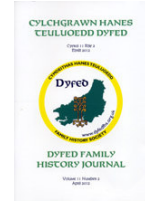


# Dramatic Rescue at Little Haven

David J Skyrme



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One Sunday evening I got a phone call out of the blue. It was from a medal collector who had bought this Royal Humane Society medal at a medal fair earlier in the day at Stratford-upon-Avon. He emailed the link to the citation (<http://lsars.org.uk/bronz99s.htm>) which reads:

“**Skyrme, W.H.** Post Office Clerk. Case 30385

On the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1899, R.H.Kaye and W.C.Lewis were bathing at Little Haven, Pembrokeshire, when Kaye became exhausted. Lewis tried to save him, but failed. Skyrme, at great risk, then swam out, and supported him till a boat came up, into which he was taken.



Testimonial on vellum to Lewis.”

Searching for the story on Welsh Newspapers Online (<http://newspapers.library.wales/>) I came across a report in the *Haverfordwest and Milford Haven Telegraph*, 16 Aug 1899 headlined “Narrow Escapes from Drowning at Little Haven. EXCITING SCENES OFF THE POINT. PLUCKY RESCUES.” After stating that “The safe sands, absence of pits and currents, are all factors which contribute to make the Haven probably the safest bathing resort in the Kingdom.” It continued:

“Frequenters of Little Haven are well acquainted with the Point, and there are few who are not aware that although the rocks and sands at its base are accessible at low water when the tide is in there is a depth of between 12 and 20 feet of water.” It noted “that precautions were neglected on Monday, accounts for the incident it is now our duty to record, and which but for the heroism of two young fellows would inevitably have had fatal results.” It then recounted in some detail how the drama unfolded adding: “During this time the greatest excitement prevailed on the Point which was crowded with visitors, and several ladies fainted.” Mr Kay was formerly organist at St Mary’s while Mr Lewis was the son of the late William Lewis proprietor of the newspaper. William Skyrme was William Henry Skyrme (1869-1941) of the Old Bridge at Haverfordwest, the son of a solicitor’s clerk from a Haverfordwest family that has been traced back to 1747.

The newspaper article then recounts a similar incident a week later at the same time and spot. Then, honeymooner Mr Bancroft got into difficulties and “Mr Howard Phillips, son of Mr Fred Phillips, Hill Street, without hesitation swam to the assistance of the struggling man, and

kept him afloat until the arrival of Mr H. Evans, and Mr B. Skyrme, who all three rendered him further aid until a boat came to the rescue, and took the unfortunate man, who by this time was in a half unconscious condition, ashore.” The Mr B Skyrme on this occasion was probably Benjamin Reynish Skyrme (1880-1953) brother of William.

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