



1953 Mountbatten Medal – Sybil Higgins

Mrs Higgins heard a lady shouting that two children were drowning, after having taken a derelict boat and floated out to sea. The boat capsized and the children were thrown into the water some 300 yards from the shore. One child, a girl of 4 years and 9 months immediately sank and her body was recovered the following day.

Mrs Higgins got to the scene of the accident by clambering down the bank, undressing as she went. There was a full tide at the time but otherwise the weather was good. She saw, about 300 yards from the shore, an upturned boat and a boy (8 years and 6 months) waving frantically. A man fully clothed was making slow but steady progress towards the child

As Mrs Higgins swam out she saw that the man was exhausted. He reached the child and she shouted to him to grab the boat. When she reached the boat the child who could not swim was holding on to the man. The man was unconscious and just losing his grip as she grabbed him. She put the child (who lashed out at her frantically) on her chest and holding the man by his collar she swam on her back towards the shore, the man and the child having been in the water approximately half an hour

About 50 yards from the shore, Mrs Feeney and Mr Hyde went to the rescue. Mr Hyde, who had a rowing boat, towed them to the shore.

Artificial respiration was carried out on the man and the boy. A doctor was called and examined the man and pronounced him dead. The boy was taken to Sligo hospital and after due treatment recovered.