



## **1980 Mountbatten Medal – John Potts**

On Sunday 16 November 1980, a group of canoeists on a Senior Instructor Course were negotiating a difficult V-shaped weir on the River Blackwater at Benburg, Co Armagh, Northern Ireland. At 2.30pm, one of the canoeists, Patrick J. Grant, misjudged the point at which he was to “shoot” the weir and his canoe was sucked from under him in the 30-foot 45 degree weir drop. Though wearing a buoyancy aid, Grant was held in the “stopper” wave at the weir for a short while before escaping from it in a semi-conscious state. The river was in full spate and it began to carry him downstream towards the next weir which had a 20-foot drop

Another member of the Course, John Potts, having successfully negotiated the first weir, observed his colleagues being swept away. Without thought for his own safety, he swam across the flow and caught Grant by the top of his buoyancy aid. Both were now only 20 yards from the second weir but Potts managed to tow Grant 35 yards to the bank across the flow of the river. Grant’s breathing was difficult as he was landed but Potts gave priority to running back upstream to warn the remainder of the party of the dangers of the weir.

Potts holds the Bronze Medallion of the Royal Life Saving Society – United Kingdom, which he gained on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 19798 at Riversdale Life Saving Club. Strabane, N.I. Without his swift action in coming to the rescue of his colleague and his determination and skill in effecting a most dangerous tow to the bank, a life would most certainly have been lost. The Mountbatten Medal of the Royal Life Saving Society for 1980 is awarded to JOHN POTTS.