



LIFEBELTS OLD AND NEW

**THE STORY OF THE LIFE-BOAT**  
A SERIES OF 50

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**LIFE-BELTS OLD AND NEW**

All life-belts were made of cork until the beginning of the 20th century. The cork belt in the top picture is the one designed for the life-boat service in 1854 and in use, with slight modifications, until 1904. It was then discovered that a new substance, kapok, was more buoyant than cork. Kapok is a vegetable down, and comes from the seed-pods of the kapok tree which grows in the Netherlands East Indies. Before its buoyancy was discovered it was used for stuffing cushions. Kapok life-belts were first issued to all life-boat crews in 1906. The life-belt now in use can support the weight of three men after 24 hours in the water, while it can support the weight of one man after over 350 hours in the water.

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# Ogden's Cigarette Cards



MODERN LINE-THROWING GUN: OLD-STYLE HAND ROCKET

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**MODERN LINE-THROWING GUN: OLD STYLE HAND ROCKET**

If it is impossible for a life-boat to get under the lee of a wreck, she gets as near as she can on the windward side, sends a line to her, rigs a breeches buoy, and hauls the men through the sea. The line is sent by means of a line-throwing gun which fires a steel rod. To this rod is attached the end of the line which is coiled up inside a tin cylinder fitted over the barrel, or is laid up in a cylinder under the barrel. The gun has a range of 60 to 80 yards. The R.N.L.I. also uses line-throwing pistols, which work in the same way, but have the line laid up in a separate box. The gun was adopted in 1922, the pistol in 1938. The gun replaced the hand rocket, a leaded cane which could be thrown only two or three yards against a gale.

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**MANBY'S MORTAR: (INSET) MODERN ROCKET APPARATUS**

Captain George William Manby (1765-1859) served in the Cambridgeshire Militia, and on retiring was appointed barrack master at Great Yarmouth. Here he experimented with a mortar or firing a line to ships wrecked close ashore. First used in 1808, the invention was adopted by the Navy Board, and mortars were established at various stations round the coast. By 1823 they had saved 229 lives, and the House of Commons voted Captain Manby £2,000. He was made a fellow of the Royal Society, and awarded the gold medal of the R.N.L.I. Inset shows the rocket apparatus as used today. It is manned partly by the coastguard and partly by volunteers. There are over 350 of these life-saving companies in Britain and Northern Ireland.

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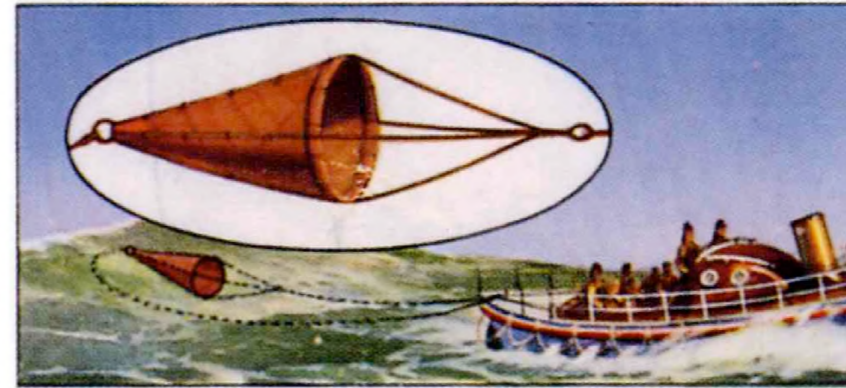
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**A RESCUE BY BREECHES BUOY**

The breeches buoy is used by a life-boat to take men off a wreck when it is impossible to get alongside. It is also used, as shown in this picture, by the Board of Trade's Life-saving Rocket Appliances to rescue the shipwrecked from the shore. A line is fired to the wreck by rocket in the case of the Board of Trade appliances, by line-throwing gun or pistol in the case of life-boats. By means of this line the buoy is passed to the wreck. It has a continuous line attached so that it can be pulled backwards and forwards. One by one the shipwrecked men get into the buoy and are hauled through the surf to the shore.

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DROGUE IN USE

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**DROGUE IN USE**

The drogue is one of the most valuable parts of a life-boat's equipment. It is a canvas bag, about 27 in. in diameter, and is thrown overboard astern when the life-boat is running before wind and sea. It fills with water and exerts a pull on the life-boat of over 6 cwt. This pull steadies the life-boat, keeping her end on to wind and sea, and so helps to protect her from the danger of "broaching to," that is, of being turned broadside on to the waves, with the risk of being capsized.

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**MODERN MORTAR AND MAROON: (INSET) OLD STYLE POWDER SIGNAL GUN**

Nowadays life-boat crews are summoned to the life-boat by the firing of a maroon from a steel mortar, buried in earth or sand. This maroon, which is both a light and a sound signal, has a long quick match fuse fixed to it. To this a signalman attaches a time fuse, which he lights when the maroon is to be used. The time fuse takes eight seconds to burn before it ignites the quick fuse, which is instantaneous. As the maroon bursts it throws off green stars. In the days before maroons were used, the crews were summoned by the firing of a powder mortar (shown inset).

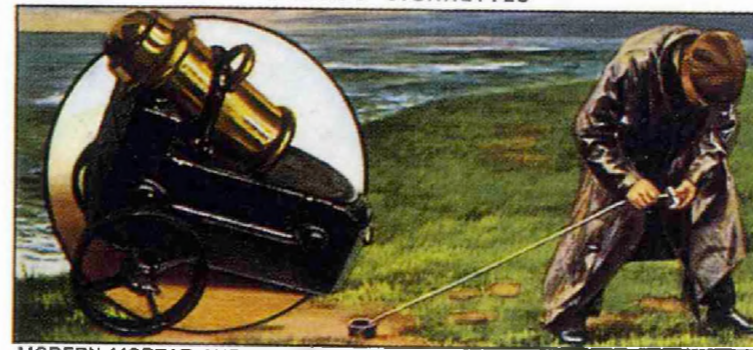
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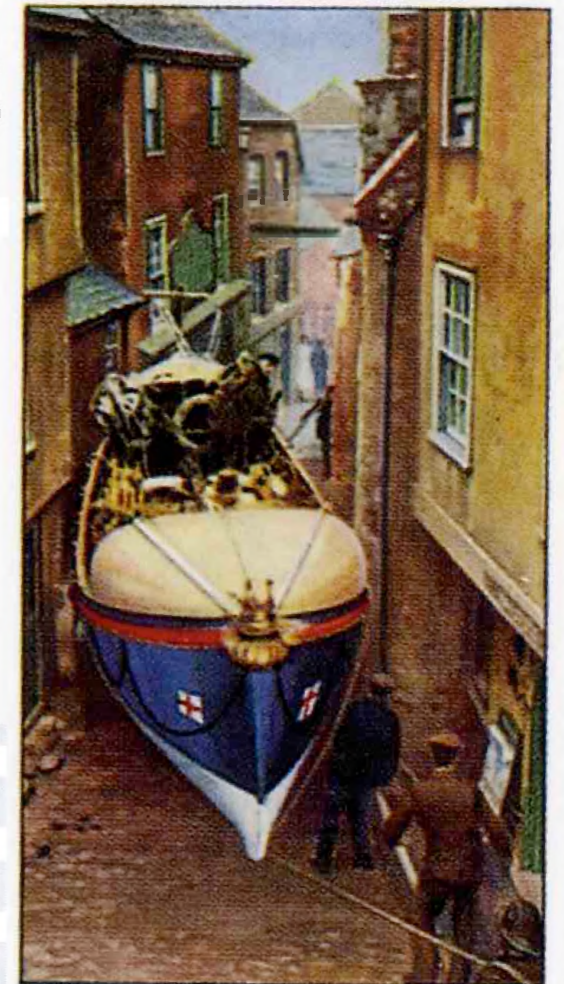
MANBY'S MORTAR: (INSET) MODERN ROCKET APPARATUS



A RESCUE BY BREECHES-BUOY



MODERN MORTAR AND MAROON: (INSET) OLD-STYLE POWDER SIGNAL GUN



LAUNCHING LIFE-BOAT THROUGH STREETS, PORT ISAAC

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**LAUNCHING LIFE-BOAT THROUGH STREETS, PORT ISAAC.**

Port Isaac, Cornwall, had a life-boat station from 1869 to 1933, and its life-boats rescued 86 lives. The village is built on the side of a hill above the sea, and its houses come right down to the beach. The village was so crowded that there was no space available near the beach for the life-boat-house. It was therefore built on a plateau in the middle of the village, just off the main street, which runs, with one or two sharp turns, from the hill-top to the beach. Down this street the life-boat was taken to be launched. The coxswain, standing in the stern, gave all his orders to the launchers by whistle, and in some places the street was so narrow that grooves were cut in the sides of the houses to allow the hubs of the carriage wheels to pass.

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