

# THE RECORD OF THE LIFE-BOAT SERVICE. 4A

## AN ADDRESS BY SIR GODFREY BARING, BT. CHAIRMAN OF THE ROYAL NATIONAL LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INSTITUTION ON 10TH. JULY, 1941.

### THE RECORD OF 1940.

During 1940 the Institution's life-boats were launched 1,081 times. That is 396 more launches than ever before in one year.

They rescued 2,056 lives. That is 858 more lives rescued than ever before in one year.

Those launches were made, and those lives were rescued, in face of the full perils of war.

During the year the Institution awarded 48 medals for gallantry.

### HELP TO THE FIGHTING SERVICES.

The year was notable for the help which the life-boat service, while following its single aim of saving life, was able to give to the fighting services at Dunkirk and in the waters round our coasts.

Nineteen life-boats took part in the Dunkirk evacuation and brought off thousands of men. All the life-boats were damaged. One of them was lost. Two of the Institution's coxswains, at Margate and Ramsgate, won the Distinguished Service Medal for their gallantry. The Institution's share in this exploit cost it £8,000.

### TRIBUTES FROM THE SERVICES.

After only six months of war the Admiralty sent a special letter of thanks to the Institution for the "exemplary spirit of courage and endurance, in which, without fear or thought of self, the life-boatmen have never spared their strength and skill in helping their brother sailors in distress from the dangers of the sea and the violence of the enemy."

The Air Council has recently thanked the Institution for "its continued and valuable work in aiding the rescue of airmen, who have been forced to land in the sea, work which has enabled a great number of these men to be picked up".

The Ministry of Shipping specially thanked the Institution for its "public spirited response to the Ministry's appeal for life-boats to go to Dunkirk" and for "its generosity in accepting the expenditure".

### CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE SERVICES.

The officers and men of the three fighting services have shown their gratitude by the way in which they responded in 1940 to the appeal which each year the Institution makes to them. The Navy and the Air Force contributed five times as much as in the year before. The Army contributed thirteen times as much, and letter after letter in response to the appeal to the Army spoke with admiration and gratitude for the work of the life-boats at Dunkirk.

### HELP TO THE VESSELS OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

The year was notable also for the large number of lives rescued from foreign vessels. In the midst of war the life-boat service has never forgotten its undertaking to rescue all in peril at sea, whatever their nationality. There were launches to 137 foreign vessels belonging to 16 different countries during the year. Life-boats rescued from them 445 lives. They rescued as many lives from foreign vessels alone during this year of war as the total number they rescue in a year of peace.

## **FINANCE IN 1940: EXPENDITURE.**

Expenditure was lower in 1940 because, owing to essential war work in the shipbuilding yards, the building of life-boats had to be greatly curtailed, and only half as much was spent under this heading as in the previous year. In spite of this however, since the outbreak of war, the Institution has been able to send fifteen new motor life-boats to the coast.

The outstanding figure in the expenditure was £65,157 spent in rewards and other payments to the crews and launchers. This is the largest amount ever spent on these rewards in one year.

## **FINANCE IN 1940: INCOME.**

The Institution's income was the largest it has ever been. It was £356,320. That was £72,168 more than in 1939, and this splendid increase was almost entirely due to the increase of £63,749 in subscriptions and donations. They amounted to £184,312. That is the largest sum which has ever been received from this source.

Of that sum the branches of the Institution contributed £145,216. That was an increase in branch contributions of £38,482. Branches not only contributed 40% of the total revenue of the Institution, but contributed more than ever before. I should like to mention that London Life-boat Day this year, thanks to the splendid efforts of our lady workers, raised £14,235. That is £1,701 more than last year.

## **THE WAR RECORD.**

From the beginning of the war up to to-day the life-boats of the Institution have rescued 3840 lives. They have rescued more lives in just over twenty-two months of war than in the last ten years of peace. They have rescued 40 lives a week. They have rescued twice as many lives a week as in the last war. They have rescued a life every four hours since the war began.

## **THE EMPIRE'S HELP.**

Every overseas mail since the war began has brought gifts to the Institution from somewhere in the Empire, unsolicited gifts from people on whom the war must be making the same heavy demands as it is making upon us all. Those gifts have come from every part of the Empire, some from special war funds and others from private citizens.

## **HELP FROM AMERICA.**

People in America have been only less generous than our own people overseas. One donor, in Texas, has already sent £300 this year, and a lady in California has sent £49 because "she had been thrilled indeed to read of the heroic deeds of those saving lives around dear old England".

At the beginning of March, after hearing a wireless appeal which I had the pleasure of making on 23rd. February, the "New York Times" published a leading article on the work of the British life-boat Service in which it said: "The Royal National Life-boat Institution has been called the noblest of England's charitable societies. It has never lacked for funds gratefully contributed by a seafaring nation, and its morale and efficiency have made it a model for the rest of the world".

## **THREE FACTS.**

The life-boat service has never, in its whole history, had so busy and so dangerous a time as since the outbreak of war.

The life-boat service has never been more generously supported by the people of Great Britain than during these months of war, in spite of the increasing demands made upon them on every side.

The life-boat service has never before received such widespread support and so many contributions and tributes from all over the world.