



1988 Mountbatten Medal – Penny Clayton

On the morning of 8 January, 1988, Penny Clayton (aged 18) was on lifeguard duty at Brighton Beach, Dunedin, New Zealand. There was a strong westerly wind with a two metre surf, the temperature approximately 26 degrees C. Observing the area known as Big Rock through binoculars, Penny noticed a male swimmer in difficulties some 200 metres from the shore. A large wave washed the swimmer on to some rocks where he signalled for assistance. Penny grabbed a rescue tube and started the arduous ten minute to reach John Bryan who was frightened and in a state of panic. Because of the large waves and considering her own safety, Penny persuaded the casualty to jump from the rock to her. She had just fastened John to the rescue tube when a large wave pounded them back on to the rocks and they both suffered severe lacerations and body bruising. Due to the extremely difficult conditions it was not possible to return to Brighton Beach. There was only one alternative – she would have to tow the casualty to Ocean View Beach some 300 metres away which required a swim further out to sea and around a cliff face. During the exhausting swim it was necessary for Penny to continually reassure the casualty and finally she successfully reached the shore and semi-carried John half a kilometre to the Brighton Surf Club where all injuries were treated

Miss Clayton is a member of the Saint Clair Club. She has been a lifeguard for three years and this was her first rescue. For her courage and tenacity in effecting a successful rescue in hazardous conditions, the Mountbatten Medal of The Royal Life Saving Society for 1988 is awarded to Penny Jane Clayton.