

THE MOUNTBATTEN MEDAL

FOR THE YEAR 1959

POLICE CONSTABLE 483 RICHARD COOKE
Nottingham City Police,
UK



During the afternoon of Sunday, 17th. May, 1959, Police Constable Cooke, with his two small children and another member of his family, was standing on the bank of the River Soar at a point above Ratcliffe Lock, which is sited on the opposite bank. They were watching the motor cruiser "Bonnie Maid" which was about to negotiate the lock. The owner of the cruiser went to open the lock gates and left his wife standing on the bank holding the boat by bow and stern lines. When the owner of the cruiser opened the paddle as the first step in draining the lock to river level, there was a surge of water between the boat and the bank. His wife was unable to hold the boat and she shouted to her husband, who ran to her assistance, but as he reached her and grabbed her arm both lost their balance and fell into deep water. Neither of them were able to swim. P.C. Cooke immediately dived from the opposite bank, fully clothed except for his jacket, and swam approximately one hundred yards diagonally across the river to their assistance. In order to reach them, P.C. Cooke had to swim through very turbulent water surging from the lock. He first reached the owner of the motor cruiser and towed him towards another boat "Just Jane" which was approaching the lock. The owner of this boat threw a line which Cooke was able to secure round the body of his patient who was then hauled on board. The second victim of the accident was then seen floating face downwards beneath the surface of the water and after helping to get her inboard, P.C. Cooke himself climbed on board "Just Jane" where he took charge and applied artificial respiration to the wife of the owner of "Bonnie Maid" who recovered consciousness after a quarter of an hour.

The action taken by P.C. Cooke without hesitation and without regard to his own safety saved two people from almost certain death by drowning, since neither could swim and there was no one else near to help. P.C. Cooke's action was the more meritorious because he had only recently left hospital after recovering from a serious illness.