS
James Griffin	M	Coastguard	SGM
Dennis Bagshaw	M	Miner	n/a (victim)
Elizabeth Mouatt	F	Widow	n/a (victim)
Hanah Rosbotham	F	Schoolmistress	AM
Charles Fish	M	Lifeboatman	RNLI
James, Charles and Stephen Abbot; Mr Webber; PC Daughton	M	Police officer; Farmer; plus 3x not stated (Group rescue)	Not stated
Alfred Moores	M	Fisherman	RHS
Philip Keough	M	Lighthouse keeper	RHS
William Thomas; Daniel Thomas; William Beith; Isaac Pride; T. Howell	M	Colliery owner; colliery manager; mechanical engineer; miners(x2). Particular attention paid to merits of colliery manager	AM
Grace Bussell	F	Farmer's daughter	RHS
Joseph Double	M	Railway worker	OSTJ
Mrs Fox; Mrs Maistre; Mrs. Marion Smith	F	Wives/widows of soldiers	RRC (Fox & Maistre; OSTJ (Smith))
William Brimelow	M	Son of Factory Owner	RHS
Daniel Thomas; Richard Jones and others	M	Miners	OSTJ & RSPLF

Lane's purpose was to inspire the aspirational working classes and she created heroes from those with whom she felt her target audience would empathise. In so doing, not only were the details of their exceptional deeds recorded, but so also was information relating to their backgrounds and everyday lives.

Lane sought to look beyond the actual acts of bravery and to record – or manufacture – a broader heroic context which re-set them as the crowning achievements of a series of lives which were not only worthy of but also *capable* of emulation. Thus Walter Cleverly was portrayed as a man whose bravery in leaping into shark-infested waters to rescue a drowning sailor was the natural

<sup>24</sup> A further tale, 'The Capture of a Slave Dhou' related to armed encounter rather than lifesaving.

successor to the pluck he had displayed as a child when ‘thrashing the cowardly bully who was the terror of the weaker and smaller boys’.<sup>25</sup>



**3. Walter Cleverey<sup>26</sup> and Alice Ayres<sup>27</sup> [images published c. 1895 & 1896]**

Lane’s account of the early years of the tragic heroine Alice Ayres likewise points to a girl who, the child of ‘poor but honest parents’, entered domestic service and fulfilled her duties ‘faithfully and well’, her neighbours being reported as having described her as ‘a quiet-spoken girl with pleasant, gentle ways, quick about her work and very fond of children’.<sup>28</sup> Similar worthy but modest ambitions were attributed to Hannah Rosbotham, a schoolmistress who earned the Albert Medal:

The heroine of this sketch evinced from her earliest years a taste and aptitude for the vocation and ministry of a teacher. While yet a mere child – sitting on the benches of the National School of Sutton, Lancashire – she looked forward eagerly to the time when she would be permitted to teach others.<sup>29</sup>

But it was not only the childhoods of her heroines and heroes that are held up for emulation. Lane also went to considerable lengths to stress that the brave acts

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<sup>25</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, p. 42.

<sup>26</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, opposite p. 41.

<sup>27</sup> Mundell, *Stories of the Fire Brigade* (London, c.1895), p. 69.

<sup>28</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>29</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, p. 121.

performed in adulthood represented consistent manifestations of the characters of the men and women whose actions she was describing. Thus Walter Cleverly's brave act was performed while sailing home to visit his mother;<sup>30</sup> whilst the life-boatman Charles Fish and his siblings were portrayed as exemplarily dutiful offspring, Lane claiming that, 'It is pleasant to learn that her sons and daughters proved their gratitude to their excellent parent by ministering to her in her declining years.'<sup>31</sup> Lane in short did not merely tell tales of bravery, but rather created fully-rounded heroes, drawing upon the lists of Victorian Britain's lifesaving medallists for her raw material.

The popular celebration of the 'everyday hero' is perhaps best exemplified by the near-deification of Grace Darling, but other examples abound. Drawn from all social classes, 'everyday heroes' were role models who anyone, through virtuous living, might perhaps hope to emulate. Heroes might even be fashioned from unlikely stock, the Reverend Henry Woodcock (author of such inspirational tomes as *Wonders of Grace* and *Popery Unmasked*) recording the life-story of John Ellerthorpe, 'The Hero of the Humber', who rose above a debauched youth and early adulthood to find a new role as a prodigiously successful saver of lives. Like those of the heroes described by Lane, Ellerthorpe's life-story had important lessons for society. He had led what Cubitt has described as an 'exemplary life':

...one valued and admired not merely (or even necessarily) for its practical achievements, but for the moral or ethical or social values or truths which it is perceived both to embody and, through the force of example, to impress upon the minds of others.<sup>32</sup>

Unlike Lane's writings, Woodcock's narrative was firmly based in an early nineteenth-century narrative tradition, wherein the protagonist's faith is allowed to occupy centre stage. Ellerthorpe's tale, as recounted by Woodcock, was one of redemption through the acceptance of God and the adoption of a life of quiet sobriety. It was a moral and spiritual journey which saw the main protagonist develop from a drunken layabout to a Christian hero; his deeds being rewarded by the granting of medals, honours and cash rewards. For Ellerthorpe, according

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<sup>30</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, p. 45.

<sup>31</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, p. 130.

<sup>32</sup> G. Cubitt, "Introduction: Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives", G. Cubitt & A. Warren, (eds.), *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives* (Manchester, 2000), p. 2.

to his biographer, the linkage between Christian devotion and heroism could not have been closer:

Ever after my conversion to God, I used to pray, when plunging into the water, "Lord help me", and knowing as I did, that prayer melts the heart and moves the arm of Jehovah, I felt confident that he would help me; and so he did... I always felt it my duty, after rescuing a drowning person, to go to the house of God at night, and return public thanks to the Almighty.<sup>33</sup>

Ellerthorpe was held up as a Christian role model: a sinner who had found God and, through his faith, had earned worldly rewards and the esteem of his peers. Nevertheless, he was portrayed as both unassuming and modest, Woodcock specifically noting that, 'Though Mr Ellerthorpe never urged his claims to public recognition, yet we rejoice to state that his deeds were not permitted to pass unnoticed and unrewarded.'<sup>34</sup> Indeed, his humble roots and personal reticence were seen as being an integral part of his virtue and were celebrated in verse in the pages of the local newspaper, *The Hull Daily Express*:

Without pretension, who by deeds endears  
His name afar beyond its native strand,  
A son of toil – yet one of Nature's peers!  
Whose worth's acknowledged in his native land!<sup>35</sup>

Ellerthorpe died in 1868 as a result of coronary disease, his physician, Dr Gibson reporting that, 'As his medical attendant, I regret to say, that his frequent plunges into the water, at all seasons of the year, and long exposure in wet clothes, have seriously damaged his health and constitution.'<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> H. Woodcock, *The Hero of the Humber: or, the History of the Late Mr John Ellerthorpe* (Alford, 1880): online Project Gutenberg eBook edition: [www.gutenberg.org/files/20520/20520-h/20520-h.htm](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20520/20520-h/20520-h.htm) (5/11/2007), p. 30.

<sup>34</sup> Woodcock, *The Hero of the Humber*, p. 57.

<sup>35</sup> Reproduced in Woodcock., *The Hero of the Humber*, p. 63.

<sup>36</sup> Dr Gibson to H. Woodcock, 26 Sept. 1867; reproduced in Woodcock, H., *The Hero of the Humber*, p. 74.



**4. John Ellerthorpe<sup>37</sup> [image published c.1895]**

For his biographer, Ellerthorpe's demise was a conscious act of martyrdom, and he further drew on the words of Gibson to stress that, 'Mr. Ellerthorpe had generously attempted to save the lives of others at the expense of abridging his own life.'<sup>38</sup> Thus was the life of 'The Hero of the Humber' portrayed as being exemplary. His funeral attracted thousands of mourners and *The Eastern Morning News* resorted to hyperbole in its description of the event, declaring that 'It may be questioned whether his career has any individual parallel in the world's history.'<sup>39</sup>

In life, Ellerthorpe's reputation had brought him the patronage of 'Persons of high distinction, and of great authority in the social world'.<sup>40</sup> He was very much regarded as a hero in his own lifetime, and his admirers were tireless in pursuing on his behalf the rewards which they considered to be his due – including medals. They lobbied both the RHS and the Board of Trade with some success

<sup>37</sup> Mundell, *Stories of the Humane Society*, p. 89.

<sup>38</sup> Dr Gibson to H. Woodcock, n.d.; reproduced in Woodcock, *The Hero of the Humber*, p. 74.

<sup>39</sup> Reproduced in Woodcock, *The Hero of the Humber*, p. 75.

<sup>40</sup> Woodcock, *The Hero of the Humber*, p. 57.

and Ellerthorpe was in due course granted the Board of Trade's Silver Medal for Saving Life (1861). In addition, he received the RHS's silver medal (1835) and certificate on vellum (1861). On a more practical level, Ellerthorpe's heroic status also earned him cash rewards. These included a bounty of £20 from Queen Victoria (1861),<sup>41</sup> and purses of gold from both private subscribers (100 guineas, 1861)<sup>42</sup> and the Trading Merchants of Hull (23 ½ guineas, 1864).<sup>43</sup>

The publication of such inspirational works helped to ensure that the work of the RHS and its kindred societies remained firmly in the public eye and the various societies were accordingly keen to furnish the authors of such works with every possible assistance, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge for example making numerous references to the generosity of the RHS in its 1900 publication *Everyday Heroes*.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, Mundell's *Stories of the Royal Humane Society* may be seen as an extended advertisement for the Society and its work, commencing with a brief history of the organisation and concluding with an extended personal description of the practical work of the Society's Receiving House in Hyde Park. Significantly, the final paragraph takes the form of a barely concealed appeal for funds, couched in the language of patriotism:

There is no institution more worthy of public support than the Royal Humane Society. Its operations are now world-wide, but unfortunately the voluntary subscriptions, on which it depends, have not kept pace with its extended sphere of usefulness... Let us hope, for the honour of our country, that the advance of this Society may not be retarded by lack of means.<sup>45</sup>

Authors such as Stanway and Lane were likewise more than happy to express their gratitude to society secretaries who had 'kindly supplied [them] with full and authentic details respecting the deeds described'.<sup>46</sup> Symbiotic links are further revealed in their published acknowledgements, Laura Lane for example thanking by name representatives of the RHS and Society for the Protection of

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<sup>41</sup> Woodcock, *The Hero of the Humber*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>42</sup> Woodcock, *The Hero of the Humber*, p. 67.

<sup>43</sup> Woodcock, *The Hero of the Humber*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>44</sup> Anon., *Everyday Heroes: Stories of Bravery During the Queen's Reign 1837-1900* (London, 1900).

<sup>45</sup> Mundell, *Stories of the Humane Society*, p. 158.

<sup>46</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, p. vii.

Life from Fire,<sup>47</sup> whilst Kay Stanaway casts her net more widely to include the RHS, RNLI, Lloyd's, Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society, Glasgow Humane Society, Order of St John and Carnegie Hero Fund.<sup>48</sup> The relationship between authors and societies was essentially symbiotic: the societies provided the authors with the stories they needed to create 'exemplary lives'; whilst in return the authors provided the Societies with widely disseminated publicity.

As an award-making body, the RHS must have been well aware of the value of such collaboration in the development of the public perception of its awards as aspirational objects. Jeremy Bentham's reservations notwithstanding,<sup>49</sup> the Society was keenly conscious of the esteem in which its medals were held and many of their early awards were actually inscribed on the edge with the words 'Go thou and do likewise'. The medal and its wearer thus performed the same function as the Watts memorial, namely to act as a source of inspiration, Froude urging:

...there is a man – such a man as you ought to be... see what he was, and how he made himself what he was, and try to be yourself like him.<sup>50</sup>

### **Objects of Desire: Medals and Social Class**

As can be seen in the cases of warriors such as Nelson and Evelyn Wood, there already existed a long tradition of military men actively seeking to acquire medals and other visible decorations. That lifesaving medals were similarly looked upon as 'objects of desire' is equally evident. By way of example, the first two Honorary gold medals to be issued by the RNIPLS were voted to William Hillary and George Manby in recognition of their roles as Founder of the Institution and inventor of lifesaving apparatus respectively.<sup>51</sup> The reaction of these two undoubtedly able individuals to their awards throws considerable light on the esteem in which such badges of recognition were held. Despite his

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<sup>47</sup> L.M. Lane, *Heroes of Everyday Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London, 1896), p. viii.

<sup>48</sup> Stanway, K., *Britannia's Calendar of Heroes* (London, 1914), p. xiii.

<sup>49</sup> J. Bentham, *The Rationale of Reward: Book I, Of Rewards in General*, Chapter XVI, pp. 3-4. Reproduced in digital form from Bowering edition of 1843 at [www.la.utexas.edu/research/poltheory/bentham/rr/rr.b01.c16.html](http://www.la.utexas.edu/research/poltheory/bentham/rr/rr.b01.c16.html) (28/11/2007).

<sup>50</sup> J.A. Froude, *Short Studies on Great Subjects* (London, 1888), pp. 583-84.

<sup>51</sup> 10 March 1825. See Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 405.

Founder's gold medal, Hillary was undeniably keen to secure further formal recognition. In December 1825 he wrote to the Committee suggesting that his role in aiding the stricken vessel *City of Glasgow* was worthy of a second medal. The Committee's members were not sympathetic to his request, reminding him that he had already received a gold medal<sup>52</sup> and explaining that they felt 'bound to husband their resources, and to grant rewards sparingly to men, for services, to whom a very small amount would be of consequence'.<sup>53</sup>

Whilst no evidence survives directly to link the two events, Hillary's rebuff was swiftly followed by a speech delivered by his friend and former employer, the Duke of Sussex, who suggested at the anniversary dinner of 1826 that the Institution should adopt the practice of awarding a second medallion, or 'a bar to the first', in appropriately meritorious cases.<sup>54</sup> The Duke's suggestion was swiftly adopted, the first beneficiary being Lt. Jobson, an Arbroath Coastguardsman and gold medallist, who was informed in March 1827 that he was to receive an additional award in recognition of a further gallant act, the Committee having decided 'to adopt a further emblem, as an appendage to the Gold Medallion, for a second signal service in the cause of the Institution, and which was suggested by H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex at the Past anniversary Dinner.'<sup>55</sup> The second beneficiary of this change in practice was Hillary, who in January 1828 was voted a 'gold boat' to suspend below his existing medal for his gallantry at the wreck of the Swedish vessel *Fortroendert*. A further two gold 'boats' were awarded to him in 1830, in both cases in recognition of lifesaving gallantry.<sup>56</sup> His memorial tablet on the Isle of Man prominently celebrated his rewards, recording that, 'Fearless himself in the work of rescue from shipwreck he helped to save 305 lives and was three times awarded the Gold Medal of the Institution for great gallantry.'<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Voted on 10 March 1825 in recognition of his role as a founder of the Institution.

<sup>53</sup> Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, p. 11.

<sup>54</sup> Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, pp. 18, 28, 29.

<sup>57</sup> R. Kelly, *For Those in Peril* (Onchan IOM, 1979). Hillary's three gold 'boats' were voted on 16 January 1828; 27 January 1830; and 15 December 1830.



The prodigious inventor George William Manby was likewise eager to see his contributions to the lifesaving movement visibly rewarded. During the course of his career Manby lobbied for - and received - medals from the RHS, RNLI and RSPLF in addition to various locally-produced medals and state-sponsored awards from France, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands.<sup>58</sup> As his biographer, Kenneth Walthew records, ‘He was pathetically proud of his medals, and wore them pinned to his chest on every possible occasion.’<sup>59</sup> An oil painting of Manby, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, shows him in unusually restrained garb, his chest decorated only by his Royal Humane Society medal which he wears with the reverse showing and his name towards the viewer,<sup>60</sup> whilst an etching of 1832 shows him more lavishly decorated with his RNIPLS medal on his chest and two awards hanging from neck ribbons.<sup>61</sup>



**5. Manby: Portrait by Lawrence<sup>62</sup> and etching of 1832<sup>63</sup>**

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<sup>58</sup> C. Barclay, ‘Life Saving Medals in the British Museum: Medals Presented to G.W. Manby FRS’, *Life saving Awards Research Society Journal* 42 (2001), pp. 16-20. Manby published images of his medals privately as *Anatistic Drawings of Gold & Silver Medals Presented by Sovereigns and Public Bodies to Captain George William Manby* (1852).

<sup>59</sup> K. Walthew, *From Rock and Tempest: The Life and Times of Captain George Manby* (London, 1971), p. 43.

<sup>60</sup> In collection of Kings Lynn Museum.

<sup>61</sup> In collection of British Museum.

<sup>62</sup> Walthew, *From Rock and Tempest*, plate opposite p. 96.

<sup>63</sup> Walthew, *From Rock and Tempest*, plate opposite p. 113.

In later life Manby fell upon hard times, and when his landlord seized his possessions, including his medals, in lieu of rent, issued an anguished plea for help to his friend Dawson Turner, explaining that he needed £61 to pay his debts on the grounds that:

I must have my medals: Mr. Young touched upon honours from foreign sovereigns in his letter to lord Melbourne, and I need them to show Conroy to induce him to get an interview with the Duchess of Kent to exhibit to her.<sup>64</sup>

Amongst the many books and pamphlets written by Manby are a number intended to draw public attention to his personal triumphs. His self-penned publications throw a very public light on his attitude to medals and, more pertinently, reveal in unflattering detail his inability to cope when he was denied the honours he craved. He was outraged when the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce proposed to bestow on him 'the Silver Medal only',<sup>65</sup> vociferously complaining that, 'a confused attempt, for the purposes of varnishing over their own injustices while they defeat my claim, was made to carry a vote of the SILVER MEDAL for me.'<sup>66</sup> He was equally enraged by the RHS, which had granted him a silver medal in 1808 but later declined to award him the more-prestigious Fothergillian gold medal, protesting that the Committee of the Society 'were not justified in refusing me Dr Fothergill's medal for my plan of launching boats'.<sup>67</sup> Nor indeed was the Queen herself safe from Manby's approaches, although he was ultimately forced to record sadly that, 'my repeated applications to obtain some mark of my SOVEREIGN'S favour has (sic) not been successful! – a circumstance I cannot sufficiently regret'.<sup>68</sup>

Whilst Manby's efforts to cajole a high honour from the Crown came to nothing, his pestering of Sir Robert Peel brought him a gold striking of Queen Victoria's coronation medal 'as a small mark of the sense Her Majesty entertains of the

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<sup>64</sup> Dawson Turner Archive, Wren Library, Trinity College, Cambridge. Reproduced in Walthew, *From Rock and Tempest*, p. 135.

<sup>65</sup> G.W. Manby, *An Address to the British Public: with Suggestions for the Recovery of Property from Sunken Vessels* (London, 1838), p. 101.

<sup>66</sup> Manby, *Address*, p. 104.

<sup>67</sup> Manby, *Address*, p. 40.

<sup>68</sup> Manby *Address*, p. 10.

usefulness of his inventions in the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck'.<sup>69</sup> It was a token reward which greatly disappointed Manby but, as Robert Malster has observed, 'in an age when modesty was more highly regarded than vanity Manby was his own worst publicist'.<sup>70</sup>

Manby's love of his medals was verging on the obsessive, but lifesaving awards were also held in high regard by the public in general. Popular poetry recorded the gallantry of lifesavers, whose bravery was readily and favourably compared with that of the soldiers who defended Britain's Empire, Clement Scott's *The Lay of the Lifeboat* (1880) for example proclaiming:

They talk of battles and rank and file;  
they call the roll, count cannon and loss,  
And Tom he wears a Corporal's stripe,  
and brave little Jim the Victoria Cross.  
They march to the front with fife and drum,  
and follow the beat of the regiment's band;  
They see their flag as it waves,  
and hear the jolly old Colonel's clear command.  
But there's never a sound in the battle at sea,  
but the howling storm and the scream afar;  
And it's only duty points the way when  
the ships break up on the harbour bar

The medals received - and proudly worn - by rescuers were likewise specifically referred to in verse:<sup>71</sup>

Praise to the men whose well earned medals rest  
On many a storm-scarred brave and manly breast,  
And tell the tale of noble efforts made,  
Of hard brought succour and triumphant aid,  
Trophies more precious than laured bays,  
The brazen plaudits or venal praise.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Walthew, *From Rock and Tempest*, p. 135.

<sup>70</sup> Malster, *Saved from the Sea*, p. 20.

<sup>71</sup> Edward Dalton, 'The Sea', originally published in E. Dalton, *The Sea, the Railway Journey and Other Poems* (London, 1866). Reprinted in J. Cumming & C. Vince (eds.), *The Life-boat in Verse* (London 1938), pp. 23-25

<sup>72</sup> Originally published in, *The World* (Christmas 1880). Reprinted in J. Cumming & C. Vince (eds.), *The Life-boat in Verse* (London 1938), pp. 13-15.

Whilst these verses both refer specifically to the bravery of lifeboat-men, the heroic deeds of fireman,<sup>73</sup> engine-drivers<sup>74</sup> and members of the general public<sup>75</sup> were likewise celebrated in print. Such bravery was frequently recognised by the RHS, which granted medals in recognition of acts of bravery on land, in rivers and at sea. The Society's records relating to the earliest years of its operations are somewhat sparse; the relevant case books having been lost during the Second World War. It is however clear from the accounts printed in the Society's *Annual Reports* and contemporary journals that the bulk of the medals given during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were awarded to members of the professional classes, with the Society's own medical assistants being particularly regularly rewarded. This of course in part reflects the primary role of the Society's medals: the rewarding of those who advanced the organisation's core aim as 'the institution for affording immediate relief of persons apparently dead from drowning'.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, many of the earliest medals recognise successful resuscitations rather than brave rescues. This was not however the sole factor affecting the granting of rewards. In the majority of cases members of the lower social orders were provided with cash rewards rather than medals, the Society taking the view that this type of reward would be more appreciated and would serve as a greater stimulus to action.

Furthermore, the majority of awards granted came about in response to letters received by the Society from salvors themselves or from their sponsors. These communications were normally written ostensibly as a means of ensuring that the Society was kept informed of successful resuscitation techniques and many of them were reproduced in the Society's *Annual Reports* with precisely that purpose in mind. There can however be little doubt that some of the correspondents hoped to be rewarded for their efforts, as in the case of Tobias Browne who sent the Society a long account of his resuscitation of a small boy in March 1800 accompanied by a letter concluding: 'If my conduct should have the

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<sup>73</sup> F. Mundell, *Stories of the Fire Brigade* (London, c. 1895).

<sup>74</sup> M. Reynolds, *Engine-Driving Life, or Stirring Adventures and Incidents in the Lives of Locomotive Engine-Drivers* (London, 1881).

<sup>75</sup> L.M. Lane, *Heroes of Everyday Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London, 1896).

<sup>76</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1774, frontispiece.

happiness to merit your approbation, it will greatly add to one of the happiest days of my life.'<sup>77</sup>

Thus, in many instances, the earliest recipients of the RHS's medals were medical men who had in effect composed their own recommendations. This situation did not last indefinitely however and by 1830 it was very much the exception rather than the rule, the Society awarding almost all of its medals in recognition of acts of bravery which had been brought to its attention by third parties. These reporters might be private individuals (albeit generally drawn from the professional classes) or representatives of larger organisations; whilst numerous recommendations were received via the commanders or officers of naval or merchant vessels. During the period 1830-33, recommendations were received by the Society from, amongst others, the Consul for France, three Royal Naval officers, an army officer, a surgeon, a ship's passenger and the Comptroller & Superintendent of London Docks.<sup>78</sup> The practice of doctors reporting their own actions had not however died out completely and the reports submitted by H.E. Harper (1830) and M. Moore (1832) were sufficient to earn each of these physicians a silver medal. Such instances were nevertheless atypical and the medal had by this time effectively evolved into a bravery reward.

A survey of the status/occupations of those who received the Society's silver medal between 1830 and 1914 reveals an overall tendency to reward those at the higher end of the social spectrum. Unsurprisingly, awards to those employed at sea dominate; and of these a disproportionate number were given to officers, particularly during the period up to 1880 when awards to officers markedly exceeded those given to ratings. Indeed, it is only during the period 1890-1909 that awards to ratings significantly outnumber those to officers; although even then the proportions of medals granted did not come close to mirroring the numbers of men serving in each of the two groups. An almost identical pattern

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<sup>77</sup> The account and letter were published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* 70, Jan.-June 1800, pp. 334-35. Brownne was presented with a silver medal by Lord Mayor of London at the Society's Anniversary meeting in April 1800, see *The Times* 26 April 1800, p. 4. He had previously received the Society's medal in 1798.

<sup>78</sup> See Young, *Acts of Gallantry*. The sources of many of the recommendations made at this time are not recorded.

can be seen the granting of awards to military personnel; those holding commissioned rank being proportionately far more likely to receive silver medals than non-commissioned officers or other ranks.

**Table 2. RHS Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient (Percentage of Awards)** <sup>79</sup>

	1830-1839	1840-1849	1850-1859	1860-1869	1870-1879	1880-1889	1890-1899	1900-1909	1910-1914
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	35.7	26.1	33.3	35.9	29.6	16.4	11.7	10.8	28.6
Army Officer/ Cadet	3.5	3.8	5.1	3.9	8.2	8.2	7.5	5.4	2.4
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	6.3	5.7	4.1	5.5	4.1	3.7	5.8	2.7	-
Clerical/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	8.4	9.6	7.7	4.7	7.1	8.9	5.8	6.3	9.5
Police	0.7	2.5	1.5	0.8	2.0	5.2	4.2	3.6	2.4
Foreman/ supervisor/ skilled labour	3.5	1.9	2.1	-	3.1	9.7	5.8	2.7	4.8
Pilot/Harbour Master	1.4	0.6	1.0	0.8	-	-	-	-	-
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	9.1	17.2	15.4	23.4	18.4	17.9	21.7	28.8	26.2
Army NCO/ Other Rank	3.5	1.9	4.1	3.9	5.1	5.2	14.2	7.2	-
Domestic service	-	1.3	1.0	0.8	-	-	0.8	-	-
Unskilled/manual labour	0.7	1.3	1.5	-	4.1	15.7	15.9	27.0	23.8
School pupil/youth	6.3	6.4	5.1	1.6	8.2	3.0	1.7	-	2.4
Unspecified	21.0	21.7	17.9	18.7	19.2	6.0	5.0	5.4	-
<b>TOTAL AWARDS</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>42</b>

Indeed, it is only when the numbers of silver medals awarded to unskilled and manual labourers are considered that we can map a developing trend towards a more liberal distribution of rewards to the lower orders of society, with the percentage of medals granted rising from a negligible 0.7% of the total for 1830-39 to a far more respectable 27% during the first decade of the twentieth century.

The introduction by the Society of a bronze version of its lifesaving medal in 1837 offered the organisation the means greatly to increase the number of awards made. The Society's *Annual Report* for 1838 records that, in its first year of existence the bronze medal was awarded on a modest 22 occasions (including 3 medals presented by the Society's Brighton branch).<sup>80</sup> During the same year the silver medal was voted to 14 rescuers. Recipients included Lieut. Archibald

<sup>79</sup> See Royal Humane Society *Annual Reports*; Young, *Acts of Gallantry*; and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2.

<sup>80</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1838, pp. 11, 18-29.

Macdonald of the Bengal Army who, along with five coastguard boatmen, had crewed a small rowing boat which went to the assistance of a fishing boat in distress off the Cork coast.

Significantly, whilst a silver medal was given to the officer, the coastguards each received only a bronze medal in recognition of their efforts. Indeed, these men are all but invisible, and are not even individually named in the *Annual Report*, which records merely ‘The SILVER MEDAL awarded to Lieut. Macdonald and a BRONZE MEDAL to each boatman.’<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, they were granted medals in recognition of their bravery and by granting such recognition the RHS was pioneering the rewarding of working class bravery and helping to establish a pool of ‘working class heroes’ which others would be able draw upon and exploit.

**Table 3. RHS: Rewards Voted 1837<sup>82</sup>**

Reward	Number voted	Percentage of awards
Silver Medal	14	7.6%
Bronze Medal	22	11.9%
Testimonial on Vellum	3	1.6%
Pecuniary Award	146	78.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>185</b>	

The vast majority of awards made in 1837 took the form of pecuniary rewards,<sup>83</sup> given to individuals who had placed themselves in some danger by entering rivers, ponds, canals and locks in order to affect rescues.<sup>84</sup> Generally their names - unlike those of Lieut. Archibald’s boatmen - were recorded, although in one instance the rescuer was described simply as ‘A Dumb Pauper’.<sup>85</sup>

By the latter part of the nineteenth century the bronze medal was being distributed far more lavishly, its distribution reflecting a substantial increase in the Society’s activities. In 1838 the Society was able to report that it had considered cases resulting in the restoration of 172 casualties during the previous

<sup>81</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1838, pp. 14, 24.

<sup>82</sup> Table derived from data in RHS *Annual Report* 1838, pp. 11, 18-29.

<sup>83</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1838, pp. 5-6.

<sup>84</sup> See RHS *Annual Report* 1838, pp. 18-28.

<sup>85</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1838, pp. 5-6.

year,<sup>86</sup> but by 1894 that number had risen to 580. The rewards given by the Society in the latter year may be summarised as follows:

**Table 4. RHS: Rewards Voted 1894<sup>87</sup>**

Reward	Number voted	Percentage of awards
Stanhope Gold Medal	1	0.2%
Silver Medal	9	1.4%
Bronze Medal or clasp	122	19.6%
Testimonial on Vellum	306	49.3%
Testimonial on Parchment	145	23.3%
Pecuniary Award and Certificate	38	6.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>621</b>	

It can thus clearly be seen that the Society had shifted its emphasis from the granting of pecuniary rewards to the presentation of medals and testimonials. The proportion of rewards which took the form of medals however remained virtually unchanged, with a total of 132 medallic awards (comprising 21.3% of all awards voted during the year) being made in 1894, as opposed to the 36 (19.5%) voted in 1837.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the vast majority of the medals being presented by the Society were struck in bronze; silver medals normally being issued at a rate of only 10-15 per annum. The way in which the bronze and silver medals were distributed was not identical. Indeed, comparison between the patterns of award for the two types of medal reveals that:

- Very few bronze medals were awarded to members of the aristocracy or landed gentry;
- A far lower percentage of bronze than silver medal awards were made to naval or army officers;
- The proportion of bronze medals awarded to unskilled/manual labourers decreased during the course of the century; whilst the proportion of silver medals awarded to the same group significantly increased.

<sup>86</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1838, p. 21.

<sup>87</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1894, pp. 9-10.



**Table 5. RHS Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient (Percentage of Awards by Representative Decades)**<sup>88</sup>

	<b>1840-1849</b>	<b>1860-1869</b>	<b>1880-1889</b>	<b>1910-1914</b>
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	26.1%	35.9%	16.4%	28.6%
Army Officer/ Cadet	3.8%	3.9%	8.2%	2.4%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	5.7%	5.5%	3.7%	-
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	9.6%	4.7%	8.9%	9.5%
Police	2.5%	0.8%	5.2%	2.4%
Foreman/ supervisor/ skilled labour	1.9%	-	9.7%	4.8%
Pilot/Harbour Master	0.6%	0.8%	-	-
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	17.2%	23.4%	17.9%	26.2%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	1.9%	3.9%	5.2%	-
Domestic service	1.3%	0.8%	-	-
Unskilled/manual labour	1.3%	-	15.7%	23.8%
School pupil/youth	6.4%	1.6%	3.0%	2.4%
Unspecified	21.7%	18.7%	6.0%	-
<b>TOTAL AWARDS</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>42</b>

**Table 6. RHS Bronze Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient As Listed in Annual Reports (Percentage of Awards)**<sup>89</sup>

	<b>1844</b>	<b>1864</b>	<b>1884</b>	<b>1904</b>
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	5.0%	17.9%	7.4%	9.0%
Army Officer/ Cadet	-	-	0.7%	5.2%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	-	-	-	-
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	5.0%	7.1%	3.7%	5.2%
Police	5.0%	3.6%	5.1%	9.7%
Foreman/ supervisor/ skilled labour	10.0%	5.4%	5.9%	5.2%
Pilot/Harbour Master	-	-	0.7%	-
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	25.0%	21.4%	16.9%	21.3%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	10.0%	5.4%	8.8%	8.4%
Domestic service	-	-	-	-
Unskilled/manual labour	15.0%	5.4%	6.6%	5.2%
School pupil/youth	-	12.5%	7.3%	11.0%
Unspecified	25.0%	21.4%	36.8%	20.0%
<b>TOTAL AWARDS</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>155</b>

<sup>88</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; Young, *Acts of Gallantry* 1; and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2.

<sup>89</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; Royal Humane Society *Case Books*; and Life Saving Awards Society website [www.lsars.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk](http://www.lsars.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk) (21.5.2008)

It can accordingly be demonstrated that, throughout the nineteenth century, the social class of rescuers continued materially to affect the nature of any reward which they might expect to receive from the RHS. Working class bravery was regularly rewarded, but the Society remained more inclined to give medals to army officers than to private soldiers and very markedly more likely to award a silver medal than a bronze medal to a member of the landed classes.

Practices did however evolve during the course of the second half of the century. The most obvious example of this can be seen in the rewarding of non-seafaring civilian bravery. Here it is possible to demonstrate that an initial inclination to grant pecuniary rewards to working-class rescuers was replaced as the century progressed by an increased use of medals and certificates. Furthermore, whilst initially few awards of silver medals were made, during the period 1910-14 almost a quarter of all silver medals awarded were given to manual workers (including 4 miners; 2 cellar-men; a carpenter; a grain-weigher; a gas-worker and a steeplejack). Such developments notwithstanding, a significant status bias continued to be observable in the Society's distribution of rewards. This is doubtless in part a reflection of the Society's inflexible reporting systems, which for much of the nineteenth century would not even consent to consider a case unless its circumstances could be fully verified by members of the middle classes. In the early years of the century, this requirement was set out in the Society's regulations, Rule XVII specifying in 1838:

That all persons within five miles of London, who claim Premiums offered by this Society, shall produce Testimonials to the Secretary within one month, signed by three respectable Housekeepers acquainted with the accident, and the Medical Assistant, if any attended, or by the Minister of the Parish.<sup>90</sup>

By the latter part of the century the requirement for middle-class endorsement had been only slightly reduced, Rule XVI of the Society as published in 1894 specifying that:

Applications should be substantiated, where possible, by written statements of eye-witnesses, supported by the evidence of two responsible persons acquainted with the circumstances of the case, and

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<sup>90</sup> See for example RHS *Annual Report* 1838, p. 41.

the Honorary Medical Assistant, if any attended, or by the Minister of the Parish.<sup>91</sup>

In such circumstances brave deeds performed in public spaces (such as harbours or rivers) might readily be witnessed by ‘responsible persons’, whilst equally heroic acts performed behind closed factory doors passed unnoticed. Moreover, when the bravery of a gentleman was witnessed by his peers there was perhaps a greater inclination for them to champion his cause with the Society than there would have been had they witnessed the same deed being performed by an anonymous labourer. The granting of medals and certificates represented the culmination of a frequently lengthy paper-driven process which was generally initiated by the reporting of an incident to the Society. Rescuers continued on occasion to submit claims on their own behalf, but the vast majority of the letters which started this process came from government departments, the police, employers, or members of the public.

An examination of the Society’s surviving *Case Books* makes it absolutely clear that where letters were received from private individuals they were almost invariably members of the professional classes. Indeed, such was the social standing of many of these reporters that the Society’s officers regularly entrusted them with making the arrangements to present the medal on its behalf. Furthermore, a high degree of literacy was generally required to frame a case in such a way as to excite the enthusiasm of the Society and less articulate accounts of brave deeds, no matter how worthy, might easily be overlooked. This effectively reduced the likelihood that any nominations which might be made by workers on behalf of their social peers would be successful. Instead, working-class rescuers were forced to rely on the sponsorship of their social superiors. The nominations process thus served to ensure that control of the Society’s awards remained firmly in the hands of the professional classes. In such circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that class biases - whether conscious or unconscious - crept into the process.

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<sup>91</sup> See for example RSH *Annual Report* 1894, p. 21.

Such biases were not of course confined to the RHS. On the contrary, they represented the norm rather than the exception, with instances of apparent injustice being found in the records of many contemporary organisations. The unequal class-based treatment of individuals who shared the same risks is particularly obvious when examining cases of rescue from shipwreck, there being a widespread tendency to grant different awards to officers and ratings - even when they had crewed the same rescue boat. A typical example relates to the granting of rewards by Lloyd's of London (which had established its own system of awards in 1836)<sup>92</sup> to those who had manned a boat which went to the aid of 15 shipwrecked mariners in November 1854:

The Honorary Silver Medal to Mr. William Barrett, Master, Royal Navy, Chief Officer in Command of the Coast Guard Station, Balbriggan...

The Honorary Silver Medal to Mr William Barrett Junr., for his meritorious conduct on the same occasion.

The Honorary Silver Medal to the Revd. Alexander Synge, in acknowledgement of the noble example shewn by him in volunteering and forming one of the boat's crew on the first attempt...

The sum of £20. to the Boat's Crew for their services on the same occasion.<sup>93</sup>

In 1860 a similar situation is recorded, a naval officer receiving a silver medal for his role in manning a lifeboat, whilst the lifeboat's coxswain was awarded a bronze medal and £1, and each of the 11 lifeboat-men the sum of £1 each.<sup>94</sup> Later in the century, Lloyd's again demonstrated bias, awarding silver medals to the officers and bronze medals to the ratings who distinguished themselves on the occasion of the grounding of the *SS Tahar* at Mauritius on 22 March 1901.<sup>95</sup> Tellingly, this attempted rescue was also recognised by the RHS, which granted silver medals to all surviving rescuers, regardless of their status.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> L. Syson, 'Designs on Posterity: Drawings for Medals, The British Museum 11 September- 25 October 1992', in M. Jones (ed), *Designs on Posterity: Drawings for Medals* (London, 1992), pp. 225-26. J. Gawler, *Lloyd's Medals 1836-1989: A History of Medals Awarded by the Corporation of Lloyd's* (Toronto, 1989), pp 132-33.

<sup>93</sup> Lloyd's of London, *General Minute Book*, 23 March 1853. Gawler, *Lloyd's Medals*, p. 24.

<sup>94</sup> Wreck of the John Bull off Yarmouth, 17 February 1860. Lloyd's of London, *General Minute Book*, 23 March 1853. Reproduced in Gawler, *Lloyd's Medals*, p. 25.

<sup>95</sup> Gawler, *Lloyd's Medals*, p. 31.

<sup>96</sup> RHS case no. 31232. The families of three men who lost their lives received 'In Memoriam' certificates.

Comparable practices were followed by other maritime organisations. No fewer than 21 of the 24 gold medals awarded by Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society during the period 1851-59 were gained by officers,<sup>97</sup> whilst the RNIPLS/RNLI similarly tended throughout much of the nineteenth century to restrict its award of gold medals to members of the officer class. Officers of the Coastguard and Royal Navy were particularly favoured during the first half of the century.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, of the medals awarded for gallantry during the first decade of the Institution's existence, 32 (76.2%) of the 42 gold medals granted were presented to RN or Coastguard officers; whilst the same two classes of individual received 72 (42.3%) of the 170 silver medals given.<sup>99</sup> Thus, whilst medals might be received by people drawn from all sections of society, the award of gold medals was largely restricted to persons of rank. Furthermore, whilst an officer serving with the RN or Coastguard might expect to receive a gold or silver medal based upon the degree of gallantry he displayed, an ordinary seaman was likely to receive a silver medal at best.

In these early years medals were presented in relatively large numbers as part of a conscious effort by the RNIPLS to increase awareness of its activities and to encourage other to follow the example of those rewarded. Moreover, the view was occasionally taken that a medal should be presented 'with a view of exciting others to follow the example' of the recipient rather 'than from any particular risk incurred by them'.<sup>100</sup> Cameron records several instances where the class-based presentation of awards led to complaints being received by the Institution. One such instance occurred in 1824, when the *Admiral Berkley* foundered in a storm off Portsmouth. The wreck resulted in the RNIPLS making 6 awards:

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<sup>97</sup> W. Fevyer, 'Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 30 (1997), pp. 53-69.

<sup>98</sup> See Warner, *The Life-boat Service*, pp. 267-73.

<sup>99</sup> Figures based on Cameron, *Riders of the Storm*, p. 33.

<sup>100</sup> Cameron, *Riders of the Storm*, p. 36.

**Table 7. Wreck of the *Admiral Berkley* 1824: Rewards Given<sup>101</sup>**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Act</i>	<i>Reward</i>
Capt. Peake	RN Officer	Directed operations from beach	Gold medal
Lt. Grandy	Coastguard Officer	Skippered a coastguard boat responsible for landing victims	Gold medal
Lt. Festing & Lt Walker	RN Officers	Helped to crew a RN whaleboat; helped to land victims	Silver medal to each
James Terrible & Thomas Godfrey	Seamen	Rushed into surf to assist man bringing hawser ashore	2 guineas to each

The decision to award a gold medal to Peake, - who had at no time been in mortal danger - greatly offended Festing and Walker and they accordingly returned their awards to the Institution in protest. A similar situation occurred the following year when an incident off the coast at Jersey resulted in three ‘gentlemen of property’ being presented with gold medals and three ‘persons in a humble sphere of life’ receiving a reward of three sovereigns apiece in recognition of their gallantry. All had helped crew the same boat and, following the receipt of a letter from Philip Nicolle, regretting that the taking of a ‘pecuniary reward was foreign to his feelings’, the Institution took the unusual step of reclassifying him as a gentleman and issuing him with a silver medal.<sup>102</sup>

Another instance in which social class appears to have influenced the nature of the rewards granted can be seen in the case of the wreck of the sloop *Lively* in 1827.

The original recommendation to the Institution, signed by four army officers, was written on the day of the incident and declared:

...that Lieut. James Lindsay, R.N., of the Coastguard, stationed at Fort George, accompanied by two of his men, William Cork and Alexander Gray, boatmen, who volunteered to accompany Lieut. Lindsay on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1827, did at imminent risk to their lives, and through a tremendous sea, succeed in saving the crew (three in number) and one female passenger, belonging to the sloop *Lively*, of Inverness, then a wreck on the back of Fort George. ...had it not been for the active exertions of these gallant men, the above mentioned four persons must, in all human probability, have lost their lives, as the boat belonging to the wreck had been previously swamped and the vessel went to pieces a few minutes after the crew were taken from her.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Cameron, *Riders of the Storm*, p. 36; Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 9.

<sup>102</sup> Cameron, *Riders of the Storm*, p. 36; Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 11.

<sup>103</sup> Official RNLI MS copy; author’s collection.

On 7 February 1827 a gold medal was voted to Lieutenant Lindsay. The ratings Cork and Gray had to be content with silver medals. The official citation for the awards to Lindsay, Cork and Gray throws interesting light on the reporting process:

The Inverness sloop *Lively* went on shore during severe weather near Fort George, Nairn, with the Master, two seamen and one female passenger on board. Using *Lively*'s boat, which had been driven ashore, Lieutenant Lindsay and his two men went alongside. Soon the boat was swamped and went to pieces, and they were forced to board the sloop where they remained for two hours. With the sea running over the vessel, Lieutenant Lindsay had continually to hold the female passenger to prevent her from being swept overside. The bottom of the sloop was out by this time and, half an hour after they were finally taken off by the Coastguard boat, she broke up.<sup>104</sup>

There are significant discrepancies between the two accounts of the rescue: the original recommendation made by Lindsay's fellow officers strongly implying that he and the two Boatmen had been solely responsible for the rescue; whilst the final citation makes clear that they were in fact themselves saved by the local Coastguard boat. Although this does not in any way serve to detract from the courageous nature of the actions of the three would-be salvors, it does nevertheless serve as a cautionary reminder that the accuracy of the reports submitted to award-giving bodies might on occasion be influenced by the nature of the personal relationships between rescuer and reporter.

The practice of distributing different grades of medal on the basis of social class was not restricted to private organisations. The Board of Trade pursued a very similar policy, awarding the 'foreign services' medal in gold to officers and in silver to ratings until about 1895.<sup>105</sup> A corresponding practice was followed by the LSHS, with over 93% of the recipients of its gold marine medal being ship's masters or other officers.<sup>106</sup> A more democratic approach was taken by some newspapers, several of which encouraged their readers to submit their own recommendations for medals. These publications were primarily focussed upon

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<sup>104</sup> Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 16.

<sup>105</sup> Abbott and Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 278. From 1895 onwards the medal was awarded in gold or silver on the basis of the degree of bravery shown by the recipient.

<sup>106</sup> 59 out of 63 medals awarded 1840-1914. Figures derived from E. Gordon Williams, 'Liverpool Gold: Thee Gold Medal Awards of the Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 35 (1999), pp. 3-15

the aspirational working class and the letters submitted reflected the preoccupations of their readership. The Quiver Medal was sponsored by a Protestant Sunday magazine. Of the 59 awards made between its establishment in 1885 and 1904, five were presented to children;<sup>107</sup> eight to police officers; five to lifeboat-men (including the four survivors of the Margate Lifeboat disaster of 1898);<sup>108</sup> three to firemen; and two to clerics. Similarly, although Jerome K Jerome's magazine *To-day* presented its Gallantry Fund Medal on only thirty occasions between 1894 and 1897, many of these awards were given to deserving workers. Indeed, almost half of the recipients were also recorded as having been given additional cash rewards, ranging from 10s 6d to £5:

**Table 8. Gallantry Fund: Cash Rewards<sup>109</sup>**

Reward	Occupation	Notes
£1.1s.0d	Engine driver	Bronze medal
£1.1s.0d	Tinsmith	Medal. Fourth rescue in four years.
£5.0s.0d	Employed in Wood-cutting shop	Silver medal. Aged 14. Fifth rescue. Sole source of family income.
£1.1s.0d	In full time employment. Wage £1 per week.	Silver medal. Wage £1 per week. Ill health as result of rescue.
£1.1s.0d	Not recorded	Medal.
£1.1s.0d	Colliery horse-shoer	Bronze medal.
£1.1s.0d	Postman	Medal. Third rescue.
£1.1s.0d	Chemical worker	Medal. Member of works' fire brigade.
£2.2s.0d	Foreman stevedore	Silver medal. Credited with saving over 20 lives previously.
£1.1s.0d	Railway porter	Silver medal
£1.1s.0d	Railway porter	Silver medal
£3.3s.0d	Engineer? (an employee of Mr Whitley's)	Bronze medal
10s.6d	Boy	Medal. Member of Boy's Brigade.
£1.1s.0d	Railway clerk	Medal

In several cases those who received medals from Jerome were also honoured by the RHS. This was not however always the case and it is interesting to note that, whilst this duplication was not uncommon, there is at least one incidence in which it was deemed inappropriate. This relates to a recommendation passed by the *Nilgiri News* to both the RHS and to *To-Day* that the actions of two 'Madras bred, mild but resourceful, Hindu(s)' were worthy of recognition.<sup>110</sup> In this

<sup>107</sup> Aged sixteen or under.

<sup>108</sup> *The Quiver* 1898, p 287 & 479. The medal awarded to John Gilbert for this incident was sold at auction by Sotheby's on 29 September 1894 (lot 782).

<sup>109</sup> Information extracted from Anon, "'To-day' Gallantry Fund Medal', pp. 46-58.

<sup>110</sup> *To-day*, 6 July 1895, p. 274.



instance *To-day* issued medals, but the RHS took the view that ‘there was no need for two medals for the same act.’<sup>111</sup>

Within the sphere of State-sponsored awards, the Victoria Cross had been established in 1856 ‘for the purpose... of rewarding individual instances of merit and valour’.<sup>112</sup> The new decoration was, in theory, available to all soldiers and naval personnel regardless of rank: a practice which mimicked the theoretically open rewards system operated by the RHS. The Albert Medal, instituted in 1866 as a reward for bravery at sea and extended in 1877 to cover similarly heroic acts performed on land, was likewise established as a notionally ‘classless’ award; the decision to grant the decoration in gold or bronze<sup>113</sup> in theory being based upon the level of risk faced by the rescuer rather than their social status.

The standard of courage needed to earn the lifesaving award was set at the highest possible level - it being stated in 1866 that ‘Our Albert Medal ought not to be as cheap as their (RNLI) Gold Medal’<sup>114</sup> - and from the outset all grants of the award had to be personally approved by the monarch. Until 1881, all recommendations for medals for saving life on land were submitted to the Queen by the Prime Minister; whilst those for saving life at sea were submitted by the President of the Board of Trade. Thereafter all recommendations were submitted by the Home Secretary, with the exception of those made on behalf of naval personnel, which from 1891 were sent to the monarch by Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.<sup>115</sup> Initial submissions were received by the responsible departments from a wide variety of sources, Henderson recording that:

...it was often left to concerned individuals to bring such acts to public notice. Individuals such as members of Parliament, parsons and private citizens forwarded newspaper cuttings, reports of inquests or similar items for assessment while other submissions originated from coroners and chairmen of boards of enquiry.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Anon, ‘“To-day” Gallantry Fund Medal’, p.52.

<sup>112</sup> Warrant of 29 January 1856, reproduced in P.E. Abbott and J.M.A. Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards* (London, 1981), p. 44.

<sup>113</sup> After the introduction of a second class decoration in 1867.

<sup>114</sup> Quoted in Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 7.

<sup>115</sup> Abbott and Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 18.

<sup>116</sup> Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 7.

Submissions were also received via the RHS and similar bodies. Once received, all submissions were subjected to a high level of scrutiny, the government departments responsible for preparing recommendations demonstrating a uniformly high level of concern for maintaining the standards. Captain Spencer W. Scrase-Dickins received the medal in bronze in 1893 in recognition of his courage in jumping overboard in high seas to assist a Lascar who had fallen overboard. Despite the presence of sharks in the water, the validity of his case was subject to intense discussion, it being argued that, ‘the sharks in the Red Sea although very plentiful are not generally considered to be dangerous partly because they are for the most part of the shovel nose variety which have smaller mouths.’<sup>117</sup>

Of the 233 awards made between 1866 and 1914, a total of 104 (44.6%) were earned by manual workers, seamen or junior soldiers; whilst naval and military officers, together with managers and professionals, accounted for a further 86 (36.9%) of awards. Given that workers at this time vastly outnumbered members of the managerial classes, this certainly appears to offer *prima facie* evidence for the presence of a marked degree of class-bias in the selection of potential medallists, and it is indeed likely that the distribution of Albert Medals in part reflected the class-prejudices both of those who submitted (or conversely failed to submit) recommendations and of the Whitehall elite which assessed them.

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<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 7. Award published in *London Gazette* 17 August 1893.

**Table 9. Albert Medals 1866-1914<sup>118</sup>**

<b>Rank/Occupation</b>	<b>Sea: no. Medals</b>	<b>Sea: % total Medals</b>	<b>Land: no. Medals</b>	<b>Land: % total Medals</b>	<b>Total: Land + Sea</b>	<b>% total Medals</b>
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	31	13.3%	-	-	31	<b>13.3%</b>
Army Officer/ Cadet	2	0.9%	15	6.4%	17	<b>7.3%</b>
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	1	0.4%	1	0.4%	2	<b>0.9%</b>
Clerical/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	8	3.4%	30	12.9%	38	<b>16.3%</b>
Police	1	0.4%	3	1.3%	4	<b>1.7%</b>
Foreman/ supervisor/ skilled labour	-	-	17	7.3%	17	<b>7.3%</b>
RNLI/ voluntary rescue services	2	0.9%	-	-	2	<b>0.9%</b>
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	31	13.3%	7	3.0%	38	<b>16.3%</b>
Army NCO/ Other Rank	2	0.9%	14	6.0%	16	<b>6.9%</b>
Housewife	-	-	2	0.9%	2	<b>0.9%</b>
Domestic service	-	-	1	0.4%	1	<b>0.4%</b>
Unskilled/manual labour	-	-	50	21.5%	50	<b>21.5%</b>
Prisoner	-	-	1	0.4%	1	<b>0.4%</b>
School pupil/youth	-	-	2	0.9%	2	<b>0.9%</b>
Unspecified	5	2.1%	7	3.0%	12	<b>5.1%</b>
<b>TOTAL AWARDS</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>35.6%</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>64.4%</b>	<b>233</b>	

Such biases notwithstanding, an examination of individual citations highlights the fact that the distribution of awards represents in part a recognition of the tendency of members of the officer and managerial classes to actively ‘lead from the front’ in times of danger. The medals to naval officers in particular were frequently used to reward individual rescues - such as jumping overboard to the assistance of a drowning seaman - rather than as a means of recognising the officer’s role in a team rescue.

One can only speculate as to how many naval ratings receive no recognition despite performing similar acts of daring. It seems to be the case that commanding officers were more likely to pursue a reward on behalf of a colleague from the wardroom than a member of the seamen’s mess. A similar

<sup>118</sup> Data from Henderson *Heroic Endeavour* and Wilson and McEwan, *Gallantry*.

trend is clearly observable in the number of Albert Medals granted to members of the army prior to the Great War: 17 (51.5%) officers to 16 (48.5%) other ranks. This is a breakdown which closely mirrors the 46% officers to 54% other ranks split seen in the case of the grants of the Victoria Cross. As Smith has observed, during the nineteenth century fewer than 12% of servicemen held officer rank and the granting of almost half of all Victoria Crosses to them accordingly 'represented a tremendous bias towards the military elite.'<sup>119</sup>

On occasion, other incident-specific factors affected the distribution of awards. In mining areas for example, many of the medals awarded to middle-class civilians were earned by certified managers and similar specialists who used their particular specialist skills and risked their own lives leading underground rescue efforts. Of the four Albert Medals in gold awarded for the Tynewydd inundation of 1877 for example, two were received by professionals and two by workers. The recipients were William Beith (a mechanical engineer), Daniel Thomas (a colliery proprietor), Isaac Pride (a collier) and William Howell (a collier). All the awards were covered by the same citation in the *London Gazette*:

... when only a few yards of barrier remained, the danger from an irruption of water, gas, and compressed air was so great as to cause the colliers to falter. It was at this juncture that the above-mentioned four men volunteered to resume the rescue operations, the danger of which had been greatly increased by an outburst of inflammable gas under great pressure and in such quantities as to extinguish the Davy lamps which were being used. The danger from gas continued at intervals until half-past three in the following morning, and from that time the above four men at great peril to their own lives continued the rescuing operations until three o'clock P.M. when the five imprisoned men were safely released.<sup>120</sup>

All four men also received the silver lifesaving medal of the Order of St John<sup>121</sup> in addition to the silver medal of the RHS.<sup>122</sup> As Henderson observes, the rescue of the five trapped colliers was the direct result of the 'skill, bravery, endurance and comradeship of their fellow workers in the area, owners, managers, colliers

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<sup>119</sup> M.C. Smith, *Awarded for Valour* (Basingstoke, 2008), p. 103.

<sup>120</sup> *London Gazette*, 7 August 1877, p. 4581.

<sup>121</sup> Besly, *For Those in Peril*, p. 44.

<sup>122</sup> See Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2, p. 45.

and firemen alike.’<sup>123</sup> These awards accurately reflected the participation of all of these men.

Sometimes however the fair distribution of rewards came about only in response to external pressures. In the case of the Darren Colliery disaster of 1909 for example, it was originally recommended that three men of relatively high social standing, including William Turner, a local doctor, receive the medal. No ordinary colliers were recommended. On learning of his recommendation Dr Turner declined the honour, writing to the Home Office to explain that ‘I prefer forgetfulness with my comrades to the proudest honours without them.’<sup>124</sup> Turner was also one of 272 miners and other local people who signed a petition requesting that the carpenter William Evans, who had been the first man to go to the assistance of the trapped miners, should have his bravery recognised. The correspondence prompted the Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, to reopen the case, observing that:

It would be very unfortunate if the impression should be created that working miners have not the same chance of being recommended for rewards for bravery as others of a higher social class.

The opinion of the men about one of their comrades would be a very trustworthy guide in any question of this character. This would be equally true in war or peace...<sup>125</sup>

Evans was in due course granted the Edward Medal and Dr Turner, satisfied that justice had been done, likewise consented to accept the well-deserved honour offered to him.

Accordingly it can be argued that, whilst there is certainly considerable evidence for the operation of a degree of class-bias in assessing the suitability of individuals for receipt of the government-sponsored lifesaving medals; such bias is more likely to reflect a reporting system which allowed for worthy deeds of

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<sup>123</sup> Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 9.

<sup>124</sup> TNA POWE 6/5, *Darran Colliery Explosion: Inspector's Reports, Press Reports and Correspondence Dealing with Honours and Awards for Bravery*, quoted in McDonald, J.C., *Darran House, Deri: The Mine, the Medal and the Men* (Wigtown, 2009), p. 24.

<sup>125</sup> TNA POWE 6/5, *Darran Colliery Explosion: Inspector's Reports, Press Reports and Correspondence Dealing with Honours and Awards for Bravery*, quoted in McDonald, *Darran House*, pp. 27-27.

members of the lower classes to be ignored than for members of the middle-classes to be undeservingly honoured.<sup>126</sup> Officers and managers were thus more likely to receive awards than members of lower social classes, whose equally brave acts were more prone to be overlooked. Nevertheless, Edward and Albert Medals were undoubtedly awarded to individuals drawn from all walks of life, including those at the very bottom of the social scale. By way of example, the Albert Medal was earned by two Maltese cess-pit emptiers,<sup>127</sup> whilst another of the more interesting awards of this period was that of a bronze Albert Medal given to Neighbour, an Australian Aborigine from the Roper River, who performed his brave act whilst in police custody. Neighbour, despite the heavy encumbrance of the chains he was wearing at the time, risked his own life (and sacrificed the opportunity to gain his liberty) by going to the aid of his escort who was in danger of drowning in the Wilton River.<sup>128</sup> The award is remarkable not so much because of the ethnicity of the recipient as for the fact that it was granted to a prisoner; despite the fact that, in order to ‘preserve pure this most honourable Distinction’ the warrant establishing the two-class decoration made specific provision for the cancellation of awards made to those deemed to be ‘guilty of any crime or disgraceful conduct which in Our judgement disqualifies them from the said Decorations’.<sup>129</sup>

### **Medals and Gender**

If the Albert Medal could be won by members of all social classes, it was certainly not regularly awarded to women. In total, only five women received the decoration during the period up to 1914. All of the awards were of the 2<sup>nd</sup> class/bronze type, with women accounting for only 2.1% of all Albert Medal recipients:

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<sup>126</sup> In the case of the Darran Colliery disaster, for example, the original recommendations had been based on letters received from two clergymen (one of whom was a close personal friend of the man he recommended) as well as on the official report of the Mines Inspectorate.

<sup>127</sup> Antonio Dingli and Paolo Bonnici. See *London Gazette*, 31 May 1909.

<sup>128</sup> *London Gazette*, 7 May 1912, p. 3280.

<sup>129</sup> Royal Warrant of 12 April 1867. Reproduced in Abbott and Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 18.

**Table 10. Albert Medal Awards 1866-1914: Female Recipients<sup>130</sup>**

Name	Occupation	Date	Class	Incident
Hannah Rosbotham	Schoolmistress	14 Oct. 1880	Bronze, Land	Belfry collapse at primary school
Caroline Hughes	Housewife	14 Oct. 1905	Bronze, Land	House fire
Hilda Elizabeth Wolsey	Nurse	11 June 1910	Bronze, Land	Mental patient on roof
Frances Maude Wright	Housewife	26 Dec. 1910	Bronze, Land	Assisting with arrest of armed burglar
Amy Madeline Jacques	Miss (child)	26 Mar. 1911	Bronze, Land	Bull attacked brother
Elizabeth Holley	Nurse	22 Nov. 1912	Bronze, Land	Rail accident

A further award was approved by George V on 25 March 1911 but the recipient, Nurse Edith Ellen Reynolds, modestly declined the honour on the grounds that ‘the account of the subject to which you refer has been exaggerated’.<sup>131</sup>



**6. Hannah Rosbotham, wearing her Albert Medal around her neck<sup>132</sup> [image published 1896]**

Awards of the Edward Medal to women were even rarer; a single bronze medal of the Industrial pattern being awarded to Hannah Hugill in 1910 in recognition

<sup>130</sup> See Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, pp. 17-53.

<sup>131</sup> Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 12. The award was in recognition of saving a distressed patient from falling from a hospital roof.

<sup>132</sup> Lane, *Heroes of Everyday Life*, opposite p. 121

of bravery shown whilst saving her mother from a bull.<sup>133</sup> Similarly, the tendency of the Order of St John to restrict its remit to the granting of awards in recognition of bravery displayed within an industrial setting also had the effect of limiting the number of medals given to women. In total only eight such awards were made prior to the outbreak of the First World War.<sup>134</sup>

Government opposition to the granting of medals to women was deeply entrenched. During the Napoleonic period it was not unusual for women to serve onboard British warships and the establishment of the Naval General Service Medal in 1848 encouraged a number of applications from women who had been onboard Royal Naval vessels at key battles. One such application was received from Jane Townsend, who had been onboard HMS *Defiance* at Trafalgar. Townsend's name was included on the official roll of those entitled to the medal with clasp 'Trafalgar', but a marginal note makes it clear that her well-deserved medal was never issued, recording that, 'Upon further consideration this cannot be allowed – there were many women in the fleet equally useful, and it will leave the navy exposed to innumerable applications of the same nature.'<sup>135</sup> Similar applications were indeed received, but all the female applicants were given short shrift, even when they were able to demonstrate that they had undertaken important roles such as nursing the wounded or supplying their ship's guns in battle.<sup>136</sup>

Official resistance to the granting of medals to women continued well into the nineteenth century. Indeed, a tendency for some senior officers to assume that women possess little interest in gaining them has proved remarkably persistent, Rear Admiral M. Morgan-Giles for example writing as recently as 1995 that:

We men may feel guilty that such a small proportion of George Medals have been awarded to women... But personally, I rather doubt whether women spend too much time worrying about this; they are too sensible.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> *London Gazette*, 19 April 1910. The incident occurred near Middlesbrough on 11 September 1909. A further award of the Edward Medal to a woman was made to Lilian Peyto in 1925. See *London Gazette*, 28 August 1925.

<sup>134</sup> N. Gooding, *Honours and Awards to Women to 1914* (London, 2007), p. 207, Appendix 4.

<sup>135</sup> TNA ADM 36/14817, *Royal Navy Ships' Musters (Series 1)*.

<sup>136</sup> N. Gooding, *Honours and Awards to Women to 1914* (London, 2007), pp. 13-21.

<sup>137</sup> M. Morgan-Giles, Foreword to D.V. Henderson, *Fashioned into a Bow: How Resolute, Heroic Women Earned the George Medal* (Bishop Auckland, 1995), pp. xi-xii.



One must hope that the women who served in the Crimea were as disinterested as Morgan-Giles presumes for, whilst the Crimean campaign resulted in military nurses gaining a high public profile, they received no medals. Even Florence Nightingale was denied a campaign medal, receiving initially instead a special jewel from the Queen and in later years both the Royal Red Cross (1883) and the Order of Merit (1908) in recognition of her unique contribution to British nursing.<sup>138</sup>

Nevertheless, it has frequently been stated in print that Mary Seacole received a number of medals from various governments in recognition of her services; Small for example recently stating that ‘On her return to England, Seacole was awarded the Crimea medal, an extraordinary departure from the rules.’<sup>139</sup> Such claims are understandable in the light of the plentiful contemporary evidence that Seacole was in the habit of prominently wearing a selection of awards, including the British campaign medal for the Crimea. Indeed, the only surviving photograph of Seacole portrays her wearing a chest-full of awards, whilst Gleichen’s portrait bust of 1871 portrays her wearing no less than four medals.<sup>140</sup> Nor was this merely an affectation adopted when visiting the studio of the sculptor or photographer; one veteran surgeon recalling that when he met Seacole in central London after the war recalling that, ‘The medal first attracted my eye, and on looking up I noticed her dusky countenance.’<sup>141</sup>

Recent research has however convincingly demonstrated that Seacole, irrespective of her invaluable work in the Crimea, was not formally entitled to any of the medals which she sported.<sup>142</sup> The mere fact that she acquired and chose to wear these medals is in itself revealing however, suggesting that, whilst she might not have been considered eligible for such honours by the authorities, Seacole nevertheless justifiably felt herself to be fully entitled to the same distinctions which decorated the chests of the men who had served in the Crimea.

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<sup>138</sup> Gooding, *Honours and Awards*, p. 26.

<sup>139</sup> H. Small, *Florence Nightingale: Avenging Angel* (London, 1998), p. 200.

<sup>140</sup> Gooding, *Honours and Awards*, p. 31.

<sup>141</sup> D.A. Reid, *Memories of the Crimea: January 1855 to June 1856* (London, 1911), reproduced in Gooding, *Honours and Awards*, p. 31.

<sup>142</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of the evidence, see Gooding, *Honours and Awards*, pp. 30-31.

In fact it was not until the Egyptian and Sudanese campaigns of the 1880s that female nurses were at last deemed to be eligible for campaign medals,<sup>143</sup> although thereafter it became standard practice to grant campaign medals to female nursing personnel. Medals were much appreciated and highly sought after, Miss Loch, Lady Superintendent of the Indian Army Nursing Service, for example, writing in January 1889 that ‘I believe we shall have medals... which will be very jolly.’ Nor was she to be disappointed, recording on 7 December 1890 that, ‘our medals have come... They have a remarkably pretty Queen’s Head... and our names engraved on the outer edge.’<sup>144</sup> Women were clearly happy to receive medals - whether as a reward for of bravery or, in recognition of active service - but they were less likely to receive them than their male counterparts.

If the small numbers of Albert Medals, Edward Medals and Lifesaving Medals of the Order of St John can be viewed as reflecting the limited numbers of women who were exposed to immediately perilous situations in the workplace, the similarly limited numbers of medals awarded in recognition of gallantry at sea might likewise be seen to mirror the realities of seafaring life. Women can again be seen to be under-represented in the medals awarded by the RNIPLS/RNLI, only 20 silver medals being awarded to women between 1825 and 1914.

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<sup>143</sup> Gooding, *Honours and Awards*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>144</sup> A.F. Bradshaw (ed.) *Catherine Grace Loch: A Memoir* (1905), quoted in Gooding, *Honours and Awards*, p. 76.

**Table 11. RNLI Medals to Women<sup>145</sup>**

Name	Date Voted	Summary	Notes
Grace Horsley Darling	24 October 1838	Wreck of <i>Forfarshire</i> : rowed to assistance of survivors	Lighthouse keeper's daughter. Also received RHS Gold medal.
Margaret Llewellyn; Martha Llewellyn	29 April 1847	Wreck of <i>Margaret</i> : waded into surf to assist survivors	Medals to both women; no medals to male co-rescuers
Georgia Vilhelimia Fisher	29 April 1847	Wreck of <i>Marwood</i> ; resuscitated crew-member	Wife of clergyman
Eleanor Galbraith	6 September 1855	Capsized fishing boat: Entered water and helped casualty to shore	-
Grace Tait; Ellen Petrie	28 July 1856	Capsized fishing boat: helped crew small boat that went to aid of casualties	Medals to both women in rescue boat crew; £2 to man
May Stout Hecterson Moar	9 September 1858	Descended cliff to aid shipwrecked fishermen	10/- reward to Mr Moar
Alice Bell Le Geyt	1 September 1864	Two boys fell from pier: rowed to assistance	-
Jane Campbell	5 October 1871	Wreck of <i>Manly</i> ; rescued crew member from surf and resuscitated him	-
Ellen Frances Prideaux-Brune; Gertrude Rose Prideaux-Brune; Mary Katherine Prideaux-Brune; Beatrice May Prideaux-Brune; Nora O'Shaugnessy	9 August 1879	Capsized boat: rowed to aid of casualty and got him into their boat	Medals to each of five 'young ladies' in small rowing boat
Mrs Whyte	4 December 1884	Wreck of <i>William Hope</i> : caught line thrown by crew, wrapped it around her body and held it secure whilst six men got ashore	Farm labourer's wife
Maria Horsford; Josephine Horsford	3 November 1887	Capsized rowing boat: helped crew small boat that went to aid of casualties	Medals to 2 women and 1 man in rescue crew
Mrs Wallace; Ellen Blyth	12 April 1888	Wreck of <i>Burns</i> : used ropes to rescue crew	Assistant Lighthouse Keeper's wife & Head Lighthouse keeper's daughter. Medals to 2 women and 2 men

Of these medals, no fewer than five - accounting for a quarter of the total - were awarded in recognition of a single incident in which a rowing-boat crewed by young ladies went to the assistance of a seaman who had got into difficulties in a small boat. When the circumstances of this case are compared to those of other contemporary incidents which led to the granting of the Institution's silver medal, it is impossible not to reach the conclusion that the youth and gentility of

<sup>145</sup> See B. Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry: RNLI Medals and How They Were Won* (London, 1998).

the Prideaux-Brune sisters and their companion Miss O'Shaugnessy had no small effect upon the decision of the medal committee.<sup>146</sup>

Equally, it is unlikely that the committee overlooked the fact that the sisters' parents had for over 20 years been keen supporters of the Institution and that Mr Prideaux-Brune was Chairman of its Padstow branch. Their actions nevertheless caught and held the attention of the public, *The Times* using the language of 'separate spheres' to observe that, whilst the role of lifesaver was generally a male preserve, 'such services are even rendered sometimes by the fair sex, who exert themselves to save the lives of the stronger race'.<sup>147</sup>

There was one other instance where the Institution's normally exacting standards appear to have been relaxed - the granting of a medal to a clergyman's wife in recognition of her resuscitating a shipwrecked mariner in circumstances which apparently involved no exposure to personal risk - but the remaining medals to women certainly appear to have been hard earned. The three awards to lighthouse-dwellers all recognised the exposure of the recipients to physical hardship and serious danger and the same is true of a number of awards made to fisher-folk and other coastal dwellers. Of these the medal to May Stout Hecterson Moar<sup>148</sup> stands out, as does that granted to Mrs Whyte, the wife of a Scots farm labourer, the citation for which explains, without recourse to florid language that:

When the Dundee steamer William Hope was wrecked in Aberdour Bay, Fife, in a heavy gale, Mrs Whyte went to the spot and took hold of a rope thrown to her by one of the crew. She then wound it around herself and, with waves washing around, planted her feet firmly on the beach, and enabled all six men to reach safety.<sup>149</sup>

Mrs Whyte was clearly no delicate, helpless creature.

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<sup>146</sup> The family were at the heart of the local establishment, Charles Prideaux-Brune - in his capacity of Lord High Sheriff of Cornwall - hosting the Prince of Wales on the occasion of his visit to Truro in April 1880. See *The Times*, 13 April 1880, p. 9.

<sup>147</sup> *The Times*, 20 April 1880, p. 14.

<sup>148</sup> Who also received silver medals from the Board of Trade and RHS.

<sup>149</sup> Medal voted 4 December 1884. Citation reproduced in Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 177.

In six of the incidents leading to the granting of RNLi medals to women, the rescue parties comprised both men and women. In three of these cases medals were granted to members of both sexes, whilst in two the men received only pecuniary rewards and in one instance no rewards at all. These discrepancies seem initially to hint at a gender bias, but may in part reflect the actual contributions made by the different rescuers. The latter is certainly true in the Moar case; and in the case of Margaret and Martha Llewellyn it is likewise specifically stated that the female rescuers took a leading role, wading ‘into the surf with the help of two men’.<sup>150</sup> The situation is less clear-cut in the case of Grace Tait and Ellen Petrie however, the women having ‘put out in a boat with Miss Tait’s father and saved two of the four man crew.’<sup>151</sup> There is no hint in the citation that Mr Tait’s contribution was in any way less significant than that of his daughter, but his reward took the form of £2 rather than a silver medal.

Founded by the insurance brokers in 1836, the Lloyd’s Medal for Saving Life at Sea was only awarded to two women. The first of these, Miss Kate Gilmour, was recognised for her bravery during a serious fire aboard the SS *Sardinia* on 25 August 1908. A stewardess, she remained at her post assisting with the evacuation of the vessel’s Arab passengers and could not be persuaded to abandon the ship until all of the women and children in her care had been rescued. Gilmour’s courage earned her a silver medal.<sup>152</sup> The other recipient was the appropriately-named Madam Matelot, whose award recognised her caring (and stereotypically feminine) actions following the sudden death of her lighthouse-keeper husband:

Madame Matelot, not understanding the mechanism of the revolving Light, and afraid that passing vessels might mistake the Light for a fixed one, worked all night, with the assistance of her children, turning the Light themselves, and so probably saved passing ships from disaster.<sup>153</sup>

Whilst Gilmour’s brave actions would in all probability of earned her some form of recognition irrespective of her gender, it is inconceivable that it would have

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<sup>150</sup> Medal voted 29 April 1847. Citation reproduced in Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, p. 85.

<sup>151</sup> Medal voted 28 July 1856. Citation reproduced in Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, pp. 112-13.

<sup>152</sup> J. Gawler, *Lloyd’s Medals 1836-1989: Awards for Courage and Exceptional Services* (Toronto, 1989), p. 33.

<sup>153</sup> Committee Minutes 28 June 1911, reproduced in Gawler, *Lloyd’s Medals*, p. 35.

been deemed appropriate to reward a male lighthouse-keeper for continuing to do his duty in the event of an equipment failure, irrespective of any extenuating personal circumstances. Those women who performed brave deeds were clearly perceived as exceptional: their actions conflicting with middle-class notions of femininity. The Shipwrecked Fishermen & Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society (SFMRBS) only awarded a single medal – in gold – to a woman between its foundation in 1851 and the outbreak of the Great War. The society's own papers stress the femininity of the rescuer, recording that 'a case has arisen here which almost rivals the memorable one of Grace Darling' and that 'the heroine Mrs Dick is a young, refined looking woman of about twenty years of age'.<sup>154</sup> In performing the brave act of rescuing two people from an upturned boat, Mrs Dick was 'unmindful of the weakness natural to her sex', her actions meeting with success only thanks to 'the grace of God'.<sup>155</sup> The SFMRBS was using the language of 'separate spheres'.

Even if it was indeed the case that awarding authorities such as the RNLI, the SFMRBS and Lloyd's were operating within a conservative Victorian gender value-system and consciously applying different standards to the actions of men and women when considering their suitability to receive awards, the fact remains that maritime lifesaving medals were seldom awarded to women. This should perhaps elicit little surprise, for the small number of women employed in the maritime professions – and hence the pool of potential medallists – was very limited.

The occasional award of honours such as the Albert Medal and the silver medal of the RNLI notwithstanding, during the nineteenth the role of granting medals to women remained largely the preserve of the RHS. Even then, comparatively few women were granted the Society's silver medal between its inception in 1774 and the outbreak of the First World War. A mere 29 women earned medals between 1830 and 1914; whilst during the same period 1,099 medals were

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<sup>154</sup> Anon., *Heroism at Sea: A History of Awards for Skill and Gallantry at Sea Presented by the Society since 1851* (e-book, Chichester, 2009), p. 65.

<sup>155</sup> Anon., *Heroism at Sea*, p. 65.

awarded to men.<sup>156</sup> It is noticeable that at no point during this period does the percentage of awards to women in any given decade rise above 3.7%, whilst awards to women made during the period 1900-14 accounted for a paltry 1.3% of the medals. The circumstances of the awards made between 1830 and 1914 may be summarised as follows:

**Table 12. RHS Silver Medals to Women: 1830-1914<sup>157</sup>**

Name	Date	Rescue	Successful/ Unsuccessful	Notes
Hon. Miss Eden	1833	River: Attempted to save child	U	Lady
Mrs Savory	1834	Beach: Saved child	S	
Miss Darling	1837	Wreck of <i>Forfarshire</i> : rowed to assistance of survivors	S	Lighthouse-keeper's daughter : GOLD Medal. Also received RNIPLS silver Medal
Margaret McGibbon	1843	River: used punt to rescue brother from rapids	S	Canadian Ferry operator
Miss Wilkinson	1844	River: saved child from river	S	Governess
Miss Pool	1845	River: saved wife of clergyman	S	Farmer's daughter (18): Had previously saved a child.
Miss Hesketh	1848	Beach: saved friend when overrun by incoming tide	S	
Miss Atkinson	1850	Marsh: Saved child after two men refused to go to rescue on account of danger	S	Teacher (in service):
Miss M. Kane	1850	Beach: swam to aid of bather and bathing woman	S	
Miss K. Kane	1850	Beach: threw improvised rope made from bathing dresses to her sister	S	
Miss Rowbotham	1858	Water tank: Saved brother (aged 2)	S	Child (16)
Mrs Hecterson	1858	Capsized fishing boat: descended cliff and threw rope and lifebuoy to casualties	S	Fisherman's wife: Also received RNLI Medal and B of T Medal. Also known as 'Mrs Moar'
Miss Harvey	1865	Beach: saved bather who got out of depth	S	
Miss Wright	1866	Lay on ice and used walking stick and rope to support man who had fallen through. Pulled into water by casualty	U	
Miss E.C. Buckworth	1868	River: saved sister	S	Child
Miss Sissons	1868	River: supported E.C.	S	Governess

<sup>156</sup>Figures based on RHS Case Books plus data published in L. Young, *Acts of Gallantry* (London, 1872) & W. Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2: 1871-1950* (London, 1996).

<sup>157</sup> See RHS Case Books; Young, *Acts of Gallantry*; & W. Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.

		Buckworth until rescuer arrived		
Miss Cummins	1870	Beach: rescued woman who got out of depth whilst bathing	S	
Miss Scott	1870	Beach: rescued woman who was swept out to sea	S	
Miss Bussell	1876	Rode horse to wreck and carried ashore imperilled passengers and crew	S	Farmer's daughter: Australian Rescue. RHS Bronze medal to co-rescuer.
Miss Westley	1880	Beach: saved woman who got out of depth whilst bathing	S	
Hon. Miss Colville	1880	Beach: saved young girl who got out of her depth whilst bathing	S	Lady
Miss Coates	1881	Saved her sister after she fell through ice by supporting her for 2 hours. One male co-rescuer lost his life.	S	Silver medal to one co-rescuer and recognition of courageous conduct of deceased co-rescuer recorded.
Miss Rowe	1887	Lake: Saved 2 young brothers	S	Girl (15): Continental rescue.
Miss Hackett	1889	Beach: saved young girl who got out of her depth whilst bathing	S	
Miss Long	1893	Supported man who had fallen through ice until help came	S	RHS Bronze Medals to 2 co-rescuers
Miss Evans	1895	Jumped into sea fully clothed and rescued 2 occupants of upset boat	S	
Miss Fullerton	1897	Beach: saved experienced male swimmer who got cramp whilst bathing	S	
Miss Heath	1901	Beach: helped to save woman who got out of her depth whilst bathing	S	RHS Bronze Medal to co-rescuer
Miss Millman	1904	Lake: saved woman who got into difficulties whilst bathing from a boat	S	RHS Resuscitation cert to female co-rescuer

In common with many early awards granted to men, the first medal awarded by the Society to a woman (1803) was given to a midwife in recognition of medical services.<sup>158</sup> A slightly later award, made to the Hon. Miss Eden, recognised her rather ineffectual and ultimately unsuccessful efforts to rescue a child from a swollen stream:

<sup>158</sup> Awarded to a midwife, Mrs Anne Newby, in recognition of her role in the resuscitation of 500 still-born babies. See RHS *Annual Report*, 1803, p. 63; R. Pearsall, *Lifesaving, The Story of the Royal Life Saving Society* (London, 1991), p. 82.



...the depth of the water, and the rapidity of the current, rendered it impossible for her to affect her generous purpose. Overcome by anxiety and excitement, she with difficulty reached the bank, when she fainted.<sup>159</sup>

Miss Eden had exposed herself to some degree of personal risk and all awards to women made thereafter recognised acts of bravery. The most famous of these was the gold medal given the Grace Darling as a reward for her gallant efforts to rescue the passengers and crew of the *SS Forfarshire*. The Society's own account of this rescue was, as might be expected given the high level of public interest which the incident attracted, a masterpiece of hyperbole:

...there was no hope of reward, no encouraging plaudit to stimulate exertions or to awake emulation. Nothing but the pure and ardent wish to save the sufferers from impending destruction could have induced these two individuals to enter upon so perilous an expedition, fraught as it was with the imminent hazard of their own lives. Surely imagination of the loftiest creations never invested the female character with such a degree of fortitude as has been evinced by Miss Grace Horsley Darling on this occasion. Is there in the whole field of history, or of fiction, even one instance of female heroism to compare with this!<sup>160</sup>

Darling was thus portrayed by the RHS as a super-woman whose achievement was wholly exceptional and utterly unique. Whilst such a portrayal doubtless appealed to an urban middle-class audience, it was not universally appreciated by members of the Darlings' local community. The contrast in opinions can be seen in the writings of William Howitt, who recorded in his book *Visits to Remarkable Places* (1842) the opinions of local folk in 1840. Howitt reported that the members of the local establishment spoke with a single voice: 'all the gentry... had but one voice in honour of Grace Darling's courage and generous devotion; as well as her general prudence and admirable character.'<sup>161</sup>

Many members of the seafaring community were not however so impressed; a young woman interviewed by Howitt near Bamburgh explaining that, 'Grace Darling is thought nothing in particular, only except by those a good way off... O, nooa, there was no danger. It was low-water; and the sea was quite smooth;

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<sup>159</sup> Rescue attempt made 5 January 1833. Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p.31.

<sup>160</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>161</sup> J. Mitford, *Grace Had an English Heart: The Story of Grace Darling, Heroine and Victorian Superstar* (New York, 1988), p. 81.

anyone could have done what she did.’<sup>162</sup> The harbour-master at North Sunderland was equally blunt, observing that ‘It’s all humbug...’<sup>163</sup> Grace Darling however had a powerful sponsor in the shape of the Duke of Northumberland, who combined his role as the leading member of the North East’s aristocracy with his Presidency of the RHS.

The Duke showered the Darlings with gifts and even took the highly unusual step of taking on responsibility for the management of Grace Darling’s trust fund and the vetting of her potential suitors. The Duke’s personal interest in the welfare of the Darlings also led to his ensuring that they received gold medals from the RHS rather than the customary silver awards. If it had been his intention that the Darling case be used to raise public awareness of the Society’s work, he certainly appears to have been successful. Money flooded into the Society’s coffers in the wake of the *Forfarshire* rescue, legacies for the year 1838 amounting to £2,800 - a sum which exceeded by over £350 the Society’s total legacy income for the previous decade.<sup>164</sup> But if the *Forfarshire* episode had served to replenish the coffers of the RHS, the associated fame came at a price for the Darlings. Grace may have been honoured with numerous gifts and medals, but she also now found herself besieged by souvenir hunters, who would frequently write to her requesting autographs and cuttings of her hair to be treasured like medieval relics. She had attained the status of secular saint, her willingness to risk her own life to save those in peril combining with her modest and religious nature to create a national and international heroine. Grace Darling was portrayed as noble, Christian, feminine and non-threatening, a typical contemporary press description noting that, ‘Grace is nothing masculine in her appearance, although she has so stout a heart... she is about the middle size, of a comely countenance... and with an expression of benevolence and softness most truly feminine in every point of view.’<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Mitford, *Grace Had an English Heart*, p. 81.

<sup>163</sup> Mitford, *Grace Had an English Heart*, p. 81.

<sup>164</sup> The legacy income for 1827-37 totalled £2440.10s. See Royal Humane Society *Annual Report*, 1894, p. 124.

<sup>165</sup> *Berwick & Kelso Warder*, 22 September 1838. Quoted in Mitford, *Grace Had an English Heart*, pp. 77-78.

Grace's life was portrayed in the press and popular pamphlets as exemplary, and her early death in 1842 served to freeze for eternity the public image of the maid of the Farne Islands. As Cunningham observes, initially her memory 'at a national level was sustained in compilations of women's heroism and duty aimed at a middle-class and largely female readership.'<sup>166</sup> The publication of Eva Hope's account of her life in 1875<sup>167</sup> brought her deeds to a far wider audience. The work was unashamedly evangelical in tone, imbuing every event in its subject's life and death with Christian meaning. Grace Darling's status as a contemporary saint and female role-model was further reinforced by the writings of her sister Thomasin, whose booklet *Grace Darling: Her True Story. From Unpublished Papers in the Possession of the Family* (1880) used Grace's own words to further to emphasise her femininity and Christian devotion.



**7. Victorian print of children laying flowers at Grace Darling's tomb [1866] (author's collection)<sup>168</sup>**

Throughout the later Victorian age her legend came to serve as a potent beacon of nobility and nationhood, Frank Mundell summing up a widely-held sentiment when he wrote on behalf of the Sunday School Union that:

<sup>166</sup> H. Cunningham, *Grace Darling: Victorian Heroine* (London, 2007), p. 81.

<sup>167</sup> E. Hope, *Grace Darling, Heroine of the Farne Islands: Her Life, and its Lessons* (London, 1875).

<sup>168</sup> Engraving by J. Godfrey, after a painting by C.W. Nicholls (1866). Published in London by Vertue & Co.

Seldom, if ever, before had so grand a display of courage been shown by a woman, and... it stirred every heart. Congratulations flowed from rich and poor – from the Queen to the humblest toiler for his daily bread. All ranks and classes were proud that such a deed had been performed by an Englishwoman... Four years later death claimed her for his own, and she was laid to rest in the ancient churchyard at Bamborough (sic), where several years later a monument was raised over her grave; but no memorial was needed, for her courageous act will keep her memory green as long as men and women continue to love what is noble and true.<sup>169</sup>

As a recipient of the RHS medal in gold, Grace Darling was of course an exceptional and high-profile case. The more usual awards made by the Society took the form of pecuniary rewards, testimonials and silver or bronze medals, with the latter recognising more hazardous rescues. Medals in particular were hard won and silver medals were very rarely given to women. By way of example, whilst there were no female recipients of the Society’s silver medal in 1894, the *Annual Report* for that year nevertheless records the granting of awards to 12 women:

**Table 13. RHS Awards to Women: 1894 *Annual Report***

Name	Date	Reward
Mary Ann Kling	4 February 1894	Pecuniary
Mary Ann Parker	5 March 1894	Testimonial on Vellum
Jane Hughes	5 April 1894	Testimonial on Vellum
Mabel Berens	6 May 1894	Testimonial on Parchment
Elsie M. Ruckle	7 July 1894	Testimonial on Vellum
Alice Bigsby	22 July 1894	Testimonial on Vellum
Ellen Bosworth	27 July 1894	Testimonial on Parchment
Louise F. Tomlinson	17 August 1894	Testimonial on Parchment
Bessie Hull	31 August 1894	Testimonial on Vellum
Mabel Shrewsbury	10 September 1894	Bronze Medal
Violet Ogden	19 September 1894	Testimonial on Parchment
Miss F.E. Harvey	26 September 1894	Testimonial on Vellum

During 1894 the Society considered a total of 527 cases and granted 621 individual awards. Of these, only a little over 1.9% of the total number of

<sup>169</sup> F. Mundell, *Stories of the Humane Society* (London, c.1895), pp. 71-72.

awards granted were given to women.<sup>170</sup> Of the total awards given in 1894, some 132 (equivalent to 21.2% to either gender) took the form of medals. Only one of these medals (equivalent to 8.3% of female awards) was given to a woman however and, although the sample size is very small, this suggests that there were even fewer medals presented to women in that year than might be expected if such awards were to mirror the general trend. Moreover, an examination of the granting of medals to women throughout the period under consideration reveals that this under-representation was not atypical.

**Table 14. RHS Medals to Women 1844-1904<sup>171</sup>**

	<b>1844</b>	<b>1864</b>	<b>1884</b>	<b>1904</b>
Total Silver medals awarded	16	10	14	4
Silver medals to women (number)	1	-	-	1
Silver medals to women (percentage annual total)	6.3%	-	-	25.0%
Total Bronze medals awarded	20	56	136	155
Bronze medals to women (number)	-	1	2	3
Bronze medals to women (percentage annual total)	-	1.8%	1.5%	1.9%
<b>Total medals awarded</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Total medals to women (number)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total medals to women (percentage annual total)</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

It can thus be seen that the number of medals of all types awarded to female recipients account for less than 3% of the total granted by the RHS. The figures for the most highly prized of its normal awards – the silver medal – were similarly low, with only 29 of the 1128 (2.6%) of those awarded between 1830 and 1914 being given to women.<sup>172</sup>

<sup>170</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1894, pp. 10, 26-104.

<sup>171</sup> See RHS *Annual Reports*, Young, *Acts of Gallantry* 1; Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2.

<sup>172</sup> These figures include the exceptional gold medals granted to William and Grace Darling.

**Table 15. RHS Silver Medals to Women (by Decade)**<sup>173</sup>

	1830-1839	1840-1849	1850-1859	1860-1869	1870-1879	1880-1889	1890-1899	1900-1909	1910-1914
Total Silver medals awarded	143	157	195	128	98	134	120	111	42
Silver medals to women (number)	3	4	5	4	3	5	3	2	-
Silver medals to women (percentage total)	2.1%	2.5%	2.6%	3.1%	3.1%	3.7%	2.5%	1.8%	-

It must however be borne in mind that these low figures do not necessarily represent a conscious anti-female bias on the part of the Society, but rather they might be seen as reflecting the number and nature of the cases submitted to it for consideration.

This of course in part reflected the ‘separate spheres’ ideology so beloved of the Victorian middle-classes, a world-view which placed women primarily within a private and domestic setting, wherein opportunities for displays of personal bravery were of necessity somewhat limited. Where brave deeds were performed, those recognised by the RHS in the middle of the nineteenth century tended to be linked to stereotypically ‘female’ virtues. Thus in 1858 the 16 year-old Miss Rowbotham was given a silver medal for saving her younger brother from drowning - ‘the young lady with great difficulty lifted the child into the arms of its mother’<sup>174</sup> - whilst in the same year the splendid May Stout Hecterson, who descended a cliff to haul a party of fishermen from the storm-tossed North Sea, is characterised along with her female companions simply as ‘their wives’.<sup>175</sup>

Many of the incidents similarly centred on the rescue of close family members or children - that is upon rescues which reflected middle-class male ideals of ‘feminine’ behaviour. Such examples serve to illustrate how, during the middle years of the nineteenth century, the female recipients of the RHS’s medal

<sup>173</sup>Table based on RHS Case Books plus data published in L. Young, *Acts of Gallantry* (London, 1872) & W. Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2: 1871-1950* (London, 1996).

<sup>174</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 226.

<sup>175</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 227.

generally conformed to gender stereotypes and their deeds were publically described by the Society in terms which reflected this.

This was not however the case by the close of the century, when the citations published demonstrate that the RHS was applying similar standards to both male and female rescuers. As described in the *Annual Reports*, the types of rescue undertaken by men and women (from falls through ice, rip currents etc) are remarkably similar and the style of language used to describe the incidents is, by the latter part of the nineteenth century, generally gender-neutral, with little or no emphasis being placed on the sex of the rescuer.<sup>176</sup>

Rewards for female rescuers however remained scarce, and those which were granted tended disproportionately to recognise the rescue of family members, women and children. To a significant extent, it is probable that a broader anti-female bias at the submission stage of the process contributed to women being less likely than men to be recommended to the Society. Nevertheless, by the time their actions were brought to its attention they were no less likely than a man to receive an award. Furthermore, although women received fewer medals than men, a review of the Society's case books tends to indicate that this reflects the nature of the cases submitted and the risks faced by the rescuers.

The small number of RHS awards given to women may thus, in part, be seen as a reflection of the then prevalent male middle-class attitudes to women and femininity. Evidence for such stereotyping can also be found in the design of the awards (both official and unofficial) of the period themselves, for women were not merely recipients of lifesaving awards: their images actually graced several medals.

An examination of these designs can give some insight into how the role of women in the process of lifesaving was viewed by the bodies which commissioned the medals. These representations can generally be broken down into two stereotypes: allegorical saviour/protector and defenceless victim. Only

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<sup>176</sup> Earlier nineteenth century accounts place much greater emphasis on the femininity and fragility of female rescuers.

when treated as an allegorical personification is the female form assigned any saviour/protector role. On a sample of 20 different designs of lifesaving medal issued between 1825 and 1911, female figures were shown in the role of victim on eight occasions and allegorical saviour/protector on 13 occasions.<sup>177</sup> No 'real' women were portrayed as rescuers – indeed, in every case where a 'real' woman is shown on a medal, she is illustrated as a victim.

This contrasts markedly with the treatment of male figures during the same period. In nine cases men are portrayed as victims, but in no fewer than 14 instances 'real' men are shown in the roles of rescuers or saviours. Only one male allegorical figure appears, this being a heavily armoured watchman on the reverse of the King's Police Medal (1909).<sup>178</sup> The evidence of the medal designs accordingly strongly suggests that the organisations which recognised non-military bravery during the nineteenth century were firmly rooted in the orthodoxy of 'separate spheres'.

This is further reflected in the awards presented by newspapers and magazines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Despite the fact that these awards were generally made on the basis of recommendations received from members of the general public, women medallists are again somewhat under-represented; although at 9.5% this bias is appreciably less marked than in the case of the RHS awards.

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<sup>177</sup> See Appendix 23

<sup>178</sup> See Appendix 24



**Table 16. Newspaper Awards to Women: 1885-1904<sup>179</sup>**

Publication	Dates	Total Awards	Awards to women	Percentage to women
<i>Quiver</i>	1885-1904	61	7	11.5%
<i>Answers/Pluck</i>	1895-97	71	4	5.6%
<i>To-day</i>	1894-97	31	1	3.2%
<i>Golden Penny</i>	1901-04	37	7	18.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	<b>200</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9.5%</b>

In the case of the Humane Society awards, the under-representation of women was to a large extent a direct result of the fact that they were significantly less likely than men to be found in many of the non-domestic locations (such as onboard ships, or down sewers and mines) which frequently provided the setting for the type of highly perilous rescue which might lead to the granting of a medallic award. Serious life-threatening incidents occurring in such closed settings often attracted the attention of ‘the authorities’ (such as the Admiralty, mine owners or coroners) responsible for regularly submitting recommendations to the Society.

Furthermore, outside the home women frequently performed their rescues in more public spaces (such as on beaches or by the banks of rivers), where assistance was more likely to be available, and accordingly exposed themselves to a lower degree of personal risk. In short, the process of rewarding women was simultaneously meritocratic yet discriminatory. Even when faced with an accident, the likelihood of a woman attempting to undertake a rescue was also liable to be adversely affected by practical considerations such as whether she

<sup>179</sup> See M.S. Leahy, ‘The Golden Penny’, *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal*, 1- 3 (1988), pp. 21-27; M.S. Leahy, ‘The “Pluck” Medal’, *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal*, 1- 3 (1988), pp. 79-84; Anon., ‘The “To-day” Gallantry Fund Medal’, *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 20 (1994), pp.42-59; J. Boddington, ‘The Quiver Medals’ *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 23 (1995), pp. 4-38.

was able to swim; the elaborate nature of female costume; modesty; and social expectations. Indeed, the elaborate nature of female costume could impact significantly upon the ability of a woman to perform a rescue, Miss Rowbotham for example in 1858 being initially 'slightly assisted by the temporary expansion of her dress' and latterly being imperilled by 'her clothes becoming saturated, and thus causing her more readily to sink.'<sup>180</sup> Modesty could also affect the willingness of a woman to remove articles of clothing in public. Miss Hackett for example, in her efforts to save a young girl from drowning at Shankhill in 1889, initially attempted to go to her aid fully clothed, only returning to shore to remove 'a portion of her clothing' when she found herself hopelessly encumbered.<sup>181</sup>

Nevertheless, women did attempt to save others and female fatalities were certainly not unknown. During the period 1908-1914, when the RHS granted no silver medals to women, the Carnegie Hero Trust Fund recognised no fewer than 34.<sup>182</sup> The RHS however did not grant its medals posthumously, whilst the Carnegie Hero Trust's awards recognised the deeds of rescuers irrespective of whether or not they survived the rescue attempt.

Similarly, the RHS of New Zealand frequently recognised those who perished whilst endeavouring to save life. During the period 1899-1914 a little over 12% of the awards it granted to surviving salvors were made to women. During the same period, over 47% of those granted posthumously were presented to the next-of-kin of female rescuers.

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<sup>180</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 226.

<sup>181</sup> RHS Case 24617. See W. Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2: 1871-1950* (Chippenham, 1996), p. 76.

<sup>182</sup> B.E. Escott, *Twentieth Century Women of Courage* (Thrupp, 1999), p. 249. It should however be noted that only a minority of these awards took the form of medals.

**Table 17. RHS of New Zealand: Awards to Women: 1899-1914<sup>183</sup>**

Award Type	Total Awards	Awards to Women	Percentage Awards to Women
Stead Gold medal	3	-	-
Gold Medal	6	1	16.7%
Silver Medal	77	6	7.8%
Bronze Medal	86	10	11.6%
Certificate of Merit	123	19	15.4%
'In Memoriam' Certificate	21	10	47.6%
Certificate on Parchment	2	-	-
Special Certificate	2	-	-
Letter of Commendation/Official Letter	88	11	12.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>14.0%</b>

There was undoubtedly a great deal of public interest in tales of women who were willing to sacrifice their lives in an attempt to save others and popular books such as Kate Stanway's *Britannia's Calendar of Heroes* highlighted the deeds of such 'martyrs'.<sup>184</sup> Published in 1914, Stanway's work took the form of a list of brave deeds, arranged by day and by month. For the period August-September, she listed eleven inspirational incidents in which women played the leading role. All but three of these led to the deaths of the female protagonist or protagonists.<sup>185</sup>

- 'An Oxford Girl of 8 dies in trying to save her little Brother' (1 August 1869: Died)
- 'Death of a Worcestershire Mother while trying to save her Children' (2 August 1882: Died)
- 'Young Scotch Lady drowned in trying to save her Brother' (12 August 1902: Died)
- 'Heroism in Ireland' (13 August 1909: Survived)
- 'Brave London Girl' (17 August 1909: Survived)
- 'Heroic Scotch Lassie' (3 Sept. 1879: Died)
- 'Grace Darling' (7 Sept. 1838: Survived)
- 'A Gallant Stewardess' (16 Sept. 1895: Died)
- 'Some Gallant Herefordshire Schoolchildren' (18 Sept. 1874: 2 Died)
- 'A Gloucestershire Woman Burnt to Death in trying to save her Friend' (22 Sept. 1887: Died)
- 'Heroic death of a Carnarvonshire Widow' (28 Sept. 1902: Died)

<sup>183</sup> Table collated from rolls of cases reproduced in Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*.

<sup>184</sup> K. Stanway, *Britannia's Calendar of Heroes* (London, 1914).

<sup>185</sup> Stanway, *Calendar of Heroes*, pp. 210-79.

The cases cited were frequently highly emotive and often accompanied by verses from Canon Rawnsley's *Ballads of Brave Deeds*, as in the case of Edith Leadingham, a ship's stewardess from Gateshead, who lost her life whilst trying to save a child following a fire onboard the *SS Iona*:

She has taken the little one safe in her hand,  
Angel of help, she has turned for the door –  
This eloquent heap of ash on the floor  
Is the seal of her will, and the sign of her doom;  
But her feet so swift for the purpose planned  
Are set, God knows, in a larger room.

Think of her gratefully, girls of the Tyne  
Whose blood is salt with the Northern sea!  
The salt that shall keep our England free  
From the savour of Death is a salt of flame,  
Salt of self-sacrifice, salt divine  
That is sprinkled on all, as we name her name.<sup>186</sup>

Thus, within a Victorian context, female lifesavers were inspirational yet enigmatic - their deeds seeming simultaneously both to support and subvert the current orthodoxy of 'separate spheres'. As such, they reflected the real world rather than what Vickery and others have convincingly demonstrated to be a middle-class (and male-generated) idealised construct.<sup>187</sup> Rescuers such as Grace Darling were portrayed as adhering to the Victorian gender stereotype of nurturing, religious womanhood; but their deeds were nevertheless based upon robust, pragmatic actions of an altogether more masculine nature. Such ambiguities were perhaps a little uncomfortable for middle-class Victorians, and there is clear evidence in many descriptions of Darling's life and deeds of a very conscious attempt being made to downplay the risk that her actions might in any way have undermined her femininity, Cunningham noting that, on the occasion of the anniversary of her death in 1892, the *Echo* portrayed her as embodying, 'precisely the qualities that women should honour; gentleness, refinement and a willingness "to sacrifice themselves in a genuine love to help their distressed fellows"'.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Stanway, *Calendar of Heroes*, pp. 262-63.

<sup>187</sup> See A. Vickery, 'Golden Age of Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal* 36:2 (June, 1993), pp 383-414.

<sup>188</sup> Cunningham, *Grace Darling*, p. 97.

For others however Grace Darling offered a model for those women who were beginning to agitate for a more prominent role in society, and during the 1890s a heated debate was conducted as to the true significance of heroines, with the – almost exclusively male – participants arguing over the degree to which such women contributed to the strength of the nation.<sup>189</sup> As the somewhat partisan *Alnwick and County Gazette* observed on 22 October 1892:

At this time when the advancement of women's status is being pleaded, urged and demanded from every platform, it is to figures such as Grace Darling to whom we must turn for illustration; and from characters like hers that we must draw arguments for the concession to women of a higher place in the world.

A perhaps surprising champion was also to be found in Baden-Powell, who reminded his Boy Scout readers in 1908 that:

In talking of boys I may as well state that the same remark applies to women and girls, that they are not only capable of doing valuable work in saving life, but they have done so over and over again... Doris Kay, of Leytonstone, is only eight years old, but she was awarded the diploma for saving life by the Royal Humane Society last year.<sup>190</sup>

Nevertheless, in the broader sphere the fact that most of the heroic deeds ascribed to women related to the saving of life served to mitigate against such threats to male dominance, and many medals were awarded to women whose deeds could be interpreted as representing extensions of a normal feminized carer's role. Typical of these are five of the six female recipients of the Albert Medal whose deeds included saving a class of schoolchildren, rescuing children from fire, saving a child from a bull and on two occasions protecting patients from peril. Similarly, of the 29 RHS silver medals given to women between 1830 and 1914, no fewer than 21 (72.4%) were granted in recognition of deeds involving the rescue or attempted rescue of women and/or children. Of these, 12 (41.3%) were awarded in recognition of attempts to save the lives of children. During the same period, men earned 1,099 RHS silver medals, but only 108 of these – (9.8%) were given for saving or attempting to save the lives of children. It

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<sup>189</sup> Cunningham, *Grace Darling*, p. 98.

<sup>190</sup> R. Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship* (London, 1908) p. 252.

would appear that, overall, the RHS contributed little to upsetting the ideology of ‘separate spheres’.

### Medals and Age

But if children were frequently the beneficiaries of lifesaving gallantry, they also on occasion played the role of salvors. Such deeds were sometimes formally recognised, and during the period 1830-1914, a total of 46 RHS silver medals<sup>191</sup> were awarded to children and young people, a figure equivalent to just under 4.1% of the total awarded during this period.

**Table 18. RHS Silver Medals: Awards to Children<sup>192</sup>**

	1830-1839	1840-1849	1850-1859	1860-1869	1870-1879	1880-1889	1890-1899	1900-1909	1910-1914
Number of awards	9	10	10	2	8	4	2	-	1
Percentage total	6.2%	6.4%	5.1%	1.6%	6.6%	3.0%	1.7%	-	2.4%

Typical of those honoured was 14-year-old Henry Worrall, who in 1831 went to the assistance of two much younger friends following the capsizing of their small boat:

Providence gave to H. Worrall the strength and fortitude by which many have been saved under similar circumstances. A little experience of swimming enabled him to save the lives of his companions in distress. He saw that a strong effort only could be of any avail, and with manly courage seized one of the boys, and guided him to the boat, which had by this time righted, telling him that on his fast holding it, his life depended. The other little boy was on the point of sinking, when H. Worrall, with fortitude and energy beyond his years, dashed through the water, and grasping him at the moment he was disappearing, swam with his almost lifeless charge to the other side of the boat, so as to balance here.<sup>193</sup>

There is little in this description to distinguish the events described from the type of incident which the Society was routinely rewarding. In the eyes of the author of this account, the success of Worrall’s actions could be attributed to the manly attributes of strength and fortitude, with which he had been divinely endowed.

<sup>191</sup> Out of a total of 1,128 RHS silver medals awarded 1830-1914.

<sup>192</sup> See Young *Acts of Gallantry* and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.

<sup>193</sup> Citation reproduced in Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, pp. 24-25.

Specialist knowledge - in this case of swimming - was also identified as playing a significant role in the successful outcome. In numerous cases such as Worrall's the youthful rescuer was portrayed not as child but rather as a young adult who saved those in distress through a display of maturity 'beyond his years'.

In other instances great stress was placed upon both upon the youth and the social circumstances of the rescuer, as in the case of the 'little boy' Joseph Lague whose successful rescue of a boy of 15 attracted the attention of *The Times* in July 1842. Eleven year-old Lague attracted particular sympathy not only because of his youth but also on account of his impoverished circumstances. Reacting to the story as recounted in the press, the RHS granted the boy not only its silver medal<sup>194</sup> but also a gift of £10; whilst the licensed victuallers and tradesmen of the parish of St Pancras established a fund to pay for his schooling. The case also attracted the attention of the journal's prosperous readership, whose members may or may not have welcomed the spotlight thrown upon their philanthropic activities:

This case of true heroism, scarcely credible in one so young, and equalled only by the spirited and noble-minded conduct of Grace Darling, has also to no small degree attracted the attention of the aristocracy, many of whom have liberally contributed to the necessities of the poor boy and his distressed mother. Among them may be mentioned the following:-- A few days since the servant of a noble Earl, who "did good by stealth, and blushed at fame," waited upon the boy's mother with a gift of 5l., with the promise of his Lordship that she should receive further assistance. The Countess L - , also, in a very kind letter stated, that having read the account in the newspapers, she was so pleased with the gallant conduct of the little boy that she desired his acceptance of a sovereign. A sovereign was also received in a note from Major-General Lygon MP, and other sums have been received and duly acknowledged by the poor mother, who is dependent entirely on washing for the support of herself and seven orphans.<sup>195</sup>

Such young rescuers - whose deeds were additionally described in the Society's *Annual Reports* and later reprinted in Lambton Young's widely-circulated *Acts of Gallantry* (1872) - could thus attract extensive contemporary publicity both for themselves and for the work Society. They could also serve as lasting and useful role models both for their peers and for members of the adult community; Master

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<sup>194</sup> Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 101.

<sup>195</sup> *The Times*, 14 July 1842, p. 5.

Harcourt Carter (aged 15) for example rushing to the aid of two youngsters who were at risk of drowning having been ‘disgusted by the apathy of a man who at the time was looking on’.<sup>196</sup> The humility displayed by some young heroes was also valued, as exemplified by the case of Henry Bowden, an Eton scholar, who having rescued a drowning boy from the Thames, treated his deed ‘as a simple occurrence [and] coolly walked home, changed his clothes and thought nothing more of the matter.’<sup>197</sup>

Less well-publicised but rather more numerous were the bronze medals awarded to children. These account for 34 (9.3%) of a sample of 367 bronze medals issued by the RHS between 1844 and 1904.<sup>198</sup> Most medals related to the saving of life from drowning and the locations of the incidents recognised were typically confined to inland waterways and beaches. The *Annual Report* for 1914 records the granting of nine bronze awards (including one clasp) to recipients aged 16 or younger.

**Table 19. RHS Bronze Medals: Awards to Children, 1914**

Name	Age	Summary
George P. Atkins	13	Saved a 10-year-old who had fallen from a boat into the River Lea in county Cork.
Seigfred M. Enderstein	12	On separate occasions saved a boy (9) and a girl who had fallen into the Sea at Langebaan, Cape Colony. Awarded medal and clasp.
Archibald Lappin	16	Saved two men from drowning in Belfast harbour.
Albert Lauder	13	Saved a non-swimmer from drowning in the sea at Portsmouth.
John Lavery	15	Saved a boy who had fallen overboard from a training ship into the Gareloch.
Paddy	16	Saved a man who had fallen from a canoe into a crocodile-infested river in Southern Nigeria.
William B. Tudor	14	Saved two girls who had fallen through ice at Crewe.
Lily Walker	12	Saved a boy (7) who had fallen into the Regent’s Canal at Haggerston.

Well-earned though these bronze medals were, they nevertheless represented only 7.2% of the 124 bronze medals awarded by the RHS during 1914.

<sup>196</sup> Citation reproduced in Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 154.

<sup>197</sup> Citation reproduced in Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 182.

<sup>198</sup> Children received 0/20 bronze medals awarded in 1844; 7/56 in 1864; 10/136 in 1884; and 17/155 in 1904.



Furthermore, during the same year, all of the silver medals granted were given to adult rescuers.

If RHS medals to children were scarce, government-sponsored awards were positively rare; only a combined total of three Albert and Edward Medals being granted to children prior to 1914.

**Table 20. Albert & Edward Medals: Awards to Children**<sup>199</sup>

Name	Age	Award	Summary
Thomas Lewis	16	AM Bronze (Land)	Lewis, a newsboy, rescued a man from a collapsed construction trench at Newport (1909).
Hannah Hugill	15	EM Bronze	Saved mother from bull (1909)
Jack Hewitt	10	AM Bronze (Land)	Saved a 9-year-old friend from drowning at Goole (1911).

In the case of the Edward Medal the paucity of awards to children is of course not surprising, as the medal was intended to reward gallantry in mines or industrial workplaces. Indeed, the fact that a medal was granted to Hannah Hugill in recognition of a brave act performed on a farm might be considered to be pushing the definition of an industrial work-place to its limits, Henderson commenting specifically upon the ‘surprising decision... that farming was to be considered an industrial occupation’.<sup>200</sup> No grants of the Albert Medal for Saving Life at Sea were made to children (although James Hudson, a 17-year-old apprentice seaman, received a bronze medal in 1867);<sup>201</sup> whilst the Albert Medal for Saving Life on Land was awarded to only two children prior to the outbreak of the Great War.

Thus child recipients can be seen to account for only two (1.0%) of 193 recipients of the Albert Medal prior to 1914 and one (0.46%) of the 218 recipients of the Edward Medal during the same period. When compared with such figures, the numbers of awards granted to children by the RHS seems rather more generous. Proportionally even more numerous however were the awards granted to children by various newspapers, frequently as the result of recommendations submitted to the relevant editor by members of the general

<sup>199</sup> Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, pp. 32, 36, 83.

<sup>200</sup> Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 58.

<sup>201</sup> Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 34.

public. Typical of such awards was the “Order of Bravery” established by the journal *Answers* in February 1892. A total of 40 *Answers* medals were awarded to recipients of all ages during 1892, their issue being announced in March (2 awards)<sup>202</sup>; April (4)<sup>203</sup>; May (6)<sup>204</sup>; July (8)<sup>205</sup>; September (9)<sup>206</sup>; and December (11)<sup>207</sup>. The awards were made in recognition of bravery displayed in a diverse range of circumstances and recipients included the ‘Misses Meadows’ (whose ages are unfortunately not given) and two boys aged 10 and 16 respectively. This accounted for between 5% and 10% of the awards made. Other newspapers and magazines were likewise generous in distributing their medals to young citizens; the *Golden Penny* presenting almost half of its medals to children.

**Table 21. Newspaper Awards to Children: 1885-1904<sup>208</sup>**

Publication	Dates	Total Awards	Awards to children	Percentage to children
<i>To-day</i>	1894-97	31	1	3.2%
<i>Pluck</i>	1895-97	71	11	15.5%
<i>Golden Penny</i>	1901-04	37	17	46%
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	<b>139</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20.9%</b>

The fact that these publications granted so many awards to children may in part be attributed to the nature of the recommendations which they received from their respective readerships. It should however also be remembered that these newspapers and magazines had in many instances been deliberately established as a challenge to the dominance of the ‘penny dreadfuls’ with the specific intention of celebrating and encouraging socially acceptable behaviour amongst their readers. Within this context the awarding of medals performed a dual purpose: rewarding those who had performed brave deeds whilst simultaneously encouraging readers to emulate their actions.

As the editor of *Answers* explained in February 1892, the creation of the *Answers* “Order of Bravery” was intended in part to ‘foster the spirit of bravery for which

<sup>202</sup> *Answers*, 19 March 1892.

<sup>203</sup> *Answers*, 23 April 1892.

<sup>204</sup> *Answers*, 28 May 1892.

<sup>205</sup> *Answers*, 23 July 1892.

<sup>206</sup> *Answers*, 3 September 1892.

<sup>207</sup> *Answers*, 24 December 1892.

<sup>208</sup> See Leahy, ‘The Golden Penny’, pp. 21-27; Leahy, ‘The “Pluck” Medal’, (1988), pp. 79-84; Anon., ““To-day” Gallantry Fund Medal’pp.42-59.

the sons and daughters of Britain are famous throughout the world'.<sup>209</sup> Within such a context the youthful recipients of the magazine's medals could be held up as patriots, as exemplars of 'robust Christianity' and as appropriate role models for British youth. Crown and Faith were thus central to the *Answers* mission, and the promotion of such patriotic bravery gave rise to a whole sub-genre of children's literature, with authors such as Frank Mundell and Kate Stanaway producing inspirational volumes with titles such as *Stories of the Lifeboat* (1894) and *Britannia's Calendar of Heroes* (1914) on behalf of Protestant and unashamedly jingoistic bodies such as the Sunday School Union and the League of the Empire. Children were likewise encouraged to support lifesaving activities through the medium of popular magazines. The publication *The Boys of England* (subtitled *A Young Gentleman's Journal of Sport, Sensation, Fun and Instruction*) for example using tales of bravery on the high seas to encourage its readers to contribute to its own lifeboat fund: 'Brave men! They perished in the performance of a good deed, and British Boys will not forget their daring deeds. This, Boys, is true heroism!'<sup>210</sup> The *Boys of England* lifeboat fund was portrayed by the journal's editor as being central to his publication's function, his preface to the collected and bound edition of the first volume stressing in the most jingoistic of terms that:

Not only has the Work itself pleased and gratified its thousands of Readers, but it has been the means of furthering the great cause of Humanity in promoting the BOYS OF ENGLAND LIFE-BOAT FUND. Projected and thought of by the British Boys, it will, when placed upon the water, remain a striking example of what the Boys of the United Kingdom can achieve when they bend their indomitable will to the task.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> *Answers*, 27 February 1892.

<sup>210</sup> *The Boys of England*, vol. 1, no. 11 (4 February 1867), p. 173.

<sup>211</sup> Editorial by Edwin J Brett, May 1867. *The Boys of England*, vol. 1, pp. iii-iv.



### 8. Promoting the lifeboat as a focus of nationalism in *The Boys of England*,<sup>212</sup> 1867

Thus the celebration of tales of heroism could be - and was - used both to promote patriotism and to generate practical outcomes. Children's popular fiction also celebrated the performance of duty and youthful courage. Perhaps the best known example of the genre is provided by E. Nesbitt's, *The Railway Children* (1906), wherein the young heroes save a train from colliding with a landslip. A grateful public reward Bobbie, Phyllis and Peter with engraved watches rather than medals, but the formal presentation as described by Nesbitt recalls contemporary newspaper accounts of real ceremonies. The words 'For Valour' engraved on the watches likewise echo the inscription to be found on the face of the Victoria Cross. In their moment of glory the children are grateful but suitably modest, Peter explaining to the gathered crowd:

Ladies and Gentlemen, it's most awfully good of you, and we shall treasure the watches all our lives - but really we don't deserve anything, really. At least, I mean it was all awfully exciting, and what I mean to say - thank you all very, very much.<sup>213</sup>

<sup>212</sup> *The Boys of England*, vol. 1, no. 11 (4 February 1867), p. 173.

<sup>213</sup> E. Nesbitt, *The Railway Children* (London, 1995 [1906]), p. 103.

The character Peter exemplified a generation steeped in patriotism and, as Van Emden observes, ceremonies such as that described by Nesbitt played a central role in cementing the relationship between the people and the state:

...most people did not question their life-long allegiance to their native land. Communities demonstrated this through pageants and procession, celebrating the continuing prosperity of the nation and its empire...<sup>214</sup>

Unsurprisingly, this environment nurtured a number of militarily-organised and uniformed youth organisations dedicated to the service of God, Queen, and Country. Foremost of these was Baden Powell's scouting movement which strove to instil the virtues of loyalty, discipline and good citizenship in its membership, whilst the Boys' Brigade promoted similar virtues but with a markedly greater emphasis being placed upon its role in promoting 'the advancement of Christs' Kingdom among Boys'.<sup>215</sup> The scouting movement encouraged and rewarded brave deeds through the granting of medals to its members. The most prestigious of these was founded in 1909 and was shamelessly modelled on the Victoria Cross, taking the form of a simple bronze cross *patee* hung from a plain red ribbon.<sup>216</sup> There was a clear and expressed expectation of the movement's leadership that scouts would perform brave acts and come to the aid of those in distress:

Scouts will be Scouts  
Scouts can be heroes too  
By striving to aid  
A man or a maid  
And seeing the Scout Law through.<sup>217</sup>

Indeed, in a series of statements which run directly contrary to modern 'best practice', Baden-Powell himself made it absolutely clear that his Scouts had a duty to perform brave deeds without giving any consideration to their personal welfare. His recruits were specifically instructed to 'Plunge in boldly... and

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<sup>214</sup> R. Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War* (London, 2005), p. 11.

<sup>215</sup> J. Springhall, 'Building Character in the British Boy: the Attempt to Extend Christian Manliness to Working-class Adolescents, 1880-1914' in Mangan, J.A. & Walvin, J. (eds.), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1987), p. 53.

<sup>216</sup> J.W. Mussell (ed.), *The Medals Yearbook 2009* (Honiton, 2008), p. 321

<sup>217</sup> Extract from pre-war song, reproduced in Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers*, p. 14.

don't bother about your own safety',<sup>218</sup> a young sailor's act of bravery in rescuing several women from a fire being held up as a suitable model for emulation, being 'an example to you of how to do your duty AT ONCE without thinking of dangers or difficulties'.<sup>219</sup>

The awards given by the Boy Scout Association - along with similar medals issued by both the Girl Guides Association<sup>220</sup> and the Boys' Brigade<sup>221</sup> - provided the organisations with a potent and highly visible means of celebrating deeds that reflected the ideals of duty and self-sacrifice which they espoused. They acted as badges of honour, reinforcing their recipients' sense of loyalty to their parent organisation and nation and acting as a focus of pride for those who might one day hope to aspire to such recognition. This sense of duty and loyalty was soon to be tested by the Great War, and the roles of heroes, uniforms and medals in preparing Britain's youth for the fray should not be underestimated. The under-aged boy volunteer Stuart Cloete was perhaps typical of his generation in recalling the vital role of these in preparing him for the conflict ahead, recalling that 'from the cradle up' he had been accustomed to celebrate 'glorious war, with its bands and marching feet, its uniforms and air of recklessness, its heroes and glittering decorations'.<sup>222</sup> A similar tale was related by another boy soldier, who recalled that he and his young friends had been enthralled by the heroism of a wounded Boer War veteran, being in particular 'fascinated with his medal which he displayed in a glass case with a few accessories such as regimental cap badges and buttons'.<sup>223</sup>

### **Medals, Race and Empire**

If Baden Powell had recognised from the outset that medals had a key role to play in inspiring loyalty in the members of his nascent movement, the board of

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<sup>218</sup> R. Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship* (London, 1908), p. 251

<sup>219</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 255. George Obeney received the bronze medal of the SPLF for his bravery.

<sup>220</sup> Wilson & McEwan, *Gallantry*, p. 47.

<sup>221</sup> Mussell, *Medals Yearbook*, p. 319.

<sup>222</sup> Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers*, p. 18.

<sup>223</sup> Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers*, p. 19.

the Honourable East India Company had long beforehand come to much the same conclusion. As early as 1784 the Company had established a campaign medal with which to reward all of the Indian troops who had participated in the campaigns fought in Western India and Gujerat in 1778-84. The Deccan medal was the first of a series of campaign medals struck for - and worn by - the Company's sepoys (or native troops). Its design and inscription were calculated to flatter the wearer and to ensure that he felt himself to be part of a great Anglo-Indian endeavour. The obverse bore a European design, portraying a figure of Britannia seated on a trophy of arms and holding a victor's wreath over a fort. The reverse was entirely Indian, featuring an inscription in Farsi:

As coins are known throughout the world, so shall be the bravery and exploits of these heroes by whom the name of the victorious English nation was carried from Bengal to the Deccan. Presented in AH 1199 by the East India Company's Calcutta Government.<sup>224</sup>

The medals were struck in precious metal (gold or silver) and from the outset were intended to be worn, being fitted with a suspension ring to facilitate their being hung around the neck from a yellow cord. Those wearing them were visibly and conspicuously marked out as battle-hardened heroes and there can be little doubt that these medals (and the other campaign medals awarded by the Company over the following decades) performed an important role in encouraging the loyalty of their recipients and cultivating a sense of shared commitment to the 'victorious English nation'.

General Order number 104 of the Governor General of India established, on 1 May 1837, the Indian Order of Merit, 'to afford personal reward for personal bravery, without reference to any claims founded on mere length of service or general good conduct.' In so doing the Governor General founded what Abbott and Tamplin have argued might be considered to be the oldest official British gallantry award, although it should be noted that, prior to 1860, it was awarded by the Honourable East India Company rather than the British Crown.<sup>225</sup> The award was available only to native soldiers and, between 1837 and 1914, was

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<sup>224</sup> Mussell, *Medals Yearbook*, p. 110. AH 1199 equates to AD 1784.

<sup>225</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 159. See also P. Duckers, *Reward for Valour: The Indian Order of Merit, 1914-1918* (Uppermill, 1999).

earned by Indian troops on only 2,746 occasions.<sup>226</sup> This award was intended in part to ‘strengthen the attachment of native soldiers to the Government’<sup>227</sup> but, whilst certainly affording a means for the official recognition of martial gallantry, it also paradoxically served to emphasise the ‘separateness’ of Indian troops. British troops serving alongside their Indian colleagues were, from the 1850s onwards, eligible to receive the Victoria Cross or the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Indian soldiers were to remain ineligible for the more prestigious Victoria Cross until 1911, having to make do in the meantime with the Indian Order of Merit. Whilst Indian troops were unable to earn the Victoria Cross until 1911, the same restrictions did not apply to members of other ethnic groups, Samuel Hodge, a private serving in the 4<sup>th</sup> West India Regiment, being the first black servicemen to earn the honour at Tubabecelong in the Gambia on 30 June 1866.<sup>228</sup> Awards of the Albert Medal were likewise not restricted to white Europeans, with seven being presented to Indians and one to an Australian Aborigine prior to 1914.

**Table 22. Albert Medal: Awards to Non-Europeans, 1866-1914<sup>229</sup>**

Name	Sea/ Land	Gold/ Bronze	Summary
Seedie Tindal Farabani	Sea	Gold	Rescued a boy from a shark (1880)
Shaik Mohadin	Sea	Bronze	Rescued a man from a fire and explosion in the Persian Gulf (1913)
Habib Khan; Sheikh Abdul Samand; Kallan Khan	Land	Bronze (3 medals)	Saved life of man caught in avalanche in Punjab (1898)
Muhammad Ali; Hasil	Land	Bronze (2 medals)	Saved life of men caught in avalanche in Punjab (1907)
Neighbour	Land	Bronze	Saved police officer from drowning in Australia (1911)

Albert Medals - whether awarded to Europeans or others - were invariably hard-won, the citation accompanying the first-class medal awarded to Seedie Tindal Farabani of HMS Wild Swan in 1880 giving some taste of the level of danger faced by the recipients:

<sup>226</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 167.

<sup>227</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 159.

<sup>228</sup> M. Arthur, *Symbol of Courage* (London, 2005), pp. 108-9.

<sup>229</sup> See Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, pp. 17-53.



A fugitive slave boy, named Farajallah, jumped overboard on 3<sup>rd</sup> August and was seized by an enormous shark, which bit off his leg at the knee, dragging him under the water. When he rose to the surface, the shark again attacked him, tearing off his remaining leg. Farabani jumped into the water, and brought the unfortunate boy to the surface and to a place of safety. Farabani saw the whole of the horrible catastrophe from the first seizure of the boy, and when he jumped into the water not only the attacking shark but three others were close to the ship.<sup>230</sup>

Farabani's personal bravery was beyond doubt and his award richly deserved. When asked at the presentation ceremony why he had risked his life he explained simply that: 'I like boy. Boy cry. I go to him. I too old and tough, no shark touch me.'<sup>231</sup> The grant of such a prestigious reward to an African was not however without controversy and Farabani came perilously close to having to content himself with a token cash reward:

This is a very brave and gallant service and would appear to warrant the granting of the Albert Medal as recommended but as Rear Admiral Jones recommends the granting of a pecuniary reward as well as a medal on the ground that the latter would perhaps not be so thoroughly understood, especially as to the great honour of obtaining it, by the Seedies generally, as among our own people it would, I think, seem to be doubtful whether it would be advisable to grant the medal at all... I think we should ascertain how far the rescuer would value an Albert medal. If as it would appear, he was a seaman aboard the White Swan it is probable that he may be sufficiently civilised to do so.<sup>232</sup>

A total of eight non-Europeans were awarded the Edward Medal prior to 1914, although these awards recognise only three incidents.

**Table 23. Edward Medal: Awards to Non-Europeans, 1908-1914<sup>233</sup>**

Name	Mines/ Industry	Silver/ Bronze	Summary
Martinus; Coco; Athomas; Elias; Aaron; & Isaac	Mines	Bronze (6 medals)	Rescued six miners trapped by mud-rush in Kimberley Diamond Mine (1909)
Ram Lal Bauri	Industry	Bronze	Saved two children from oncoming train (1910)
Gurzei Ahom	Industry	Bronze	Attempted to save man from suffocation in oil tank in Assam (1911)

<sup>230</sup> Citation reproduced in Wilson & McEwan *Gallantry*, p. 310.

<sup>231</sup> The National Archives, London, MT9 (Code 6) 192/M6853/81.

<sup>232</sup> The National Archives, London, MT9 (Code 6) 192/M6853/81. See also Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, p. 7.

<sup>233</sup> See Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, pp. 67-102.

In the case of Gurzei Ahom, the rescue was effected by two men (one European and one Indian), both of whom received the Edward Medal in bronze. The Kimberley Diamond mine accident resulted in a total of 12 Edward Medals being awarded under the same citation. Of these, six silver medals were awarded to Europeans; whilst the six African members of the rescue team received lesser bronze awards. This certainly suggests the application of ‘double standards’ to the award process, a suspicion which is further reinforced by another case which occurred in a Natal Colliery in 1913. In this incident a European manager by the name of Hepburn went with an African called Mbuzimaceba and an Indian called Munian to assist a party of miners who had been overcome by gas. The afflicted men were located, but Hepburn collapsed and was carried to safety by Mbuzimaceba whilst Munian chose to stay behind and assist the casualties. Hepburn was awarded the Edward Medal in silver and bronze medals were given to two other Europeans who had assisted in the rescue. No other medals were given, the *London Gazette* recording instead that, ‘The native Mbuzimaceba and the Indian Munian showed great bravery, and a letter of appreciation, together with a suitable present, was sent to them by the Governor-General.’<sup>234</sup>

Overall, the combined total of Albert and Edward Medals awarded to non-white recipients between 1866 and 1914 was 16; a figure which represents some 3.9% of the 411 awards made. A further high honour earned by a non-European was the RHS’s Stanhope Gold Medal for 1879, an award granted in recognition of the deed judged by the Society to have been the most heroic performed anywhere in the Empire during the preceding year. The recipient of this august honour was an Indian doctor by the name of Baboo Kristo Chunder Chuckerbutty:

On the 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1878, the body of a native woman was taken to Ghat on the Ganges for cremation, but, showing symptoms of returning animation, the natives threw her into the river, being under the impression that she was possessed by an evil spirit. Mr. Chuckerbutty, hearing the cry of “Bhutt-Bhutt” (goblin), ran to the spot, and not being able to obtain assistance from a concourse of affrighted natives, promptly plunged into the water and swam to the assistance of the woman. The place was a dangerous whirlpool twenty-five feet deep.

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<sup>234</sup> Citation reproduced in Wilson & McEwan *Gallantry*, p. 151.

In effecting the rescue, Mr. Chuckerbutty ran very great personal risk, not only from the well known eddies of the Hooghly, but from becoming entangled in his cloth and having his hand violently clutched by the drowning woman. In addition to showing great physical courage, the salvor had the moral strength to risk the native opinion, which might have reduced him to the position of outcast from his friends or compelled him to renew his caste by a severe penance. It is considered that the loss of cast must follow the act of touching what might have been a corpse.<sup>235</sup>

The unflattering portrayal of the ‘affrighted natives’ in Chuckerbutty’s citation betrays what might be interpreted as an expression of racial or cultural superiority on the part of its author; but it is equally clear that the awards committee had taken into account the social complexities of the doctor’s predicament when faced with the sight of the drowning woman and had used these to inform its decision to grant him the highest honour in its gift. Chuckerbutty was one of nine individuals who, having received the Society’s silver medal in 1878, were eligible to be granted the Stanhope Gold Medal. All of the others appear to have been white Europeans, but the Indian doctor’s claim was nevertheless preferred even to that of a white man who swam ashore through several miles of shark-infested seas from a sinking vessel and then returned in a small boat to rescue his shipwrecked companions.<sup>236</sup> Other citations – whilst often recognising the ethnicity of the honorees – otherwise display few hints of overt or covert racism:

William Guy, a liberated African, directed solely by Mr. Wilmot’s cries, dashed at once into the river, and reached him at the moment he was sinking. Guy was becoming much exhausted, but he had been followed by “Tom Osmond”, a Krooman, who arrived in time to assist him in supporting Mr. Wilmot, until a boat reached them.<sup>237</sup>

To M. Chiron and his son, who so nobly risked their lives... the General Court felt bound to award to each the honorary silver medallion, in testimony of their unqualified admiration of such noble courage and humanity.<sup>238</sup>

...lance corporal James Thompson (a black soldier)... having carefully kept his eye on the spot where the boy sank, on reaching it, saw his body

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<sup>235</sup> RHS case number 20523. Citation reproduced in Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2, pp. 3-4.

<sup>236</sup> Charles H. Hodge, RHS case number 20567.

<sup>237</sup> Citation for silver medals to W. Guy and T. Osmond for rescue on Niger Expedition, 7 October 1841. See Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, p. 99.

<sup>238</sup> Citation for silver medals to M. Chiron and M. Chiron *filis* for rescue in Mauritius in June 1848. See Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, pp. 146-48.

on the bottom, and in a moment sprang overboard, dived, and brought him to the surface.<sup>239</sup>

Indeed, the absence of regular references to patriotism, race or Empire in the late nineteenth-century *Annual Reports* of the RHS is in itself worthy of comment. The Society appears almost totally to have abandoned the rhetoric of its early years – wherein it regularly highlighted its patriotic credentials – in favour of a very matter-of-a fact reporting style. The Society continued to take pride in its Royal patronage, but references to patriotism and Empire are almost wholly absent in the reports given of lifesaving acts, as are instances of jingoistic language. Indeed, where the relationship between the Society and government was alluded to elsewhere in the *Reports*, it was generally very much underplayed, with the facts relating to the forwarding of cases by the Admiralty, India Office *et cetera* being stated simply and without comment.<sup>240</sup> There were of course exceptions, and the Society was as capable as any other public body of being swept up by the prevalent mood of specific occasions. One such instance is provided by its official response to the death of the polar explorer, Robert Falcon Scott.

News of the death of Captain Scott (1868-1912) and his companions on their return from the South Pole reached England on the afternoon of 10 February 1913.<sup>241</sup> The following day, at the Annual General Court of the RHS, it was resolved that copies of a vote of condolence should be inscribed on vellum and forwarded to the widows (and additionally in the case of Scott, the mother) of those who had lost their lives.<sup>242</sup> The vote captured perfectly the public mood, recording that the Court wished to convey its ‘deepest sympathy and condolence’ to the families of those ‘who so nobly perished on the return journey after reaching the South Pole, January 1912 during which the greatest heroism and self sacrifice to their sense of duty was displayed.’<sup>243</sup> This was the language of

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<sup>239</sup> Citation for silver medal to James Thompson for rescue in Bahamas on 25 June 1853. See Young, *Acts of Gallantry*, pp. 189-90.

<sup>240</sup> See for example, RHS *Annual Report* 1894, pp. 9-10.

<sup>241</sup> M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 96-98.

<sup>242</sup> Archives of the RHS, London, *Proceedings of General Courts: 1880-1943*, report of Annual General Court, 11 February 1913.

<sup>243</sup> Testimonial inscribed on vellum presented by the RHS to the widow of Petty Officer Evans. The covering letter, signed by the RHS Secretary, is dated 28 March 1913. Private collection.

Empire – with the triumph of reaching the Pole emphasised, alongside the self-sacrifice and sense of duty which one might expect from Imperial adventurers. It was however an unusual departure for a Society which appears to have taken pride in its inclusivity.

But whilst the RHS appears to have endeavoured to avoid any hint of institutionalised racism in its own publications, the language used in the reporting of the Society's awards in the contemporary press was not always so enlightened. An article by Ray Stannard Baler published in the United States in *McClure's Magazine* of September 1901 was a typical offender, drawing a stark contrast between the merits of the white rescuer ('...a football player, a well-knit, muscular fellow...') and black victims ('...half-naked Kaffirs came plunging out of the mouth of the tunnel, wild with terror.').<sup>244</sup> The mere fact that Europeans might risk their lives to save Africans was recorded as something remarkable - 'white blood for black'.<sup>245</sup>

Indeed, in recounting the tale of a rescue from drowning at sea, Baker observed that some would question the desirability of even attempting to save black lives:

A Lascar fireman named Esnolla... slipped overboard. There are those to whom a Lascar more or less would be a small matter, especially when an immense sea was running and there were sharks abroad.<sup>246</sup>

More remarkable still was the account of the bravery of a British seaman named Wilson (or William) McField<sup>247</sup>, whose bravery in saving many of the passengers and crew of a ship capsized off the Nicaraguan coast in 1897 was recognised both by the RHS and the United States government<sup>248</sup>. As Baker recorded:

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<sup>244</sup> R.S. Baker, 'Stories from the Archives of the Royal Humane Society', *McClure's Magazine* XVII no. 5, (Sept. 1901), pp. 401-409, hereafter cited as Baker, 'Stories from the Archives'.

<sup>245</sup> Baker, 'Stories from the Archives', pp. 401-03. The case referred to earned J.J. Brown and R. Brand RHS silver medals in 1897: RHS case number 29078. Citation reproduced in Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2, p. 94.

<sup>246</sup> Baker, 'Stories from the Archives', p. 403. The case referred to earned J.H. Collin the Stanhope Gold Medal for 1896: Royal Humane Society case number 28627. Citation reproduced in Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2, p. 8.

<sup>247</sup> Whilst the rescuer's first name is given as Wilson in RHS records, Baker gives it as William.

<sup>248</sup> McField was granted a gold medal by the US Government. See J. Boddington, *A Conquered Sea: An Illustrated History of the United States Presidential Life Saving Medal and Related*

One other story from the records of the Royal Humane Society I like especially to think about, because the hero was an obscure negro seaman sailing in an out-of-the-way corner of the earth, and yet his bravery was found out and two of the greatest nations on earth strove to see which could do him the greater honour... McField was a negro, a subject of Great Britain... and he swam like a seal.<sup>249</sup>



**9. 'One by one... he pulled up five of the crew.'<sup>250</sup> [image published 1901]**

Baker described McField in far more respectful terms than he does the other black men referred to elsewhere in his article, a linguistic shift which perhaps reflects McField's role of active rescuer (rather than passive or panicked victim) and the fact that those saved included white Europeans.

Nevertheless, Baker still felt the need to mention McField's colour on no less than three occasions. The RHS's citation for this award recounted in detail McField's bravery in swimming twice into the darkened interior of an upturned vessel in order to bring two passengers trapped in an air-pocket to safety. The Society did not however find it necessary to make any reference to the ethnic origin of the rescuer.<sup>251</sup>

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*Awards* (Penticton, 1990), p. 49, no. 16. Baker claims (p. 409) that McField also received 'fifty dollars in gold', but this is not verified by Boddington.

<sup>249</sup> Baker, 'Stories from the Archives', pp. 406-07.

<sup>250</sup> Baker, 'Stories from the Archives', p. 408.

<sup>251</sup> RHS case number 29639. Citation reproduced in Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2, p. 97.

As can be seen from the records for 1900-09, the Society's *Annual Reports* record the granting of silver medals to rescuers from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.

**Table 24. RHS Silver Medals to Non-Europeans: 1900-1909<sup>252</sup>**

Name	Date	Nationality/Occupation	Summary
Yame	1900	Fijian Boatman	Attempted to save crew of cutter wrecked in storm.
Ahmed El Shamy	1902	Egyptian Sailor	Saved two men when boat capsized in Red Sea
Muang Kin Bin	1903	Burmese Coolie	Saved a boy who fell into the Irrawaddy
Eusoof Nobo	1905	Lascar Coal Trimmer	Saved a fellow coal trimmer who fell overboard whilst ship steaming at 16 knots
Shaik Mahomed Shaik Ally	1905	Indian Police Constable	Saved intoxicated man who fell down a well
Jocky Bar	1906	'Portuguese coloured fisherman'	Saved several crewmen from a trawler driven aground

It is also noticeable that the actions for which they were rewarded appear to be very similar to those which resulted in silver medals being granted to white recipients. That notwithstanding, the number of silver medals granted to non-European recipients was however small and never accounted for more than 5.4% of all of the medals of that class presented.

**Table 25. RHS Silver Medals: Awards to Non-Europeans<sup>253</sup>**

	1830-1839	1840-1849	1850-1859	1860-1869	1870-1879	1880-1889	1890-1899	1900-1909	1910-1914
Number of awards	2	4	3	2	2	5	4	6	-
Percentage total	1.4%	2.5%	1.5%	1.6%	2.0%	3.7%	3.3%	5.4%	-

It is noticeable that the proportion of silver medals granted to non-European recipients increased significantly during the period 1880-1910, and this trend is mirrored even more markedly by the allocation of bronze awards.

<sup>252</sup> See Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2.

<sup>253</sup> Data from RHS *Annual Reports*, Young *Acts of Gallantry* and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2.

**Table 26. RHS Bronze Medals: Non-European Recipients<sup>254</sup>**

	1844	1864	1884	1904
Number	-	-	9	15
Percentage Total	-	-	6.6%	9.7%
<b>TOTAL AWARDS</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>155</b>

Further light can be thrown on the types of bravery recognised by examining the extensive records maintained by the RHS. These suggest that by the early twentieth century the Society was for the most part ‘colour blind’, rewarding similar acts of courage with similar honours, irrespective of the race of the rescuer or rescuers involved. Thus in May 1889 we find the Society awarding its silver medal to James Craig, a wharf foreman, for saving a boy from the Tyne at Ouseburn and Ishar Das, a sweet-seller, earning the same reward for rescuing a boy from drowning in the River Ravi at Lahore.

Where members of different races received different honours for the same rescue the reasons for the decision seem generally to be based firmly on the role of the rescuer. A case in point is provided by the case of Grace Bussell, a young white Australian woman who earned a silver medal in 1876 for riding her horse into the surf on numerous occasions in order to rescue the passengers and crew of the wrecked vessel *Georgette*.<sup>255</sup>

Bussell took the initiative in the rescue effort and, although she was actively assisted in her efforts by Samuel Isaacs, his role in the rescue was more limited. Isaacs, an aborigine stockman, received a bronze medal – an award which did not reflect his ethnicity but rather recognised his significant but lesser role in the rescue. Laura Lane, who had celebrated Bussell (‘The Australian Grace Darling’) as one of her ‘Heroes of Everyday Life’, was keen to stress the inter-racial collaboration between the young women and the stockman, recording that:

...it is one of the pleasantest features of this history that members of two races are to be found working side by side, bent on the same noble errand of mercy. Prejudice of race, and above all prejudice of colour, are often the source of so much evil, that we note with satisfaction the good feeling

<sup>254</sup> Awards as listed in RHS *Annual Reports* for 1844, 1864, 1884 and 1904.

<sup>255</sup> RHS case number 20278. See Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2, p. 46.



which seem to have existed between the young mistress and her coloured servant.<sup>256</sup>

Whilst Lane went to great lengths to stress that ‘We must not forget the native stockman who shared with Grace Bussell the honours of the rescue’, she somewhat undermined her liberal credentials by repeatedly emphasising the different social status of the protagonists and by failing anywhere to record the stockman’s name.<sup>257</sup> The RHS’s published citation, in contrast, reported the facts of the case: naming both protagonists, outlining their respective roles, and making only passing reference to Isaacs’s ethnicity.

It is accordingly probably fair to say that - in general - if non-Europeans were numerically under-represented in the lists of medals and certificates awarded this is a reflection not of the Society’s prejudices but of the lack of cases passed to them for consideration. In short, by the late Victorian period the awards made by the Society reflected the worthiness of the cases submitted to them and, whilst the Society generally did everything in its power to ensure that its awards were granted in an equitable manner, their distribution nevertheless inevitably reflected the broader societal biases and prejudices of those responsible for drafting the original submissions.

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<sup>256</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, pp. 187-88.

<sup>257</sup> Lane, *Heroes*, p. 188.

**Table 27. RHS Bronze Medals: Non-European Recipients, 1904 & 1914<sup>258</sup>**

Name	Date	Occupation	Summary
Oyo	1904	Soldier, Nigeria Regt.	Helped to save British officer from drowning at Unwana, West Africa
Somir Alli	1904	Lascar (seaman)	Saved comrade from drowning when boat overturned at Moulmein
Vireshvar Amirman	1904	Police Officer	Saved woman who fell down well at Pandoli, India
Dada Balaji	1904	Police Officer	Saved man who attempted to commit suicide at Bombay
Basawan	1904	Coolie	Saved woman from drowning at Karachi
J. bin-Muini	1904	Askarie (soldier)	Saved Indian soldier from drowning in crocodile-infested river in British East Africa
Dhaji Govind	1904	Police Officer	Saved woman who attempted to commit suicide in well at Bombay
Abdul Kader	1904	Police Officer	Saved two boys from drowning in Bombay harbour
Futteh Khan	1904	Soldier	Saved comrade from drowning near Jallalabad, India
Seth Dandoo Mal	1904	Contractor	Saved camel driver from drowning in river in Baluchistan
Gheelman Mohamad	1904	Boatman	Saved bather from drowning in Sutlej at Nangal, India
Wali Muhammad	1904	Syce (soldier)	Saved woman who fell down well at Khandiva, India
Tukaram Nana	1904	Police Officer	Saved man who fell down well at Junnar, India
Abdul Rahman	1904	Tindal (seaman)	Saved man who fell overboard into Irrawaddy, India
Lokua Sing	1904	Police Officer	Saved Man who fell into Howli River, India
Mahadeo Sadu Gade	1914	-	Helped save attempted suicide from river at Satara, India
Osmani Bin Hamisi	1914	Boatswain's Mate	Saved man from capsized boat in crocodile infested harbour at Bataiba
Choribarcler Isi	1914	-	Saved two men from capsized boat at Masqat, Arabia
Leng Khan	1914	-	Saved man from suffocation in coke scrubber in Singapore
R.E. Kotey; Kwaku Nyan; Kobina Dadzie; Adjietey Kwemin; Samuel Botchey; Kumi; Anmah	1914	Fishermen? (7 medals)	Saved ten people from boat capsized by tornado offshore at Addah, Gold Coast
Mkuwe	1914	Police Officer	Attempted to save man from fast flowing river in Southern Rhodesia
Muazim	1914	Boatman	Saved British soldier from Kabul River
Paddy	1914	Servant	Saved man from capsized canoe in Southern Nigeria
Naranjan Singh	1914	Sepoy (soldier)	Saved British soldier from drowning in river at Rangilpur, India

The broad geographical spread of the acts which earned RHS rewards mirrors that of Britain's Empire, with brave deeds performed in the Middle East, Indian subcontinent and Africa being recognised. Indian rescues markedly predominate

<sup>258</sup> See RHS *Annual Reports*, 1904 and 1914.

however, representing some 62.5% of the incidents and 48% of the awards granted during the periods sampled. It is also noticeable that 38.7% of the medallists were members either of the army or police; this high proportion doubtless reflecting regular formal contact between government bodies such as the India Office and War Office and the Society.

These links were well established and the Society's *Annual Report* for 1894 notes that 527 cases were 'entered on the Society's Books'. Of these 462 (87.7%) occurred in the British Isles; 13 (2.5%) in India; 33 (6.3%) in the Colonies; and 19 (3.6%) 'in foreign countries, where either the salvors or salvees were British subjects'.<sup>259</sup> An examination of the rewards granted in 1894 reveals that all of the 13 Indian cases submitted to the Society resulted in the granting of awards.

**Table 28. RHS Awards 1894: Indian Cases<sup>260</sup>**

Case number	Name	Occupation	Reward
26,910	Nanak	Police Constable	Vellum Testimonial
26,911	Iman Bakhsh	Police Constable	Vellum Testimonial
26,951	Kuber Rae; Appulswany	Indian Soldiers	Bronze Medal to each
26,953	Rustom Khan	Lascar (seaman)	Parchment Testimonial
26,961	J. Mearns; E. Marlines	British Soldiers	Vellum Testimonial to each
26,977	A.W. Heaton	-	Parchment Testimonial
27,024	Fatch Din	Indian Soldier	Bronze Medal
27,114	W. Horn	RN Sailor	Vellum Testimonial
27,225	F.L. Orman; H. Rae	British Officer; Indian Soldier	Bronze Medal to each
27,383	C.D. Singh	-	Vellum Testimonial
27,399	Girbar; P.J. Roach	-	Vellum Testimonial to each
27,403	J. Sparrell	British Soldier	Bronze Medal
27,416	J.E. Clayton	British Soldier	Bronze Medal

In total, 17 awards were granted in respect of these 13 cases, with 9 of these (52.9%) being given to Indians. Of the 7 medals presented, 4 (or 57.1%), were likewise given to Indian recipients. The list is dominated by members of the police and uniformed forces, once again reflecting the close links between the

<sup>259</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1894, p. 10.

<sup>260</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1894.

Society and the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the Field Marshal Commanding in Chief and the India Office, all of which were sent medals and testimonials for distribution to those under their command and control.<sup>261</sup>

The honouring of Indians, whether directly by the Crown or through agencies such as the RHS, reflected British policy in south Asia in the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny.<sup>262</sup> This cataclysmic event had prompted the abandonment of the previous policy of seeking to undermine existing ruling regimes. Instead the princely houses were celebrated as bastions of sound governance and the rigid hierarchy of caste-driven society held up as a model of societal stability. Within such a hierarchical status-focussed society the granting of awards represented a potent means of showing favour to loyal subjects and provided a powerful incentive to those who sought a tangible means of demonstrating their commitment to the ruling Imperial regime. As Cannadine explains, protocol within the Raj was governed by a rigidly-enforced 'warrant of precedence', which recognised no fewer than 77 social ranks.<sup>263</sup> The receipt of an award from the RHS - which of course enjoyed the patronage of the Queen-Empress - may not have led to the formal elevation of an individual, but it would equally have done him or her no harm in the eyes of their peers and social superiors.

Whilst rewards to Indians were relatively commonplace, it is noticeable that during the period 1904-14 no awards were made to indigenous Australasians. This however is a reflection of this responsibility for making such awards passing to home-grown humane societies in Australia and New Zealand during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Indeed, earlier in its history the RHS had frequently granted medals to New Zealand Maoris. This may have in part reflected the relatively enlightened approach taken by the New Zealand government to the country's indigenous inhabitants. As early as 1867 Maoris gained parliamentary representation and the nineteenth century likewise witnessed the granting of the franchise to some Maoris.<sup>264</sup> Between 1851 and 1882, awards to Maoris account for no less than 14% of all awards made to New

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<sup>261</sup> RHS *Annual Report* 1894, p. 10.

<sup>262</sup> D. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire* (London, 2001), pp. 41-57.

<sup>263</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, p. 43.

<sup>264</sup> C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914* (Oxford, 2004) p. 304.

Zealanders by the RHS. In every case the award given was a medal. These included a bronze medal given to Riwi Te Ropiha in recognition of his efforts to save a jockey from drowning in 1878 and a similar medal awarded to Kate Middlemass for having successfully rescued a European tourist from perishing following a canoe accident in 1882.<sup>265</sup>

**Table 29. RHS: Awards to Maoris, 1851-1882<sup>266</sup>**

Award Type	New Zealand Awards	Awards to Maoris	Percentage of New Zealand Awards to Maoris
Silver Medal	5	1	20.0%
Bronze Medal	35	6	17.1%
Certificate on Vellum	7	-	-
Certificate on Parchment	3	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14.0%</b>

From the early 1880s the role of principle *fons honorum* in New Zealand passed from the London-based society to its new antipodean offspring, the RHS of Australasia. Under the auspices of this new body the overall percentage of New Zealand awards granted to Maoris shrank from 14.0% to a mere 4.4%. This however is in part a reflection of the fact that the RHS of Australasia - like its London-based counterpart - generally refrained from making paper or parchment awards to indigenous New Zealanders. When medals alone are considered, Maori recipients account for a slightly more respectable 7.8% of awardees.

**Table 30. RHS of Australasia: Awards to Maoris, 1881-1914<sup>267</sup>**

Award Type	New Zealand Awards	Awards to Maoris	Percentage Awards to Maoris
Clarke Gold Medal	1	-	-
Gold Medal	1	-	-
Silver Medal	19	1	5.3%
Bronze Medal	107	8	7.5%
Certificate of Merit	91	1	1.1%
Certificate of Commendation	1	-	-
Letter of Commendation	25	1	4.0%
Honourable Mention	3	-	-
Recorded in Archives	3	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4.4%</b>

<sup>265</sup> Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, pp. 75 & 77.

<sup>266</sup> Table compiled from cases described in J.D. Wills, *Zealandia's Brave: The Royal Humane Societies in New Zealand 1850-1998* (Christchurch, 2001), pp. 65-81.

<sup>267</sup> Table compiled from cases described in Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, pp. 95-147.

A similar tendency to focus on medallic rewards is revealed by an examination of the honours granted to Maoris by the RHS of New Zealand between its foundation in 1899 and the outbreak of the First World War. The overall percentage of awards granted to Maoris is again modest (5.4%), but Maori medals account for 8.1% of all those given during the period.

**Table 31. RHS of New Zealand: Awards to Maoris 1899-1914<sup>268</sup>**

Award Type	Total Awards	Awards to Maoris	Percentage Awards to Maoris
Stead Gold medal	3	-	-
Gold Medal	6	1	16.7%
Silver Medal	77	5	6.5%
Bronze Medal	86	8	9.3%
Certificate of Merit	123	5	4.1%
'In Memoriam' Certificate	21	1	4.8%
Certificate on Parchment	2	-	-
Special Certificate	2	-	-
Letter of Commendation/Official Letter	88	2	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5.4%</b>

In all three cases the relative paucity of non-medallic awards is highly conspicuous. Two possible explanations for this discrepancy present themselves. The first of these is that the members of the various committees involved were reluctant to grant paper awards to individuals whom they felt might lack the schooling fully to appreciate them. The second is that the level of bravery which an indigenous New Zealander had to display in order to warrant his or her bravery being brought to the attention of one of the humane societies was frequently far higher than that which might be expected of their white fellow-countrymen. If the Societies based their decisions on the individual merits of each case (rather than on the basis of the race of the salvor) such a bias would inevitably result in a Maori being more likely to earn a medal than a white New Zealander. The first of these scenarios envisages humane societies pursuing a race-conscious, paternalistic and ultimately patronising policy towards the granting of awards; whilst the second represents a far more meritocratic and colour-blind approach.

<sup>268</sup> Table compiled from cases described in Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, pp. 153-265.

Whilst the surviving descriptions of the deeds which prompted the granting of these awards are incomplete and their interpretation must inevitably be a subjective rather than purely objective exercise, they nevertheless provide a strong body of evidence to support the view that, to a significant extent, the medals earned were appropriately hard won. The available evidence accordingly tends to support the proposition that any ‘filtering out’ of Maori rescuers normally occurred prior to the various award-making bodies becoming involved in the process. Further evidence of the relatively relaxed attitude to race is revealed by the fact that several of the awards reflect the widespread prevalence of inter-racial marriage in New Zealand, the medallists Maria Tame MacFarlane, Ani Katene (Mrs A.J. Knox) and Puhī Glaimona (Mrs H. Knox) all being Maori women who had married European men.<sup>269</sup> Most of the medals and certificates awarded by the RHS of New Zealand recognised bravery displayed in rescuing victims from drowning, although the petition requesting formal recognition which the society submitted to Queen Victoria stated that one of its key aims was, ‘To bestow rewards upon all who risk their own lives to save those of their fellow creatures’.<sup>270</sup> This very loose definition allowed for the rewarding of courageous acts performed in a wide range of circumstances, and it is perhaps not surprising to find that one Maori medallist, Reme Karepal, gained his reward for by extinguishing a potentially disastrous ship-board fire.<sup>271</sup>

### **Types of Rescue**

In Britain the RHS remained far-more sharply focussed, concentrating its efforts upon rewarding those who saved life from drowning or asphyxiation. This is clearly shown in the types of rescue for which the Society granted its silver medal. But, whilst drowning cases initially dominate the table, from the 1880s onwards asphyxiation cases occurring in mines and other confined spaces become increasingly significant, a trend which implies an increasing awareness on the part of the Society of the perils faced by industrial workers.

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<sup>269</sup> Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, pp 205-06, 215.

<sup>270</sup> Quoted in Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, p. 37.

<sup>271</sup> Case number 223, 16 June 1907. See Wills, *Zealandia's Brave*, p. 211.

**Table 32. RHS Silver Medals: Nature of Rescue (Percentage of Awards)<sup>272</sup>**

	1830-1839	1840-1849	1850-1859	1860-1869	1870-1879	1880-1889	1890-1899	1900-1909	1910-1914
Drowning	93.7	93.1	96.5	98.4	92.8	81.4	78.4	60.4	64.2
Confined Space rescues (eg mines/wells)	2.1	2.5	1.0	0.8	7.2	16.4	20.8	37.8	31.0
Other	4.2	4.4	2.5	0.8	-	2.2	0.8	1.8	4.8
<b>TOTAL NO. AWARDS</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>42</b>

Such a shift also brought the Society into competition with the Order of St John. Compared with many of the other bodies the Order of St John was far from liberal in the number of awards granted and, during the period 1874-1914, the Order's medal for lifesaving was awarded on some 280 occasions. An analysis of the circumstances surrounding these awards reveals that, in keeping with the priorities outlined in the *Annual Report* of 1874, over a third of the medals granted were earned for gallantry within the mining and quarrying industries. Numerous miners had of course been trained in first aid techniques by the St John Ambulance Association and the Order's similar close links with the railway industry is likewise mirrored in the number of medals given to railwaymen.

**Table 33. Nature of Rescue Order of St John Lifesaving Medals: 1874-1914<sup>273</sup>**

<i>Nature of Incident</i>	<i>Number of Awards 1874-1914 (280)</i>	<i>Percentage of Awards 1874-1914</i>
Accidents in mines & quarries	94	33.6
Gas/ sewer based asphyxiation incidents	52	18.5
Railways	44	15.7
Incidents involving animals (especially runaway horses)	27	9.6
Quetta Eartquake (India)	23	8.2
Industrial accidents	16	5.7
Trams	5	1.8
Awards for general 1 <sup>st</sup> aid/ nursing	4	1.4
Cliff rescues	4	1.4
Marine incidents	3	1.1
Other (Road accident; Steam; 'Lunatic'; Piracy; Military Action)	5	1.8
Uncertain	3	1.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>-</b>

<sup>272</sup> See Young, *Acts of Gallantry*; Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2.

<sup>273</sup> See London, Archive of the Most Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem. Typescript record of citations compiled by Dr Colin Thompson.



Inevitably, the overlapping interests of the Order of St John and the RHS led to numerous instances of duplication of awards, rescuers commonly being granted medals by both organisations in recognition of the same deeds. Typical of this type of overlap was a fatal accident which occurred at Booth's Cement Works near Rochester in November 1902. Heroic attempts to rescue three men who had been overcome by toxic fumes led to the granting of no fewer than eight medals to the four rescuers: one silver and three bronze awards being granted by the RHS and four bronze medals by the Order of St John.<sup>274</sup>

Furthermore, the institution of the Albert Medal - and later the Edward Medals for Mines (1907) and Industry (1910) - introduced considerable additional scope for duplication, a prime example of the phenomenon being afforded by the disastrous explosion at the Hulton Colliery in 1910. Other instances of duplication abound, as in the case of William Beith, a mechanical engineer who received not only the Albert Medal in gold, but also the silver medals of the RHS and the Order of St John for his services during the aftermath of the Tynewydd Colliery disaster of 1877, being far from unique.<sup>275</sup>

In many instances the awards of the RHS were similarly duplicated by popular newspapers. As newspaper awards were generally granted on the basis of recommendations made by members of the public, such overlap provides strong circumstantial evidence for the degree to which the concerns of the Society overlapped with those of the population at large.

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<sup>274</sup> RHS case number 32424. See Fevyer, *Act of Gallantry* 2, p. 110.

<sup>275</sup> Besly, *For Those in Peril*, pp. 13-16, 44, 54.

**Table 34. Nature of Rescue: Newspaper Awards<sup>276</sup>**

<i>Type of Incident</i>	<i>Quiver Medal</i>	<i>Answers: Number of Awards, 1892</i>	<i>To-day "Gallantry Fund" Medal: Number of Awards, 1894-97</i>	<i>Golden Penny: Number of Awards, 1901-1904</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Drowning	23	26	21	32	102
Fire	17	3	1	2	23
Industrial Accident	-	3	1	-	4
Mines	1	-	-	-	1
Cliff rescue		2	-	-	2
Runaway horse/vehicle	1	2	-	-	3
Railway accident	5	2	4	2	13
Fall through ice	2	1	3	-	6
Asphyxiation	-	-	1	-	1
Shipwreck	9	-	-	1	10
Animals	1	1	-	-	2
Untraced	2	-	-	-	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>169</b>

This is particularly evident in the case of the *Golden Penny*, which only presented a total of 37 medals, including 18 to boys under the age of 16, two to girls under the age of 16 and five to older women (one of whom was aged 72).<sup>277</sup> The RHS also honoured no less than 25 of these medallists; whilst a further four received additional awards from other sources, including the Order of St John and the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire. It is however noticeable that in the case of each of the newspapers considered, the most numerous type of incident receiving recognition was the saving of life from drowning (inclusive of shipwrecks and falls through ice). Looked at overall, this class of incident accounts for no fewer than 118 (70.2%) of the newspaper cases rewarded, a figure which sits easily alongside the 161 (69.7%) of RHS silver medals for similar acts during the period 1890-1909.

<sup>276</sup> *The Quiver* 1894, p. 230; See also W.F. Brown, 'The Case of the Missing Quiver Medal', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 25 (1995), pp. 47-49 and J. Boddington, 'The Quiver Medals' *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 23 (1995), pp. 4-38. In addition, a silver medal dated 1902 and named to Alan Harper was sold at by Bathantiquesonline (sic) in October 2001 (lot 113243). No trace of the circumstances relating to this award has been found. *Answers* issues of 19 March 1892, 23 April 1892, 28 May 1892, 23 July 1892 & 3 September 1892.

Leahy, 'The Golden Penny', pp. 21-27.

<sup>277</sup> Leahy, 'The Golden Penny', pp. 21-27.

**Table 35. RHS Silver Medals: Awards for Saving Life from Drowning (Percentage of Awards)<sup>278</sup>**

	1830-1839	1840-1849	1850-1859	1860-1869	1870-1879	1880-1889	1890-1899	1900-1909	1910-1914
Person overboard	31.3	33.6	35.6	46.8	44.0	30.6	14.9	19.4	59.2
Boat accident	10.4	12.3	9.0	4.8	14.3	13.9	18.1	23.9	7.4
Wreck	20.9	6.8	2.1	16.7	16.5	9.3	45.7	37.3	22.2
Fall through ice	2.2	2.7	5.9	3.2	-	6.5	5.3	1.5	-
Beach Bathing	3.0	3.4	5.3	6.3	7.7	6.5	5.3	4.5	-
Tide	-	2.7	1.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drowning (other)	32.1	38.4	41.0	22.2	17.6	33.3	10.6	13.4	11.1
<b>TOTAL NO. DROWNING</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>27</b>

The saving of life from shipwreck or other forms of drowning similarly dominated the stirring tales recounted in the various improving tracts produced in the final years of Victoria's reign; providing many of the cases reproduced by Mundell, by Lane and by the anonymous author of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge's *Everyday Heroes*.

**Table 36. Nature of Rescue: Published Compilations**

<i>Type of Incident</i>	<i>Lane: Heroes of Everyday Life<sup>279</sup></i>	<i>Mundell: Stories of the Humane Society<sup>280</sup></i>	<i>Anon.: Everyday Heroes<sup>281</sup></i>	<i>Total</i>
Drowning	3	7	2	12
Fire	3	-	2	5
Industrial Accident	1	4	-	5
Mines	4	-	5	9
Bomb	1	-	-	1
Building Collapse	1	-	-	1
Cliff Rescue	1	-	-	1
Railway accident	1	-	-	1
Fall through ice	-	1	-	1
Shipwreck	5 <sup>282</sup>	3	18	26
Other (non-lifesaving)	1 <sup>283</sup>	-	4 <sup>284</sup>	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>67</b>

<sup>278</sup> See Young, *Acts of Gallantry* and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.

<sup>279</sup> L.M. Lane, *Heroes of Everyday Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London, 1896). Excludes several non-lifesaving tales mentioned in a general chapter on winners of the Royal Red Cross.

<sup>280</sup> F. Mundell, *Stories of the Humane Society* (London, c. 1895).

Excludes several rescues mentioned in a general chapter on the Stanhope Gold Medal.

<sup>281</sup> Anon., *Everyday Heroes: Stories of Bravery During the Queen's Reign 1837-1900* (London, 1900).

<sup>282</sup> Including two separate Canadian incidents covered in a single chapter.

<sup>283</sup> Includes Elizabeth Mouatt (accidentally left stranded aboard an abandoned boat) and F Russell (capture of a slaving dhou).

<sup>284</sup> Includes Captain Manby (inventor), Mary Seacole (Crimean heroine), TH Kavanagh (civilian VC winner) and Jacques Fosse (French winner of numerous awards for saving life on land and in water).

Interest in the rescue of men and women from a watery grave can thus be seen to be firmly embedded in the consciousness of late-Victorian Britons. Whilst many of the awards granted by the RHS recognised rescues performed in inland waters (such as lakes, canals and rivers), the Society also granted medals for saving life at sea. Here it found itself in potential competition with not only the British Government but also a wide array of unofficial bodies.

**Table 37. Scope of Lifesaving Awards**

<i>Issuing Body</i>	<i>Award</i>	<i>Type of Rescue Rewarded</i>
<b>HM Government (Crown)</b>	Albert Medal (Sea)	Rescue of British nationals (inshore and high seas)
<b>HM Government (Board of Trade)</b>	Sea Gallantry Medal (foreign Services)	Rescue of British mariners by foreign nationals (inshore and high seas)
<b>HM Government (Board of Trade)</b>	Sea Gallantry Medal	Rescue by British nationals (inshore and high seas)
<b>RNLI</b>	Medal	Inshore rescues
<b>Shipwrecked Fishermen &amp; Marine's Royal Benevolent Society</b>	Medal	Rescue of/by SFMRBS members (generally high seas)
<b>Mercantile Marine Service Association</b>	Medal	Rescue of/by MMSA members (generally high seas)
<b>Liverpool Shipwreck &amp; Humane Society</b>	Marine Medal	Rescue of/by Liverpool mariners (inshore and high seas)
<b>Lloyds</b>	Medal for Saving Life	Inshore and high seas rescues

The RHS partially succeeded in avoiding the duplication of awards by the RNLI by the expedient of not generally granting awards in respect of inshore rescues made in British and Irish waters. There is also substantial evidence for the existence of formal or semi-formal agreements between the various award-giving organisations which sought to mitigate against the risk of such cases, the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society's 1855 *Annual Report* for example explaining that:

...it has been decided by the Committee of the "Life Boat Institution" and the "Shipwrecked Mariners' Society", that all applications for rewards for saving life on the coasts of the United Kingdom, should be entertained by the former society, whilst the latter would take up all meritorious cases deserving of reward which occurred on the high seas, Colonies, or coasts and islands abroad... In accordance with this arrangement, a letter... addressed to the Humane Society, and forwarded by that society to the

Life Boat Institution, was transferred to the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society.<sup>285</sup>

Whilst the duplication of unofficial awards did on occasion occur (as in the case of the medals granted by both bodies to the Prideaux-Brune sisters in 1879), it was accordingly not a serious problem. Perhaps of greater significance were the instances in which the various societies duplicated official government awards. Here multiple awards were fairly commonplace. Typical of such cases of were those of Halton Lecky<sup>286</sup> (who received the Albert Medal in bronze, Lloyd's Lifesaving Medal in silver and RHS Medal in silver for the same act) and Allen Shuttsworth<sup>287</sup> whose actions in 1866-67 earned him the Albert Medal in gold, Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society Medal in gold, Lloyd's Lifesaving Medal in silver and RHS Medal in bronze.

But if there were occasions on which the State and the various private award-giving organisations found their roles overlapping, the relationship between the various parties was generally symbiotic. From the outset, the RHS in particular enjoyed a good working relationship with various government departments and many of the awards granted by the Society were made on the basis of reports submitted to it via official channels. The Society's medals and other awards were used to reward acts of bravery which might otherwise have gone unrecognised either as a result of falling below the standards required to earn a state award or as a result of no official form of recognition existing to recognise the type of deed performed. This special relationship was recognised initially by the granting of official permission in 1869 for the medals of the RHS to be worn on naval and military uniform. It was a move which effectively marked the co-option of the medals of the RHS into the State honours system.

This position was to be further underlined during the Great War in a War Office letter which was widely circulated to Home Commands, Commanders-in-Chief in the Field and commanders of overseas garrisons. This document addressed the

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<sup>285</sup> Quoted in W. Fevyer, 'Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 30 (1997), p. 61.

<sup>286</sup> A. Stanistreet, *Heroes of the Albert Medal* (Honiton, 2002), pp. 104-06.

<sup>287</sup> Auctioned by Dix Noonan & Webb, 2 March 2005, lot 88 (£19,000). See B. Simkins, 'Around the Auctions', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 54 (2005), pp. 49-50.

means available for recognising non-combatant gallantry by service personnel and notes that, in addition to a range of official decorations (Albert Medal; Edward Medal; and Board of Trade Medal for Saving Life at Sea), ‘the undermentioned forms of reward, other than promotion, present themselves’<sup>288</sup>:

- (i) Royal Humane Society awards (silver and bronze medals, also Testimonials on parchment and vellum)...
- (ii) The Stanhope gold medals of the Royal Humane Society granted by the Royal Humane Society, in addition to the above awards for the bravest act of the year.
- (iii) The medals of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.<sup>289</sup>

Whilst it must be stressed that this circular did little more than remind senior office of long-standing pre-war practice, the very fact that the awards of the RHS and RNLI were thus specifically recommended served to reinforce their status as an informal additional tier to the national awards system. That notwithstanding, the number of RHS awards issued to servicemen during the Great War pales into insignificance when compared to the number of decorations and medals granted in recognition bravery in the field. The RHS granted a total of 35 silver medals to service personnel during the period 1914 to 1918,<sup>290</sup> whilst the RNLI awarded only seven medals to members of the armed forces.<sup>291</sup>

During the same period the Military Medal was granted in recognition of bravery in the field on over 121,000 occasions, the Military Cross was earned by over 37,000 officers and the Distinguished Conduct Medal awarded 25,000 times.<sup>292</sup> Even Britain’s highest award for bravery, the Victoria Cross, was earned on 628 occasions.<sup>293</sup>

The carnage of France and Flanders exposed an entire generation to previously unimagined levels of risk and created an environment where the performance of acts of bravery became almost commonplace. In the opening years of the war

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<sup>288</sup> War Office letter 0137/4286 (A.G. 10) of 15 September 1917. Sainsbury notes that 200 copies were printed and circulated. See J.D. Sainsbury, *For Gallantry in the Performance of Military Duty* (London, 1980), pp. 16-19.

<sup>289</sup> War Office letter 0137/4286.

<sup>290</sup> Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2, pp. 130-42.

<sup>291</sup> Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry*, pp. 233-43.

<sup>292</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, pp. 82, 220, 226-27.

<sup>293</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 293.

many of the heroic acts officially rewarded involved the rescuing of injured or otherwise imperilled soldiers, with some 30% of the Victoria Crosses earned in 1914 being awarded in recognition of humanitarian actions.<sup>294</sup> Military Crosses and Military Medals were likewise given for lifesaving as well as war-winning acts, a typical citation being that for the Military Cross awarded to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Herbert Brierley for his bravery in rescuing buried comrades whilst under fire at Passchendaele on 24 January 1918:

During a heavy and continuous bombardment he collected a party of men and, under heavy shell fire, dug out some men who had been buried during the bombardment. By his courage and resource he undoubtedly saved several lives.<sup>295</sup>



**10. Herbert Brierley and his Military Cross, 1918 (author's collection)**

Although such junior awards continued to be awarded for saving life throughout the war, as the conflict progressed, official attitudes hardened. In particular the percentage of Victoria Crosses awarded for humanitarian acts decreased whilst those given for belligerent acts correspondingly increased. Smith records that only 6% of the 203 Victoria Crosses awarded in 1918 recognised humanitarian actions, arguing that the mechanisation of the killing process changed forever the nature of warfare and created a new heroic environment:

<sup>294</sup> M.C. Smith, *Awarded for Valour* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 118-19.

<sup>295</sup> *London Gazette*, 16 August 1918, p. 9563

War on an industrial scale demanded heroes that were as implacable as the machines they used to fight... A machine does not feel compassion or remorse. Neither did the heroic ideal that emerged from the Western Front in 1917.<sup>296</sup>

Whilst the man or woman who performed a heroic deed prior to 1914 was marked as an exceptional individual, the grim reality of the trenches served to make bravery almost commonplace. Courage on such a scale could only be recognised by the Crown. The RHS and its fellow societies had lost their near-monopoly on the rewarding of courage.

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<sup>296</sup> Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 161, 163-64.



## CONCLUSION



A product of the Enlightenment, the Royal Humane Society can trace its origins back to 1774, when the physicians William Hawes and Thomas Cogan brought together a group of like-minded friends and colleagues to found 'THE INSTITUTION for affording immediate Relief of Persons apparently dead from DROWNING'. Such a foundation was not of course a random occurrence, and the establishment of the nascent RHS in London was part of a much broader-based pan-European movement which reflected growing scientific awareness of the possibility of resuscitation.

At an institutional level, the core priorities of the RHS were initially the saving of lives, souls and money. The founding membership of the Society boasted some of the most prominent medical doctors in London; and they brought to the fledgling Society a high degree of academic rigour and a sense of focus and purpose. At a practical level, the Society established a series of first-aid stations around the capital and printed and circulated practical guidance on resuscitation. Furthermore, under the influence of such luminaries as William Heberden and John Hunter, it was able to set about exploring the limits of resuscitation medicine: developing techniques for the restoration of the near-dead and publishing this in the pages of the *Society's Annual* reports. It might accordingly be argued that a central function of the Society was to promote widespread acceptance of the scientific and philosophical position that the moment of death was not directly controlled by an omnipotent deity but was rather a physical state which could actively be engaged with by medical men or by those who followed their guidance and direction.

Although the RHS was, in its early years, undoubtedly extremely active in the promotion of Christian values and worship, such a position nevertheless brought it into conflict with those Christians who adopted the stance that its work represented nothing more than a futile effort to thwart Divine will. Other clerics took a contrary position, choosing instead to view the Society as a Divine agent. The founders of the Society included no fewer than six clergymen, and many others were equally happy to support its humanitarian work. For these men, the Society's role in the salvation of souls - and in particular those of would-be

suicides - represented its key benefit.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the Society sought to do everything in its power to ensure that those saved from self destruction did not again imperil their souls by repeating their efforts.<sup>2</sup> The RHS took a particularly active role in attempting to improve the moral lives of those whom its representatives restored; with each rescuee receiving a parcel of religious texts and a written reminder that, since they had been saved from death through Divine agency, they were henceforth honour-bound to lead virtuous and pious lives.<sup>3</sup>

But if the saving of lives and souls were important to the founders of the Society, they were equally concerned with mitigating the negative economic effects of unnecessary premature deaths. Such deaths might leave a family of dependents as a burden on the parish, or deprive an employer - and thus indirectly the state - of an industrious worker whose hands might be turned to the creation of wealth. Time and time again the RHS stressed through its *Annual Reports*<sup>4</sup> and other publications the important role it performed in relieving the parish and state of unacceptable financial burdens, arguing that the savings thus made were 'sufficient to recommend the Society to the patronage and encouragement of government and of every real patriot.'<sup>5</sup> Typically, in 1803, the Society celebrated its successes by declaring:

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS PROMOTED.  
- Restored to Life, To their Parents, and To the State, 2679. -  
PAROCHIAL BURTHENS PREVENTED.<sup>6</sup>

The Society sought thus to emphasise its patriotic credentials. Indeed, the Society went to considerable lengths to encourage the patriotic feelings of its subscribers, reminding them that, 'As true Christians, as good patriots, and as sincere lovers of your country, you are DEEPLY INTERESTED in aiding and advancing the views of the HUMANE SOCIETY.'<sup>7</sup> The Society's royal patronage and connections further strengthened such patriotic linkages for, as Prochaska

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<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY 1774-1784*, p. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> 'Dr Valpy's Sermon for the Humane Society', *Brit. Crit.* XXI, June 1803, p. 662.

<sup>3</sup> *RHS Annual Report 1781-82*, p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> See for example *RHS Annual Report*, 1803, p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> *RHS Annual Report*, 1783. The comments were published as a footnote to a sermon preached by the Rev. John Hadley Swain at St Martin's in the Field.

<sup>6</sup> *RHS Annual Report*, 1803, p. 80.

<sup>7</sup> *RHS Annual Report*, 1803, p. 10.

observes, ‘Royal charities rarely let their supporters or charges forget their debt to the monarchy’.<sup>8</sup>

A Correspondent assures us, that the company which honoured the anniversary Festival of the Royal Humane Society, amounted to 400 and upwards of beneficent characters. When the KING’S health was drank, as Patron of this excellent institution, almost unparalleled applause followed, which closed with “God save the King”, by Mr. Dignum, loudly and universally chorused.<sup>9</sup>

From the outset, the Society was reliant upon subscription-paying supporters to fund its activities. Some of the membership was drawn from the highest ranks of polite society, with both the Lord Mayor and Bishop of London being early recruits, but much of the rank-and-file membership was recruited from the aspirational middle classes. This was made possible by the decision to pitch the annual membership dues at an affordable level, thus encouraging those of even modest means to join and make an appropriate contribution to the Society’s funds. The names of subscribers were reproduced in the *Annual Reports*, allowing even the most modest contributor the pleasure of seeing his or her name published alongside those of the cream of Society. Moreover, the Society’s strong links to the Crown afforded precious opportunities for subscribers to bask in the reflected glory of their royal masters. Many of these subscribers may have shared the core values of the Society’s founders, but membership of the RHS also provided access to the convivial advantages of a more conventional club. The Society held regular meetings - where both drink and conversation flowed liberally - and major feasts, at which the natural social order was reinforced as the Society handed out its awards and those rescued during the course of the year were paraded before their assembled benefactors.

But it would be wrong to think of the Royal Humane Society as an inward-looking organisation, for its founders had from the outset sought actively to encourage the growth and development of like-minded bodies elsewhere within their sphere of influence. By translating the work of the Amsterdam humane society into the more-widely accessible medium of the English language Cogan

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<sup>8</sup> F. Prochaska, *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy* (Yale, 1995), p. 47

<sup>9</sup> *The Times*, 22 April 1799, p. 3.

had taken an important step towards raising awareness of the practical aspects of resuscitation, and the Royal Humane Society's subsequent production and distribution of *Annual Reports* and other publications helped to ensure that knowledge of its work and message was widely disseminated. The Society was furthermore always happy to use the popular press to advertise its activities and was never slow to celebrate its achievements, proudly proclaimed itself in 1803 to be the 'PARENT OF HUMANE SOCIETIES' and boasting offspring in 21 locations in the British Isles.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the RHS claimed - with greater or lesser honesty - to likewise be 'parent' to similar societies in 'Berlin, Gonnitz, Prague, St. Petersburg, Boston, Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, New York, and Jamaica.'<sup>11</sup> But if such boasts were somewhat exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the London-based organisation did indeed enjoy a degree of real international influence. Its work was certainly influential in encouraging the establishment of similar humane societies in the Americas, and its activities were likewise held up as a model in France.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, as the nineteenth century progressed and the British Empire was consolidated, it came to perform a very real parental role for a host of new bodies founded in Australasia, Canada and in other parts of the globe which were at that time coloured pink. Moreover - and equally significantly - by popularising the rewarding of civilian bravery it pioneered a practice which was later to be adopted by the British Crown and government.

The RHS today exists primarily for the purpose of recognising the courage displayed by individuals who have placed their own lives at risk in order to save their fellows from danger; a purpose which it achieves through the distribution of medals and other rewards to worthy rescuers. The distribution of medals has been central to the Society's purpose since its inception, but the practice has not always been used as a means of recognising courage. During the eighteenth century, the RHS most frequently used its medals as a means of recognising the activities of gentlemen (most frequently the Society's own Medical Assistants)

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<sup>10</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1803, p. 80.

<sup>11</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1803, p. 80.

<sup>12</sup> J. Bentham, *The Rationale of Reward: Book I, Of Rewards in General*, Chapter XVI, p. 4.

Reproduced in digital form from Bowering edition of 1843 at

[www.la.utexas.edu/research/poltheory/bentham/rr/rr.b01.c16.html](http://www.la.utexas.edu/research/poltheory/bentham/rr/rr.b01.c16.html) (28/11/2007).

who had successfully resuscitated the apparently dead, although some were also granted in recognition of the production of essays or inventions relevant to the preservation of life. The RHS thus used its medals - in much the same way as many other contemporary societies - as a means of recognising the achievements of those who had furthered the aims of the awarding body. Often the incidents which led to the granting of medals involved people placing their lives at peril, for example by leaping into a river to haul a drowning man or woman to safety. Those who took the risks were however primarily drawn from the lower classes and were rewarded by the Society with grants of cash rather than medallions, reflecting the opinion of Bentham and others that medallic rewards were likely to be appreciated by the prosperous whilst little-valued by the poor.<sup>13</sup>

The Society sought to use its rewards - both medallic and monetary - as a means of inspiring people to support its aims. Many of its early medals were inscribed with the words 'go thou and do likewise', and in 1825 it boasted that those responsible for resuscitations and rescues were frequently 'animated... by the rewards of the Society'.<sup>14</sup> The medals were intended to be worn and to be seen and they served to mark the wearer as a person of virtue and it was this visibility that invested them with special significance. There can certainly be little dispute that medals were highly sought after, and even significant lifesaving pioneers such as Sir William Hillary and Captain George Manby went to extraordinary lengths to secure and wear similar highly visible badges of honour.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, it came increasingly to be recognised that medals might serve as a useful means of rewarding persons of all social classes by serving as 'a badge which would... influence the benevolent in giving employment to one who has been so successful in saving the lives of his fellow creatures.'<sup>16</sup> Certainly, by the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the social divide which had seen medals pinned exclusively to the chests of members of the professional and upper classes had

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<sup>13</sup> J. Bentham, *The Rationale of Reward: Book 1, Of Rewards in General*, Chapter XVI, pp. 3-4. Reproduced in digital form from Bowering edition of 1843 at [www.la.utexas.edu/research/poltheory/bentham/rr/rr.b01.c16.html](http://www.la.utexas.edu/research/poltheory/bentham/rr/rr.b01.c16.html) (28/11/2007).

<sup>14</sup> RHS *Annual Report*, 1825, pp. ix-x.

<sup>15</sup> See for example O. Warner, *The Life-Boat Service: A History of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution 1824-1974* (London, 1974), pp. 11-12 and K. Walthew, *From Rock to Tempest: The Life and Times of Captain George Manby* (London, 1971), p. 43.

<sup>16</sup> L. Young, *Acts of Gallantry 1* (London, 1872), p. 13.

largely evaporated, with all of the soldiers in Wellington's victorious army receiving a medal in celebration of the Battle of Waterloo.

The Waterloo Medal was not however given as a reward for individual merit, being instead distributed universally to those who had been present at the battle. Indeed, throughout the first half of the nineteenth century a *laissez faire* approach to government served to ensure that no officially-awarded medals were available for the rewarding of either military or civil bravery. In the absence of state-sponsored bravery awards, by the 1820s the RHS had largely turned its back on the practice of granting medallic rewards to rescuators, choosing instead to use medals primarily as a means of recognising individual acts of bravery. Thus, of the 85 medals awarded in the period 1830-35, only 3 were given in recognition of successful resuscitations. Thirty-eight of the RHS bravery awards given between 1830 and 1835 were granted to members of the Royal Navy or Mercantile Marine.

Brave acts performed at sea were also being recognised by other bodies: the RNIPLS instituting a bravery medal in 1824 and Lloyd's of London establishing a medal for saving life in 1837. Such awards recognised both the significant perils faced by Britain's mariners and the absence of any formal government-sponsored means of reward. Links between the Admiralty and both the RNIPLS and RHS were close and many of the rewards granted by the two bodies went to Naval or Coastguard personnel on the basis of official recommendations. The two societies thus enjoyed a high degree of official recognition and their rewards were actively used to fill a gap in provision which elsewhere in Europe was addressed via a national system of honours and rewards.

The absence of any official means of recognising gallantry at sea was mirrored on land. As the nineteenth century progressed public awareness of the dangers of industrial and other machinery increased greatly. The extensive and lurid reporting of railway accidents served to bring these dangers home to a previously complacent middle-class newspaper readership, whilst increases in the circulation of newspapers and sensational periodicals also served to highlight the dangers of domestic fires, mining and other industrial activities. These

developments overlapped with the Crimean War, a conflict which had prompted the establishment for the first time of a reward specifically designed to recognise martial bravery. The Victoria Cross<sup>17</sup> in particular captured the public imagination and the concepts of medals and bravery came to be far more closely linked in the public consciousness. In a society where the industrial city was increasingly viewed as place of inherent danger analogous to a battleground, it must have seemed highly appropriate that civilian heroes should receive medals in the same way as their military counterparts. Appropriately enough, the granting of such rewards for bravery on land was pioneered by the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire and the Order of St John, both of which fielded uniformed ‘armies’ in defence of the Britain’s beleaguered urban residents.

Award-giving bodies were not of course simply motivated by generosity and a desire to reward the worthy. The granting of gallantry awards was liable to attract press attention and thus to assist with the promotion of the award-giving body and its activities. Indeed, by the late 1700s, there already exists clear evidence for the RHS taking active steps to cultivate editorial support for the Society’s work.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the altruism of the award-giving body (and by association its membership and supporters) was highlighted and its elevated position in the broader social context was reinforced. Members of such bodies basked in the reflected glory of their (frequently Royal) Patrons and were able to adopt a paternalistic attitude to those who benefited from their charity. Such paternalism was clearly evident in ceremonial activities, an account of a RHS ceremony published in *The Times* of 22 April 1799 recording that:

Solemn music, the City Marshalls, Stewards, &c, introduced the living fruits of the Society; and as soon as the procession had arrived at the upper part of the room Mr. Greton’s ingenious Odes were recited by the young Orators. The first banner was carried by Mrs. Leigh of Newington. – “Behold my infant Child and Niece restored.” Mr. Lardner addressed the President “I thank you for my own life and for the lives of my three children.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Established in 1856.

<sup>18</sup> William Hawes, for example, writing in flattering terms of Mr Urban’s editorship of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*. See *Gentleman’s Magazine*, July-December 1793, pp. 876-877.

<sup>19</sup> *The Times*, 22 April 1799, p. 3.



An even more blatant class divide was to be observed in the activities of the Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem, the members of the Order sporting embroidered mantles, enamelled decorations and titles such as Knight, Commander and Officer which mirrored those used by France's *Legion d'Honneur*. By way of contrast, most of the recipients of its awards were drawn from the ranks of miners, factory workers and other members of the labouring classes. In the case of the Order of St John, the role of the Order in granting honours further served to confer a much-needed facade of legitimacy upon an organisation whose origins were, to say the least, murky. In presenting medals to two miners in September 1875 for example, Sir Edmund Lechmere, took the opportunity unequivocally to link the English body's role as a *fons honorum* with its dubious claims to be the legitimate successor of the crusader Order of St John, recounting the background to the establishment of its array of awards and observing that, 'There appears to be a certain degree of appropriateness in the legal representatives of the English branch of the time-honoured and chivalrous Orders of St John being the promoters of such an object.'<sup>20</sup> Thus the granting of medals might be used as a tool of social control; reinforcing existing social hierarchies and entrenching patron/client relationships.

But if one motive for the presentation of medals was the maintenance of the existing social order, an even more important driver was the desire to mould and change society through the creation and promotion of heroes who could act as role models for the young and the poor. The RHS and its imitators had always been aware of the importance of publicising their activities, both through the cultivation of relations with the popular press and via the publishing and distribution of their own literature. Through these media they were able to bring the deeds – and, by extension, the lives – of those whom they chose to honour to a wide audience. The promotion of 'everyday heroes' as role models chimed in neatly with the mood of the times, reflecting both the Victorian cult of hero-worship and the values of hard work, persistence, self-control and courage espoused by Smiles in his influential work *Self Help*.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Order of St John of Jerusalem in England: Descriptive History of its Medals for Saving Life on Land by Special Acts of Bravery* (London, 1876), n.p.

<sup>21</sup> S. Smiles, *Self Help: With Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance* (London, 1859).

The heroes who were marked out from their fellows by the wearing of lifesaving medals were not great generals or politicians. Rather, they were often ordinary men and women with whom the public could readily identify. As fine examples of Thomas Arnold's fashionable *Muscular Christianity*, their stories were taken up and told and retold by campaigning Christian authors such as Frank Mundell<sup>22</sup> and Laura Lane<sup>23</sup> who, through the construction of life-narratives to complement the tales of heroism they recounted, wove together a series of 'exemplary lives' with which they sought to inspire a readership drawn from the young and from the aspirational working classes.

The production of these compilations was supported - but not initiated - by the RHS, which, as an organisation, had by the latter part of the nineteenth century adopted a more passive and supporting role in the promotion of Christian values. For authors of some 'improving' works a Christ-like act of sacrifice symbolised the ultimate hero, and such writers chose particularly to stress acts of martyrdom. In *Britannia's Calendar of Heroes*, Kate Stanaway provided her readers with one or more instances of conspicuous bravery for every day of the year.<sup>24</sup> Her compilation included examples of both military and civil courage and she listed a total of 59 separate lifesaving incidents under the month of February. No fewer than 31 of these had resulted in the death of one or more rescuers. Indeed, her death-toll for February amounted to 65; a figure which excludes the 454 lives lost on aboard troopship Birkenhead! However admirable, the martyrs thus celebrated by Stanaway were not drawn from the ranks of the RHS's medallists, for the Society did not grant its rewards posthumously.

Lane's 'Heroes of Everyday Life' were more resilient and - like those honoured by the RHS - were more likely to survive than to succumb. But whilst many of the exemplary lives recounted by Lane were those of RHS medallists, her selection of individuals suitable for elevation to hero status did not accurately

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<sup>22</sup> See for example F. Mundell, *Stories of the Lifeboat* (London, 1894); F. Mundell, *Stories of the Fire Brigade* (London, c. 1895); and F. Mundell, *Stories of the Humane Society* (London, c. 1895).

<sup>23</sup> L.M. Lane, *Heroes of Everyday Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London, 1896).

<sup>24</sup> K. Stanway, *Britannia's Calendar of Heroes* (London, 1914).

mirror that made by the RHS Committee. Lane's heroes were drawn almost exclusively from the working classes, whilst the RHS medal lists are liberally scattered with the names of members of the officer and professional classes. Lane's aim was of course to fashion exemplary lives which would have resonance with the lives of her working-class target readership. Her intention was to provide plausible role models. To do this she called upon the pantheon of brave individuals honoured by the RHS and others, imposing her own selection criteria upon a catalogue of cases which had paradoxically previously been passed through the filter of Victorian male middle-class prejudice.

Medals might also be used as a means of celebrating civic, regional or national identity. The various local humane societies which were created in imitation of the RHS frequently adopted the role of *fons honorum*, disbursing awards within strictly confined geographical areas. In some cases the design of the medals produced by these bodies mirrored that of the RHS, but other organisations took great care to ensure that the awards given incorporated unique imagery which promoted regional identities. Within the British Isles elaborate award ceremonies allowed local dignitaries high-profile public opportunities to celebrate local virtue and civic pride; whilst elsewhere in the Empire humane societies were on occasion at the centre of the struggle to establish a national identity. But if the Empire's humane societies were quick to recognise the value of medals as patriotic tools and symbols of nationhood, the same could not be said for the British Crown. Whilst some European governments, including those of France and Sweden,<sup>25</sup> had introduced official awards for lifesaving as early as the 1780s, it was not until 1839 that the Board of Trade abandoned a policy of *laissez faire* and took the first steps towards creating a medal with which to reward foreigners who had saved the lives of British subjects.<sup>26</sup> Even then, a further 15 years were to pass before the Board of Trade Medal for Saving Life (more commonly referred to as the Sea Gallantry Medal) was created with which

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<sup>25</sup> F. Caille, *La Figure du Sauveteur: Naissance du Citoyen Secoureur en France 1780-1914* (Rennes, 2006); P.H. Demoge, 'Les Medailles d'Honneur Temoins d'Une Societe' *Ordres et Distinctions* 7 (1996); C.P. Mulder, 'The Swedish Medal "Illis Quorum Meruere Labores" (For Meritorious Work), *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 1-3 (1987-88), pp. 65-67.

<sup>26</sup> Instructions were issued for the creation of a medal in 1839, but dies were not available until 1841.

to reward British citizens for ‘gallantry involving risk to life or other very peculiar merit’.<sup>27</sup>

The Sea Gallantry Medal was awarded sparingly and in no way displaced the plethora of unofficial medals for maritime bravery awarded by the RHS, RNLI, Liverpool Shipwreck & Humane Society and others. Indeed, it was not unusual for brave individuals to find themselves in receipt of two or more awards for the same act. Unlike the RNLI medal, the Board of Trade’s award was not however wearable and, following extensive public lobbying, the department came to the conclusion:

...that a decoration which could be worn upon the person, as the Victoria Cross is worn, would be prized more highly, and would be more of an inducement to those acts of gallantry and humanity..<sup>28</sup>

The resulting award was the Albert Medal. In discussing the Victoria Cross, Smith draws attention to the fact that the mid-Victorian authorities responsible for the foundation and distribution of this notionally egalitarian award were ‘unable to offer a definition of heroism; like art, like beauty, it was in the eye of the beholder’.<sup>29</sup> The foundations upon which the Albert Medal was built were similarly ill-defined, but drew upon a range of middle-class values which encompassed notions of patriotism, self-improvement, personal responsibility and the virtue of self-improvement. Like the Victoria Cross, the Albert Medal was closely linked (not least by virtue of its name) to the Royal Family. Moreover, wherever possible, the monarch personally pinned the medals to the chests of their proud recipients, whilst the words ‘Presented by Her (or His) Majesty’ were generally inscribed on the reverse of the decoration.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, the institution of both awards served as a public demonstration of the willingness of the government and monarch to respond to a perceived public mood and, in so doing, perhaps in some small way helped to forge closer links between the Crown and the people.

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<sup>27</sup> P.E. Abbott, ‘The Origins of the Albert Medal’, *Orders and Medals Research Society Journal* 41.2 (2002), p. 94 note 5.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Abbott, ‘The Origins of the Albert Medal’, p. 93.

<sup>29</sup> M.C. Smith, *Awarded for Valour: A History of the Victoria Cross and the Evolution of British Heroism* (Basingstoke, 2008), p. 202.

<sup>30</sup> P.E. Abbott & J.M.A. Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards* (London, 1981), p. 20.

Significantly, the Albert Medal, unlike the Sea Gallantry medal, was in the gift of the Crown rather than a government department. This was a distinction which doubtless appealed to paternalists who viewed the monarchy as a counterbalance to the power of centralised government,<sup>31</sup> but its status as a Royal gift raised a number of problems for the new award, the most significant of these being the fear that a recipient might subsequently behave in such a way as to bring disgrace upon himself, upon his award and - by extension - upon the Crown itself. This anxiety was primarily rooted in the recognition that sailors were seldom drawn from polite society and that their heroic deeds might be witnessed only by members of their own class.

Awards of the Victoria Cross could only be made upon the express recommendation of a senior officer, thus ensuring that any cases passed to the authorities for approval were subjected to filtering by appropriately sensitive members of the middle or upper classes. By way of contrast, recommendations for the Albert Medal could, in theory at least, be submitted by any member of the community. It was accordingly felt appropriate to make all recipients sign an undertaking that they would return their decoration in the event of being required to do so. Such a demand might be made if a recipient were found to be 'guilty of any crime or disgraceful conduct', the rescinding of the decoration being intended to 'preserve pure this most honourable Distinction.'<sup>32</sup> In the event, no such cancellations were ever made.

The creation of the new wearable Albert Medal had an immediate impact upon several lifesaving societies, including the RHS which reduced the size of its medal to facilitate its being worn by servicemen whilst in uniform and the Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society which not only reduced the size of their awards but also remodelled them to mirror the oval form of the new decoration. Such changes were however cosmetic and, in general, the new decoration had surprisingly little effect on the core work of the private bodies. This was largely because the standard of bravery deemed necessary to earn the

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<sup>31</sup> See for example D. Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (New Brunswick, 1979).

<sup>32</sup> Albert Medal Warrant of 12 April 1867.

Albert Medal was set so high as to ensure that, even after the scope of the decoration was extended to cover rescues in mines and elsewhere on land, they were only given out in tiny numbers. Indeed, between 1866 and 1914 the Albert Medal was awarded on only 233 occasions: an average of fewer than five medals per annum.<sup>33</sup> By way of contrast, the RHS granted 160 medals in a single year during 1904.<sup>34</sup> The presentation of each and every one of these might reasonably be expected to inspire considerable positive coverage in the local press.

Thus, whilst the Albert Medal received not inconsiderable press coverage on the rare occasions when it was awarded, it was actually given out in such miniscule numbers as to be virtually invisible to most members of the public. Unofficial awards continued to represent the popular face of lifesaving and throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century medals and awards continued to be awarded in very substantial numbers by humane societies; special interest groups (such as the RNLI); elements of the insurance industry (such as Lloyd's); newspapers; and private individuals. The 'everyday heroes' of Victorian England were far more likely to have been honoured by the Committee of the Royal Humane Society than by the Crown. Indeed, even those who received an award from the hands of the Queen were likely also to receive a complementary medal from the RHS, RNLI or another similar body.

This situation was to remain largely unaltered during the opening years of the twentieth century. In 1908 a new award - the Edward medal - was created to recognise those brave acts performed in mines, quarries and factories which did not quite reach the standards required to earn the Albert Medal. Awarded by the Crown but funded by commercial interests, the Edward Medal was awarded sparingly, 218 being given between 1908 and 1914: an average of about 36 per annum. Whilst this figure at first sight seems not ungenerous, it should be remembered that in many instances multiple awards were made for the same rescue (66 Edward Medals being earned for rescue work at Wellington colliery in

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<sup>33</sup> Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 22.

<sup>34</sup> 155 bronze medals, four silver medals and one gold Stanhope Gold Medal.

1910)<sup>35</sup> and the actual number of incidents represented is very much lower than the bare figures suggest. As the extent of press coverage would tend to reflect the number of incidents and attendant award ceremonies, the public impact of such multiple awards would accordingly be diluted both within and outside the area where they were earned. Moreover, even when the Edward Medal was given to several rescuers, it was often the case that even larger numbers of unofficial medals were granted in recognition of the same incident. An extreme example of this phenomenon was provided by the Hulton Colliery disaster of 1910, following which the 10 Edward Medals presented by the King were matched by no fewer than 217 unofficial awards.<sup>36</sup> Thus, despite initiatives such as the introduction of the Albert and Edward Medals, the reality was that in the years up to 1914 the rewarding of lifesaving valour remained firmly embedded in the private rather than the public realm.

But to what type of people were these awards granted? The earliest recipients of the Royal Humane Society's medals had been drawn overwhelmingly from the middle classes, with a couple of token royals - namely Tsar Alexander I and Prince Ernest Augustus - thrown in for good measure. The award which they received was of classical design and intended to appeal to those blessed with learning and discernment and the Committee which voted the honours upon them was drawn from amongst their peers. By the early nineteenth century the RHS's medallists were more likely to have performed a brave deed than resuscitated an apparent corpse, but the professional classes continues to dominate the lists of those honoured. Indeed, during the period 1830-39 over 39% of the Society's medals were given to naval officers, whilst during the same period some 9% went to ordinary sailors and a mere 0.7% to unskilled labourers.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, during the RNLI's early years, its gold medal recipients were drawn primarily from the professional or officer classes.

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<sup>35</sup> D.V. Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour: A Complete Register of the Albert, Edward and Empire Gallantry Medals and How They Were Won* (Polstead, 1988) p. 60.

<sup>36</sup> Boddington, *The Entombed: British Mining Disasters and the Rescuers' Medals* (Naramata, 1992), pp. 23-28.

<sup>37</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; Young, *Acts of Gallantry 1* (London, 1872) & W. Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2: 1871-1950* (London, 1996).

From the late 1830s onwards the introduction of a new bronze medal encouraged the RHS to adopt a more generous policy towards the granting of medals and the number of awards made to working class recipients accordingly grew. In 1844 about 40% of all bronze medals awarded were given to fishermen, seamen or manual labourers; whilst between 1910 and 1914 no less than 50% of silver awards were granted to members of the same groups.<sup>38</sup> Such developments notwithstanding, members of the officer and professional classes continued to be proportionally over-represented, a fact which probably resulted from a reporting process which relied on ‘respectable’ members of the public – such as doctors, ship-owners or magistrates – submitting reports which were then evaluated by members of the same social classes. Reports of rescues submitted via the Foreign Office, army or Admiralty were likewise prone to focus on the deeds of their own officers and officials. Submissions were accordingly subjected to middle-class filtering both at the point of submission and the point of assessment. The awards made by the Order of St John were similarly mediated, all eyewitness recommendations having to be ‘countersigned by the nearest Clergyman, or magistrate, or Employer of the witness.’<sup>39</sup>

Whilst the RHS and the RNLI pioneered the rewarding of working-class bravery (and served as sources of inspiration for other bodies both at home and abroad), the State was slow to set in motion a parallel official system for rewarding ‘everyday’ courage. It was not until the 1850s that the establishment of the Victoria Cross and Distinguished Conduct Medal created an opportunity for ordinary soldiers and sailors to earn wearable distinctions, and it was to take until the creation of the Albert Medal in the following decade for the same opportunity to be extended to civilians. Even then, filtering occurred in the assessment of Albert Medal claims, and whilst over 44% of the awards made between 1866 and 1914 went to manual workers, seamen or junior soldiers; during the same period nearly 37% went to naval or military officers, managers or professionals.

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<sup>38</sup> Data derived from Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*; RHS *Annual Reports*; RHS *Case Books*; and Life Saving Awards Society website [www.lsars.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk](http://www.lsars.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk) (21.5.2008).

<sup>39</sup> *Order of St John of Jerusalem in England: Descriptive History of its Medals for Saving Life on Land by Special Acts of Bravery* (London, 1876), n.p.



The degree of filtering is however less evident than in the case of the awards of the RHS, a situation which is likely to reflect in part the higher proportion of Albert Medal recommendations received from members of the general public rather than via representatives of professional, military or administrative elites. Even greater levels of democracy were to be witnessed in the distribution of medals by popular newspapers and periodicals such as *To-day*, *Answers* and *Quiver*. These publications regularly invited their subscribers to submit cases for consideration and the medals and other rewards granted tended to mirror the preoccupations and interests of their readers, with numerous awards being made to policemen, life-boatmen and children. In the case of the *To-day* Gallantry Fund, almost half of the medallists honoured were also granted cash prizes, a reflection of their humble social status.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, whilst press-sponsored awards were indubitably more democratically distributed than those approved by the Board of Trade, Home Office or Committee of the RHS, it must be recalled that the final decision on who was to receive or be denied an award rested with the newspaper's editor; and that the person occupying such a position would have himself been raised with the values, attitudes and prejudices of the Victorian middle classes.

Prejudice certainly came to the fore when it came to the consideration of granting awards to women. Female lifesavers might be perceived as anomalous: having a foot in both of the 'separate spheres' which were so central to orthodox middle-class Victorian thought. The saving of life could readily be portrayed as nurturing and feminine; but the performance of brave deeds strayed into an altogether more masculine and pragmatic realm. Female rescuers thus occupied an uncomfortable position in the Victorian middle-class psyche, and they are markedly under-represented both as recipients of official and unofficial awards, accounting for a little over 2% of pre-World War I Albert Medal winners<sup>41</sup> and less than 3% of RHS silver medallists between 1830 and 1914.<sup>42</sup> The 20 RNLI medals issued up to 1914 were granted in recognition of only 11 incidents, with

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<sup>40</sup> Anon, 'The "To-day" Gallantry Fund Medal', *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal* 20 (1994), pp. 46-58.

<sup>41</sup> Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*, pp. 17-53.

<sup>42</sup> Figures based on RHS Case Books plus data published in Young, *Acts of Gallantry* 1 & Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry* 2.

awards being given to members of the same family or household on several occasions.<sup>43</sup> The language used in the RHS's own reports of female rescues initially frequently reflected the value systems of the Society's officials, Jane Pool (who won a silver medal in 1845) for example being defined as 'a slightly-made little girl of eighteen'.<sup>44</sup> By the latter part of the nineteenth century however a far more gender-neutral language had been adopted, and the reports of rescues reproduced in the Society's *Annual Reports* place little or no emphasis on the gender of individual rescuers, concentrating instead on the technicalities of the rescue itself.

But while there is ample surviving evidence of official opposition to the granting of military awards and decorations to women,<sup>45</sup> the paucity of awards made to women by the various private organisations need not necessarily be viewed as solely the product of institutionalised misogyny or bias. In many instances the types of acts normally rewarded by the societies occurred in spheres of life (such as coal-mining or shipping) which were not regularly frequented by women, whilst in the case of the RHS a review of the surviving documentation suggests that the number and type of awards granted generally accurately reflect both the number of submissions received and the risks run by the rescuers. That notwithstanding, numerous awards were given for rescues which reinforced the stereotypical female carer role, with over 72% of the RHS silver medals granted to women during the period 1830-1914 being given in recognition of the rescue or attempted rescue of children. To a large extent such an allocation doubtless served to mirror the types of circumstances in which a woman might be called upon to save life; but the granting of medals in recognition of women performing their 'natural' nurturing and caring roles would also have helped to reduce the degree to which such recognition might otherwise have threatened traditional gender-role stereotypes. Accordingly, whilst the granting of awards to women by the RHS, RNLI and other bodies might have served briefly to raise the profile of individual recipients, the practice did little to undermine the prevalent bourgeois orthodoxy of 'separate spheres'.

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<sup>43</sup> See B. Cox, *Lifeboat Gallantry: RNLI Medals and How They Were Won* (London, 1998).

<sup>44</sup> Contemporary account reproduced in Young, *Acts of Gallantry* 1 p. 125

<sup>45</sup> See N. Gooding, *Honours and Awards to Women to 1914* (London, 2007).

The awards of the RHS were also awarded only to *surviving* rescuers and, in the case of bodies which granted posthumous rewards, such as the Carnegie Hero Fund, female honourees occur with rather greater frequency. The Royal Humane Society of New Zealand similarly gave posthumous honours. Women accounted for 12% of the awards made by the society to living rescuers between 1899 and 1914, but 47% of its posthumous awardees.<sup>46</sup> Much of the coverage given to women in the numerous books recounting and celebrating ‘exemplary lives’ dwelt upon such martyrs,<sup>47</sup> raising the intriguing possibility that dead heroines were more valued – and perhaps less threatening to a male-dominated the *status quo* – than live ones.

But if medals were only rarely awarded to women, what was the situation *vis-a-vis* those drawn from Britannia’s non-white citizens? From the late eighteenth century the Honourable East India Company had taken steps to ensure that its sepoys were decorated with medals as a means of encouraging their commitment to their imperial masters and even the prestigious Victoria Cross had been earned by a black African soldier as early as 1866.<sup>48</sup> Non-Europeans likewise on occasion received the Albert Medal, seven such awards (amounting to a little under 3.7% of the total) being made prior to 1914. Nevertheless, an examination of the circumstances surrounding the sole instances in which Edward Medals were presented to black Africans reveals the application of double standards, with native rescuers receiving bronze medals and Europeans silver.<sup>49</sup> In contrast with many reports in the popular press, the citations associated with RHS awards to non-white recipients display little evidence of overt racism, and the types of deed rewarded by the Society appear to be in general the same, with corresponding classes of award being granted to rescuers irrespective of ethnicity.

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<sup>46</sup> See J.D. Wills, *Zealandia’s Brave: The Royal Humane Societies in New Zealand, 1850-1998* (Christchurch, 2001).

<sup>47</sup> See for example K. Stanway, *Britannia’s Calendar of Heroes*, (London, 1914), pp. 210-79, wherein 8 of the 11 women featured lose their lives in rescuing children, siblings and friends.

<sup>48</sup> M. Arthur, *Symbol of Courage* (London, 2005), pp. 108-9.

<sup>49</sup> Six silver Edward Medals given to Europeans and six bronze Edward Medals given to African recipients for rescuing miners trapped by mud-rush in Kimberley Diamond Mine (1909).

Non-white recipients were nonetheless under-represented in the Society's award tables, although by 1904 they accounted for almost 10% of all bronze medals granted. Under-representation resulted less from racial or cultural bias on the part of the Society than from the relative paucity of suitable cases passed to them for consideration, racial filtering having taken place at a point prior to submission. With a few exceptions, the RHS appears to have endeavoured to treat all cases submitted to it on an equal basis, the final distribution of awards reflecting the broader societal prejudices of those who submitted (or failed to submit) meritorious cases for consideration.

That is not of course to say that non-white rescuers were frequently publically held up as suitable subjects for admiration or emulation. Although Africans and Indians were granted lifesaving awards by both the Crown and humane societies, accounts of their deeds were seldom reproduced in the mass-circulating popular books of the late Victorian era. Children, by way of contrast, frequently featured as lifesavers both in fictional tales of adventure and in 'improving' literature. Publications such as *The Boys of England* recounted tales of youthful daring, whilst authors such as Mundell - writing for the Sunday School Union - and Lane dressed up true tales of courage and sacrifice for a youthful audience. The audiences for such publications could be vast. At the peak of its circulation in 1871, Edwin Brett's *The Boys of England* sold some ¼ million copies weekly and enjoyed an estimated readership of 2 million,<sup>50</sup> its youthful working-class readers receiving a crash-course in middle-class values:

The *Boys of England* contained advice about various occupations open to the working-class youth, and snippets from Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help*. Another significant element... was its patriotic tone, intended to display the English national character, particularly "that true manliness, which is England's moral as well as physical supremacy over the other nations of the earth".<sup>51</sup>

Such literature vigorously promoted the virtues of patriotism and muscular Christianity, presenting its readership with an array of exemplary lives from which to seek inspiration. The heroes featured frequently earned medals and

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<sup>50</sup> A. Riches, *When the Comics Went to War* (Edinburgh, 2009), p. 16.

<sup>51</sup> Kevin Carpenter, quoted in A. Riches, *When the Comics Went to War* (Edinburgh, 2009), p. 21.

other honours. Young lifesavers were lauded, and about 9% of the bronze medals awarded by the RHS between 1844 and 1904 were given to children and young people of 16 or under.<sup>52</sup> Even greater prominence was given to youthful lifesaving by the various award-giving newspapers at the turn of the century. These, reflecting both public interest (as manifested in the types of recommendation received) and a hard-headed recognition of the newsworthiness of youthful heroics, gave in excess of 20% of their medals to youngsters.<sup>53</sup>

Whilst the language of the RHS's *Annual Reports* of the late-Victorian period provide little evidence for the Society pursuing an overtly nationalistic or jingoistic agenda, many of the newspaper-sponsored awards which came into being in the 1880s and 1890s adopted designs liberally draped in overtly patriotic symbolism. The rise of patriotic uniformed youth organisations such as the Scouts and Boys Brigade represented a response to public anxieties about the health and strength of the nation in the wake of the Boer War. These new quasi-military organisations were quick to establish a range of gallantry awards to which their members might aspire. Children were deemed to be mutable, Baden Powell declaring that 'Very few men are born brave, but any man can make himself brave if he tries – and especially if he begins trying when he is a boy.'<sup>54</sup> Scouts were drilled in the virtues of patriotism and self-sacrifice and marvelled at the tales of their fellows whose bravery had been recognised by the receipt of a medal from 'B-P'.

The Boys Brigade likewise sought to mould the children of Britain's working-class, proclaiming its objective to be 'the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among Boys and the promotion of habits of Obedience, reverence, Discipline, Self-Respect and all that tend towards a true Christian Manliness.'<sup>55</sup> Both bodies

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<sup>52</sup> Children received none of the 20 bronze medals awarded in 1844; 7/56 in 1864; 10/136 in 1884; and 17/155 in 1904.

<sup>53</sup> Between 1885 and 1904 the publications *To-day*, *Pluck* and *Golden Penny* gave 29 out of a total of 139 medals to children.

<sup>54</sup> R. Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship* (London, 1908), p. 226.

<sup>55</sup> J. Springhall, 'Building Character in the British Boy: the Attempt to Extend Christian Manliness to Working-class Adolescents, 1880-1914' in Mangan, J.A. & Walvin, J. (eds.), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1987), p. 53.

actively rewarded, promoted and publicised brave deeds performed by their members, creating a pantheon of disciplined and dutiful heroes. The makings of Kitchener's army can readily be seen in the young Scouts who 'were taught to march, wave banners and win medals'.<sup>56</sup>

## Summary

The RHS originally produced medals as a means of recognising the work of those who supported its aims but, by the early nineteenth century, and in common with the various other philanthropic bodies which had sprung up in its wake, it had turned to using them as a means of recognising exceptional courage. The granting of medals by the RHS was in addition intended to increase public awareness of the Society and its work, encourage patriotism, stimulate Christian virtue, and promote emulation. Rigid divisions between the giver and receiver of decorations also served to reinforce class, gender and race structures; whilst local and provincial societies were able to use both symbolic designs and elaborate civic presentation ceremonies to promote pride in local towns, cities and communities.

The giving of medals was central to the achievement of these aims, the physical awards - when prominently worn - converting the recipient into a living memorial and model for emulation. This process was greatly facilitated by the granting of official permission for service personnel to wear the medals of the RHS and RNLI. The elevation of medallists to the status of 'everyday heroes' was however dependent upon ensuring high levels of public interest and to do this the RHS and other bodies - in particular the RNLI - made effective use not only of their own in-house publications but also the popular press. Indeed, press coverage of the RHS's activities rose consistently during the nineteenth century, featuring in a paltry 11 news reports in *The Times* during the first quarter of the century but in a far more impressive 404 stories in the final quarter. The medals of the RHS and other societies were generally distributed with due ceremony, the associated publicity ensuring that the recipients were at least accorded the status

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<sup>56</sup> R. Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War* (London, 2005), p. 14.

of local heroes. These local heroes were frequently drawn from the working classes. The recognition of such working-class bravery had been pioneered by the RHS and RNLI and their medals had been used as a means of recognising the courage of a segment of society whose deeds had hitherto gone un-noticed and un-remarked. Hitherto, heroes had almost without exception been drawn from the upper echelons of society. The 'working class hero' was very much a product of the second half of the nineteenth century and the granting of medals (albeit in limited numbers) to members of the labouring classes - as well as the erection of public monuments such as G.F. Watts's *Memorial to Heroic Self-Sacrifice* - were central to the development of what was essentially a new concept.

The greatest fame was afforded those whose tales were taken up by popular publishers and authors who recognised them as having the potential to inspire their would-be readership. Time and time again the tales of brave individuals were refashioned to create exemplary lives which might be used to reach new audiences amongst the young and the aspirational working classes. The fact that most of the individuals selected for this process of apotheosis had been granted medals was significant, but the mere possession of a bravery award was not enough to ensure that a man or woman should be thus elevated. The weavers of 'heroic lives' sought to find their exemplars amongst the ranks of the working classes. Middle-class and upper-class medallists were accordingly largely excluded from their ranks. The best-known lifesavers were working-class to the core and, as such, were the antithesis of the military heroes of the Napoleonic and Victorian eras.

Whilst still valued by members of the officer and professional classes, medals thus came also to serve as badges of honour for the working classes: highly visible social markers whose significance was widely recognised. They conferred formally-sanctioned status upon those who wore them and identified their recipients to their peers as being individuals who were worthy of emulation. The receipt of a lifesaving medal allowed even the most humble rescuer to be implicitly identified with national heroes such as Grace Darling and reinforced in the eyes of the public the moral and patriotic messages explicitly linked to them.

Nevertheless, except at a local level, the simple possession of a medal did not imbue its owner with heroic status. Wider recognition was instead in the gift of those authors and journalists who created and disseminated the popular narratives which grew from the individual acts of bravery. The majority of the heroes so created were representative of the industrious poor. This was in marked contrast with the press and public's treatment of military heroes, the majority of whom were drawn from the officer class. These were often holders of the highest Royal decoration for valour, the Victoria Cross.

From the middle of the nineteenth century the establishment of government-sponsored lifesaving awards meant that the private societies no longer held a monopoly on the rewarding of those who Andrew Carnegie labelled the 'Heroes of Peace.'<sup>57</sup> Civil awards such as the Albert Medal and Edward Medal did not however attain the same level of public recognition as the Victoria Cross and their creation did little to undermine the role of the RHS and its fellows, the new state-sponsored awards being given in such small numbers as to be relatively insignificant when seen alongside the far more generous distribution of well-established, well-publicised but unofficial awards. In many cases both official and unofficial awards were granted in recognition of the same incident, but whilst the Crown expressed concerns about the appropriateness of wearing multiple awards granted for the same deed, in general the two systems operated harmoniously.

Indeed, it was not until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 that the near-monopoly of the private societies was broken. Conscription ensured that a whole generation of men was exposed to the horrors of war, as opposed to the far smaller number of volunteers who had participated in the colonial campaigns of the nineteenth century. The slaughter in France and Flanders led to a vast increase in the number of brave acts brought to the attention of the authorities at a time when the activities of the private lifesaving bodies and the writings of the likes of Lane and Mundell had ensured that value of the medal as a means of recognising courage and promoting loyalty and patriotism was almost universally

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<sup>57</sup> J.F. Wall, *Andrew Carnegie* (Oxford, 1970), p. 397.



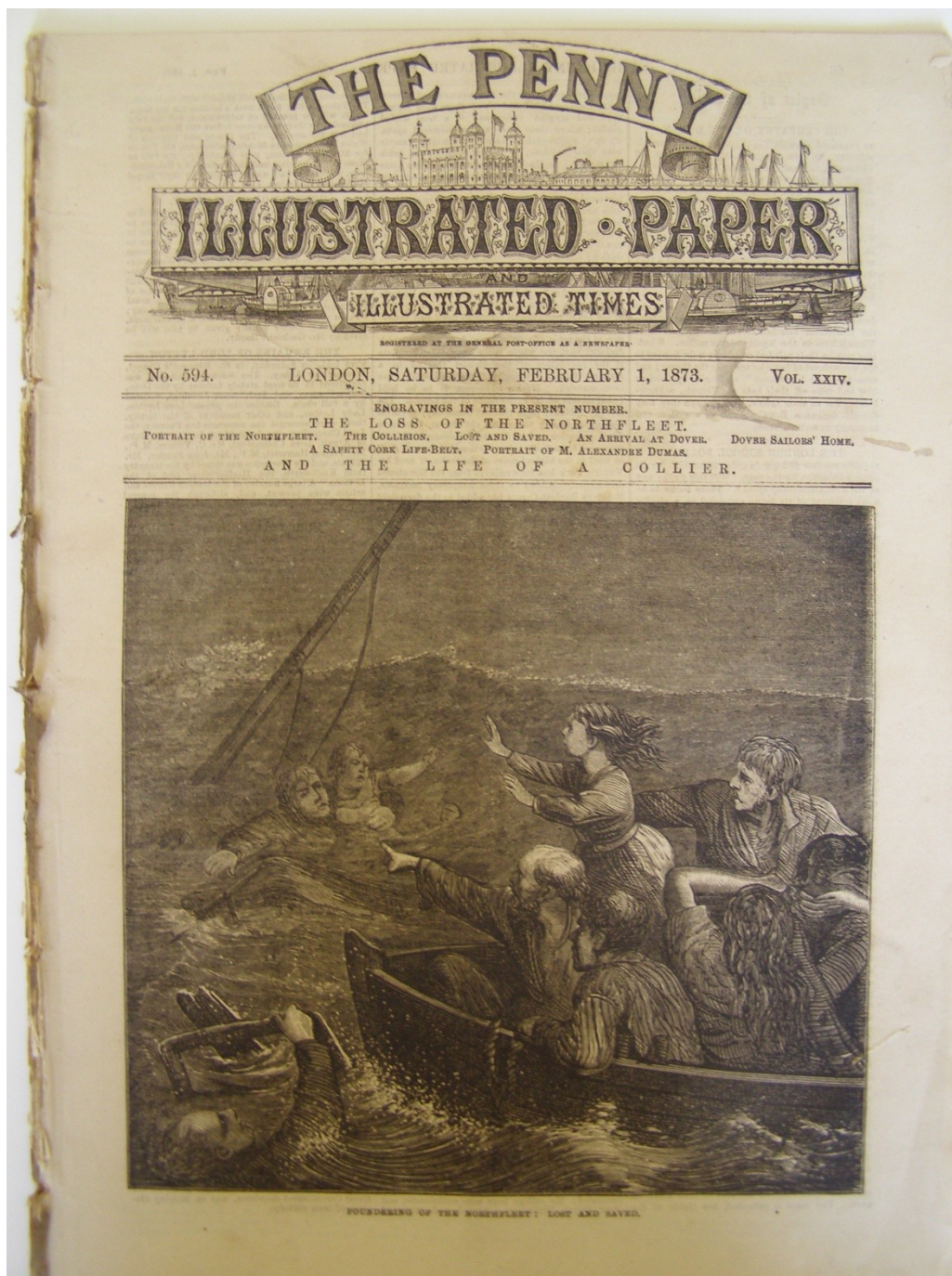
appreciated. The State responded by initiating an array of novel awards both to meet the demands imposed by total war and to reward the vast numbers of ordinary men and women who had displayed conspicuous bravery in the field. Courage, which had previously been a rare and valued commodity, became almost commonplace as hundreds of thousands of men drawn from every stratum of society were forced to struggle for survival on a daily basis.

Within this novel reality, the recognition of brave deeds performed in the saving of life came to take second place to those performed in an attempt to kill, whilst the number of medals given by the RHS - which had hitherto greatly exceeded in number those given by the Crown - were now given in far smaller numbers than those awarded in the name of the King. The dominance of the RHS and the private societies was eclipsed and they came increasingly to be subsumed into the official honours system. In a world at war there was still a need for heroes, but it was a different type of courage which was now demanded. As H.M. Tomlinson observed, 'Courage isn't what it used to be. The machine runs over us and we can't stop it.'<sup>58</sup> Such a new world had less time for humanitarian heroes.

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<sup>58</sup> H.M. Tomlinson, *All our Yesterdays*, (London, 1930), p. 481.

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## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX 1

### Royal Humane Society Medal: Recorded Specimens, 1776-1825

Recipient	Date	Glazed	Provenance	Suspension
Frederick Bull	(1776)	Not known	Spink's <i>Numismatic Circular</i> , 1920	not known
John Drymond	1777	No	Dix Noonan Webb 4 July 2001	loop
James Coles	1778	No	Dix Noonan Webb 15 December 2000	loop
W. Wrench	1781	No	Glendinning's 28 March 2001	loop
I.L. Shirreff	1783	No	Dix Noonan Webb 25 September 2008	loop
John Dodd	1784	No	Dix Noonan Webb 25 September 2008	loop
John Gray	1785	No	Dix Noonan Webb 9 December 1999	loop
John Baker	1787	No	Christie's, 22 March 1988	loop
Steel	1791	No	<i>LSARS Journal</i> 16, 79	loop
Hooper	1791	No	Dix Noonan Webb 25 September 2008	loop
North	1792	No	Spink's 28 March 1995	ring
Furnass	1793	No	Spink's 25 November 1998	ring
Pryce	1793	No	CJ & AJ Dixon October 2007	loop
Brown	1794	Yes	Glendinning's 2 March 1988	swivel
Summers	1796	No	Dix Noonan Webb 13 December 2007	none
Gretton	1797	Yes	ex Fevyer Coll. (not in 2008 sale)	not known
Nisbett	1798	No	<i>LSARS Journal</i> 16, 79	none
Penn	1798	No	Christopher Eimer (online archive)	none
D. Bromley	1799	Not known	House of Commons Collection	not known
Beckingsale	1799	No	Spink's 22 July 2004	none
Woodford	1800	No	Dix Noonan Webb 25 September 2008	swivel
Browne	1800	Yes	Floyd, Johnson & Payne 21 November 1997	not known
A.B.W. Lord	1802	No	Glendinning's 23 June 1993	loop
Thomas Young	1803	Yes	Sotheby's 28 June 1990	not known
Denny	1804	No	Dix Noonan Webb 25 September 2008	none

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<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Glazed</b>	<b>Provenance</b>	<b>Suspension</b>
Banks	1805	No	Dix Noonan Webb 25 September 2008	none
Brodie	1805	Yes	Dix Noonan Webb 22 October 1997	engraved rim
I. (J) Colen	1805	No	Dix Noonan Webb 13 December 2007	none
Oldham	1805	Yes	Dix Noonan Webb 25 September 2008	suspension post
Smith	1805	Yes	Dix Noonan Webb 25 September 2008	swivel
Stone	1805	Yes	<i>LSARS Journal</i> 24, 57	not known
Taylor	1805	Not known	<i>LSARS Journal</i> 9, 20	not known
Tsar Alexander I	1806	Yes	State Hermitage Museum	swivel
Aldis	1806	Yes	Liverpool Medal Co. February 2002	not known
A.D. Bosquet	1806	No	British Museum M3887	none
Edw. Owen	1808	Yes	Glendinning's 25 March 1992	engraved rim
G.W. Manby	1808	No	British Museum 1851-7-9-11	suspension
Rd. Hunter	1809	Yes	Wallis & Wallis 16 June 1988	not known
J. Sykes	1809	Not known	<i>LSARS Journal</i> 13, 67 13, 67	not known
W.C. Hood	1810	No	Christie's, 22 March 1988	not known
J.P. Evans (re-engraved)	1810	No	Dix Noonan Webb 9 December 1999	loop
Tho. Robson	1816	No	Dix Noonan Webb 9 December 1999	ring
R. Rochford	1817	No	Sotheby's 11 May 1989	gilt & brooched
J. Short	1818	Yes	Glendinning's 24 July 2002	not known
J. Davison	1818	Yes	Baldwin March 1950	ring
L. Hall	1818	Yes	Dix Noonan & Webb December 2006	ring
Thom. Cook	1819	No	Spink's 8 May 2002	not known
Mrs. C. Blamire	1822	No	Spink's 8 November 1984	not known
Wm. F. Roome	1824	No	Glendinning's 15 April 2003	none
Capt. F. English	1825	Yes	Glendinning's 2 March 1989	ring suspension
Johs. Goodwin	undated	No	Liverpool Medal Co. February 2004	not known



## APPENDIX 2

### Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient<sup>1</sup>

#### 1830-39

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total = 143)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	51	35.7%
Army Officer/ Cadet	5	3.5%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	9	6.3%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	12	8.4%
Police	1	0.7%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	5	3.5%
Pilot/ Harbour Master	2	1.4%
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	13	9.1%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	5	3.5%
Unskilled/manual labour	1	0.7%
School pupil/ youth	9	6.3%
Unspecified	30	21.0%

#### 1840-49

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total =157)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	41	26.1%
Army Officer/ Cadet	6	3.8%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	9	5.7%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	15	9.6%
Police	4	2.5%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	3	1.9%
Pilot/ Harbour Master	1	0.6%
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	27	17.2%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	3	1.9%
Domestic Service	2	1.3%
Unskilled/manual labour	2	1.3%
School pupil/ youth	10	6.4%
Unspecified	34	21.7%

<sup>1</sup> Data derived from *RHS Annual Reports*; Young, *Acts of Gallantry*; and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.

### 1850-59

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total =195)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	65	33.3%
Army Officer/ Cadet	10	5.1%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	8	4.1%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	15	7.7%
Police	3	1.5%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	4	2.1%
Pilot/ Harbour Master	2	1.0%
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	30	15.4%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	8	4.1%
Domestic Service	2	1.0%
Unskilled/manual labour	3	1.5%
School pupil/ youth	10	5.1%
Unspecified	35	17.9%

### 1860-69

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total =128)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	46	35.9%
Army Officer/ Cadet	5	3.9%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	7	5.5%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	6	4.7%
Police	1	0.8%
Pilot/ Harbour Master	1	0.8%
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	30	23.4%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	5	3.9%
Domestic Service	1	0.8%
School pupil/ youth	2	1.6%
Unspecified	24	18.7%

### 1870-79

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total =98)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	29	29.6%
Army Officer/ Cadet	8	8.2%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	4	4.1%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	7	7.1%
Police	2	2.0%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	3	3.1%
Sailors/ boatmen/ fishermen etc.	18	18.4%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	5	5.1%
Unskilled/manual labour	4	4.1%
School pupil/ youth	8	8.2%
Unspecified	10	19.2%

**1880-89**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of Awards (Total = 134)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	22	16.4%
Army Officer/ Cadet	11	8.2%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	5	3.7%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	12	8.9%
Police	7	5.2%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	13	9.7%
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	24	17.9%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	7	5.2%
Unskilled/manual labour	21	15.7%
School pupil/ youth	4	3.0%
Unspecified	8	6.0%

**1890-99**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of Awards (Total = 120)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	14	11.7%
Army Officer/ Cadet	9	7.5%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	7	5.8%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	7	5.8%
Police	5	4.2%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	7	5.8%
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	26	21.7%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	17	14.2%
Domestic service	1	0.8%
Unskilled/manual labour	19	15.9%
School pupil/ youth	2	1.7%
Unspecified	6	5.0%

**1900-09**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of Awards (Total =111)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	12	10.8%
Army Officer/ Cadet	6	5.4%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	3	2.7%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	7	6.3%
Police	4	3.6%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	3	2.7%
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	32	28.8%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	8	7.2%
Unskilled/manual labour	30	27.0%
Unspecified	6	5.4%

**1910-14**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of Awards (Total = 42)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	12	28.6%
Army Officer/ Cadet	1	2.4%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	4	9.5%
Police	1	2.4%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	2	4.8%
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	11	26.2%
Unskilled/manual labour	10	23.8%
School pupil/youth	1	2.4%

**RHS Stanhope Medal: 1873-1914**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of Awards (Total = 42)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	16	38.1%
Army Officer/ Cadet	5	11.9%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	1	2.4%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	2	4.8%
Police	1	2.4%
Foreman/ supervisor/ skilled labour	2	4.8%
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	9	21.4%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	1	2.4%
Unskilled/manual labour	4	9.5%
Unspecified	1	2.4%

**Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient  
 (Number of Awards)**

	1830-1839	1840-1849	1850-1859	1860-1869	1870-1879	1880-1889	1890-1899	1900-1909	1910-1914
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	51	41	65	46	29	22	14	12	12
Army Officer/ Cadet	5	6	10	5	8	11	9	6	1
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	9	9	8	7	4	5	7	3	-
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	12	15	15	6	7	12	7	7	4
Police	1	4	3	1	2	7	5	4	1
Foreman/ supervisor/ skilled labour	5	3	4	-	3	13	7	3	2
Pilot/Harbour Master	2	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	13	27	30	30	18	13	26	32	11
Army NCO/ Other Rank	5	3	8	5	5	24	17	8	-
Domestic service	-	2	2	1	-	-	1	-	-
Unskilled/manual labour	1	2	3	-	4	21	19	30	10
School pupil/youth	9	10	10	2	8	4	2	-	1
Unspecified	30	34	35	24	10	8	6	6	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>42</b>

**Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient  
 (Percentage of Awards)**

	1830-1839	1840-1849	1850-1859	1860-1869	1870-1879	1880-1889	1890-1899	1900-1909	1910-1914
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	35.7	26.1	33.3	35.9	29.6	16.4	11.7	10.8	28.6
Army Officer/ Cadet	3.5	3.8	5.1	3.9	8.2	8.2	7.5	5.4	2.4
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	6.3	5.7	4.1	5.5	4.1	3.7	5.8	2.7	-
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	8.4	9.6	7.7	4.7	7.1	8.9	5.8	6.3	9.5
Police	0.7	2.5	1.5	0.8	2.0	5.2	4.2	3.6	2.4
Foreman/ supervisor/ skilled labour	3.5	1.9	2.1	-	3.1	9.7	5.8	2.7	4.8
Pilot/Harbour Master	1.4	0.6	1.0	0.8	-	-	-	-	-
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	9.1	17.2	15.4	23.4	18.4	17.9	21.7	28.8	26.2
Army NCO/ Other Rank	3.5	1.9	4.1	3.9	5.1	5.2	14.2	7.2	-
Domestic service	-	1.3	1.0	0.8	-	-	0.8	-	-
Unskilled/manual labour	0.7	1.3	1.5	-	4.1	15.7	15.9	27.0	23.8
School pupil/youth	6.3	6.4	5.1	1.6	8.2	3.0	1.7	-	2.4
Unspecified	21.0	21.7	17.9	18.7	19.2	6.0	5.0	5.4	-
<b>TOTAL AWARDS</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>42</b>

### APPENDIX 3

#### Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Nature of Rescue<sup>2</sup>

##### 1830-39

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 143)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	42	29.4%
Boat accident	14	9.8%
Wreck	28	19.6%
Fall through ice	3	2.1%
Beach Bathing	4	2.8%
Drowning (other)	43	30.1%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	1	0.7%
Other confined space (asphyxiation)	2	1.4%
Vehicle accident	1	0.7%
Resuscitation only	5	3.5%

##### 1840-49

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total =157 )	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	49	31.2%
Boat accident	18	11.5%
Wreck	10	6.4%
Fall through ice	4	2.5%
Beach Bathing	5	3.2%
Tide	4	2.5%
Drowning (other)	56	35.7%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	4	2.5%
Vehicle accident	1	0.6%
Cliff Rescue	1	0.6%
Resuscitation only	5	3.2%

##### 1850-59

Nature of Rescue	No. of Awards (Total =195 )	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	67	34.4%
Boat accident	17	8.7%
Wreck	4	2.1%
Fall through ice	11	5.6%
Beach Bathing	10	5.1%
Tide	2	1.0%
Drowning (other)	77	39.5%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	2	1.0%
Stranded on ice flow	1	0.5%
Bomb	1	0.5%
Fire	2	1.0%
Resuscitation only	1	0.5%

<sup>2</sup> Data derived RHS *Annual Reports*; from Young, *Acts of Gallantry*; and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.

### 1860-69

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 128)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	59	46.1%
Boat accident	6	4.7%
Wreck	21	16.4%
Fall through ice	4	3.1%
Beach Bathing	8	6.2%
Drowning (other)	28	21.9%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	1	0.8%
Hunting accident	1	0.8%

### 1870-79

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 98)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	40	40.8%
Boat accident	13	13.3%
Wreck	15	15.3%
Beach Bathing	7	7.1%
Drowning (other)	16	16.3%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning))	3	3.1%
Colliery/mine (explosion/ asphyxiation/drowning)	4	4.1%

### 1880-89

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 134)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	33	24.6%
Boat accident	15	11.2%
Wreck	10	7.5%
Fall through ice	7	5.2%
Beach Bathing	7	5.2%
Drowning (other)	36	26.9%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	17	12.7%
Colliery/mine (explosion/ asphyxiation/drowning)	1	0.7%
Other confined space (asphyxiation)	4	3.0%
Structural collapse (bridge/building)	3	2.2%
Cliff rescue	1	0.7%

### 1890-99

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 120)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	14	11.7%
Boat accident	17	14.2%
Wreck	43	35.8%
Fall through ice	5	4.2%
Beach Bathing	5	4.2%
Drowning (other)	10	8.3%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	4	3.3%
Colliery/mine (explosion/ asphyxiation/drowning)	13	10.8%
Other confined space (asphyxiation)	8	6.7%
Cliff rescue	1	0.8%

### 1900-09

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 111)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	13	11.7%
Boat accident	16	14.4%
Wreck	25	22.5%
Fall through ice	1	0.9%
Beach Bathing	3	2.7%
Drowning (other)	9	8.1%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	8	7.2%
Colliery/mine (explosion/ asphyxiation/drowning)	14	12.6%
Other confined space (asphyxiation)	20	18.0%
Vehicle accident	1	0.9%
Fouled diver	1	0.9%

### 1910-14

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 42)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	16	38.1%
Boat accident	2	4.8%
Wreck	6	14.3%
Drowning (other)	3	7.1%
Colliery/mine (explosion/ asphyxiation/drowning)	6	14.3%
Other confined space (asphyxiation)	7	16.7%
Landslide	1	2.4%
Rescue from height	1	2.4%



**RHS Stanhope Medal: 1873-1914**

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 42)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	20	47.6%
Boat accident	4	9.5%
Wreck	5	11.9%
Flood	1	2.4%
Fall through ice	1	2.4%
Drowning (other)	3	7.1%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	1	2.4%
Other confined space (asphyxiation)	5	11.9%
Industrial accident	1	2.4%
Shark	1	2.4%

**Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Nature of Rescue  
 (Number of Awards)**

	1830-1839	1840-1849	1850-1859	1860-1869	1870-1879	1880-1889	1890-1899	1900-1909	1910-1914
Person overboard	42	49	67	59	40	33	14	13	16
Boat accident	14	18	17	6	13	15	17	16	2
Wreck	28	10	4	21	15	10	43	25	6
Fall through ice	3	4	11	4	-	7	5	1	-
Beach Bathing	4	5	10	8	7	7	5	3	-
Tide	-	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drowning (other)	43	56	77	28	16	36	10	9	3
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	1	4	2	1	3	17	4	8	-
Colliery/mine (explosion/ asphyxiation/ drowning)	-	-	-	-	-	1	13	14	6
Other confined space (asphyxiation)	2	-	-	-	6	4	8	20	7
Vehicle accident	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Cliff rescue	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Stranded on ice flow	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bomb	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fire	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hunting accident	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Structural collapse (bridge/building)	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
Fouled diver	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Landslide	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rescue from height	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Resuscitation only	5	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>42</b>

**Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Nature of Rescue  
 (Percentage of Awards)**

	<b>1830- 1839</b>	<b>1840- 1849</b>	<b>1850- 1859</b>	<b>1860- 1869</b>	<b>1870- 1879</b>	<b>1880- 1889</b>	<b>1890- 1899</b>	<b>1900- 1909</b>	<b>1910- 1914</b>
Person overboard	29.4	31.2	34.4	46.1	40.8	24.6	11.7	11.7	38.1
Boat accident	9.8	11.5	8.7	4.7	13.3	11.2	14.2	14.4	4.8
Wreck	19.6	6.4	2.1	16.4	15.3	7.5	35.8	22.5	14.3
Fall through ice	2.1	2.5	5.6	3.1	-	5.2	4.2	0.9	-
Beach Bathing	2.8	3.2	5.1	6.2	7.1	5.2	4.2	2.7	-
Tide	-	2.5	1.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drowning (other)	30.1	35.7	39.5	21.9	16.3	26.9	8.3	8.1	7.1
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	0.7	2.5	1.0	0.8	3.1	12.7	3.3	7.2	-
Colliery/mine (explosion/ asphyxiation/ drowning)	-	-	-	-	-	0.7	10.8	12.6	14.3
Other confined space (asphyxiation)	1.4	-	-	-	4.1	3.0	6.7	18.0	16.7
Vehicle accident	0.7	0.6	-	-	-	-	-	0.9	-
Cliff rescue	-	0.6	-	-	-	0.7	0.8	-	-
Stranded on ice flow	-	-	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bomb	-	-	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fire	-	-	1.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hunting accident	-	-	-	0.8	-	-	-	-	-
Structural collapse (bridge/building)	-	-	-	-	-	2.2	-	-	-
Fouled diver	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.9	-
Landslide	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.4
Rescue from height	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.4
Resuscitation only	3.5	3.2	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL AWARDS</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>42</b>

## APPENDIX 4

### Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Location of Rescue<sup>3</sup>

#### 1830-39

Location	Number of Awards (Total = 143)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	14	9.8%
At Anchor	5	3.5%
Harbour/Docks	36	25.2%
Inshore	28	19.6%
Beach	6	4.2%
River	37	25.9%
Canal	5	3.5%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	4	2.8%
Well/shaft	1	0.7%
Sewer/cesspool	1	0.7%
Domestic	1	0.7%
Resuscitation: No Rescue	5	3.5%

#### 1840-49

Location	Number of Awards (Total =157)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	12	7.6%
At Anchor	14	8.9%
Harbour/Docks	33	21.0%
Inshore	11	7.0%
Beach	10	6.4%
River	52	33.1%
Canal	8	5.1%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	6	3.8%
Well/shaft	2	1.3%
Swimming Baths	1	0.6%
Cliff	1	0.6%
Other	2	1.3%
Resuscitation: No Rescue	5	3.2%

#### 1850-59

Location	Number of Awards (Total =195)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	24	12.3%
At Anchor	35	17.9%
Harbour/Docks	36	18.5%
Inshore	10	5.1%
Beach	18	9.2%
River	48	24.6%
Canal	5	2.6%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	14	7.2%
Well/shaft	2	1.0%
Other	2	1.0%
Resuscitation: No Rescue	1	0.5%

<sup>3</sup> Data derived from *RHS Annual Reports*; Young, *Acts of Gallantry*; and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.

**1860-69**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Awards (Total =128)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
High Seas/ Offshore	19	14.8%
At Anchor	34	26.6%
Harbour/Docks	17	13.3%
Inshore	21	16.4%
Beach	10	7.8%
River	15	11.7%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	9	7.0%
Well/shaft	1	0.8%
Other	2	1.6%

**1870-79**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Awards (Total =98)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
High Seas/ Offshore	31	31.6%
At Anchor	9	9.2%
Harbour/Docks	12	12.2%
Inshore	14	14.3%
Beach	8	8.2%
River	12	12.2%
Canal	1	1.0%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	2	2.0%
Well/shaft	3	2.0%
Colliery/mine	4	3.1%
Other	2	2.0%

**1880-89**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Awards (Total = 134)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
High Seas/ Offshore	19	14.2%
At Anchor	18	13.4%
Harbour/Docks	13	9.7%
Inshore	16	11.9%
Beach	8	6.0%
River	19	14.2%
Canal	2	1.5%
Mill Race	2	1.5%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	11	8.2%
Well/shaft	17	12.7%
Sewer/cesspool	1	0.75%
Colliery/mine	1	0.75%
Industrial site	4	3.0%
Cliff	1	0.75%
Other	2	1.5%

**1890-99**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Awards (Total = 120)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
High Seas/ Offshore	16	13.3%
At Anchor	2	1.7%
Harbour/Docks	6	5.0%
Inshore	45	37.5%
Beach	9	7.5%
River	8	6.7%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	7	4.2%
Well/shaft	4	3.3%
Sewer/cesspool	4	3.3%
Colliery/mine	13	10.8%
Industrial site	3	2.5%
Cliff	1	0.8%
Other	2	1.7%

**1900-09**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Awards (Total =111)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
High Seas/ Offshore	18	16.2%
At Anchor	3	2.7%
Harbour/Docks	3	2.7%
Inshore	28	25.2%
Beach	3	2.7%
River	11	9.9%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	2	1.8%
Well/shaft	5	4.5%
Sewer/cesspool	5	4.5%
Colliery/mine	17	15.3%
Industrial site	12	10.8%
Other	4	3.6%

**1910-14**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Awards (Total =42)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
High Seas/ Offshore	11	26.2%
At Anchor	4	9.5%
Harbour/Docks	3	7.1%
Inshore	6	14.3%
River	3	7.1%
Sewer/cesspool	2	4.8%
Colliery/mine	6	14.3%
Industrial site	5	11.9%
Other	2	4.8%

**RHS Stanhope Medal: 1873-1914**

Location	Number of Awards (Total = 42)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	22	52.4%
At Anchor	1	2.4%
Harbour/Docks	3	7.1%
Inshore	2	4.8%
River	5	11.9%
Pond/ Lake	1	2.4%
Well	1	2.4%
Sewer/cesspool	2	4.8%
Colliery/Mine	1	2.4%
Industrial site	4	9.5%

**Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Location  
 (Number of Awards)**

	1830-1839	1840-1849	1850-1859	1860-1869	1870-1879	1880-1889	1890-1899	1900-1909	1910-1914
High Seas/ Offshore	14	12	24	19	31	19	16	18	11
At Anchor	5	14	35	34	9	18	2	3	4
Harbour/Docks	36	33	36	17	12	13	6	3	3
Inshore	28	11	10	21	14	16	45	28	6
Beach	6	10	18	10	8	8	9	3	-
River	37	52	48	15	12	19	8	11	3
Canal	-	8	5	-	1	2	-	-	-
Mill Race	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Pond/Lake/ Reservoir	5	6	14	9	2	11	7	2	-
Swimming baths	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Well/shaft	4	2	2	1	3	17	4	5	-
Sewer/cesspool	1	-	-	-	-	1	4	5	2
Colliery/mine	-	-	-	-	4	1	13	17	6
Industrial site	-	-	-	-	-	4	3	12	5
Cliff	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Domestic	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	1	2	2	2	2	2	4	2
Resuscitation: No rescue	5	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>42</b>

**Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Location  
 (Percentage of Awards)**

	<b>1830- 1839</b>	<b>1840- 1849</b>	<b>1850- 1859</b>	<b>1860- 1869</b>	<b>1870- 1879</b>	<b>1880- 1889</b>	<b>1890- 1899</b>	<b>1900- 1909</b>	<b>1910- 1914</b>
High Seas/ Offshore	9.8	7.6	12.3	14.8	31.6	14.2	13.3	16.2	26.2
At Anchor	3.5	8.9	17.9	26.6	9.2	13.4	1.7	2.7	9.5
Harbour/Docks	25.2	21.0	18.5	13.3	12.2	9.7	5.0	2.7	7.1
Inshore	19.6	7.0	5.1	16.4	14.3	11.9	37.5	25.2	14.3
Beach	4.2	6.	9.2	7.8	8.2	6.0	7.5	2.7	-
River	25.9	33.1	24.6	11.7	12.2	14.2	6.7	9.9	7.1
Canal	-	5.1	2.6	-	1.0	1.5	-	-	-
Mill Race	-	-	-	-	-	1.5	-	-	-
Pond/Lake/ Reservoir	2.8	3.8	7.2	7.0	2.0	8.2	4.2	1.8	-
Swimming baths	-	0.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Well/shaft	0.7	1.3	1.0	0.8	2.0	12.7	3.3	4.5	-
Sewer/cesspool	0.7	-	-	-	-	0.75	3.3	4.5	4.8
Colliery/mine	-	-	-	-	3.1	0.75	10.8	15.3	14.3
Industrial site	-	-	-	-	-	3.0	2.5	10.8	11.9
Cliff	-	0.6	-	-	-	0.75	0.8	-	-
Domestic	0.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	1.3	1.0	1.6	2.0	1.5	1.7	3.6	4.8
Resuscitation: No rescue	3.5	3.2	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL AWARDS</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>42</b>

## APPENDIX 5

### Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Additional Data<sup>4</sup>

#### 1830-39

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	143 (141 silver; 2 gold)	
Successful rescues	138	96.5%
Unsuccessful rescues	5	3.5%
Awards to women	3 (inc. 1 gold)	2.1%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	2	1.4%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	15	10.5%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	7	4.9%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	15	10.5%

#### 1840-49

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	157	
Successful rescues	152	96.8%
Unsuccessful rescues	5	3.2%
Awards to women	4	2.5%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	4	2.5%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	19	12.1%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	9	5.7%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	20	12.7%

#### 1850-59

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	195	
Successful rescues	186	95.4%
Unsuccessful rescues	9	4.6%
Awards to women	5	2.6%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	3	1.5%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	29	14.9%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	6	3.1%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	33	16.9%

<sup>4</sup> Data derived from *RHS Annual Reports*; Young, *Acts of Gallantry*; and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.



### 1860-69

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	128	
Successful rescues	117	91.4%
Unsuccessful rescues	11	8.6%
Awards to women	4	3.1%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	2	1.6%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	14 (inc. cases where award recognises more than 1 rescue)	10.9%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	7	5.5%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	13	10.2%

### 1870-79

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	98	
Successful rescues	93	94.9%
Unsuccessful rescues	5	5.1%
Awards to women	3	3.1%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	2	2.0%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	8	8.2%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	1	1.0%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	18	18.4%

### 1880-89

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	134	
Successful rescues	126	94.0%
Unsuccessful rescues	8	6.0%
Awards to women	5	3.7%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	5	3.7%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	14 (inc. cases where award recognises more than 1 rescue)	10.4%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	11	8.2%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	13	9.7%

### 1890-99

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	120	
Successful rescues	108	90.0%
Unsuccessful rescues	12	10.0%
Awards to women	3	2.5%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	4	3.3%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	3	2.5%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	7	5.8%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	3	2.5%

### 1900-09

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	111	
Successful rescues	81	73.0%
Unsuccessful rescues	30	27.0%
Awards to women	2	1.8%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	6	5.4%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	-	-
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	3	2.7%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	3	2.7%

### 1910-14

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	42	
Successful rescues	32	76.2%
Unsuccessful rescues	10	23.8%
Awards to women	-	-
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	-	-
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	-	-
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	3	7.1%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	2	4.8%

**RHS Stanhope Medal: 1873-1914**

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	42	
Successful rescues	8	19.0%
Unsuccessful rescues	34	81.0%
Awards to women	-	-
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	1	2.4%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	1	2.4%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	2	4.8%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	2	4.8%

**Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Additional Data (Number of Awards)**

	<b>1830-1839</b>	<b>1840-1849</b>	<b>1850-1859</b>	<b>1860-1869</b>	<b>1870-1879</b>	<b>1880-1889</b>	<b>1890-1899</b>	<b>1900-1909</b>	<b>1910-1914</b>
Total medals awarded	143	157	195	128	98	134	120	111	42
Successful rescues	138	152	186	117	93	126	12	81	32
Unsuccessful rescues	5	5	9	11	5	8	108	30	10
Awards to women	3	4	5	4	3	5	3	2	-
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	2	4	3	2	2	5	4	6	-
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	15	19	29	148*	8	14*	3	-	-
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	7	9	6	7	1	11	7	3	3
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	15	20	33	13	18	13	3	3	2

\* inc. cases where award recognises more than 1 rescue

**Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Additional Data  
 (Percentage of Awards)**

	<b>1830- 1839</b>	<b>1840- 1849</b>	<b>1850- 1859</b>	<b>1860- 1869</b>	<b>1870- 1879</b>	<b>1880- 1889</b>	<b>1890- 1899</b>	<b>1900- 1909</b>	<b>1910- 1914</b>
Successful rescues	96.5	96.8	95.4	91.4	94.9	94.0	90.0	73.0	76.2
Unsuccessful rescues	3.5	3.2	4.6	8.6	5.1	6.0	10.0	27.0	23.8
Awards to women	2.1	2.5	2.6	3.1	3.1	3.7	2.5	1.8	-
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	1.4	2.5	1.5	1.6	2.0	3.7	3.3	5.4	-
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	10.5	12.1	14.9	10.9	8.2	10.4	2.5	-	-
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	4.9	5.7	3.1	5.5	1.0	8.2	5.8	2.7	7.1
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	10.5	12.7	16.9	10.2	18.4	9.7	2.5	2.7	4.8

## APPENDIX 6

### Royal Humane Society: Stanhope Medal, 1873-1914<sup>5</sup>

Date	Name	Occupation/status	Rescue	Successful/ Unsuccessful	Other Awards
1873	Webb	Mercantile Marine Officer	High seas: man overboard	U	LSHS
1874	Houghton	Army Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1875	Rogers	RN Officer	High seas: man overboard	U	
1876	Storey	Land Owner	River: boating accident	S	
1877	Montgomerie	RN Officer	High seas: man overboard	U	AM (Sea)
1878	Wintz	RN Officer	High seas: man overboard	S	
1879	Chuckerbutty	'Medical Man'	River	S	
1880	Fremantle	RN Officer	High seas: man overboard	S	SFMRBS
1881	Senior	Indian Army Officer	River: boat accident	S	
1882	Jenkins	Police Constable	River: attempted suicide	S	
1883	Simpson	RN Rating	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1884	Cleverley	'Passenger'	High seas: man overboard	S	
1885	Collins	Trawlerman (Skipper)	High seas: man overboard	S	Quiver
1886	McRae	Indian Army Officer	Well	S	
1887	Hedley	Medical Student	River	S	
1888	Battison	RN Rating (Boy)	Ice	S	
1889	Meyer	Works Foreman	Foul Air: Industry	U	
1890	Cooper	Mercantile Marine Officer	High seas: man overboard	S	AM (Sea)
1891	Huddleston	Royal Indian Marine Officer	High seas: man overboard	S	
1892	Thomas	RN Rating	Inshore: Shark	S	
1893	Scrase-Dickens	Army Officer	High seas: man overboard	S	AM (Sea)
1894	Mugford	Works Foreman	Flood; Sewer	S	
1895	Hatton	Seaman	High seas: man overboard	U	
1896	Collin	Merchant Marine Officer	High seas: man overboard	S	Lloyds; MSG
1897	Chainey	RN Rating	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1898	O'Neill	Miner	Foul Air: Mine	U	
1899	Hall	Army Other Rank	Foul Air: Industry	S	

<sup>5</sup> Table based on RHS archives plus data published in W. Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2: 1871-1950* (London, 1996) and J. Boddington, *Courage of the Highest Order: The Stanhope Medal of the Royal Humane Society 1873-1994* (Glassboro, 1998).

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1900	Allen	Factory Worker	Foul Air: Industry	S	
1901	Lowry	RN Officer	High Seas: shipwreck	S	Lloyds
1902	Henderson	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: shipwreck	S	
1903	Shearme	Merchant Marine Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1904	Mackenzie	Army Medical Officer	High seas: man overboard	S	French MM; AMM; Lloyds
1905	Stockton	Carter	Foul Air: Sewer	S	
1906	Noble	RN Officer	High seas: man overboard	U	
1907	Parr	Seaman	Harbour: boat accident	S	
1908	Smith	Brick Worker	Collapsed Kiln	S	AM (Land)
1909	Boutell	RN Rating	High seas: shipwreck	S	
1910	Fraser	Trawlerman (Engineer)	High seas: man overboard	S	
1911	Hadley	Mercantile Marine Officer	High seas: man overboard (suicide)	S	
1912	Palmer	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: shipwreck	S	
1913	Tomkinson	RN Officer	High seas: man overboard	U	
1914	Hales	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: shipwreck	S	

**Other Awards:**

AM: *Albert Medal*

AMM: *Arnott Memorial Medal (Ireland)*

French MM: *French Marine Ministry Gold Lifesaving Medal*

LSHS: *Liverpool Shipwreck & Humane Society Marine Medal*

Lloyds: *Lloyds Lifesaving Medal*

MSG: *Merchant Service Guild Silver Valour Cross*

Quiver: *Quiver Medal*

SFMRBS: *Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners Royal Benevolent Society Medal*

## APPENDIX 7

### Royal Humane Society Silver Medals: Awarded 1830-1914<sup>6</sup>

Date	Name	Occupation/ status	Rescue	Successful/ Unsuccessful	Notes
1830	Grant	Army Officer	River	U	Attempted to save child
1830	Keen	-	River: carriage accident	S	
1830	Wilding	Serviceman	River	S	Saved child
1830	Green	Schoolboy	Beach: bathing	S	
1830	Dobbie	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1830	Brander	Gentleman: Described as 'Esq.'	Ice	S	
1830	Harper	Doctor	Resuscitation	S	
1830	Waugh	RN Officer	Harbour(?): man overboard	S	
1830	Avrey	Described as 'Mr'	Canal	S	
1830	Green	Described as 'Mr'	Ice	S	
1830	Fitzroy	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1830	Leigh	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1830	Wake	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1830	Hogan	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1830	Loder	Young Gentleman	River	S	Saved 2 'young ladies'
1830	Vielson	RN Rating	Harbour: man overboard	S	Described as 'man of colour'. Also stated to have rescued a man who fell overboard off African coast
1831	Earle	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1831	Stearne	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1831	Burman	Doctor (?)	Resuscitation	S	
1831	Alexander	Schoolboy	River	S	Etonian
1831	Mattacott	-	Lake	S	
1831	Worrall	Boy (14)	River: Boat accident	S	
1831	Parry	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1831	Higginson	Revenue Officer (Mate)	Harbour (?): man overboard	S	
1831	Macgrath	Carpenter	River	S	Saved child: 'thousands looking on'
1832	Dumaresque	RN Officer (Mate)	Harbour (?): man overboard	S	
1832	Mant	RN Officer	Harbour (?): man overboard	S	
1832	Cook	Attendant	River	U	Had previously

<sup>6</sup> Table based on RHS archives plus data published in L. Young, *Acts of Gallantry* (London, 1872) & W. Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2: 1871-1950* (London, 1996).

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					saved a woman and a child on separate occasions
1832	Johnston	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1832	Finlayson	RN Officer	Harbour (?): woman overboard	S	
1832	Barnes	RN Officer	Beach: boat accident	S	
1832	Moore	Doctor	Resuscitation	S	
1832	Wadoux	-	Harbour: woman overboard	S	
1832	Peate	RN Rating	Harbour: boat accident	S	Had previously saved man overboard
1833	Hon. Miss Eden	Lady	River	U	Female rescuer: Attempted to save child
1833	Field	Farmer	Inshore wreck	S	
1833	Baldock	RN Rating	High seas: child overboard	S	Casualty aged 6
1833	Leigh	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1833	Liardett	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1833	Hunt	Surgeon	River	S	Also resuscitated casualty
1833	Richmond	Described as 'Mr.'	River: boat accident	S	
1833	Jacks	Wine cooper	Docks: attempted suicide	S	
1833	Dunlop	Army NCO	River	S	Canada. Saved child
1833	Newell	Army Drummer	River	S	Saved children
1833	Hyland	Mercantile Marine Officer	High seas: man overboard. (Attempted suicide)	S	
1833	Henin	Pilot	Inshore wreck	S?	Boulogne. French rescuer
1833	Aldridge	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1833	Carruthers	'gentleman of the civil service'	Inshore wreck	S	Saved wife and Indian servant
1833	Elliot	Mercantile Marine Officer	River: boat accident	S	
1833	Sumner	Surgeon	Inshore wreck	S	
1833	Hoodlass	-	Inshore wreck	S	
1833	Dobson	-	Inshore wreck	S	
1833	Baker	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1833	Lennox	Army Officer/ Lord	Harbour: boat accident	S	
1834	Cole	Youth: Son of tanner	River	S	
1834	Felstead	Schoolboy (14)	River	S	
1834	Carroll	RN Officer	Harbour (?): man overboard	S	Midshipman (15)
1834	Wakefield	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	



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1834	Litton	Described as 'Mr'	River (attempted suicide)	S	
1834	Gilbert	Army Officer	River: boat accident	S	
1834	Mrs Savory	-	Beach	S	Female rescuer: Saved child
1834	Keys	RN Officer	Harbour: boat accident	S	Rescuer invalided
1834	Ray	Seaman	Inshore wreck	U	Ceylonese rescuer
1834	Owens	Boy (13): Son of ship's mate.	Harbour	S	Saved child
1834	Van der Ham	Ship's Master	Inshore wreck	S	Dutch rescuer
1834	Morgan	Mercantile Marine Mate	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1835	Fitzjames	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1835	Crawford	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1835	Morum	Mechanic	Child down privy	S	Casualty aged 2 ½
1835	Keys	'Young gentleman' (16)	Canal	S	Had previously (aged 13) saved a boy from a canal
1835	Tyfer	-	River	S	Two rescuers in one day. Only one successful
1835	Birch	-	Harbour	S	Had performed similar deed 14 months earlier
1835	Doneford	RN Rating	At anchor: Woman overboard (attempted suicide)	S	Had saved four others in previous incidents
1835	Dunbar	Mercantile Marine Rating	River: Boat accident	S	Had saved a boy in previous incident
1835	Payne	Gentleman	Canal: attempted suicide	S	
1835	Pigou	Officer: HEIC	River	S	
1835	Dovey	Boy	Beach: bathing	S	
1835	Sommerville	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1835	Willoughby	RN Officer	Harbour: child overboard	S	
1835	Hill	Described as 'Mr' and 'of Dundee Courier Office'	Harbour: child overboard	S	
1835	Burnby	RN Officer	High seas: man overboard	S	
1835	Pritchard	Described as 'Mr'	River: child overboard	S	
1835	Ellerthorpe	Mercantile Marine Rating	Harbour: man overboard	S	Had saved 7 other people in separate incidents 1833-34
1835	Bamford	'of the Ordnance Department'	Ice	S	Saved child
1835	Mant	RN Officer	High Seas: boat	S	Had received

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			accident		previous RHS Silver Medal (1833)
1836	Brockwell	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1836	Price	Police Officer	Asphyxiation: cesspool	S	
1836	Dobbie	RN Officer (Mate)	High Seas: men overboard	S	Had received previous RHS silver medal in 1831
1836	Thompson	-	River	S	Had saved a life in previous incident
1836	Palmer	RN Doctor	Sea (inshore)	S	
1836	Forbes	Described as 'Mr'	River	S	
1836	Philpott	Pilot	Shipwreck: Goodwin Sands	S	Had saved 100+ lives in previous incidents
1836	Crow	Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour	S	
1837	Callow	-	River	S	
1837	Hall	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1837	Ross	-	Harbour	S	
1837	Roberts	Baronet	Inshore wreck	S	Bronze Medals to boatmen
1837	MacDonald	Bengal Army Officer	Inshore wreck	S	As above
1837	Labatt	Described as 'Mr'	Harbour: attempted suicide	S	
1837	Walsh	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: wreck	S	82 saved
1837	Spence	-	Inshore wreck	S	
1837	Claxton	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	Had received previous RHS Silver Medal (1817) and saved woman in 1835
1837	Prosser	Described as 'Mr'.	River	S	Had saved 5 lives in previous incidents
1837	Blackwood	Described as 'Mr'. Ship's passenger	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1837	O'Shea	RN Asst. Surgeon	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1837	Foreman	Mercantile Marine Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1837	Darling	Lighthousekeeper	Inshore wreck	S	GOLD Medal
1837	Miss Darling	Lighthousekeeper's daughter	Inshore wreck	S	Female rescuer: GOLD Medal
1837	McIntyre	-	River: wreck	S	Saved 5 people
1837	Appleton	Cleric	River	U	
1837	Stevens	RN Officer (Mate)	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1837	Stephens	RN Officer (Mate)	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1837	Christopher	RN Officer (Mate)	High Seas: man overboard	S	Commanded rescue boat in

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					gale
1838	Smith	RN Officer	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1838	Palmer	RN Officer	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1838	Coppinger	Described as 'Esq.'	River	S	
1838	Graves	Described as 'Esq.'	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1838	Peacock	RN Officer	Harbour: child overboard	S	Saved child
1838	Lawrence	Surgeon	Resuscitation	S	
1838	Cowlan	Boy (16)	River	S	Saved child
1838	McRea	Cleric	River	S	Saved child
1838	Walker	Described as 'Mr.'	Asphyxiation: well	S	3 died, one recovered
1838	Ross	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1838	Jones	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1838	Mantle	RN Coastguard	Inshore wreck	S	
1838	Jones	-	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1838	Jennings	RN Coastguard	Inshore wreck	S	
1838	Higginson	Revenue Cutter Officer	Harbour	S	Saved child
1838	Jones	RN Coastguard (Officer?)	Inshore wreck	S	
1839	Green	Mercantile Marine Officer	River: men overboard	S	Result of collision
1839	Davies	-	River	S	
1839	Greenhill	-	Canal	S	
1839	Smith	-	Canal	S	
1839	Johnson	RN rating	River: boat accident	S	
1839	Eccleston	Described as 'Mr.'	River: attempted suicide.	S	
1839	Smith	Described as 'Mr.'	River: boat accident	S	One saved, one drowned
1839	Wood	-	River	S	
1839	Froggatt	Army NCO	Beach: bathing	S	Saved officer
1839	Brambles	Boy (13)	Beach: bathing	S	
1839	Hassett	Revenue boatman	Harbour	S	Had saved 3 lives in previous incidents
1839	Aldridge	RN Officer	Harbour	S	
1839	Roots	Doctor	Resuscitation	S	Medical Assistant
1839	Sinnot	Army Other Rank	High Seas: child overboard	S	
1840	Kinnaird	Seaman?	River: man overboard	S	
1840	Sleigh	Police: Chief Superintendent	River: Flood	S	
1840	Blane	Army Officer	River: boat accident	U	
1840	Wickham (James)	Young gentleman	River	S	
1840	Wickham (Joseph)	Young gentleman	River	S	
1840	Oakes	Ship's Carpenter	Inshore wreck	S	Bronze medals to 3 other rescuers

1840	Guthrie	-	Harbour	S	Saved child
1840	Nightingale	Described as 'Mr.'	Canal	S	Saved child
1840	Martin	Harbour Master	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1840	Tweedie	Master of convict ship	High Seas: child overboard	S	Saved child of convict
1840	Duncan	Merchant Marine Officer (2 <sup>nd</sup> Mate)	Harbour: men overboard	S	Son of RN Captain
1840	Harman	-	Beach: boat accident	S	Saved boy of 14
1840	Knight	Policeman	Asphyxiation: well	S	Saved 2 and recovered 1 body
1840	Downes	Guilford & Dorking Carrier	River	S	Saved 'young gentleman' (10)
1840	Kingston	RN Officer (Mate)	High Seas: man overboard	S	Had saved 4 lives in 1839.
1841	Stanley	RN Officer	Ice	S	
1841	Anglesea	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1841	Scott	RN Officer (Mate)	Harbour: boat accident	S	
1841	Cuffe	Described as 'Mr.'	Uncertain: bathing accident	S	
1841	Gallwey	-	Harbour	S	Saved child. Had previously saved woman.
1841	Sterne	-	Beach: bathing	S	
1841	English	Policeman	River	S	Assisted by 'some Italian girls'
1841	Entwistle	Army Other Rank	River	S	
1841	Higgins	Army (?) Captain	Swimming baths	S	Saved daughter of JP
1841	Vereker	Described as 'Esq.'	Beach/rocks: bathing	S	
1841	Sharpe	Described as 'Esq.' & 'of Meadowside Works'	River	S	Saved child.
1841	Willis	Doctor	Resuscitation	S	
1841	Ellis	Described as 'Mr.'	River	U	
1841	Tyrell	Described as 'Mr.'	Harbour	S	Saved boy.
1841	Guy	Liberated African	River	S	Black rescuer
1841	Osmond	Krooman	River	S	Black rescuer
1842	Lord Beauclerc	Aristocrat	Harbour: woman overboard	S	
1842	Sclater	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	Off Calais. Commanded French lifeboat
1842	McLeod	RN Officer	River: attempted suicide	S	
1842	Hone	Mercantile Marine Officer	River: man overboard	S	
1842	Lague	Boy (11)	Canal	S	
1842	Spurway	Described as 'Mr.'	River: attempted suicide	S	
1842	Biddulph	Army: Gentleman Cadet	Canal	S	
1842	Grant	-	River	S	Saved 2 lives in same month

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1842	Borton	Doctor	Resuscitation	S	
1842	Hahn	Merchant	River	S	
1842	Roberts	-	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1842	Richards	RN Officer	Harbour (?): boy overboard	S	
1842	Lundy	RN Rating	Harbour (?): boy overboard	S	
1842	Burgess	HEIC Cadet	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1842	Turner	RN Officer (Mate)	Harbour: wreck	S	
1842	McKillopp	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1843	Butler	Cleric	River	S	Rescuer aged 70
1843	Gilley	Blacksmith	Inshore wreck	S	
1843	Croker	Described as 'Mr.'	Mill Race	S	Had saved lives on 4 previous occasions
1843	Doran	RN Rating	Harbour: man overboard	U	
1843	Robson	Boy (13)	River	S	Son of factory owner. Saved child
1843	Walker	Described as 'Mr.'	River	S	
1843	Youngs	Coastguard: Chief Boatman	Inshore wreck	S	
1843	M. McGibbon	Ferry operator	River	S	Female recipient
1843	A. McGibbon	Ferryman	River	S	
1843	Blacklow	Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour	S	Saved child
1843	Edwards	Son of tradesman	Pond	S	Saved boy
1843	Whitehead	Described as 'Mr.'	River: cart accident	S	
1843	Corbin	Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour: woman & child overboard	S	Received RHS vellum cert. in 1841
1843	Ward	Boy (15)	Beach: bathing	S	
1843	Daniel	Described as 'Mr.'	River	S	Saved child.
1843	Polehampton	University student (Oxford)	River	S	
1843	Garnham	-	River; boat accident	S	
1843	Campbell	Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1843	Sir W. Riddell	Baronet	River	S	
1843	Gesvret	French Naval Matelot	River: man overboard	S	French Rescuer. Saved British Naval Officer
1843	Caldwell	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1843	Vansittart	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1843	Mackenzie	Mercantile Marine Officer (2 <sup>nd</sup> Mate)	High Seas: boy overboard	S	
1844	Braithwaite	RN Sailmaker	Harbour: boat accident	S	
1844	Cary	RN Officer	River: man overboard	S	
1844	Ollier	Retired surgeon	Resuscitation	S	Ice rescue. No

					silver medal to rescuer: 'a labouring man'
1844	Joiner	Mercantile Marine Officer (Mate)	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1844	Morton	-	River	S	Bronze medals to two assistants
1844	Creighton	Doctor	Canal: attempted suicide	S	Rescued & resuscitated
1844	Aitchison	Army Officer	Harbour	S	
1844	Barkwith	Army Private	Harbour	S	
1844	Maxted	Seaman	Cliff	S	Had saved lives on 2 previous occasions
1844	Miss Wilkinson	Governess	River	S	Female recipient
1844	Geary	RN Officer (Mate)	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1844	Ranson	Mercantile traveller	River	S	
1844	Harrington	RN Boy	Harbour: boy overboard	S	Had saved life on a previous occasion
1844	Whyte	RN Officer	River: man overboard	S	Had recently saved lives on 2 previous occasions
1844	Burd	Youth: Son of clergyman	Ice	S	
1844	Sandford	Youth (16)	Ice	S	
1845	Carnie	Customs-house boatman	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1845	Miss Pool	Farmer's daughter	River	S	Female recipient. Had previously saved a child.
1845	Smith	Graduate (BA)	Canal	S	
1844	Dew	RN Officer (Mate)	Harbour (?): man overboard	S	Saved Hon. Mr Walpole
1845	Barnard	Mariner	River	S	Had saved lives at sea on previous occasions
1845	Chapman	Army NCO	Inshore: boat accident	S	Also voted £20 by Jamaican House of Assembly
1845	Les Fouris	Custom-house Officer (Captain)	Harbour: boat accident	S	
1845	Behan	Sailor	High Seas: woman overboard. Attempted suicide	S	German recipient
1845	Maxwell	Doctor	Canal: man overboard	S	
1845	Danckert	Described as 'Mr.'	River	S	Saved boy
1845	Teait	Caulker's apprentice (19)	Harbour	S	
1845	Hughes	Described as 'Mr.'	River	S	Saved girl
1845	Fisher	RN Officer (Mate)	Harbour	S	
1845	Warren	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	

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1845	Newman	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1845	Munsie	Seaman	High Seas: man overboard	S	Bronze RHS medal to assistant
1845	Wooldridge	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1845	Birtwhistle	RN officer (Mate)	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1845	Hire	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1846	Sergeant	-	River	S	Saved boy
1846	Clifford	Described as 'Mr.'	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1846	Earl of Leicester	Aristocrat	Beach/rocks: tide	S	
1846	Hon. F. Astley	Aristocrat	Beach/rocks: tide	S	
1846	Jackson	Mercantile Marine Officer	River	S	
1846	Vereker	Described as 'Esq.'	River	U	
1846	Trotel	French sailor	Harbour	S	French recipient
1846	Green	University student (Oxford)	River: boat accident	S	
1846	Mitchell	'gentleman'	Canal	S	Saved boy. Had saved life on a previous occasion
1846	Jenner	Described as 'Mr.' & 'returning home from the Alfred club'	Reservoir: attempted suicide	S	
1846	Finch	RN Officer	Harbour (?): man overboard	S	Had previously received RHS Bronze Medal (1840)
1846	Gibson	RN Officer	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1846	Camp	Portuguese ship's captain	High Seas wreck	S	Portuguese rescuer. Medals also awarded to other crew members
1847	Bates	Described as 'Mr.'	Ice	S	
1847	MacCameron	Mercantile Marine Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1847	Browne	Police Constable	River: boat accident	S	
1847	Fisher	RN Officer (Quartermaster)	High Seas: man overboard	S	Had saved life on 2 previous occasions
1847	Davies	Cleric	River: boat accident	S	
1847	Mulqueeny	Army private	Beach: bathing	S	
1847	Weltch	Boatman	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1847	Smith	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1848	Millman	Army Officer: Son of general	River: boat accident	S	
1848	Monsieur	Canoe owner	River: boat	S	Mauritian: 'man

	Chiron		accident		of colour'
1848	Monsieur Chiron (Fils)	Son of canoe owner	River: boat accident	S	Mauritian: 'man of colour'
1848	Sims	Ferry Captain	Harbour: man & child overboard	S	
1848	Hon. WB de Blaquiere	RN Officer	Harbour	S	Saved child
1848	Robinson	RN Coxwain	High seas: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1848	Field	RN Rating	High seas: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	Had saved 2 lives in 1842
1848	Austin	Described as 'Mr'	River: boat accident	S	
1848	Hutchinson	Doctor	Resuscitation	S	RHS Medical Assistant
1848	Lusignan	Described as 'Mr'.	River: boat accident	S	Fourth rescue. Had previously received RHS bronze Medal (1841)
1848	Miss Hesketh	-	Beach: tide	S	Female recipient
1848	Lucey	-	Harbour: man overboard	S	Fourth rescue. Had previously received RHS reward
1848	Granger	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1848	Heslop	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1848	McCann	Doctor	Resuscitation	S	RHS Medical Assistant
1848	Laughrin	RN Rating	At anchor: boat accident	S	
1848	Carter	Boy (15): Son of Major	Beach/rocks: tide	S	Saved 2 boys
1848	Farrant	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1848	Osborne	RN Officer	Harbour: boy overboard	S	
1848	Cheesman	Superintendent of bathing machines	Beach	S	Brighton Branch award. For 2 rescues.
1848	Wright	-	Well	U	Brighton Branch award. Had previously won RHS Bronze Medal (1838?).
1849	Dickerson	-	Inshore wreck	S	Five French co-rescuers drowned & four survivors recommended



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					for B of T medals
1849	Carne	Labouring miner	River: boat accident	S	Also voted £5 by RHS General Court
1849	Powell	Schoolboy (13) Winchester School: 'Gentleman Commoner'	River	S	
1849	Gerard	Youth (18)	Inshore wreck	S	
1849	Roberts	Cleric	River	S	
1849	Huggins	RN Officer (Quartermaster)	At anchor: boy overboard	S	Had saved 11 lives on previous occasions
1849	Fellows	Described as 'Mr'.	River	S	
1849	Horton	Boy (15)	Harbour	S	Canadian rescue. Saved child. Had previously saved 2 other children in similar manner.
1849	Russell	Described as 'Mr'	Canal	S	
1849	Tarleton	RN Officer	At anchor (?): man overboard	S	Spelt 'Tarlton' in Annual Report. Had in 1847 saved life at wreck of US Brig 'Somers'.
1850	Gray	Described as 'Mr'	Ice	S	
1850	Wylde	RN officer	Resuscitation	S	Had previously been involved in lifeboat rescue
1850	Lee	Clerk	River	S	Had previously saved another life
1850	Miss Atkinson	Teacher (in service)	Marsh	S	Female recipient. Saved child
1850	Jones	-	River: boat accident	S	Rescuer was paralysed in one leg
1850	Hamber	Student (Oxford)	River: boat accident	S	Had previously saved another life
1850	Folks	Boy: Described as 'Master'.	River	S	Had saved life on a previous occasion
1850	Edwards	Police Constable	Harbour	S	
1850	Standen	Doctor	River	S	Saved child
1850	Smith	Boy: Described as 'Master'.	River	S	Son of army officer. Saved child.
1850	Harris	Described as 'Mr'.	Harbour	S	
1850	Collier	French soldier	Beach: bathing	U	French recipient
1850	Binstead	RN Officer	Canal	S	Saved child.
1850	Miss M. Kane	-	Beach: bathing	S	Female recipient
1850	Miss K. Kane	-	Beach: bathing	S	Female recipient
1850	Woodhouse	Described as 'Mr'.	Inshore wreck	S	Awarded order of knighthood by Potrugal.

1850	Moggridge	RN Officer	Trapped on ice flow	S	
1850	Stanhope	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	Casualty died soon afterwards
1851	Roach	'native boatman'	Harbour	S	St Helena. Had previously saved another life
1851	Hankey	Boy (11)	Pond	S	
1851	Wickham	Described as 'Esq.'	River	S	Had previously saved 2 other lives
1851	Anstey	Described as 'Mr'.	Harbour	S	
1851	Julian	RN Officer	At anchor: boy overboard	S	'not first instance of gallant and humane conduct'
1851	Donor	Described as 'Mr'.	River	S	Had saved 8 lives on previous occasions
1851	Richards	Student (Cambridge)	Harbour	S	Saved child
1851	Angrove	Merchant Marine Officer	Harbour	S	
1851	Burgess	Train Guard	River: attempted suicide after rail crash	S	
1851	Oddy	Described as 'Mr'.	Beach	S	
1851	Spencer	Pilot	Harbour	S	Had saved life previously. RHS Bronze medal to co-rescuer.
1851	Saumarez	RN Officer	At anchor (?): man overboard	S	Had previously saved several lives
1851	Loxton	RN Rating	High Seas: boy overboard	S	
1851	Skead	RN Officer	High Seas: boy overboard	S	
1851	Lambe	RN Midshipman	High Seas: boy overboard	S	
1851	Gardner	RN Officer	At anchor: boy overboard	S	
1851	Pyne	Merchant Marine Officer (Mate)	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1851	Ward	RN Boatswain	High Seas: man overboard	S	Had previously saved 8 lives
1851	Sullivam	RN Midshipman	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1852	Browne	-	River: boat accident	S	Fifth life saved in six years.
1852	Foote	Assistant Storekeeper Commissariat Dept.	At anchor (?): man overboard	U	
1852	O'Reilly	Cleric	Harbour	S	
1852	Campbell	Boy (12)	Sea: boating accident	S	1 ½ mile offshore
1852	Bowden	Schoolboy (Eton)	River: boat accident	S	
1852	Pope	RN Boy	Canal	S	Saved child

1852	Webber	Youth (18)	Beach	S	
1852	Hearn	-	River: boat accident	S	Awarded £10 by Lord Lieutenant
1852	Dougall	RN Officer	River	S	
1852	Reeves	RN Quartermaster	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1852	James	-	Beach: bathing	S	St. Malo, France
1852	Quintin	-	Beach: bathing	S	St. Malo, France
1852	Tarleton	RN Officer	At anchor (?): man overboard	S	Had previously received RHS Silver medal (1849)
1852	Ward	RN Officer	River: attempted suicide	S	
1852	Creak	'of the Baths, Brighton'	Harbour	S	Had previously saved several lives
1852	Bencraft	Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour	S	Had previously 'exerted himself in a similar manner'
1852	Jordan	Ferryman	Ice	S	Canadian rescue
1852	Grierson	Army Officer	Ice	S	Saved child
1852	Davies	Army Officer	River	S	Jamaican rescue
1853	Miller	Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour	S	
1853	Ross	-	Ice	S	
1853	Munro	-	Ice	S	
1853	Handscombe	'young man'	Well	S	Had previously saved lives on 2 occasions
1853	Jones	Gentleman	Canal	S	Saved child
1853	Kinnear	Cleric	River: lock	S	Saved child. Had previously saved lives of another child
1853	Thompson	Army NCO	Harbour	S	Saved child. Rescuer described as 'black soldier'. Bahamian rescue.
1853	Keane	Aged 15	River	S	Saved child
1853	Elleray	-	River	S	Saved child
1853	Keast	RN Petty Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	Had previously saved life
1853	Wainwright	Young gentleman (17)	River: boat accident		
1853	Tinley	Army Officer	Harbour	S	
1853	Morel	French Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour	S	French recipient
1853	Betts	-	Beach	S	Had previously saved 10 lives
1853	Semple	RN Officer	Harbour: boat accident	S	
1853	Hughes	Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour	S	Saved mother and child. Had previously saved 4 lives

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1853	Brooks	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1853	Simmons	RN Petty Officer	At anchor (?): Man overboard	S	
1853	Wadd	Domestic Servant	Ice	S	Saved child
1853	Skelton	RN Rating	Inshore: boy overboard	S	
1853	Green	Mercantile Marine Officer	Ice	S	Saved children
1853	Simkin	Mercantile Marine Officer (3 <sup>rd</sup> Mate)	High Seas: woman overboard (suicide)	U	
1853	Hudson	Mercantile Marine Officer (Mate)	River: boy overboard	S	Saved child
1854	Lucas	RN Officer (Mate)	Inshore: Threw bomb overboard	S	Awarded Victoria Cross
1854	Dixon	Described as 'Mr'.	Harbour	S	Saved 2 children.
1854	Hallowes	-	River: man overboard	S	Had previously saved 2 lives
1854	Nickalls	Described as 'Mr'.	River: boat accident	S	
1854	Atkins	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1854	Lowther	RN Officer	At anchor: boy overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1854	Duckworth	Landlord of Public House	River	S	
1854	Doran	RN Officer	River	S	
1854	Thomas	Described as 'Mr'.	Harbour	S	
1854	Clemenger	Cleric	Canal	S	Saved child
1854	Tipper	RN Petty Officer	River: men overboard	S	
1854	Heelis	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1854	Thursby	Cleric	Ice	S	Saved child
1854	Stirling	RN Officer	Inshore: Wrecks	S	Rescue of wrecked crews under hostile fire
1854	Stanley	RN Officer	At anchor: boy overboard	S	
1854	Hunter	RN Officer	Inshore: Wrecks	S	Rescue made under Russian fire. Very late award – voted 1867
1855	Ransome	Schoolmaster	Ice	S	
1855	Guest	Police Officer	Harbour	S	Two separate rescues in one day
1855	Hall	Alderman (71)	River	S	Saved child
1855	Mason	Described as 'Mr'.	River	S	Had previously saved 4 lives.
1855	Pengelly	RM Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1855	Portman	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1855	Wilkes	Described as 'Mr'.	River: attempted	S	

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			suicide		
1855	Dobbin	Bank Cashier	River	S	
1855	Gallagher	RN Botswain's Mate	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1855	Woodriff	RN Officer (Admiralty Agent)	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1855	Walker	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1855	Welch	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	Had saved lives on previous occasions
1855	Ellis	Described as 'Mr'.	River (lock)	S	
1856	Bullock	RN Officer	River: boat accident	S	
1856	Denison	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1856	May	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: men overboard	S	
1856	Alexander	RN Officer (Mate)	At anchor: boating accident	S	Very late award - voted 1872
1856 & 1857	Ball	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	Medal for 2 separate rescues
1857	Wilson	RN Officer	Harbour: Boat accident	S	
1857	Bould	-	Ice	S	
1857	Moody	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1857	Christian	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1857	Wilson	Surgeon	River (attempted suicide)	S	Rescued and resuscitated
1857	Hughes	Described as 'Mr'.	Ice	S	Canadian rescue.
1857	Lancey	Army Officer	High Seas: man overboard	U	
1857	Beeden	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1857	Beresford	Cleric	River	S	Saved child
1857	Bate	Nobbler	Beach	S	
1857	Forbes	Boy (14)	Lake	S	Saved sister. Swiss rescue.
1857	Hunt	Medical student	Harbour	S	Saved boy. Had previously saved 2 lives.
1857	Darras	-	Beach: bathing	S	French rescue and rescuer. Saved 2 children. Had previously saved 5 lives.
1857	Hathorn	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1857	Hodge	Farmer's son (21)	River	S	
1857	Fahey	Police Officer	Harbour	S	Saved child
1857	Maubant	Professor of French and Drawing	Beach: tide	S	Saved 3 children
1857	Pollard	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1857	Berger	Troop-ship rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	

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1857	Drake	RN Officer	At anchor: man & woman overboard	S	
1857	Hawkins	Mercantile Marine Boatswain	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1857	Green	Mariner	Harbour	S	
1857	White	Army Other Rank	Inshore: fell into sea	S	Mauritius rescue
1858	Moffatt	Army Officer	High Seas: Fire	S	'Sarah Sands' incident
1858	Castle	Captain of Troop-ship	High Seas: Fire	S	'Sarah Sands' incident
1858	Meyers	Described as 'Mr'.	Canal	S	Saved child.
1858	Campbell	Boy (16)	River	S	Saved child
1858	McKirgan	Pilot	Harbour	S	
1858	Stamers	-	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1858	The Hon. T.J. Wynn	Aristocrat/ pupil at Military College	River	S	
1858	Pates	Surgeon	River	S	Had previously saved 5 children.
1858	Lees	Described as 'Mr'.	Beach	S	Blind rescuer. Saved child.
1858	Fosse	-	River (primarily); Also flood & fire	S	French serial rescuer with multiple decorations inc. Legion d'Honneur. Case submitted by Council of Beaucaire.
1858	Hixon	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1858	Lord Hastings	Aristocrat	River	S	
1858	Buckley	Army NCO	Beach: bathing	S	
1858	Robarts	Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1858	Anstruther	RN Officer	Inshore (?): Man overboard	S	Saved man in water whilst in fire-fight with pirates
1858	Sullivan	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1858	Miss Rowbotham	Child (16)	Water tank	S	Female rescuer. Saved brother (aged 2)
1858	Mrs Hecterson	Fisherman's wife	Inshore: wreck	S	Female rescuer. Also received RNLI Medal and B of T Medal. Also known as 'Mrs Moar'
1858	Warren	RM NCO	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1858	Davies	RN Asst. Surgeon	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1858	Saunders	RN Rating	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1858	Collins	Mercantile Marine	Harbour: woman	S	Later received

		Rating	overboard		RHS Bronze Medal (1867)
1858	Colwpe	HM Consul	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1858	Moss	Boatman	At anchor: boat accident	S	
1858	Russell	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1858	Harpur	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1858	Hellard	Described as 'Mr'.	Beach: bathing	S	
1858	Glasgow	Army NCO	River	S	Indian rescue
1858	Fraser	Army Officer	River	S	Rescue conducted in mid-battle on Nepalese border.
1858	Court	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1859	Duggan	Army Other Rank	River	S	
1859	Mansel	RN Officer	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1859	Newman	RN Head Krooman	At anchor: man overboard	S	Black recipient
1859	Boxer	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1859	Chapman	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	U	Midshipman (14). Bronze medals to 2 ratings.
1859	Darcy	Army Other Rank	River	S	Canadian rescue
1859	Snow	RM Officer	River	S	
1859	Shields	RN Rating	River: boat accident	S	
1859	Law	Army Officer	River: reeds	S	Indian rescue
1859	Airey	Army Officer	River	S	
1859	Mackintosh	Army Surgeon	Beach: bathing	S	Rescued and resuscitated
1859	Nicholls	Cambridge Graduate (BA)	Beach: tide	S	
1859	Gournay	Captain of French Mail Packet	Harbour	S	French rescuer. Had previously saved many lives. Held Legion d' Honneur
1859	Bridson	Described as 'Esq'.	Lake: boat accident	S	
1859	Whithead	RN Officer	Harbour	S	
1859	Coleman	-	Harbour	S	Saved child
1859	Dowling	-	Harbour	S	Saved child
1859	Anderson	Gentleman	Beach: bathing	S	
1859	Smith	Mercantile Marine Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	Had previously saved a soldier
1859	Greenfield	Coastguard	Beach	S	
1859	Cavill	Mercantile Marine Rating	High Seas: boy overboard	S	
1859	Beaumont	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: man overboard	U	
1859	Secker	RN Rating	High Seas: man	S	Result of

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			overboard		collision
1859	Cameron	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	U?	Man rescued, but injuries described as 'fatal'
1859	Davies	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	U?	Man rescued, but injuries described as 'fatal'
1859	Seymour	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	U	
1859	Bean	RN Boy	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1859	Pilbrow	Mercantile Marine Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1859	Gollan	Described as 'Mr'	River	S	Overseas rescue
1860	Heygate	Gentleman (rescued his butler)	Reservoir	Not stated	
1860	Morgan	-	River	S	
1860	Grant	RN Rating	High Seas: boy overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1860	Ching	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1860	Anderson	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard & High Seas?: boy overboard	S	Medal for two separate rescues
1860	Hawkins	RN Officer	Not stated: man overboard	S	
1860	Cooper	Mercantile Marine Officer	At anchor: boy overboard	S	
1860	Romualdo	-	River: man overboard	S	
1860	Urquart	Sailor	River: boat accident	S	
1860	Chute	Army Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1860	Quigley	Army Other Rank	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1860	Dill	Cleric	Beach: lunatic	S	
1860	Kennedy	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1860	Hardinge	RN Officer	High Seas: boy overboard	S	
1860	Harton	Medical student	River: attempted suicide	S	Rescued and resuscitated
1860	Killingbeck	Described as 'young man'	Well	S	Saved child
1860	Goldsmid	Indian Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1860	Fraser	RN Boy	At anchor: man overboard (due to explosion)	S	
1860	Keay	Army NCO	Inshore	U	
1861	Ellis	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1861	Bate	RN Rating	At anchor: man	S	



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			overboard		
1861	Fitzroy	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1861	Metters	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1861	Coxon	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1861	Alington	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1861	Williams	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1861	Heneage	RN Officer	Harbour: boy overboard	S	
1861	O'Donovan	Described as 'Mr.'	River	S	
1861	Cameron	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1861	MacFarlane	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	Had saved life on 7 previous occasions
1861	Ramsay	Described as 'Mr.'	River	U	Attempted to save child
1861	Costa	French Navy Quartermaster	Harbour	U	French recipient
1862	Young	Farmer	Inshore wreck	S	
1862	Rouse	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1862	Nicholson	Fisherman	Flooded quarry	S	
1862	Giles	Mercantile Marine Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1862	Hastings	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	U	
1862	Cunningham	Harbour Master	Inshore wreck	S	
1862	Brooks	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	U	
1862	Dunn	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	U	Previously awarded RHS Bronze Medal
1862	Malone	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1862	Halot	French Ship's Captain	High Seas Wreck: Iceberg	S	French recipient. Also received Legion d'Honneur and B of T medal.
1862	Page	Customs Officer. Described as 'Mr.'	Harbour	S	Medal awarded for 2 separate rescues.
1862	Maori Jack	-	Lake/fiord	S	New Zealand rescue. Maori rescuer
1863	MacLean	Son of Lieutenant Governor	River	S	Rescue in British Kaffraria. Had previously saved 2 lives.
1863	Turner	Army Officer	Lake: boat accident	S	Indian rescue
1863	Murphy	-	River	S	Saved girl.

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					Previously awarded RHS Bronze Medal
1863	Heysham	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1863	Bowden Smith	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1863	Salmond	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1864	Nicoll	Described as 'Mr'.	Ice	S	
1864	Sigrist	RM other Rank	Beach: bathing	S	
1864	Mutter	Army Officer	Harbour	S	Saved child
1864	Williams	Mercantile Marine Rating	Inshore: boating accident	S	
1864	Moon	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard & At anchor: boy overboard	S	Awarded for 2 separate rescues
1864	Corrington	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	U	
1864	Frost	Described as 'Mr'.	Beach: bathing	U	
1864	Halloran	RN Cadet	Harbour	S	Saved brother (9)
1864	Manderville	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	Second rescue in 3 weeks
1864	Parker	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1865	Dundas	Army Officer	Harbour	S	
1865	Thomas	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1865	Miss Harvey	-	Beach: bathing	S	Female recipient
1865	Phillips	Brother-in-law of bishop	Inshore wreck	S	Australian rescue
1866	Leith	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1866	Fitzgerald	RN Officer	At anchor: boy overboard	U?	
1866	Popplestone	Farmer	Inshore wreck	S	Received Albert Medal
1866	Fell	Scholar (18)	River	S	French rescue
1866	Stanley	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1866	Sowerby	RN Petty Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1866	Molyneux	RN Officer	At anchor: boy overboard	S	
1866	Burke	Army NCO	Harbour	S?	
1866	Wintry	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1866	Miss Wright	-	Ice	S	Female recipient
1867	Thomas	Described as 'Mr'.	Ice	S	
1867	Streader	Described as 'Mr'.	Ice	S	
1867	Albiston	Ferry Manager	Harbour: attempted suicide?	S	
1867	Gray	RN Officer	Beach: hunting accident	S	
1867	White	Described as 'Mr'.	Beach: bathing	S	
1867	Brett	Described as 'Mr'.	Beach: bathing	S	
1867	Hicks	Described as 'Mr'.	Beach: bathing	S	
1867	Douglas	Army Surgeon	Inshore wreck	S	Received

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					Victoria Cross
1867	Cobb	Cleric	Inshore wreck	S	Received Albert Medal
1867	Jackman	'Captain'	Inshore wreck	S	
1867	Denny	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1867	Custance	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1867	Johnson	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	Brazilian rescue. Various RHS awards to co-rescuers
1867	Hannifin	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1868	Miss Buckworth	-	River	S	Female recipient
1868	Miss Sissons	Governess	River	S	Female recipient
1868	Rogers	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1868	Werry	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1868	Blacker	RN Rating (Boy) aged 11	Harbour	S	Saved Child
1868	Kennedy	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1868	Blacker	RN Rating (Boy) aged 11	At anchor: man overboard	S	The award of a silver clasp for this rescue was made in 1869 (RHS Silver medal 1868)
1868	Kelly	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	Had previously received RHS Bronze Medal (1866)
1868	Dyer	'of the Queen's Volunteers'	Inshore wreck	S	
1868	Peachey	RN Petty Officer	Beach: bathing	S	
1868	Stocks	-	Harbour		Had previously received RHS Bronze Medal (1842) & Vellum (1846)
1868	James	'elderly gentleman'	Beach: bathing	S	
1868	Porter	Police Officer	Inshore: wreck	S	
1868	Drake	RN Officer	Harbour	S	
1868	Viscount Bury	Aristocrat	Inshore wreck	S	
1868	Pride	Coastguard	Inshore wreck	S	
1868	Brown	Captain of Smack	Inshore wreck	S	
1868	March	HM Consul	Inshore wreck	S	Spanish rescue
1868	Anson	RN Officer	Uncertain wreck	S	Spanish rescue
1868	Mitchell	Magistrate	Inshore wreck	S	
1868	Brenton	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1868	Empson	Mercantile Marine Rating	High Seas: man overboard	U	
1869	Ward (Snr.)	'old fisherman'	Inshore wreck	S	

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1869	Ward (Jnr.)	-	Inshore wreck	S	
1869	Berry	-	Inshore wreck	S	
1869	Flann	-	Inshore wreck	S	
1869	Irwin	Son of cleric	Lake: boat accident	S	Saved his own family. Swiss rescue.
1869	Gravenor	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1869	Coxon	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	Silver Clasp (RHS Silver Medal 1861)
1869	Brenton	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1869	Hart	RN Officer	Harbour	S	
1869	Holland	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1869	Hernandez	Fisherman	River	S	Spanish rescue. Second rescue in 2-3 weeks.
1869	Hickie	Army Other Rank	River: boat accident	S	Indian rescue.
1869	Ponsonby	Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour	U	
1869	Escombe	Described as 'Mr'.	Offshore: boating accident	S	Japanese rescue
1869	Wake	RN Officer	River: boy overboard	S	
1869	Wake	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1869	Lord W. Kerr	RN Officer/ aristocrat	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1869 & 1870	Hookum Ally	'Native of Calcutta'	River	S	Indian rescue and recipient. Award for two separate rescues
1870	Briscoe	Employee of Peninsular & Oriental Company: described as 'Mr'.	Omnibus accident: victims thrown down well	S	
1870	Laprimaudaye	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1870	Norton	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1870	Taylor	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	U	
1870	Miss Cummins	-	Beach: bathing	S	Female recipient.
1870	Thompson	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1870	Fry	-	Beach	S	
1870	Scott	-	Beach: bathing	S	Female recipient.
1870	Grundy	-	Beach: bathing	S	Rescued Viscount and his brother.
1870	Forbes	RN Officer	High Seas: boy overboard	S	
1870	Poulden	RN Officer	At anchor: boy	S	

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			overboard		
1870	Harrison	-	Inshore wreck	S	Australian rescue
1870	Bayley	-	Inshore wreck	S	Australian rescue
1870	McGran	Police Officer	River	S	
1870	Amos	Mercantile Marine Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1871	Gibbons	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1871	McCalmot	Army Officer	Harbour	S	
1871	Browne	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1871	Bean	Seaman Instructor	At anchor: boy overboard	S	
1871	McCarthy	Throstle Doffer (15)	Canal	S	Saved boy
1871	Butterfield	Surgeon Dentist's Assistant	River: boat accident	S	Rescuer had only one leg
1871	Parkes	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1871	Smith	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1871	Rawson	RN Officer	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1871	Aitken	Engineer on HM Yacht Victoria & Albert – described as 'officer'	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1871	Whitlock	Army Officer	Harbour	S	French rescue. Bronze medal to co-rescuer (French sailor)
1871	Saville	Schoolboy	Pond	S	
1871	Yonge	RN Officer	At anchor: boat accident	S	
1871	Smith	Boy (9)	River	S	Australian rescue. Saved baby brother
1871	Margary	HM Consul Service	Inshore Wreck	S	Chinese rescue. Awarded Albert Medal
1871	Dodd	HM Consul	Inshore Wreck	S	Chinese rescue. Awarded Albert Medal
1872	Brenton	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	Silver clasp
1872	Necton	RN Rating	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1872	Niven	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: boy overboard	S	
1872	Speed	RN Rating	High Seas: boy overboard	S	
1872	Buttle	Waterman	River: boy overboard	S	Said to have saved 40-50 lives
1872	Le Flemming	Aged 17. Described as 'Mr'.	Beach: bathing	S	
1872	Steel	Hop Picker	Well	U	Attempted to save child
1872	Abaran Apper	-	Flood	S	Ceylonese rescue and rescuer
1872	Fudge	Son of member of	Inshore wreck	S	

		Coast Brigade, RA. Aged 15			
1872	Christian	Mercantile Marine Rating	High Seas: girl overboard	S	Saved girl of 12
1872	Heaton	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1873	Heaton	RN Officer	At anchor?: man overboard	U	
1873	Barrington	Barrister	River: boat accident	S	
1873	Phillips	Owner of Iron Works	Offshore wreck (Yokohama Roadstead)	S	Japanese rescue
1873	Westaway	Army Officer	Harbour	S	Saved boy
1873	Osborne	Boy (12)	River	S	Saved boy
1873	McCoy	Police Officer	Boat accident	S	
1874	Brownbill	Boy (11)	River	S	Australian rescue. Saved 3 children
1874	Ellis	Steamship Co. employee	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1874	Macmeikan	Boy (9)	River	S	Australian rescue. Saved 2 children
1874	Nadal	Fisherman	Offshore wreck	S	Madagascar rescue. Rescuer native of Madagascar
1874	Harvey	Army Officer	Harbour: woman overboard	S	
1874	Robson	Army Other Rank	Harbour: boating accident	S	Indian rescue
1875	Smith	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1875	Brenton	RN Officer	At anchor?: man overboard	S	Second silver clasp
1875	Isaac	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1875	Moores	-	Inshore wreck	S	Canadian rescue. RHS Bronze Medals to 4 co-rescuers.
1876	Drake	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	Silver clasp
1876	Strickland	Police Officer	River: attempted suicide	S	RHS Bronze Medals to 2 co-rescuers.
1876	Cox	Army Other Rank	Inshore wreck	S	Gibraltar rescue
1876	Dornin	Army Other Rank	Inshore wreck	S	Gibraltar rescue
1876	Kirby	Army Other Rank	Inshore wreck	S	Gibraltar rescue
1876	Miss Bussell	Farmer's daughter	Inshore wreck	S	Female rescuer. Australian Rescue. RHS Bronze medal to co-rescuer.
1876	Labat	-	Beach: bathing	S	French rescue and rescuer

1876	White	Gentleman	Lake: boat accident	S	USA rescue
1877	Shortland	RN Officer	Offshore: boat accident	S	
1877	Ford	RN Rating	Offshore: boat accident	S	
1877	Scotcher	RN Officer	High Seas: boy overboard	S	
1877	Marx	RN Officer	High Seas: boy overboard	S	Had previously received RHS Bronze Medal
1877	Heyland	RN Officer	High Seas: boy overboard	S	Had previously received RHS Bronze Medal
1877	Eyre	Army Officer	River	S	Indian rescue
1877	Brant	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard (+ shark)	S	
1877	Lawrence	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard (+ shark)	S	
1877	Thomas	Colliery Proprietor	Colliery: flood and gas	S	Received Albert medal
1877	Beith	Mining Engineer	Colliery: flood and gas	S	Received Albert medal
1877	Pride	Collier	Colliery: flood and gas	S	Received Albert medal
1877	Howell	Collier	Colliery: flood and gas	S	Received Albert medal
1877	Bartlett	Surgeon	Well	S	
1877	Barnes	RN Petty Officer	Inshore Wreck	S	
1877	Boyer	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	U	
1878	Saul	RN Officer	Offshore: boat accident	S	
1878	Eade	RN Rating	Offshore: boat accident	S	
1878	Hawkes	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	Had previously jumped overboard 5 times to save life
1878	Pearce	Mercantile Marine Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1878	Holt	Station Master	Beach: bathing	S	Australian rescue. Rescuer had previously saved several people from drowning.
1878	Rourke	Army NCO	Harbour	S	Silver clasp
1878	Agassiz	RM Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1878	Donner	RN Officer	High Seas: boy overboard	S	Silver clasp
1878	Hodge	-	Offshore: boat accident	S	West Indian rescue
1878	Duggan	Barrister	Harbour: men overboard	S	Canadian rescue
1879	Warburton	Forgeman	River: wreck	S	

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1879	Voisard	French Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: man overboard	U	French rescuer. Also received gold (BoT?) medal from Queen
1879	Lang	RN Officer	At anchor: boy overboard	S	
1879	Fry	Army Officer	Beach: bathing	S	
1879	Falconer	Army Quartermaster	Harbour	S	Rescuer had previously saved 9 people from drowning and received RHS Bronze Medal.
1879	Knight	RN Boy	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1879	Eccles	Army Officer	River: man overboard	S	Indian rescue
1880	Cunningham	Missionary student	Ice	S	
1880	Tardival	French Naval Quartermaster	Harbour	S	French recipient
1880	McGarritty	Miner	Mine: gas	U	
1880	Prosser	Shoe Maker	Well	S	
1880	Dykes	Police Officer	Well	S	
1880	Maddox	Shepherd	Well	U	
1880	Parkes	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	S	Silver clasp
1880	Arscott	Labourer	Well	S	
1880	Miss Westley	-	Beach: bathing	S	Female recipient
1880	Nizam Din	Police Officer	Well	S	Indian rescue and rescuer
1880	Lewis	Boy (15)	Drowning	S	
1880	Hon. Miss Colville	Aristocrat	Beach: bathing	S	Female recipient
1880	Chambers	Well Sinker	Well	S	
1880	Newland	Labourer	Well	S	
1880	Graham	RN Officer	At anchor: boat accident	S	Medal presented by Prince of Wales
1880	Bayley	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1880	Aitken	Army Officer	Offshore: boat accident	S	
1880	Middleton	Army Officer	Offshore: boat accident	S	
1880	Orde	Army Officer	Offshore: boat accident	S	
1880 & 1881	Cunningham	Engineer	Flood (collapsed house) & Beach	S	Award for two separate rescues. Cyprus rescues
1880 & 1881	Ramaswami	Police Officer	Well (attempted suicide) & Well	S	Award for two separate rescues. Indian rescue and rescuer.
1881	Stonehouse	Boatman	Harbour	S	Saved boy (snowstorm/hurricane)
1881	Coleman	Coast Guard	Ice	S	
1881	Miss Coates	-	Ice	S	Female recipient.



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					Saved her sister
1881	Beazor	Labourer	Inshore wreck	S	Barbudan rescue
1881	Teague	Seaman	Inshore wreck	S	Barbudan rescue
1881	Cusack	Army Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1881	Lee	Described as 'Mr.'	Harbour	S	Saved child
1881	Sawdie	Pier Master	Inshore: fall from pier	S	
1881	Place	RM Other Rank	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1881	Montgomery	Cleric	Beach: bathing	S	
1881	Jones	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1881	Cronch	US Consul	Inshore: attempted suicide	S	St Helena rescue
1881	Trench	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1881	McLean	Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour	U	
1881	Leonard	Fisherman	Inshore wreck	S	RHS Vellum to co-rescuer
1881	Johansson	Norwegian sailor	High Seas: man overboard	S	Norwegian rescuer
1882	Swaine	RM Other Rank	At anchor: man overboard	U	
1882	Kirk	River Inspector	River: attempted suicide	S	
1882	Carus-Wilson	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1882	Harding	RN Petty Officer	At anchor: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1882	Sheedy	Town Councillor	River	S	RHS Bronze Medals to 2 co-rescuers
1882	Tudor	Tea Broker	Inshore: fell from pier	S	Saved boy
1882	Connolly	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	Rescuer already held RHS Bronze Medal
1882	Scott	Waterman	Harbour	S	
1882	Kough	Lighthouse Keeper	Inshore wreck	S	
1883	Cochrane	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1883	Bennett	RN Rating	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1883	Joste	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: woman overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1883	Donald	Mercantile Marine Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1883	Paterson	Provost of St Andrews	Beach: bathing	S	
1883	Brimelow	Son of Factory Owner	Blast furnace: foul air	S	

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1883	McCulloch	Described as 'Mr.'	Inshore wreck	S	
1884	Bell	RN Petty Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1884	Shooter	Bathing Ground Superintendent	Mill stream tunnel	S	
1884	Hon. W. Grimston	RN Officer & aristocrat	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1884	McCluskey	Training Ship Boy	At anchor: boy overboard	S	
1884	Startin	RN Officer	At anchor: boat accident	S	
1884	Goodwyn	Army Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1884	Brassey	Relative (son?) of knight	Offshore: boat accident	S	
1884	Whyte	Labourer	Pump hole: foul air	S	
1884	King	Labourer	Pump hole: foul air	S	
1884	Grainger	Fisherman	Harbour	S	
1884	Betts	Army NCO	Well	S	
1884	Saraj Din	Police Officer	Well	S	Indian rescue and rescuer
1884	Hart	Army Officer (holder of VC)	Canal	S	Silver clasp. Indian rescue. Actual rescue made by Sepoy, who received RHS Bronze Medal.
1884	Le Mesurier	District Judge	Reservoir	S	Ceylon rescue
1885	Brace	Police Officer	River	S	Saved child
1885	Smith	RN Rating	Harbour: Detained armed escaping prisoner	S	
1885	Haveron	Described as 'Mr.'	River	S	
1885	Crook	Boat Builder	River	S	Previously saved 28 lives
1885	Dutton	Boy (13)	Flooded quarry	S	Saved boy
1885	Torrey Baz	Army Other Rank	River	S	Indian rescue and rescuer
1885	Sears	Army Other Rank	Inshore	S	Aden rescue
1885	Rich	RN Officer	High Seas: wreck/collision	S	
1885	Walsh	-	High Seas: wreck/collision	S	
1885	Short	Army Officer	River: boat accident	S	
1885	Skillikorn	Seaman	Harbour	S	
1885	White	Coatguard	Beach: tide	S	Saved 6 children
1886	Cusack	Army Officer	Well	U	Silver clasp
1886	Nelson	Professional Sculler	River	S	Saved child
1886	Sears	Army Other Rank	Inshore: boat accident	S	Silver clasp
1886	Jablouski	Ship's Barber	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1886	McNulty	Police Officer	Bridge collapsed into river	S	
1886	Shapter	RN Rating	High Seas: boy	S	Rescuer already

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			overboard		held RHS Bronze Medal
1886	Neilson	Mercantile Marine Officer	At anchor: man overboard	U	
1886	Bower	Army Officer	Bridge collapsed into river	S	
1886	McKeen	Boatman	Inshore wreck	S	
1887	Hewetson	Cleric	River (man overboard?)	U	
1887	Fleet	RN Officer	Inshore: boat accident	S	RHS Bronze Medals to 2 co-rescuers (Ratings).
1887	Miss Rowe	Girl (15)	Lake	S	Female recipient. Continental rescue. Saved 2 children
1887	Trengrove	'Captain' (Army?)	Beach: bathing	S	RHS Bronze Medal to co-rescuer
1887	Eales	'Aged 58'	Well	S	
1887	F Whiteside	Compositor	Ice	S	
1887	J Whiteside	Mercantile Marine Officer	Ice	S	
1887	Chatfield	Army Officer	At anchor: boat accident	S	RHS Bronze Medals to 2 co-rescuers (ORs).
1887	Robinson	Engineer, described as 'Mr.'	Lake: boat accident	S	One saved, three drowned
1888	Wilmott	Clerk	River: woman overboard	S	Rescuer 'had saved several lives'
1888	Pochin	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	Rescued liberated slave
1888	Bradley	Pier Keeper	Harbour: man overboard	S	Rescuer held RHS Bronze Medal & 2 clasps
1888	Waters	Master Shipwright	Harbour: man overboard	S	Rescuer held RHS Bronze Medal & clasp
1888	Andrews	Boy (16)	River: attempted suicide	S	
1888	Parker	Brewery Labourer	Yeast Vat: foul air	S	
1888	Howarth	Brewery Labourer	Yeast Vat: foul air	S	
1888	Porter	Carpenter (66)	Well	S	
1888	Troubridge	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1888	Drake	RN Petty Officer	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1888	O'Sullivan	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1888	Maguire	Post Office Porter	Pier: bathing	S	Had previously saved another life
1888	Stucley	RN Cadet	Cliff: fall	S	
1888	Purdie	Bookbinder	Harbour: attempted suicide	S	Rescuer held RHS Bronze Medal
1888	Cooling	Barman	River: attempted	S	

			suicide		
1888	McKinstry	Mercantile Marine Officer	At anchor: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1888	Heathcote	Solicitor's Clerk	Lake: boat accident	S	Canadian rescue
1888	Chappell	Labourer	Well	S	
1888	Nickson	Plumber	Well	S	
1888	Marquis of Breadlebane	Aristocrat	River: boat accident	S	
1888	Corry	RN Rating	Harbour	S	
1888	Hunt	Wharf Labourer	Harbour	S	Canadian rescue
1888	Piers	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1888	Henderson	Machinist	Mill race	S	Canadian rescue
1888	Sutcliffe	Police Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1888	Lemmi	Mechanical Engineer	Inshore wreck	S	Italian rescues. Also received Italian medal
1888	Thomson	Private Secretary to Colonial Governor	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1889	Whitelaw	Engine Keeper	Ice	S	
1889	Bell	Doctor	Ice	U	
1889	Craig	Wharf Foreman	River: boy overboard	S	Had previously received RHS Bronze Medal
1889	Moore	Army Other Rank	River: boat accident	S	
1889	Ishar Das	Sweet Seller	River	S	Indian rescue and rescuer. Saved boy
1889	Sutherland	Station Master	River	S	Canadian rescue. Saved boy
1889	Ellul	Army Other Rank	Cesspool	S	Maltese rescue and rescuer
1889	Miss Hackett	-	Beach: bathing	S	Female recipient
1889	Smith	Gas Worker	Gas Holder: foul air	S	'In Memoriam' cert. to relatives of co-rescuer
1889	Mitchell	Army NCO	Beach: bathing	S	Ceylon rescue. Saved Cleric (& RHS medallist)
1890	Jones	Miner	Mine	S	
1890	Williams	Miner	Mine	S	
1890	Mackin	Boatman	Inshore wreck	S	
1890	Rose	'Able Seaman'	Inshore wreck	S	
1890	Fraser	Doctor	Ice	S	RHS 'In Memoriam' cert. to relatives of co-rescuer
1890	Fraser	Engineer	Ice	S	
1890	Russell	Engine Driver	Ice	S	
1890	Farbrother	Cleric's son	Inshore: boat accident	S	RHS 'In Memoriam' cert. to relatives of co-rescuer

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1890	Biron	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: Man overboard	S	
1890	Mathews	Police Officer	River: attempted suicide	S	
1890	Shortle	Army Other Rank	Harbour: boat accident	S	
1890	Rutherford	Gentleman	Beach: bathing	S	RHS Bronze medals to 3 co-rescuers
1890	McDonnell	Captain (Army?)	Beach: bathing	S	RHS Bronze medals to 3 co-rescuers
1890	Atkins	Valet	Beach: tide	S	Saved 3 'young ladies'
1890	Power	Described as 'Mr'.	Beach: bathing	S	
1890	Connell	Coastguard Botaman	Inshore wreck	S	
1890	Pennett	Police Officer	River: attempted suicide	S	
1890	Waters	Master Shipwright	Harbour	S	Silver clasp. Rescuer held RHS Silver Medal & Bronze Medal & clasp
1890	Cundy	Seaman	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1890	Ovens	Army Officer	River: man overboard	S	
1890	Cook	Vice-Consul	High Seas: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1891	Smith	Fisherman	Inshore wreck	S	Also received Albert Medal
1891	Simpson	Mercantile Marine Officer (Mate)	High Seas: man overboard	S	Also received B of T medal. Holder of RHS Bronze Medal.
1891	Bjorkander	Swedish sailor	Inshore Wreck	S	Swedish recipient
1891	Werner	Swedish sailor	Inshore Wreck	S	Swedish recipient
1891	Seed	Chief of Police	Inshore Wreck	S	Also received Albert medal
1891	McQue	Army Other Rank	Inshore Wreck	S	Also received Albert Medal
1891	Girby	Chief Boatman	Inshore wreck	S	Arab recipient.
1891	Girby	Chief Boatman	Inshore wreck	S	Arab recipient. Silver clasp
1891	Cow	'young Indian of Ontario'	Lake: boat accident	S	Native American recipient. Canadian rescue
1891	Murray	Acting Consul	Beach: bathing	S	Georgian rescue
1891	Sinclair	Oxford Graduate	River: boat accident	S	
1891	Wilson	Lock Keeper	River: wreck	S	Saved family
1891	Lines	Boy (8)	Ice	S	Saved boy
1891	Parks	Seaman	Inshore wreck	S	
1892	Wylie	Works Manager	Construction site:	S	Javanese rescue

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			foul air		
1892	Bevan	Police Inspector	Well	S	Burmese rescue
1892	Lee	RN Petty Officer	Confined space: foul air	S	
1892	Summerfield	Army Other Rank	River	U	Indian rescue
1892	Perry	RM Other Rank	At anchor: boat accident	S	
1893	Miss Long	-	Ice	S	Female rescuer. RHS Bronze Medals to 2 co- rescuers
1893	Halfyard	RN Rating	Harbour: boat accident	S	
1893	McDougall	Shepherd	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1893	Park	Labourer	Fall from cliff	S	
1893	Griffin	Army Officer	Well: attempted suicide	U	Indian rescue
1893	Cumming	Secretary	River: boat accident	S	Canadian rescue
1894	Addison	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1894	McCabe	Fisherman	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1894	Thomas	Police Officer	Well	S	
1894	Webster	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: man overboard (attempted suicide)	U	
1894	MacKenzie	Mercantile Marine Boatswain	High Seas: man overboard (attempted suicide)	U	
1894	Turner	Solicitor General (Jersey)	Beach: tide	S	
1894	Hamilton	Landowner	Beach: tide	S	
1894	Hardyman	Army Officer	Beach: tide	S	
1894	Slater	Mercantile Marine Officer	Inshore Wreck	S	
1894	Morrisson	Mercantile Marine Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1895	Morris	Coastguard Commissioned Boatman	Inshore Wreck	S	Also received B of T Medal
1895	Dodd	Miner	Mine: Flood	S	Also received Albert Medal. RHS Bronze Medal to 13 co- rescuers
1895	Watts	Miner	Mine: Flood	S	RHS Bronze Medal to 13 co- rescuers
1895	Whitehead	Mercantile Marine Officer	Inshore Wreck	S	Also received B of T medal
1895	Ferris	Mercantile Marine Apprentice	Inshore Wreck	S	Also received B of T medal
1895	Traill	Described as 'Mr'.	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1895	Miss Evans	-	Inshore: boat	S	Female recipient

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			accident		
1895	Worman	Watchman	Sewer: Foul Air	U	RHS 'In Memoriam' certificates to 4 co-rescuers
1895	Wheal	Turncock	Sewer: Foul Air	U	RHS 'In Memoriam' certificates to 4 co-rescuers
1895	Cole	Labourer	Sewer: Foul Air	U	RHS 'In Memoriam' certificates to 4 co-rescuers
1895	Fielden	Army Officer	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1895	Belfon	Boat Owner	Offshore wreck	S	
1895	Nutman	Mercantile Marine Officer	Offshore wreck	S	Also received Albert Medal
1896	Hannah	Pit Manager	Mine: explosion & foul air	S	RHS Bronze Medal to 11 co-rescuers
1896	Morris	Surgeon	Mine: explosion & foul air	S	RHS Bronze Medal to 11 co-rescuers
1896	Williams	Fireman	Mine: explosion & foul air	S	RHS Bronze Medal to 11 co-rescuers
1896	Butt	Justice of the Peace	Inshore wreck	S	S. African Rescue
1896	M'Keler	Mercantile Marine Rating	Offshore wreck (collision)	S	
1896	James	Mason	Well	S	RHS Bronze Medal to 2 co-rescuers
1896	Frend	Army Other Rank	Inshore: boat accident	S	Bermudan rescue
1896	Swann	Colonial Administrator	Lake: man overboard	S	Lake Nyassa rescue
1897	Forman	Army Officer	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'. Also received Lloyds Silver Medal.
1897	Gosling	Army Officer	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'. Also received Lloyds Silver Medal.
1897	Down	Army NCO	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'. Also received Lloyds Bronze Medal.
1897	Allen	Army NCO	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'. Also received MSM.
1897	Newby	Army NCO	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of

					'Warren Hastings'
1897	Howes	Army Other Rank	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'
1897	MacNamara	Army Other Rank	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'
1897	Carr	Army Other Rank	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'
1897	Arrowsmith	Army Other Rank	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'
1897	Grisley	Army Other Rank	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'
1897	Croft	Army Other Rank	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'
1897	Wooton	Army Other Rank	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'. Also received Lloyds Bronze Medal.
1897	Selous	Army Officer	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'. Also received Lloyds Silver Medal.
1897	Bayley	Army Officer	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'
1897	Roe	Army Other rank	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'
1897	Flannery	Army Other rank	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'
1897	Windham	RIM Officer	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'
1897	Huddleston	RIM Officer	Inshore Wreck	S	Wreck of 'Warren Hastings'
1897	Clifford	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: man overboard (attempted suicide)	U	
1897	Miss Fullerton	-	Beach: bathing	S	Female rescuer
1897	Brown	Miner	Mine: inundation of mud	S	S. African rescue
1897	Brand	Miner	Mine: inundation of mud	S	S. African rescue
1897	Walker	Apprentice	Gasworks: foul air	U	RHS Bronze Medal to co-rescuer
1897	D'Alton	Agent	Inshore wreck	S	S. African rescue
1897	Indar Singh	Army Other Rank	Flood	S	Indian rescue and



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					rescuer
1898	Blyth	Miner	Mine: inundation	S	RHS Bronze Medal to co-rescuer
1898	Jones	Miner	Mine: inundation	S	RHS Bronze Medals to 3 co-rescuers
1898	Benjamin	Ferryman	Inshore wreck	S	S. African rescue. RHS Bronze Medal to co-rescuer
1898	Gray	Ship's Electrician	Offshore: boat accident	S	Grenada rescue. Saved boy
1898	Payne	Boy (11)	Offshore: boat accident	U	Grenada rescue
1898	McField	Mercantile Marine Rating	High Seas: wreck	S	
1898	Phillips	RN Petty Officer	At anchor: boat accident	S	
1898	Macklin	Ship's steward	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1898	Juddery	Mercantile Marine Officer	Inshore wreck	S	Also received B of T medal
1898	Rotch	RN Officer	Harbour: boat accident	S	
1899	Baron	Miner	Sewer: foul air	U	
1899	Swanger	Mercantile Marine Rating	High Seas: man overboard	U	
1899	Green	Boatman	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1899	Charlton	RN Officer	River	S	
1899	McGregor	Wood Merchant	Lime kiln: foul air	S	RHS Bronze Medal to co-rescuer
1899	Williams	Farmer?	Inshore wreck	S	
1899	Thomas	Miner	Mine: inundation	S	RHS Bronze Medals to 2 co-rescuers
1899	Francis	Miner	Mine: inundation	S	RHS Bronze Medals to 2 co-rescuers
1900	Clements	Farmer	Inshore wreck	S	
1900	Hubbard	Labourer	Inshore wreck	S	
1900	Hale	Colliery Under-Manager	Mine: Fire & foul air	S	RHS Bronze Medals to 5 co-rescuers
1900	Parnaby	Miner	Mine: foul air	S	RHS Bronze Medals to 3 co-rescuers & resuscitation cert. to one co-rescuer
1900	Sclanders	Army Other Rank	River: under fire	S	South African rescue. RHS Bronze Medals to 5 co-rescuers
1900	Haig	Army Officer	River	S	South African rescue.
1900	Harris	Army Officer	River	U	South African rescue.

1900	Williams	Army NCO	River	U	South African rescue.
1900	Tinney	Troopship Officer	High Seas: boat accident	S	
1900	Hamilton	Army Other Rank	High Seas: boat accident	S	
1900	Samuels	Mercantile Marine Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1900	Morris	Army NCO	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1900	Sparks	RN Petty Officer	At anchor: boat accident	S	
1900	Cholmondeley	Army NCO	Beach: bathing	S	S. African rescue
1900	Lecky	RN Officer	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1900	Maynard	RM NCO	River	S	
1901	Miller	Army Other Rank	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1901	Nairn	Pilot	Inshore wreck	U	Wreck of 'SS Taher'. RHS 'In memoriam' certificates to 3 co-rescuers
1901	Weller	Mercantile Marine Rating	Inshore wreck	U	Wreck of 'SS Taher'. RHS 'In memoriam' certificates to 3 co-rescuers
1901	Gray	Mercantile Marine Rating	Inshore wreck	U	Wreck of 'SS Taher'. RHS 'In memoriam' certificates to 3 co-rescuers
1901	Mclaren	Mercantile Marine Rating	Inshore wreck	U	Wreck of 'SS Taher'. RHS 'In memoriam' certificates to 3 co-rescuers
1901	McDowell	Mercantile Marine Rating	Inshore wreck	U	Wreck of 'SS Taher'. RHS 'In memoriam' certificates to 3 co-rescuers
1901	Brooke	RNR Rating	Inshore wreck	U	Wreck of 'SS Taher'. RHS 'In memoriam' certificates to 3 co-rescuers
1901	Adam	Mercantile Marine Rating	Inshore wreck	U	Wreck of 'SS Taher'. RHS 'In memoriam' certificates to 3 co-rescuers
1901	McCarthy	Mercantile Marine Rating	Inshore wreck	U	Wreck of 'SS Taher'. RHS 'In memoriam' certificates to 3 co-rescuers
1901	Bradley	Mercantile Marine	Inshore wreck	U	Wreck of 'SS

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		Rating			Taher'. RHS 'In memoriam' certificates to 3 co-rescuers
1901	Hansen	Mercantile Marine Rating	Inshore wreck	U	Wreck of 'SS Taher'. RHS 'In memoriam' certificates to 3 co-rescuers
1901	Bowman	Mercantile Marine Rating	Inshore wreck	U	Wreck of 'SS Taher'. RHS 'In memoriam' certificates to 3 co-rescuers
1901	Peterson	Mercantile Marine Rating	Inshore wreck	U	Wreck of 'SS Taher'. RHS 'In memoriam' certificates to 3 co-rescuers
1901	Yame	Boatman	Inshore wreck	U	Fijian rescue and rescuer. RHS Bronze Medal to co-rescuer
1901	Swan	Mercantile Marine Officer	Confined space: foul air	U	
1901	Miss Heath	-	Beach: bathing	S	Female rescuer. RHS Bronze Medal to co-rescuer
1901	M'Donald	Boatman	Inshore: boat accident	S	
1901	Francis	-	Offshore: boat accident	S	S. African rescue. RHS Bronze Medals to 6 co-rescuers.
1901	Borez	Fisherman	Offshore: boat accident	S	S. African rescue. RHS Bronze Medals to 6 co-rescuers.
1901	Wallis	Army Officer	River: boat accident	S	
1901	Bongard	German Government Officer	Offshore: child overboard	S	Dar-es-Salam rescue. German rescuer. Saved child.
1902	Lynch	Fisherman	Harbour	S	Pecuniary gift also given by RHS
1902	Duckworth	Insurance Agent	Ice	U	
1902	Pitman	Coastguard Commissioned Boatman	Mineshaft: fall	S	
1902	el Shamy	Egyptian Navy Rating	Offshore: boat accident	S	Egyptian rescue and rescuer
1902	Peterson	Mercantile Marine Rating	Inshore wreck	S	
1902	Freyone	Described as 'Mr.'	Offshore: boat accident	S	Gibraltar rescue
1902	Webster	Army Officer	Inshore wreck	U	S. African rescue

1902	Robson	Farmer	Tar still: foul air	U	RHS 'In Memoriam' certificate to co-rescuer
1902	Senior	Foreman Moulder	Oil store: Fumes & fire	U	
1902	French	Army Doctor	High Seas: man overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1902	Pett	Cement Worker	Kiln: foul air	S	RHS Bronze medals to 3 co-rescuers & RHS 'In Memoriam' certificate to 2 co-rescuers
1902	Kiddle	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1903	Main	Seaman	Offshore wreck	S	
1903	Brooke	Army Officer	Well	S	RHS Bronze medal to co-rescuer
1903	Barnes	Pottery Worker	Confined space: foul air	S	RHS Bronze medals to 2 co-rescuers
1903	Marshall	Iron Worker	Confined space: foul air	S	RHS Bronze medals to 2 co-rescuers
1903	Noble	Described as 'Mr'.	River: cart accident	S	S. African rescue
1903	Ford	Electrician	Beach: bathing	S	S. African rescue
1903	Maung Kin Bin	Coolie	River: boy overboard	S	Burmese rescue and rescuer. Saved child
1903	Brooker	Labourer	Sewer: foul air	S	
1903	Watkins	Sewer Flusher	Sewer: foul air	S	
1903	Blackett	Mining Engineer	Mine: inundation	S	Sacriston Colliery
1903	Tate	Colliery Worker	Mine: inundation	S	Sacriston Colliery
1903	Walker	Colliery Worker	Mine: inundation	S	Sacriston Colliery
1903	Brass	Colliery Worker	Mine: inundation	S	Sacriston Colliery
1903	Hall	Colliery Worker	Mine: inundation	S	Sacriston Colliery
1903	Blackburn	Colliery Worker	Mine: inundation	S	Sacriston Colliery
1903	Groombridge	Works manager	Cold store: Ammonia Fumes	S	Rescued later died
1903	Owen	Army Other Rank	River	S	
1904	Frogley	RN Petty Officer	At anchor: boys overboard	S	
1904	Gunner	Police Officer	River: attempted suicide	U	
1904	Mansell	RN Rating	High Seas: man overboard	U	
1904	Miss Millman	-	Lake: bathing	S	Female Rescuer: RHS

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					Resuscitation cert to co-rescuer
1905	Pearce	Steward	High Seas: woman overboard (attempted suicide)	S	
1905	Eussoof Nobo	Coal Trimmer	High Seas: man overboard	S	Lascar rescuer
1905	Large	Mercantile Marine Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1905	Narish	-	Well	U	Attempted to save child
1905	Shaik Mahomed Shaik Ally	Police Officer	Well	S	Indian rescuer
1905	Llewelyn	Miner	Mine: Explosion, fire & foul air	S	Cambrian Colliery
1905	Price	Miner	Mine: Explosion, fire & foul air	S	Cambrian Colliery
1905	D. Davies	Miner	Mine: Explosion, fire & foul air	S	Cambrian Colliery
1905	M. Davies	Miner	Mine: Explosion, fire & foul air	S	Cambrian Colliery
1905	D. Davies	Miner	Mine: Explosion, fire & foul air	S	Cambrian Colliery
1905	Williams	Miner	Mine: Explosion, fire & foul air	S	Cambrian Colliery
1905	Jones	Miner	Mine: Explosion, fire & foul air	S	Cambrian Colliery
1905	Keymer	Mercantile Marine Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	
1905	Woolfield	Police Officer	Well	S	
1905	Tuff	Iron Worker	Furnace: foul air	U	'In Memoriam' certificate to co-rescuer
1905	Hunter	Iron Worker	Furnace: foul air	U	'In Memoriam' certificate to co-rescuer
1905	Harvey	Construction worker	River: boat accident	U	
1906	Clinch	Mercantile Marine Apprentice	Harbour: boat accident	S	
1906	Davidson	Fisherman	Inshore wreck	S	
1906	Wilson	Works Manager	Confined space: foul air	S	
1906	Munro	Works Boy	Confined space: foul air	S	
1906	Jockie Bar	Fisherman	Inshore wreck	S	'Portuguese coloured fisherman'
1906	Fairtlough	RN Officer	Offshore wreck	U	
1906	Connell	Mercantile Marine Officer	Confined space: foul air	S	
1906	Webster	Mercantile Marine Officer	Confined space: foul air	U	
1907	Leverett	Shipwright Diver	Fouled diver	S	Rescued man subsequently died
1907	Neaber	RN Rating	At anchor: man	S	RHS Bronze

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			overboard		Medal to co-rescuer
1908	Moores	Furnace Labourer	Furnace: foul air	U	RHS Bronze Medal to co-rescuer
1908	Gater	Miner	Mine: inundation	S	
1908	Stenning	Army NCO	Inshore wreck	S	Saved 7. RHS Bronze Medals to 2 co-rescuers & RHS testimonials to 9 co-rescuer
1908	Smith	Furnace Labourer	Flue: foul air	U	
1908	Freeman	RN Rating	Inshore wreck	S	
1909	Jones	Workman	Sewer: foul air	S	RHS Bronze Medal to co-rescuer
1909	Taylor	RN Officer	High Seas: man overboard	S	RHS Bronze Medal to co-rescuer
1909	Maloney	Police Officer	Offshore: boat accident	S	
1909	Schembri	Sewer Worker	Sewer: foul air	S	Maltese rescue & rescuer. RHS Bronze Medals to 2 co-rescuers & RHS testimonials to 2 co-rescuer
1909	Lee	Factory Worker	Cesspool: foul air	S	RHS Bronze Medal to co-rescuer
1909	Birrell	Gentleman	Inshore: boat accident (explosion & fire)	S	
1909	Hallowses	RN Officer	Inshore: man overboard	S	RHS Bronze Medals to 3 co-rescuers
1909	Drummond	Electrical Engineer	Well	S	
1909	Hughes	Doctor	Harbour: boat accident	S	Grenada rescue
1910	Williams	Head Teacher	Flood & landslide	S	
1910	Cook	Fisherman	Harbour	S	
1910	Chandler	Mercantile Marine Rating	High Seas: man overboard (attempted suicide)	U	
1910	Denham	RM NCO	High Seas: man overboard (attempted suicide)	U	
1910	Richardson	Police Officer	River: attempted suicide	U	
1910	Tonge	Pit Manager	Mine: Explosion & foul air	S	RHS Bronze medals to 25 co-rescuers & RHS 'In Memoriam' certificate to 1 co-rescuer

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1911	Thomas	Mercantile Marine Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1911	Davies	Mercantile Marine Officer	At anchor: boy overboard	U	
1911	Thomas	Insurance Clerk	Offshore: man overboard	S	
1911	Corbett	RN Officer	Inshore: boat accident	S	Also received B of T Medal
1912	Marsden	RN Officer	Offshore: man overboard	S	
1912	Hamilton	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
1912	Williams	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1912	Cumberlege	RN Officer	At anchor: man overboard	S	
1912	Davies	Clerk	Offshore: boat accident	S	
1912	Wooley	Miner	Mine: Fire & foul air	S	Markham Colliery
1912	Winborn	Miner	Mine: Fire & foul air	S	Markham Colliery
1912	Leach	Miner	Mine: Fire & foul air	S	Markham Colliery
1912	Howells	Miner	Mine: Fire & foul air	S	Markham Colliery
1912	Thompson	Cellerman	Brewery vat: foul air	S	
1912	Jenner	Cellerman	Brewery vat: foul air	S	
1913	Tallant	Mate of Dublin Corporation ship	Sewage sludge pit: foul air	S	RHS Bronze medals to 3 co-rescuers
1912	Todd	Carpenter	Manhole: foul air	U	
1913	Luter	Mercantile Marine Rating	Inshore wreck	S	
1913	Washington	Gas Worker	Sewer: foul air	U	RHS Bronze medals to 6 co-rescuers & RHS 'In Memoriam' certificates to 2 co-rescuers
1913	Murdoch	Grain Weigher	Ship's hold: foul air	S	RHS Bronze medal to 1 co-rescuer & RHS 'In Memoriam' certificate to 1 co-rescuer 1
1913	Young	Mine Manager	Mine: foul air	U	
1913	Heighway	Mercantile Marine Rating	High Seas wreck	S	Wreck of 'Volturno'
1913	Connor	Mercantile Marine Officer	River: man overboard	S	
1914	Oddy	RN Petty Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
1914	Sworn	Coastguard Ldg. Boatman	Inshore wreck	S	
1914	Howlett	Trawler Skipper	High Seas: Man overboard	S	
1914	Heap	Works Manager	Tar still: foul air	S	RHS Bronze

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					medal to 2 co-rescuers
<b>1914</b>	Barne	RN Officer	High Seas: Man overboard	U	
<b>1914</b>	Renouf	RN Officer	High Seas: boy overboard	S	
<b>1914</b>	Brooks	Trawlerman	High Seas: Man overboard	S	
<b>1914</b>	Cockburn	Army Officer	River: man overboard	U	
<b>1914</b>	Leech	Trawlerman	High Seas wreck: mine	S	
<b>1914</b>	Ebden-Currey	RN Officer	Inshore wreck	S	
<b>1914</b>	Wodehouse	RN Officer	Harbour: man overboard	S	
<b>1914</b>	Rafter	Steeplejack	Chimney: unconscious man at 160 feet	S	
<b>1914</b>	Kennedy	Boy Scout (15)	Inshore: current or shark	U	



## APPENDIX 8

### Royal Humane Society: Summary of Awards by Decade, 1830-39<sup>7</sup>

#### RHS Silver & Gold Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient 1830-39

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total = 143)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	51	35.7%
Army Officer/ Cadet	5	3.5%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	9	6.3%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	12	8.4%
Police	1	0.7%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	5	3.5%
Pilot/ Harbour Master	2	1.4%
Sailors/ boatmen/ fishermen etc.	13	9.1%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	5	3.5%
Unskilled/manual labour	1	0.7%
School pupil/ youth	9	6.3%
Unspecified	30	21.0%

#### RHS Silver & Gold Medals: Location of Rescue 1830-39

Location	Number of Awards (Total = 143)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	14	9.8%
At Anchor	5	3.5%
Harbour/Docks	36	25.2%
Inshore	28	19.6%
Beach	6	4.2%
River	37	25.9%
Canal	5	3.5%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	4	2.8%
Well/shaft	1	0.7%
Sewer/cesspool	1	0.7%
Domestic	1	0.7%
Resuscitation: No Rescue	5	3.5%

<sup>7</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; and Young, *Acts of Gallantry*.

**RHS Silver & Gold Medals: Nature of Rescue 1830-39**

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 143)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	42	29.4%
Boat accident	14	9.8%
Wreck	28	19.6%
Fall through ice	3	2.1%
Beach Bathing	4	2.8%
Drowning (other)	43	30.1%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	1	0.7%
Foul Air (asphyxiation)	2	1.4%
Vehicle accident	1	0.7%
Resuscitation only	5	3.5%

**RHS Silver and Gold Medals: Additional Data 1830-39**

	Number of Awards	Percentage of Total
Total medals awarded	143 (141 silver; 2 gold)	
Successful rescues	138	96.5%
Unsuccessful rescues	5	3.5%
Awards to women	3 (inc. 1 gold)	2.1%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	2 (1 'man of colour'; 1 Ceylonese)	1.4%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	15	10.5%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	7	4.9%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	15	10.5%

## APPENDIX 9

### Royal Humane Society: Summary of Awards by Decade, 1840-49<sup>8</sup>

#### RHS Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient 1840-49

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total =157)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	41	26.1%
Army Officer/ Cadet	6	3.8%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	9	5.7%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	15	9.6%
Police	4	2.5%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	3	1.9%
Pilot/ Harbour Master	1	0.6%
Sailors/ boatmen/ fishermen etc.	27	17.2%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	3	1.9%
Domestic Service	2	1.3%
Unskilled/manual labour	2	1.3%
School pupil/ youth	10	6.4%
Unspecified	34	21.7%

#### RHS Silver Medals: Location of Rescue 1840-49

Location	Number of Awards (Total =157)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	12	7.6%
At Anchor	14	8.9%
Harbour/Docks	33	21.0%
Inshore	11	7.0%
Beach	10	6.4%
River	52	33.1%
Canal	8	5.1%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	6	3.8%
Well/shaft	2	1.3%
Swimming Baths	1	0.6%
Cliff	1	0.6%
Other	2	1.3%
Resuscitation: No Rescue	5	3.2%

<sup>8</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; and Young, *Acts of Gallantry*.

**RHS Silver Medals: Nature of Rescue 1840-49**

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total =157 )	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	49	31.2%
Boat accident	18	11.5%
Wreck	10	6.4%
Fall through ice	4	2.5%
Beach Bathing	5	3.2%
Tide	4	2.5%
Drowning (other)	56	35.7%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	4	2.5%
Vehicle accident	1	0.6%
Cliff Rescue	1	0.6%
Resuscitation only	5	3.2%

**RHS Silver Medals: Additional Data 1840-49**

	Number of Awards	Percentage of Total
Total medals awarded	157	
Successful rescues	152	96.8%
Unsuccessful rescues	5	3.2%
Awards to women	4	2.5%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	4	2.5%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	19	12.1%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	9	5.7%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	20	12.7%

## APPENDIX 10

### Royal Humane Society: Summary of Awards by Decade, 1850-59<sup>9</sup>

#### RHS Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient 1850-59

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total =195)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	65	33.3%
Army Officer/ Cadet	10	5.1%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	8	4.1%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	15	7.7%
Police	3	1.5%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	4	2.1%
Pilot/ Harbour Master	2	1.0%
Sailors/ boatmen/ fishermen etc.	30	15.4%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	8	4.1%
Domestic Service	2	1.0%
Unskilled/manual labour	3	1.5%
School pupil/ youth	10	5.1%
Unspecified	35	17.9%

#### RHS Silver Medals: Location of Rescue 1850-59

Location	Number of Awards (Total =195)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	24	12.3%
At Anchor	35	17.9%
Harbour/Docks	36	18.5%
Inshore	10	5.1%
Beach	18	9.2%
River	48	24.6%
Canal	5	2.6%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	14	7.2%
Well/shaft	2	1.0%
Other	2	1.0%
Resuscitation: No Rescue	1	0.5%

<sup>9</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; and Young, *Acts of Gallantry*.

**RHS Silver Medals: Nature of Rescue 1850-59**

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total =195 )	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	67	34.4%
Boat accident	17	8.7%
Wreck	4	2.1%
Fall through ice	11	5.6%
Beach Bathing	10	5.1%
Tide	2	1.0%
Drowning (other)	77	39.5%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	2	1.0%
Stranded on ice flow	1	0.5%
Bomb	1	0.5%
Fire	2	1.0%
Resuscitation only	1	0.5%

**RHS Silver Medals: Additional Data 1850-59**

	Number of Awards	Percentage of Total
Total medals awarded	195	
Successful rescues	186	95.4%
Unsuccessful rescues	9	4.6%
Awards to women	5	2.6%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	3	1.5%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	29	14.9%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	6	3.1%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	33	16.9%

## APPENDIX 11

### Royal Humane Society: Summary of Awards by Decade, 1860-69<sup>10</sup>

#### RHS Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient 1860-69

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total =128)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	46	35.9%
Army Officer/ Cadet	5	3.9%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	7	5.5%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	6	4.7%
Police	1	0.8%
Pilot/ Harbour Master	1	0.8%
Sailors/ boatmen/ fishermen etc.	30	23.4%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	5	3.9%
Domestic Service	1	0.8%
School pupil/ youth	2	1.6%
Unspecified	24	18.7%

#### RHS Silver Medals: Location of Rescue 1860-69

Location	Number of Awards (Total =128)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	19	14.8%
At Anchor	34	26.6%
Harbour/Docks	17	13.3%
Inshore	21	16.4%
Beach	10	7.8%
River	15	11.7%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	9	7.0%
Well/shaft	1	0.8%
Other	2	1.6%

#### RHS Silver Medals: Nature of Rescue 1860-69

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 128)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	59	46.1%
Boat accident	6	4.7%
Wreck	21	16.4%
Fall through ice	4	3.1%
Beach Bathing	8	6.2%
Drowning (other)	28	21.9%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	1	0.8%
Hunting accident	1	0.8%

<sup>10</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; and Young, *Acts of Gallantry*.

**RHS Silver Medals: Additional Data 1860-69**

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	128	
Successful rescues	117	91.4%
Unsuccessful rescues	11	8.6%
Awards to women	4	3.1%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	2	1.6%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	14 (inc. cases where award recognises more than 1 rescue)	10.9%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	7	5.5%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	13	10.2%



## APPENDIX 12

### Royal Humane Society: Summary of Awards by Decade, 1870-79<sup>11</sup>

#### RHS Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient 1870-79

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total =98)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	29	29.6%
Army Officer/ Cadet	8	8.2%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	4	4.1%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	7	7.1%
Police	2	2.0%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	3	3.1%
Sailors/ boatmen/ fishermen etc.	18	18.4%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	5	5.1%
Unskilled/manual labour	4	4.1%
School pupil/ youth	8	8.2%
Unspecified	10	19.2%

#### RHS Silver Medals: Location of Rescue 1870-79

Location	Number of Awards (Total =98)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	31	31.6%
At Anchor	9	9.2%
Harbour/Docks	12	12.2%
Inshore	14	14.3%
Beach	8	8.2%
River	12	12.2%
Canal	1	1.0%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	2	2.0%
Well/shaft	3	2.0%
Colliery/mine	4	3.1%
Other	2	2.0%

<sup>11</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; Young, *Acts of Gallantry*; and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.

**RHS Silver Medals: Nature of Rescue 1870-79**

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total =98)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	40	40.8%
Boat accident	13	13.3%
Wreck	15	15.3%
Beach Bathing	7	7.1%
Drowning (other)	16	16.3%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/drowning)	3	3.1%
Colliery/mine (explosion/asphyxiation/drowning)	4	4.1%

**RHS Silver Medals: Additional Data 1870-79**

	Number of Awards	Percentage of Total
Total medals awarded	98	
Successful rescues	93	94.9%
Unsuccessful rescues	5	5.1%
Awards to women	3	3.1%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	2	2.0%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	8	8.2%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	1	1.0%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	18	18.4%

## APPENDIX 13

### Royal Humane Society: Summary of Awards by Decade, 1880-89<sup>12</sup>

#### RHS Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient 1880-89

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total = 134)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	22	16.4%
Army Officer/ Cadet	11	8.2%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	5	3.7%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	12	8.9%
Police	7	5.2%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	13	9.7%
Sailors/ boatmen/ fishermen etc.	24	17.9%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	7	5.2%
Unskilled/manual labour	21	15.7%
School pupil/ youth	4	3.0%
Unspecified	8	6.0%

#### RHS Silver Medals: Location of Rescue 1880-89

Location	Number of Awards (Total = 134)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	19	14.2%
At Anchor	18	13.4%
Harbour/Docks	13	9.7%
Inshore	16	11.9%
Beach	8	6.0%
River	19	14.2%
Canal	2	1.5%
Mill Race	2	1.5%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	11	8.2%
Well/shaft	17	12.7%
Sewer/cesspool	1	0.75%
Colliery/mine	1	0.75%
Industrial site	4	3.0%
Cliff	1	0.75%
Other	2	1.5%

<sup>12</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.

**RHS Silver Medals: Nature of Rescue 1880-89**

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 134)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	33	24.6%
Boat accident	15	11.2%
Wreck	10	7.5%
Fall through ice	7	5.2%
Beach Bathing	7	5.2%
Drowning (other)	36	26.9%
Structural collapse (bridge/building)	3	2.2%
Cliff rescue	1	0.7%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/drowning)	17	12.7%
Colliery/mine (explosion/asphyxiation/drowning)	1	0.7%
Other confined space (asphyxiation)	4	3.0%

**RHS Silver Medals: Additional Data 1880-89**

	Number of Awards	Percentage of Total
Total medals awarded	134	
Successful rescues	126	94.0%
Unsuccessful rescues	8	6.0%
Awards to women	5	3.7%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	5	3.7%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	14 (inc. cases where award recognises more than 1 rescue)	10.4%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	11	8.2%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	13	9.7%

## APPENDIX 14

### Royal Humane Society: Summary of Awards by Decade, 1890-99<sup>13</sup>

#### RHS Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient 1890-99

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total = 120)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	14	11.7%
Army Officer/ Cadet	9	7.5%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	7	5.8%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	7	5.8%
Police	5	4.2%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	7	5.8%
Sailors/ boatmen/ fishermen etc.	26	21.7%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	17	14.2%
Domestic service	1	0.8%
Unskilled/manual labour	19	15.9%
School pupil/ youth	2	1.7%
Unspecified	6	5.0%

#### RHS Silver Medals: Location of Rescue 1890-99

Location	Number of Awards (Total = 120)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	16	13.3%
At Anchor	2	1.7%
Harbour/Docks	6	5.0%
Inshore	45	37.5%
Beach	9	7.5%
River	8	6.7%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	7	4.2%
Well/shaft	4	3.3%
Sewer/cesspool	4	3.3%
Colliery/mine	13	10.8%
Industrial site	3	2.5%
Cliff	1	0.8%
Other	2	1.7%

<sup>13</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.

**RHS Silver Medals: Nature of Rescue 1890-99**

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 120)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	14	11.7%
Boat accident	17	14.2%
Wreck	43	35.8%
Fall through ice	5	4.2%
Beach Bathing	5	4.2%
Drowning (other)	10	8.3%
Cliff rescue	1	0.8%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	4	3.3%
Colliery/mine (explosion/ asphyxiation/drowning)	13	10.8%
Other confined space (asphyxiation)	8	6.7%

**RHS Silver Medals: Additional Data 1890-99**

	Number of Awards	Percentage of Total
Total medals awarded	120	
Successful rescues	108	90.0%
Unsuccessful rescues	12	10.0%
Awards to women	3	2.5%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	4	3.3%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	3	2.5%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	7	5.8%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	3	2.5%

## APPENDIX 15

### Royal Humane Society: Summary of Awards by Decade, 1900-09<sup>14</sup>

#### RHS Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient 1900-09

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total =111)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	12	10.8%
Army Officer/ Cadet	6	5.4%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	3	2.7%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	7	6.3%
Police	4	3.6%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	3	2.7%
Sailors/ boatmen/ fishermen etc.	32	28.8%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	8	7.2%
Unskilled/manual labour	30	27.0%
Unspecified	6	5.4%

#### RHS Silver Medals: Location of Rescue 1900-09

Location	Number of Awards (Total =111)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	18	16.2%
At Anchor	3	2.7%
Harbour/Docks	3	2.7%
Inshore	28	25.2%
Beach	3	2.7%
River	11	9.9%
Pond/Lake/Reservoir	2	1.8%
Well/shaft	5	4.5%
Sewer/cesspool	5	4.5%
Colliery/mine	17	15.3%
Industrial site	12	10.8%
Other	4	3.6%

<sup>14</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.

**RHS Silver Medals: Nature of Rescue 1900-09**

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total =111)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	13	11.7%
Boat accident	16	14.4%
Wreck	25	22.5%
Fall through ice	1	0.9%
Beach Bathing	3	2.7%
Drowning (other)	9	8.1%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	8	7.2%
Colliery/mine (explosion/ asphyxiation/drowning)	14	12.6%
Other confined space (asphyxiation)	20	18.0%
Fouled diver	1	0.9%
Vehicle accident	1	0.9%

**RHS Silver Medals: Additional Data 1900-09**

	Number of Awards	Percentage of Total
Total medals awarded	111	
Successful rescues	81	73.0%
Unsuccessful rescues	30	27.0%
Awards to women	2	1.8%
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	6	5.4%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	-	-
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	3	2.7%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	3	2.7%



## APPENDIX 16

### Royal Humane Society: Summary of Awards by Decade, 1910-14<sup>15</sup>

#### RHS Silver Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient 1910-14

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total = 42)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	12	28.6%
Army Officer/ Cadet	1	2.4%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	4	9.5%
Police	1	2.4%
Foreman/ supervisor/ administration/skilled labour	2	4.8%
Sailors/ boatmen/ fishermen etc.	11	26.2%
Unskilled/manual labour	10	23.8%
School pupil/youth	1	2.4%

#### RHS Silver Medals: Location of Rescue 1910-14

Location	Number of Awards (Total =42)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	11	26.2%
At Anchor	4	9.5%
Harbour/Docks	3	7.1%
Inshore	6	14.3%
River	3	7.1%
Sewer/cesspool	2	4.8%
Colliery/mine	6	14.3%
Industrial site	5	11.9%
Other	2	4.8%

#### RHS Silver Medals: Nature of Rescue 1910-14

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 42)	Percentage of Total
Person overboard	16	38.1%
Boat accident	2	4.8%
Wreck	6	14.3%
Drowning (other)	3	7.1%
Colliery/mine (explosion/ asphyxiation/drowning)	6	14.3%
Other confined space (asphyxiation)	7	16.7%
Landslide	1	2.4%
Rescue from height	1	2.4%

<sup>15</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.

**RHS Silver Medals: Additional Data 1910-14**

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	42	
Successful rescues	32	76.2%
Unsuccessful rescues	10	23.8%
Awards to women	-	-
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	-	-
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	-	-
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	3	7.1%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	2	4.8%

## APPENDIX 17

### Royal Humane Society: Summary of Stanhope Medal Awards, 1873-1914<sup>16</sup>

#### Stanhope Medal: Status/ Occupation of Recipient

Occupation	Number of Awards (Total = 42)	Percentage of Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	16	38.1%
Army Officer/ Cadet	5	11.9%
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	1	2.4%
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	2	4.8%
Police	1	2.4%
Foreman/ supervisor/ skilled labour	2	4.8%
Sailors/ boatmen/ fishermen etc.	9	21.4%
Army NCO/ Other Rank	1	2.4%
Unskilled/manual labour	4	9.5%
Unspecified	1	2.4%

#### Stanhope Medal: Location of Rescue

Location	Number of Awards (Total = 42)	Percentage of Total
High Seas/ Offshore	22	52.4%
At Anchor	1	2.4%
Harbour/Docks	3	7.1%
Inshore	2	4.8%
River	5	11.9%
Pond/ Lake	1	2.4%
Well	1	2.4%
Sewer/cesspool	2	4.8%
Colliery/Mine	1	2.4%
Industrial site	4	9.5%

#### Stanhope Medal: Nature of Rescue

Nature of Rescue	Number of Awards (Total = 42)	Percentage of Total
Man overboard	20	47.6%
Boat accident	4	9.5%
Wreck	5	11.9%
Flood	1	2.4%
Fall through ice	1	2.4%
Drowning (other)	3	7.1%
Well/shaft (asphyxiation/ drowning)	1	2.4%
Foul Air (asphyxiation)	5	11.9%
Industrial accident	1	2.4%
Shark	1	2.4%

<sup>16</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*; and Fevyer, *Acts of Gallantry 2*.

**Stanhope Medal: Additional Data**

	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Total medals awarded	42	
Successful rescues	8	19.0%
Unsuccessful rescues	34	81.0%
Awards to women	-	-
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	1	2.4%
Awards to rescuers who had previously saved life	1	2.4%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue suicides	2	4.8%
Awards for rescuing or attempting to rescue children	2	4.8%

Ten of the rescuers received additional medals from bodies other than the Royal Humane Society. These rewards included three Albert Medals and one French Government award.

## APPENDIX 18

### Bronze Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient<sup>17</sup>

#### Royal Humane Society Bronze Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient As Listed in Annual Report (Number of Awards)

	1844	1864	1884	1904
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	1	10	10	14
Army Officer/ Cadet	-	-	1	8
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	-	-	-	-
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	1	4	5	8
Police	1	2	7	15
Foreman/ supervisor/ skilled labour	2	3	8	8
Pilot/Harbour Master	-	-	1	-
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	5	12	23	33
Army NCO/ Other Rank	2	3	12	13
Domestic service	-	-	-	-
Unskilled/manual labour	3	3	9	8
School pupil/youth	-	7	10	17
Unspecified	5	12	50	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>155</b>

<sup>17</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*.

**Royal Humane Society Bronze Medals: Status/ Occupation of Recipient  
 As Listed in Annual Report (Percentage of Awards)**

	<b>1844</b>	<b>1864</b>	<b>1884</b>	<b>1904</b>
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	5.0	17.9	7.4	9.0
Army Officer/ Cadet	-	-	0.7	5.2
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	-	-	-	-
Clergy/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	5.0	7.1	3.7	5.2
Police	5.0	3.6	5.1	9.7
Foreman/ supervisor/ skilled labour	10.0	5.4	5.9	5.2
Pilot/Harbour Master	-	-	0.7	-
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	25.0	21.4	16.9	21.3
Army NCO/ Other Rank	10.0	5.4	8.8	8.4
Domestic service	-	-	-	-
Unskilled/manual labour	15.0	5.4	6.6	5.2
School pupil/youth	-	12.5	7.4	11.0
Unspecified	25.0	21.4	36.8	20.0

## APPENDIX 19

### Royal Humane Society Bronze Medals: Women and Non-white Recipients<sup>18</sup>

#### Royal Humane Society Bronze Medals: Women and Non-White Recipients Number of Awards Listed in Annual Reports

	1844	1864	1884	1904
Awards to women	-	1	2	3
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	-	-	9	15
<b>TOTAL AWARDS</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>155</b>

#### Royal Humane Society Bronze Medals: Women and Non-White Recipients Percentage of Awards Listed in Annual Reports

	1844	1864	1884	1904
Awards to women	-	1.8	1.5	1.9
Awards to non-white recipients (confirmed)	-	-	6.6	9.7

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<sup>18</sup> Data derived from RHS *Annual Reports*.

## APPENDIX 20

### Albert Medal: Summary of Awards 1866-1914 by Status/ Occupation of Recipient<sup>19</sup>

#### Albert Medals 1866-1914

Rank/Occupation	Sea Gold	Sea Bronze	Land Gold	Land Bronze	Total
Naval Officer/ Mercantile Marine Officer	5	26	-	-	<b>31</b>
Army Officer/ Cadet		2	3	12	<b>17</b>
Aristocracy/ gentry/ farming	1	-	-	1	<b>2</b>
Clerical/ Professional/ managerial/ academic	6	2	9	21	<b>38</b>
Police	-	1	1	2	<b>4</b>
Foreman/ supervisor/ skilled labour	-	-	5	12	<b>17</b>
RNLI/ voluntary rescue services	-	2	-	-	<b>2</b>
Sailor/ boatman/ fisherman etc.	2	29	1	6	<b>38</b>
Army NCO/ Other Rank	-	2	-	14	<b>16</b>
Housewife	-	-	-	2	<b>2</b>
Domestic service	-	-	-	1	<b>1</b>
Unskilled/manual labour	-	-	13	37	<b>50</b>
Prisoner	-	-	-	1	<b>1</b>
School pupil/youth	-	-	-	2	<b>2</b>
Unspecified	1	4	2	5	<b>12</b>
<b>TOTAL AWARDS</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>233</b>

<sup>19</sup> Data derived from Henderson, *Heroic Endeavour*; and Wilson and McEwan, *Gallantry*.



## APPENDIX 21

### Lifesaving Awards to New Zealanders: Female Recipients<sup>20</sup>

#### Royal Humane Society: New Zealand Awards to Women, 1851-1914

Award Type	Total Awards	Awards to Women	Percentage Awards to Women
Silver Medal	8	-	-
Bronze Medal	46	1	2.2%
Certificate on Vellum	14	1	7.1%
Certificate on Parchment	3	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.8%</b>

#### Royal Humane Society of Australasia: New Zealand Awards to Women 1881-1914

Award Type	Total Awards	Awards to Women	Percentage Awards to Women
Clarke Gold Medal	1	-	-
Gold Medal	1	-	-
Silver Medal	19	-	-
Bronze Medal	107	1	0.9%
Certificate of Merit	91	3	3.2%
Certificate of Commendation	1	-	-
Letter of Commendation	25	2	8.0%
Honourable Mention	3	3	100%
Recorded in Archives	3	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3.6%</b>

#### Royal Humane Society of New Zealand: Awards to Women: 1899-1914

Award Type	Total Awards	Awards to Women	Percentage Awards to Women
Stead Gold medal	3	-	-
Gold Medal	6	1	16.7%
Silver Medal	77	6	7.8%
Bronze Medal	86	10	11.6%
Certificate of Merit	123	19	15.4%
'In Memoriam' Certificate	21	10	47.6%
Certificate on Parchment	2	-	-
Special Certificate	2	-	-
Letter of Commendation/Official Letter	88	11	12.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>14.0%</b>

<sup>20</sup> Tables collated from rolls of cases reproduced in J.D. Wills, *Zealandia's Brave: The Royal Humane Societies in New Zealand 1850-1998* (Christchurch, 2001).

## APPENDIX 22

### Lifesaving Awards to New Zealanders: Maori Recipients<sup>21</sup>

#### Royal Humane Society: New Zealand Awards to Maoris, 1851-1914

Award Type	Number	Awards to Maoris	Percentage Awards to Maoris
Silver Medal	8	1	12.5%
Bronze Medal	46	6	13.0%
Certificate on Vellum	14	-	-
Certificate on Parchment	3	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9.9%</b>

#### Royal Humane Society of Australasia: New Zealand Awards to Maoris, 1881-1914

Award Type	Number	Awards to Maoris	Percentage Awards to Maoris
Clarke Gold Medal	1	-	-
Gold Medal	1	-	-
Silver Medal	19	1	5.3%
Bronze Medal	107	8	7.5%
Certificate of Merit	91	1	1.1%
Certificate of Commendation	1	-	-
Letter of Commendation	25	1	4.0%
Honourable Mention	3	-	-
Recorded in Archives	3	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4.4%</b>

#### Royal Humane Society of New Zealand Links: Awards to Maoris 1899-1914

Award Type	Number	Awards to Maoris	Percentage Awards to Maoris
Stead Gold medal	3	-	-
Gold Medal	6	1	16.7%
Silver Medal	77	5	6.5%
Bronze Medal	86	8	9.3%
Certificate of Merit	123	5	4.1%
'In Memoriam' Certificate	21	1	4.8%
Certificate on Parchment	2	-	-
Special Certificate	2	-	-
Letter of Commendation/Official Letter	88	2	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5.4%</b>

<sup>21</sup> Table collated from rolls of cases reproduced in J.D. Wills, *Zealandia's Brave: The Royal Humane Societies in New Zealand 1850-1998* (Christchurch, 2001).

## APPENDIX 23

### Representation of Women on Lifesaving Medals

#### Female Representations on Lifesaving Medals

Awarding Body/Medal	Date	Design	Allegorical Saviour/Protector or Victim
Plym Tamar & Tavy Humane Society/Lifesaving Medal	1831	Winged female figure gives succour to slumped semi-naked male	Allegorical Saviour/Protector
Lloyd's/Medal for Saving Life	1836	Ulysses being rescued by Leucothea	Allegorical Saviour/Protector
Liverpool Shipwreck & Humane Society/ Marine Medal	1839	Drowning woman hands child to shipwrecked man on raft	Victim
Shipwrecked Fishermen & Mariners Royal Benevolent Society/Lifesaving Medal	1851	Grieving woman stands over drowned man on stormy foreshore (plus other scenes)	Victim
Royal Society for the Protection of Life from Fire/Lifesaving Medal type 2	1852	Man carries woman from blaze	Victim
Government/Sea Gallantry Medal	1854	Shipwrecked woman on raft clutching child to breast	Victim
Hartley Colliery Medal	1862	Female angel protects and guides mine rescuers	Allegorical Saviour/Protector
Royal Humane Society of Australasia/ Lifesaving Medal	1874	Female personification of Australasia crowns rescuer with wreath	Allegorical Saviour/Protector
Royal Humane Society of New South Wales/ Lifesaving Medal	1879	Winged female angel supports grieving woman whilst man tends drowning victim	Allegorical Saviour/Protector & Victim
Liverpool Shipwreck & Humane Society/ Fire Medal	1883	Fireman conveys children from blaze to arms of kneeling mother	Victim
Quiver (newspaper)/Quiver Medal	1885	Naked male shields small girl from figure of Death	Victim
Royal Society for the Protection of Life from Fire/Lifesaving Medal type 3	1892	Man supports unconscious woman as frightened children look on	Victim
To-Day (newspaper)/Gallantry Fund Medal	1894	Britannia with shield and wreath	Allegorical Saviour/Protector

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National Canine Defence League	c. 1900	Victory and dog stand over vanquished dragon	Allegorical Saviour/Protector
Golden Penny (Newspaper)/Golden Penny Medal	1901	Seated Britannia with shield and trident	Allegorical Saviour/Protector
Royal National Lifeboat Institution/ Lifesaving Medal type 2	1903	Female personification of Hope ties lifejacket onto lifeboat Coxswain	Allegorical Saviour/Protector
Carnegie Hero Fund	1908	Angel shields and supports naked male figure	Allegorical Saviour/Protector
RSPCA/ Lifesaving Medal	1909	Allegorical female figure surrounded by animals	Allegorical Saviour/Protector
Bolton & District Humane Society/Hulton Colliery medal	1911	Victory with wreath	Allegorical Saviour/Protector
Government/Edward Medal (Industry), type 2	1911	Allegorical female figure shields stylised industrial landscape	Allegorical Saviour/Protector

## APPENDIX 24

### Representation of Men on Lifesaving Medals

#### Male Representations on Lifesaving Medals

Awarding Body/Medal	Date	Design	Saviour/Protector or Victim
Royal National Lifeboat Institution/ Lifesaving Medal type 1	1825	Three men drag man from water	Saviour & Victim
Plym Tamar & Tavy Humane Society/Lifesaving Medal	1831	Winged female figure gives succour to slumped semi-naked male	Victim
Lloyd's/Medal for Saving Life	1836	Ulysses being rescued by Leucothea	Victim
Liverpool Shipwreck & Humane Society/ Marine Medal	1839	Drowning woman hands child to shipwrecked man on raft	Saviour
Shipwrecked Fishermen & Mariners Royal Benevolent Society/Lifesaving Medal	1851	Man with telescope stands by rescue apparatus (plus other scenes)	Saviour
Royal Society for the Protection of Life from Fire/Lifesaving Medal type 2	1852	Man carries woman from blaze	Saviour
Government/Sea Gallantry Medal	1854	Shipwrecked men of raft	Victim
Hartley Colliery Medal	1862	Female angel protects and guides mine rescuers	Saviour & Victim
Jersey Humane Society/Lifesaving Medal	1865	Shipwrecked sailor astride spar	Victim
Royal Humane Society of Australasia/ Lifesaving Medal	1874	Female personification of Australasia crowns rescuer with wreath	Saviour
Royal Humane Society of New South Wales/ Lifesaving Medal	1879	Man tends drowning victim	Saviour
Liverpool Shipwreck & Humane Society/ Fire Medal	1883	Fireman conveys children from blaze to arms of kneeling mother	Saviour
Quiver (newspaper)/Quiver Medal	1885	Naked male shields small girl from figure of Death	Saviour
Royal Society for the Protection of Life from Fire/Lifesaving Medal type 3	1892	Man supports unconscious woman as frightened children look on	Saviour
Tynemouth Medal Trust/ Tynemouth Medal	1895	Men launching lifeboat	Saviour
Royal National Lifeboat Institution/ Lifesaving	1903	Female personification of	Saviour

Medal type 2		Hope ties lifejacket onto lifeboat Coxswain	
Government/Edward Medal (Mines)	1907	Mine rescuer and victim	Saviour & Victim
Carnegie Hero Fund	1908	Angel shields and supports naked male figure	Victim
Government/King's Police Medal	1909	Armoured watchman	Allegorical Saviour/Protector
Government/Edward Medal (Industry), type 1	1909	Industrial rescuer and victim	Saviour & Victim