

Source 7: Captain Manby's lifesaving apparatus

Captain George William Manby dedicated much of his life to the invention of lifesaving devices. He witnessed the wreck of the naval ship *Snipe* off Great Yarmouth in 1807, which claimed over 200 lives. This tragedy inspired Manby to come up with a way of reaching out to help ships in danger near to shore.

Captain Manby's lifesaving apparatus fired a mortar that launched a rope out to distressed ships. The rope between the ship and the shore then enabled those onboard to try to get ashore. For ships foundering near the shoreline, Manby's invention was a literal lifeline.

Between 1811 and 1821, Captain Manby tirelessly promoted his invention to gain support for the lifesaving at sea movement.

The principle of Captain Manby's invention is still used by today's lifeboats in some sea rescues (now known as line-throwing apparatus).

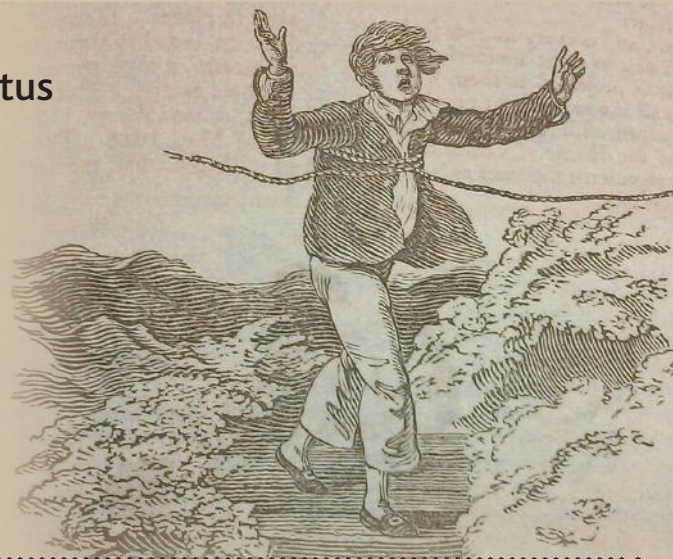


Illustration of sailor in distress by Manby

Courtesy: London Metropolitan Archives/Royal Humane Society

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, June 14.

ADDRESS RESPECTING CAPTAIN MANBY'S LIFE PRESERVER.] Mr. *Wilberforce*, pursuant to notice, called the attention of the House to captain Manby's invention for preserving seamen's lives. Captain Manby had already received a public reward for it; and animated by this, he had made various improvements in it. The whole had been tried and approved by a Committee of general officers. The invention added greatly to the utility of Mr. Greathead's life boat. Upon the whole, he thought it highly desirable that the apparatus should be established on different parts of the coast. The arrangements had better be left to the executive government, who, he hoped, would grant rewards to those who exerted themselves in preserving the lives of seamen. He himself had in vain attempted to procure a reward for some persons who had, at the risk of their lives, preserved several from wreck, and these very men afterwards refused to go out in a case of distress, because they said they had families of their own, and could not expose their lives to imminent hazard without the conviction that, in case of the worst, their families should be provided for. The expence of this would be trifling and the benefit would be great. He concluded by moving, "That an humble Address be presented to his royal highness the Prince (VOL. XX.)

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Regent, that he will be graciously pleased to give directions, that such measures, as may appear expedient to his Majesty's government, may be adopted without delay for carrying into execution, on suitable parts of the sea coast of Great Britain, captain Manby's Plans for saving the Lives of Shipwrecked Mariners; and that this House will make good the expenses attending the same."

Mr. *Rose* seconded the motion; remarking particularly on the utility of the invention, as it enabled the life-boat to reach vessels in distress on many occasions when otherwise a boat could not possibly be launched.

Mr. *Bastard*, although he highly approved of the invention, yet cautioned the House, after the experience which they had already had during the present session, as in the case of Mr. *Palmer*, against addresses stating their disposition to make good any payments of money.

Mr. *Wilberforce* observed, that the expences in the present instance would be very small.

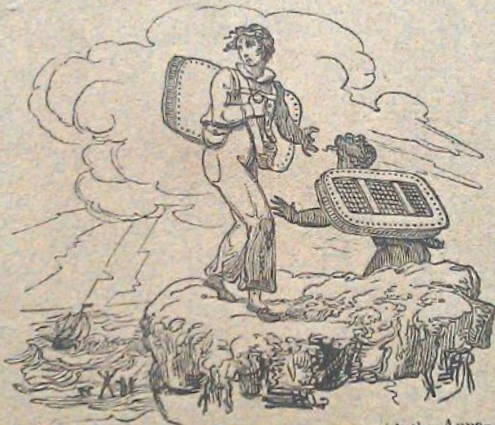
Sir *T. Turton* said, that the remark of his hon. friend related not to the amount, but to the motion itself. There was this difference, however, between the case to which his hon. friend alluded and that at present under consideration, namely, that in the former instance, the vote of the House was against the opinion of ministers, but that in the latter it received their sanction.

The motion was then agreed to.

Source 7: Captain Manby's lifesaving apparatus (continued – page 2)

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**CAPTAIN MANBY'S
 LECTURE**
 ON THE PRESERVATION OF PERSONS
IN THE HOUR OF SHIPWRECK.

“The riches of a country is its population, and the lives of its subjects one of the dearest possessions we have to protect.”



This figure represents a man fully equipped with the Apparatus for effecting a communication with a stranded vessel, which he ALONE can perform. This portable Apparatus is adapted for thinly inhabited coasts, and for islands where perhaps there is but one person residing. *Vide* page 20, and Admiral Sir R. BICKERTON's opinion on this subject, page 69.

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 Price Three Shillings.

1814.

Captain Manby's Lecture on the Preservation of Persons in the Hour of Shipwreck
 Courtesy: London Metropolitan Archives/Royal Humane Society



REPRESENTATION OF THE MORTAR, SHOT, AND LINE, PREPARED FOR EFFECTING A COMMUNICATION.



VIEW OF A VESSEL STRANDED ON A LEEWARD SHORE, AND THE METHOD OF EFFECTING COMMUNICATION.



METHOD OF RESCUING THE SHIPWRECKED PERSONS, AFTER COMMUNICATION HAS BEEN EFFECTED.

CAPT. MANBY'S METHOD OF PRESERVING SHIPWRECKED PERSONS.

Illustrations showing Captain Manby's lifesaving apparatus
 Courtesy: London Metropolitan Archives/Royal Humane Society

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE USE OF THE ROCKET AND MORTAR APPARATUS IN SAVING LIFE FROM SHIPWRECK.



(PLATE 1.) A Shot, with a Line attached, thrown over a Stranded Ship.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE USE OF THE ROCKET AND MORTAR APPARATUS IN SAVING LIFE FROM SHIPWRECK.



(PLATE 2.) A Man being hauled ashore in a "Sling" travelling on a Hawser.

Source 7: Captain Manby's lifesaving apparatus (continued - page 3)

WHITEHALL, 8th August 1815.

MY LORDS,

HAVING been desirous of carrying into further execution Captain Manby's Plan for saving the Lives of Shipwrecked Seamen, pursuant to an Address of the House of Commons, and which I noticed to your Lordships in my Letter dated 8th October, 1811, I deemed it expedient some Months ago to call upon Captain Manby for a Report, setting forth distinctly the Stations upon the Coast at which it appeared to him to be desirable that the Apparatus he recommended the adoption of should be placed. Having accordingly received a Report from Captain Manby, pointing out such Stations, I caused his apparatus to be transmitted to several of them on the Coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk, where I had understood that certain Individuals resided, who were willing to take charge of the same. The information, however, which I obtained from Captain Manby, as to Persons who were willing to take charge of the Apparatus in question, having proved in several Cases incorrect, and it being essential to the establishment of his plan, to ascertain in the first instance, what Persons will take charge of Apparatus if sent to them, to be used in Cases of Shipwreck, it has occurred to me that such Information may be procured most effectually through your Lordships means.

With this view, I herewith transmit to your Lordships a List of Places, where, in the opinion of Captain Manby, and of Officers commanding Signal Stations on the Coast, to whom a reference has been made, the Apparatus may be advantageously established for the Purpose of affording relief in cases of Shipwreck; and I am to request that your Lordships will forward such List to the Commissioners of the Customs, with Instructions to them to direct their Officers residing at, or near the respective Places mentioned in the said List, to enquire and to report whether any, and the respective Persons residing within a reasonable distance thereof, would be willing to receive the Stores and Apparatus in question, if sent to them by Government, and would undertake the care and management of the same. I have also to desire that the Board of Customs would direct precise answers to be sent in reply to the above enquiry, direct to the Home Office, containing the Names and Addresses of the several Persons who may signify their readiness to give their Assistance to this Measure.

For the sake of saving Your Lordships and the Commissioners of the Customs all unnecessary trouble, I herewith inclose a number of printed Forms containing the Questions to be put to the Custom-House Officers on the Coast, with blank spaces in which their Answers may be written, and I beg to suggest that these Forms when filled up may be returned direct to this Office.

I am, &c.

(Signed)

SIDMOUTH.

The Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury.

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury a Letter from Lord Sidmouth, Secretary of State for the Home Department, further relative to carrying into effect Captain Manby's Plan for saving the Lives of Shipwrecked Seamen, with its inclosures;

I am commanded by their Lordships to transmit the said Papers to you, and to desire that you will give directions to your Officers, and call upon them for the Information suggested by the Secretary of State.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

S. R. LUSHINGTON.

Treasury Chambers, 9th August 1815.

Commissioners Customs.

CUSTOM-HOUSE, LONDON, 16th August 1815.

THE foregoing Copy of a Letter from Mr. Lubbock (one of the Secretaries to the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury) together with Copy of the Letter from Lord Sidmouth, and of the other inclosures therein referred to, are hereby transmitted to the Collector and Comptroller of the several Ports and Places who are forthwith to return (direct to the Office of His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department) Answers to the several Queries, and as far as they are required to do so by his Lordship's said Letter, and transmit a Duplicate of such their returns to this Board.

By Order of the Commissioners,

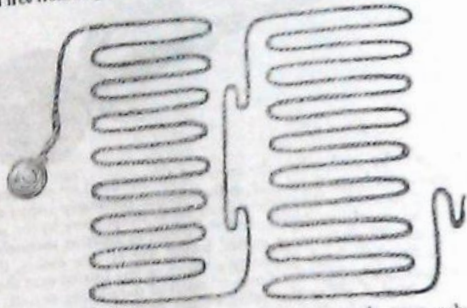
COUNTIES.	STATIONS selected by Captain MANBY.	COLLECTORS.	COMPTROLLERS.	Ports and Residences.
N. Britain	N. Berwick			
Haddingtonshire	Dunbar			
Berwickshire	Dunbar St. Abbahad Berwick	Samuel Burn.	Alexander Greeve.	Berwick.
Northumberland	Holy Island Bamborough Castle Burdale Hill Cousin Haven Hawkerley Point Newbiggin Sunderland Hartley	Charles Ogle.	George Currie.	Newcastle.
Durham	Eastington Hartlepool	John Carr. George Robinson.	John Sanderson. Chris. Septimus Hill.	Stockton. Sunderland.
Yorkshire	Flamborough Head Whitby	Charles Lovridges Benjamin Milne. James Cooper. Christopher Coulton.	Charles Roe. John Wallis. Henry Fowler. Thomas Parkin.	Hull. Bridlington. Scarborough. Whitby.
Lincolnshire	Cleyness Saltfleet Sutton Sheyessa	John Brotherton. William Marshall.	James Ingram. Thomas Cortes.	Boston. Grimsby.
Norfolk	Wells Blakeney Sherringham Croner Maudsley Happisburg Winterton Culter Yarmouth	William Palgrave. John Preston. Nicholas Tickling. Vacant.	George Thompson. Hawkins Hamilton. James Lambert. William Green.	Yarmouth. Clay. Wells. Lynn.
Suffolk	Gunton Kessingland Easton Cliff Dunwich Red House Wa Orford Orford Haven Felstow	William Batley. William Milne. Benjamin Bunnis. William Revans.	Samuel Boggis. Leonard Pearson. John Harvey. Henry Burwood.	Ipswich. Woodbridge. Aldborough. Southwold.
Essex	Mare Point Beurhouze Little Holland Vallet Sant Morsey	Vacant. Thomas Tappin. Robinson Wordsworth.	Vacant. James Collins Tabor. Anthony Runnacles.	Maldon. Colchester. Harwich.

COUNTIES.	STATIONS selected by Captain MANBY.	COLLECTORS.	COMPTROLLERS.	Ports and Residences.
Kent	Whitstable Heolvers Bridlington Deal Dover Lympen Dungones Fairlight Gally Hill Rochmore Seaford Hawk Hill Worthing Kington Seben	Isaac Slaughter. William Rickards. Benjamin Fuller Stow.	William Pittman. Jacob Friend. Boymas Geo. Sampson.	Sandwich. Deal. Dover.
Sussex	Ashey Down Dunnose St. Catherine's Parishurst Needles Christchurch Alban's Head Isle of Portland Von Portland Castle Hill Whiteclands Beeshead Peck Hill Berry Head Coleton Start Point Hope South Ground Maker Tower	Nathaniel Proctor. Harry Harrison. Henry Partington. Jeremiah Lear. James Powell.	William Watson. John Benjamin Stone. Richard Coker. John Wilson. William Wilson.	Bye. Newhaven. Soreham. Arundel. Chichester.
Hants	St. Catherine's Parishurst Needles Christchurch Alban's Head Isle of Portland Von Portland Castle Hill Whiteclands Beeshead Peck Hill Berry Head Coleton Start Point Hope South Ground Maker Tower	Elias Arnaud. William Smith	John Williams. John B. Harrison.	Portsmouth. Southampton.
Dorsetshire	Alban's Head Isle of Portland Von Portland Castle Hill Whiteclands Beeshead Peck Hill Berry Head Coleton Start Point Hope South Ground Maker Tower	David Osmond Lander. Roper Weston. John Chambers.	Edward Allen. George Sargent. Richard C. Davis.	Poole Weymouth. Lyme.
Devonshire	Beeshead Peck Hill Berry Head Coleton Start Point Hope South Ground Maker Tower	John Tho. Wright, Jun. Nicholas Brooking. Henry Tackler. Thomas Grant. Edward Rich. Roberts. Thomas Redd.	Vacant. George Porter. John Newton. George Colmer. Nicholas Glas. Robert Holland.	Exeter. Dartmouth. Plymouth. Bideford. Barnstaple. Hrascombe.
Cornwall	Penzance Newland Greber Head St. Anthony's Head Manacle Point Park Lough Lizard Point Tregony Hill Tetterdieu St. Leyans Point Land's End Silly	James Nicholas. John Kimber. Samuel Pellow. Isaac Head. James Edgecombe. John Tippet. Richard Jewel Ferris. Samuel Lemon. Augustus Stevens. Thomas Avery.	Anthony Jeeves. Henry T. W. Croucher. James Laffin. John Hickens. Nicholas Hellings. Thomas Devonshire. James Nicholls. John Hall. Thomas Trearne. John Phillips.	Looe. Fowey. Falmouth. Gweck. Perryn. Truro. Penzance. Silly Island. St. Ives. Padstow.
Penbrokeshire	Dale	Matthew Campbell. Henry Lesch.	George Chace. Anthony Innes Stokes. William Williams.	Pembroke. Milford. Beaumaris.
Anglesea	Llancastell Table Hill	William Hughes.	Joseph Lewis. William Fishley. Robert Forster. Edward Rigby. Charles Trevor. William Warren. Thomas Andrews. John Bevan. Harcourt Roe. John Davies.	Chester. Lancaster. Preston. Liverpool. Bridgewater. Minchew.
Carnarvonshire	Air Point	Thomas Brosten. James Booth.	Richard Pilkington. John Timothy Swainson. Robert Andrie. Richard Searle. John Gordon. Thomas Jenkins. Thomas Jennings. Thomas Bourne.	
Flutshire	St. Domingo	Richard Pilkington. John Timothy Swainson. Robert Andrie. Richard Searle. John Gordon. Thomas Jenkins. Thomas Jennings. Thomas Bourne.	Vacant. William Hopkins. Richard Dickens. John Perry. William Henry King. Richard Coker. William Jackson. Thomas Lister. Mungo Murray. Isaham Chapman.	Cardiff. Swansey. Llanelli. Cardigan. Aberystwith.
Cheshire	St. Domingo	Richard Pilkington. John Timothy Swainson. Robert Andrie. Richard Searle. John Gordon. Thomas Jenkins. Thomas Jennings. Thomas Bourne.	Vacant. William Hopkins. Richard Dickens. John Perry. William Henry King. Richard Coker. William Jackson. Thomas Lister. Mungo Murray. Isaham Chapman.	
Lancashire	St. Domingo	Richard Pilkington. John Timothy Swainson. Robert Andrie. Richard Searle. John Gordon. Thomas Jenkins. Thomas Jennings. Thomas Bourne.	Vacant. William Hopkins. Richard Dickens. John Perry. William Henry King. Richard Coker. William Jackson. Thomas Lister. Mungo Murray. Isaham Chapman.	
Somersetshire	St. Domingo	Richard Pilkington. John Timothy Swainson. Robert Andrie. Richard Searle. John Gordon. Thomas Jenkins. Thomas Jennings. Thomas Bourne.	Vacant. William Hopkins. Richard Dickens. John Perry. William Henry King. Richard Coker. William Jackson. Thomas Lister. Mungo Murray. Isaham Chapman.	
Glamorganshire	St. Domingo	Richard Pilkington. John Timothy Swainson. Robert Andrie. Richard Searle. John Gordon. Thomas Jenkins. Thomas Jennings. Thomas Bourne.	Vacant. William Hopkins. Richard Dickens. John Perry. William Henry King. Richard Coker. William Jackson. Thomas Lister. Mungo Murray. Isaham Chapman.	
Carmarthenshire	St. Domingo	Richard Pilkington. John Timothy Swainson. Robert Andrie. Richard Searle. John Gordon. Thomas Jenkins. Thomas Jennings. Thomas Bourne.	Vacant. William Hopkins. Richard Dickens. John Perry. William Henry King. Richard Coker. William Jackson. Thomas Lister. Mungo Murray. Isaham Chapman.	
Cardiganshire	St. Domingo	Richard Pilkington. John Timothy Swainson. Robert Andrie. Richard Searle. John Gordon. Thomas Jenkins. Thomas Jennings. Thomas Bourne.	Vacant. William Hopkins. Richard Dickens. John Perry. William Henry King. Richard Coker. William Jackson. Thomas Lister. Mungo Murray. Isaham Chapman.	
Bedfordshire	St. Domingo	Richard Pilkington. John Timothy Swainson. Robert Andrie. Richard Searle. John Gordon. Thomas Jenkins. Thomas Jennings. Thomas Bourne.	Vacant. William Hopkins. Richard Dickens. John Perry. William Henry King. Richard Coker. William Jackson. Thomas Lister. Mungo Murray. Isaham Chapman.	
Cumberland	St. Domingo	Richard Pilkington. John Timothy Swainson. Robert Andrie. Richard Searle. John Gordon. Thomas Jenkins. Thomas Jennings. Thomas Bourne.	Vacant. William Hopkins. Richard Dickens. John Perry. William Henry King. Richard Coker. William Jackson. Thomas Lister. Mungo Murray. Isaham Chapman.	
Isle of Man	St. Domingo	Richard Pilkington. John Timothy Swainson. Robert Andrie. Richard Searle. John Gordon. Thomas Jenkins. Thomas Jennings. Thomas Bourne.	Vacant. William Hopkins. Richard Dickens. John Perry. William Henry King. Richard Coker. William Jackson. Thomas Lister. Mungo Murray. Isaham Chapman.	
Isle of Wight	St. Domingo	Richard Pilkington. John Timothy Swainson. Robert Andrie. Richard Searle. John Gordon. Thomas Jenkins. Thomas Jennings. Thomas Bourne.	Vacant. William Hopkins. Richard Dickens. John Perry. William Henry King. Richard Coker. William Jackson. Thomas Lister. Mungo Murray. Isaham Chapman.	

Papers circulated by Whitehall, London, in 1815 regarding Captain Manby's plan for saving the lives of shipwrecked persons
Courtesy: Manx National Heritage,
Manuscript reference: MNH MS 02341 C

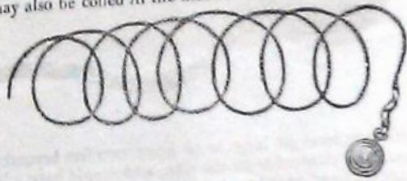
Source 7: Captain Manby's lifesaving apparatus (continued – page 4)

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even, and free from large stones, it may be thus laid with certainty in compartments.

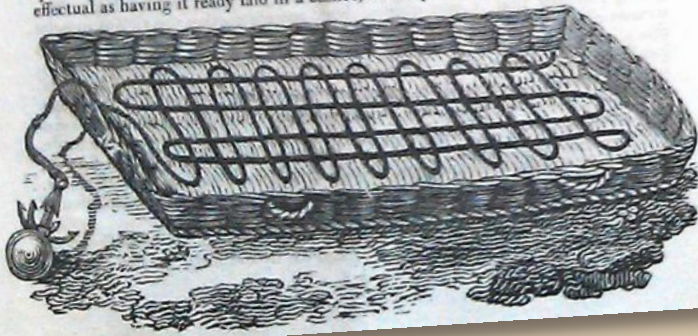


The length of the fakes must not exceed two yards; as the rope, when laid in fakes of greater length, is likely to be broken by the proportionably increased vibration. When the experiment was made with the rope laid in fakes of several yards long, it never failed to break.

The nicest care should also be taken to remove every thing from the beach likely to be an impediment to the free issue of the rope. If, with these precautions, a good and well stretched rope be used, communication will never be lost. This method of laying the rope is so simple, and the parts are so distinct from one another, that the eye, just before firing, can run over it, and at once convince itself that all is right, or detect the error of any one part overlying another; an error which would most certainly cause the rope to break, and frustrate the attempt to gain communication with the distressed vessel. The rope may also be coiled in the manner used in the whale-fishery: thus,

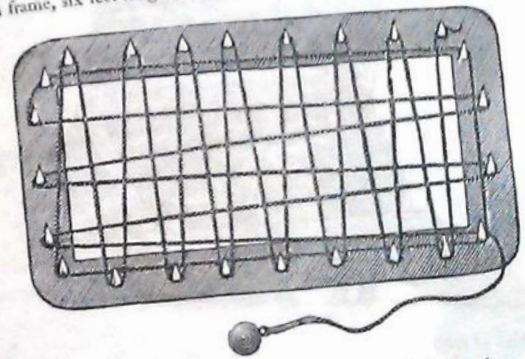


But as these methods of laying the rope consume time, and it has repeatedly happened that vessels have gone to pieces very soon after taking the ground, and all on board perished, it was necessary to discover such a method of previously arranging the rope, and preserving the arrangement during its removal from place to place, that it could be projected on the very minute of its arrival on the spot where it was required; and none of all that have been tried proved so effectual as having it ready laid in a basket, as is represented in the subjoined cut.



5
In this case the rope should be most carefully laid in tiers of fakes along and across the basket (as in the figure), no part of it being suffered to overlay any other part on the same line, and level with itself; and when done it should be kept in its position by the pressure of a cover most firmly strapped down on it, otherwise it is likely to be displaced in travelling from place to place. Above all, no mistake must be made in placing the basket; that part of the basket at which the faking ends, and at which, in the above representation, the shot lies, must be towards the sea or vessel; and should, to avoid error, be previously marked: the rope will then follow the shot freely, and without any hazard of entanglement. It is hardly necessary to observe, that there will be many tiers of the rope when thus laid in the basket; or repeat, that the utmost care and correctness are demanded in laying the rope in these tiers, that no failure may happen.

As in winter, from the greater length of the nights, assistance is more likely to be required by night than day, and it might be difficult, if the first attempt to cast the rope over the vessel failed, to lay it again in the dark with due correctness, it was necessary to supply a method, by which it might be laid with as much correctness in the dark as in the light. This was done by an oblong wooden frame, six feet long and four wide,



having at equal distances round its edge conical pegs six inches long, tapering from their base to the point, on which the rope is faked in tiers alternately along and across, as is described in the figure.

The best mode of guarding against any kinks in the rope is, that one person should turn out all the inclinations of the rope to twist and kink, and give it in to another who is faking it, only exactly in such quantities as he is able to dispose of in the fake.

The greatest care should be taken to keep the mortar dry; it should not be loaded till every thing is ready; then it should be primed and instantly fired.



But as it would be impossible to prime with loose powder in a storm, a tube (in the form of the annexed figure) may be made of common writing paper, the outer edge of which should be cemented with a little gum. This is to be filled with a paste made of finely powdered gunpowder and spirits of wine; when it is half dry, a needle is to be run through the centre of it, and the hole left open. The effect will be, that when the tube is inflamed, a stream of fire will rush with great force down the aperture and perforate the cart-ridge.

Extract from *Methods of Rescuing Persons From Vessels Stranded On a Leeward Shore* as printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1821
Courtesy: London Metropolitan Archives/Royal Humane Society

Q

1. What different campaign techniques did Manby use to promote his lifesaving apparatus and resources? List them.

2. How did the images of Manby's invention help the campaign to save lives at sea?

3. Looking at the parliamentary documents, suggest some steps that governments can take to support a campaign?

4. Before the parliamentary motion was made to adopt Captain Manby's invention on suitable parts of the coast, Mr Wilberforce stated one reason why some people who had saved people from shipwreck later refused to go out to rescue others. What was the reason?