

MOUSEHOLE FISHERMEN HONOURED

AN ECHO OF THE BALTIC WRECK

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING THE PENZANCE LIFEBOAT

There was an echo of the wreck of the Baltic on Saturday, when the six men who so gallantly went to the rescue of the five persons in danger on the little ketch on the 1st November, were presented with £2 each subscribed by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. The scene of the presentation was the Wesleyan Schoolroom, and there was a large number present. The proceedings were presided over by the Rev. G. D. Mason (Wesleyan superintendent minister), supported by Rev. R. W. Aitken, Colonel and Mrs. Cornish, Messrs. C. Tregenza, C.C., S. Bond. B. Wright, and Woodhill (Chief officer Coastguards). The names of the recipients were: Messrs. W. S. Drew. H. Harvey, R. Harry, R. Thomas, L. Harvey, and C. Harry.

After letters regretting inability to be present had been read from the Mayor of Penzance (Coun. A. K. Barnett) Capt. Reading, Messrs F. Holman, N. H. Symons, and R. Davey.

Mr. T. H. Cornish explained the object of the meeting. He was there in his official capacity as hon. sec. of the Penzance and Sennen branch of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution to ask the chairman to present the noble men who went to the rescue of a shipwrecked crew recently with £2 each. They would remember that the recipients on the night of Nov. 1st acted in a most meritorious way in saving the lives of five persons from the ketch Baltic, which was wrecked near Mousehole Island. They all knew of the gallant rescue, and the danger the men ran in carrying out the noble services – (Applause). He was away at the time, but from information placed in his hands, he drafted a report and forwarded it to the Institution, and they should be thankful that the men's services were so highly appreciated. As far as he could see, on the night of the storm, those gallant men, to use the words of a great historian "Cut their bridge behind them." They were lowered over the back of the quay by the crane, and if anything went wrong they had nothing to look for. The speaker referred to the movement made by the King to present miners with medals for gallant rescues, and thought there should also be medals for those who effected rescues at sea. He hoped it would not be long before his Majesty would include those who were brave on the sea. Mousehole had, from time to time, turned out men who had not been afraid to run great risks – (Applause). He was proud to record amongst those men he had known that of the late "dear old Joe Trewavas." (applause) who did a plucky act and was awarded the V.C. Mr. Cornish also referred to the plucky action of Brownfield in connection with the sinking of the "Orlando," and said boys of that stamp made men of the class who went out to the scene of the Baltic. He might mention that the arrangements for the presentation were in the hands of Mr. Bruce Wright, and he was proud to find himself taking part in the proceedings that evening. (Hear, hear). He was also proud to think that the first time his wife came there was on an occasion of that sort as it shewed that there were as good men in Cornwall as there were out of it.

Rev. G. D. Mason remarked that when the wreck occurred, he was conducting a service at his church at Penzance and when they heard the boom of the rockets, a thrill went through the frame of everyone present. He concluded the meeting as quickly as he could, and the congregation went to the harbour to see the lifeboat launched. He remembered what a stormy night it was, as he had been in storms both on sea and on shore. He also remembered the keen and cutting wind as it blew against his face, One knew the difficulties and dangers under which the crew had to labour that evening, and when they heard of the gallant rescue a thrill of great pride and gratitude to God, and thankfulness to the men rose in their hearts for the men who had achieved such a splendid deed. – (Applause). He was glad to be present to share with them in their congratulations to those brave men, – (Hear, hear). The men were brave from the highest motive – to save life – (Applause). One was not, therefore, surprised to find that a thrill of admiration went through the heart of the country for their gallant action, and that only a short time ago some gentleman, feeling that some recognition should be made presented, on his own behalf medals to the six men who had been mentioned that evening. The action on the 1st November made them feel that the great men were not all dead, but that there were still people of heroic actions as there were in past days – (applause.) As Mr. Cornish had stated, the men “cut the bridge behind them, and if anything had gone wrong they could have done nothing,” and he was glad to find their efforts had been awarded by the parent Institution. He was quite sure there were as many brave men at Mousehole as there were at any part of the country, and it must be very gratifying to Mrs. Cornish upon her first visit to Mousehole to attend a function of that description.

The men were then presented with the money, and the Chairman, the vicar of Paul, and Mr. Cornish each shook hands with them and congratulated them upon their plucky action.

Rev. R. W. Aitken remarked that he looked upon Mousehole as one of the rising places in England, and he congratulated the men upon their bravery in facing a storm under such difficulties and rescuing the crew and passengers of the Baltic. It had been said that the people were going worse instead of better. He did not believe anything of the sort. There were better people in the world to-day than ever there was.

Mr. C. Tregenza proposed a vote of thanks to the speakers, and mentioned that Mr. Pellew of Birmingham, recently presented the men with medals. He was of the opinion that the lifeboat was useless at Penzance, and there was not a better place for it than near Penlee Point where she could be used at any time or tide. When they considered the length of time the lifeboat took recently to be launched, he thought it was time the authorities considered the whole matter.

Mr. Bruce Wright seconded and the resolution was carried unanimously.

Mr. Cornish in acknowledging the compliment remarked at he received a letter from the National Institution which included the following clause: “Regarding the suggestion made by the salvors that the institution should provide a surf boat which might be used in the way described in your report, my committee will be greatly obliged if you and they will consider this matter and report at the same time as you consider the arrangements of the launching of the Penzance lifeboat, etc.” That paragraph, continued Mr. Cornish, referred to the whole question as to where the boat should be placed between Penzance and the western shore.

For some years past it had been a vexed question, and they realised under the altered system of maritime trade that Penzance was not at all suitable for the keeping of a large lifeboat. Through telephonic and telegraphic communication they were aware that a ship was in distress before she came ashore, and it behoved them to have the boat in the proper place. There was a motion before the Local Committee going into the whole question as to where the boat should be placed. The committee had examined every inch of the coast from Porthgwara to Penzance, Mousehole, Lamorna, Newlyn, and everywhere else, but the opinions of the committee were varied. Before they came to a definite decision, however, the committee would hear what the men of Mousehole had to say on the matter. The committee did not care whether the boat was placed at Penzance, Newlyn, Mousehole, or Lamorna. Their object was to place it in the best position for those who wanted it – (Applause).

The singing of the Doxology terminated the proceedings.

Mr. Pellew, it was stated, intends to present a medal to young Brownfield, for his coolness in connection with the wreck of the Orlando.

The Orlando was towing the Emblem to Mousehole, and when off Lamorna, while the Orlando was lowering her foresail she was run into by the Emblem. The crew hurriedly got on board the Emblem. Brownfield, however, was still on board the sinking craft. With great coolness and presence of mind, he cut the lashings of the Orlando's boat and got into it as the Orlando foundered. The lad floated away in the punt, and was subsequently picked up by his companions.

Mr. W. J. Renfee Pellow has forwarded to Mr. Stephen Bond, of Penzance, the medals for the Mousehole fishermen who risked their lives on the occasion of the wreck of the Baltic in order to save the crew of that vessel. The interesting souvenir consists of a handsome, massive silver medal, with gold centre. The design is a lifebuoy and pair of crossed oars. On one side are the words "For Bravery" and the recipients name, and on the other "Baltic Wreck, Mousehole, Cornwall. The medal is enclosed in a neat case, bearing the words "Baltic Wreck, 1907" in gilt letters.

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