

London Metropolitan Archives

Information Leaflet Number 52

Records of Bravery awards



Introduction

London Metropolitan Archives holds four collections relating to awards for bravery bestowed by private organisations: Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, Lloyd's Medals, Royal Humane Society and the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire. This leaflet provides information on the main sources in these collections for the recipients of awards, as well as background information on the organisations that bestowed them.

Records of gallantry awards made by the state can be found at The National Archives (see below).

Lloyd's Patriotic Fund (Ms 31590-6, Ms 35166-81)

The Fund was established in 1803 on the resumption of the Napoleonic Wars, under the auspices of Lloyd's of London (although as a separate entity). The Patriotic Fund, as it was originally known, made honorary awards between 1803 and 1809, usually in the form of swords or silver vases, for acts of bravery in battle. A total of 153 swords and 66 vases were commissioned by the Fund in this period. From 1809 it restricted itself to granting financial support to 'the relief of Widows, orphans and relatives who depend for support on those who fell in the cause of their country', as well as to prisoners of war, schools, hospitals and injured soldiers.

For alphabetical lists of recipients of awards, see Jim Gawler, *Britons Strike Home* (Sanderstead, 1993), or Charles Messenger, *Unbroken Service* (London, 2003).

Reference	Description	Years Covered
Ms 31590	Minute books of the Trustees. Contain brief details of recommendations for awards.	1803-1993
Ms 35166	Printed reports of Trustees' meetings. Give full transcripts of letters read at the meetings, often outlining the event for which an award was to be made.	1804-8
Ms 31591	Ledger. Includes accounts for the purchase of swords and vases.	1803-61

Lloyd's Medals (Ms 31610-19)

Lloyd's of London emerged in the 18th century as the market for marine insurance. In the 19th century it established a system of medals to recognise acts of courage at sea.

The first medal awarded by Lloyd's of London was Lloyd's Medal for Saving Life at Sea. It was instituted in 1836 and bestowed in recognition of bravery in rescuing, or attempting to rescue, those whose lives were endangered at sea. In 1974, it became

Lloyd's Medal for Saving Life. Gold, silver and bronze medals were struck, although the gold medal has been awarded only once, to Captain Edward Evans, in 1921.

Lloyd's Medal for Meritorious Services was created in 1893, to be awarded to those who by their endeavours averted damage to, or loss of, vessels and their cargoes. The medal was at first issued in bronze, 1893-1900; then in silver only, 1900-17; and finally, from 1917, in silver and bronze.

Lloyd's War Medal for Bravery at Sea was introduced in 1940. It was devised for bestowal on officers and men of the merchant marine and fishing fleets in recognition of acts of exceptional gallantry in wartime.

See also Hazardous Circumstances: A Register of Awards of Lloyd's War Medal for Bravery at Sea 1939–1945, compiled by R J Scarlett (Dallington: Naval & Military, 1992).

Initially, medals were voted at General Meetings of the subscribers of Lloyd's, and brief details can be found in the minutes of General Meetings (Ms 31570). From 1870, decisions were made by the Committee of Lloyd's alone, and noted in the minutes of the Committee (Ms 31571). In 1941, responsibility for medals was handed to the Medals Sub-Committee, which had been set up in the first instance to design and make recommendations for the award of Lloyd's War Medal for Bravery at Sea.

Minutes of the Medals Sub-Committee are not held by LMA but have been retained by Lloyd's. Lloyd's Medal for Services to Lloyd's was introduced in 1913. Records pertaining to it are also retained by Lloyd's.

For further information about Lloyd's medals, see Jim Gawler, *Lloyd's Medals, 1836 – 1989* (Toronto, 1989).

Lloyd's Medal for Saving Life at Sea

Reference	Description	Years Covered
Ms 31610	Correspondence and papers relating to awards of Lloyd's Medal for Saving Life at Sea, arranged by date of incident. In 1974 the medal was renamed Lloyd's Medal for Saving Life. Indexed by name of recipient in Jim Gawler, <i>Lloyd's Medals, 1836 - 1989</i> (1989).	1901-91

Lloyd's Medal for Meritorious Services

Reference	Description	Years Covered
Ms 31611	Correspondence and papers relating to awards of Lloyd's Medal for Meritorious Services, arranged by date of incident. Indexed by name of	1902-1985

Reference	Description	Years Covered
	recipient in Jim Gawler, Lloyd's Medals 1836-1989 (1989).	

Lloyd's Medal for Saving Life at Sea AND Lloyd's Medal for Meritorious Services

Reference	Description	Years Covered
Ms 31612	Correspondence and papers relating to awards of Lloyd's Medal for Saving Life at Sea and Lloyd's Medal for Meritorious Services, for which no other papers survive. Arranged by date of incident. Compiled 1960s-90s by Lloyd's staff in the course of answering enquiries. Indexed by name of recipient in Ms 31613.	1837-1943
Ms 31614	Extracts from minutes relating to awards of Lloyd's Medal for Saving Life at Sea and Lloyd's Medal for Meritorious Services, for which no other papers survive. Arranged chronologically. Typescript volume compiled in 1978 by Jim Gawler. Consists of extracts from minutes of General Meetings, 1837-69 (Ms 31570), minutes of the Committee of Lloyd's, 1878-1923 (Ms 31571), and minutes of the Medals Sub-Committee, 1945.	1837-1943
Ms 31615	Index to vessels involved in incidents for which Lloyd's Medal for Saving Life at Sea and Lloyd's Medal for Meritorious Services were awarded, compiled 1970s-90s. Correspondence and papers relating to these vessels can be found in Ms 31610-11, arranged by date of incident. Please note that the references to documents in this index do not relate directly to Ms 31610-11 and the documents to which they do relate are not known.	1913-20

Lloyd's War Medal for Bravery at Sea

Reference	Description	Years Covered
Ms 31617	Reports of incidents submitted to the Medals Sub-Committee, with notes of their recommendations for awards of Lloyd's War Medal for Bravery at Sea. Reports were compiled by the Admiralty and passed to Lloyd's, where further information was added. Indexed by name of recipient and vessel in Ms 31619/2. Also indexed by name of recipient in	1939-48

Reference	Description	Years Covered
	Jim Gawler, Lloyd's Medals 1836-1989 (1989).	
Ms 31619/1-2	Lists of awards of Lloyd's War Medal for Bravery at Sea published in Lloyd's List, 1941-7. Compiled 1970s-90s Vol. 2 includes an index (numbered 1-530) to awards by name of recipient and vessel. This index covers awards published in Lloyd's List and those unpublished. Compiled late 20th century. Ms 31619/2 is available on the open shelves in the Information Area.	1941-7

Royal Humane Society (LMA/4517)

The Royal Humane Society was founded in London in 1774 by two doctors, William Hawes (1736-1808) and Thomas Cogan (1736-1818). Both men were concerned at the number of people wrongly taken for dead - and, in some cases, buried alive; they wanted to promote the new, but controversial, medical technique of resuscitation and offered money to anyone rescuing someone from the brink of death. The reward of 4 guineas paid to the rescuer and 1 guinea to anyone allowing a body to be treated on his premises soon gave rise to a widespread scam among the down-and-outs of London: one would pretend to be rescued and the other the rescuer - and they would share the proceeds. Monetary rewards were therefore gradually replaced by medals and certificates.

A network of "receiving houses" was set up in and around the Westminster area of London where bedraggled bodies, many of them pulled out of London's waterways, could be taken for treatment by volunteer medical assistants. The first of these stood in Hyde Park, on the banks of the Serpentine. Gradually, branches of the Royal Humane Society were set up in other parts of the country, mainly in ports and coastal towns where the risk of drowning was high.

Today the aim of the Society is to recognise the bravery of men, women and children who have saved, or tried to save, someone else's life. The Society operates solely from its headquarters in London, but gives awards to people from all over the country, and sometimes from overseas.

Indexes to recipients of the Royal Humane Society's bronze medal (1837 - 2006) can be found on the website of the Life Saving Awards Research Society at www.lsars.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

Reference	Description	Years Covered
LMA/4517/A/06	Annual reports: Contain name of claimant, brief details of incident, award granted and case number.	1774-date

Reference	Description	Years Covered
LMA/4517/A/01	Minute books. Contain brief details of case number, name of claimant, name or description of person(s) rescued and details of award recommended.	1774-2000
LMA/4517/B/02	Medal registers. Contain brief details of case number, name of claimant, date and description of medal awarded.	1776-2006
LMA/4517/B/01/01	Case books. Contains information on the subject of the rescue, the claimant of the award, any medical attendant and witnesses, details of the accident or incident, and type of award. NB: Due to the sensitive nature of the information contained in the case books, these records are subject to a period of restricted access in order to protect the confidentiality of living individuals.	1821-2005

Society for the Protection of Life from Fire (Ms 34978-84)

The Society was established in 1836, after a previous attempt to set up such a society in 1828 failed. It was formed in reaction to high death rates from fires in domestic properties. Its aims were to provide men and equipment (mostly mobile fire escapes) to assist in rescues from fires. It also bestowed awards for individual acts of bravery in rescuing victims from fire. Until 1867 these were for incidents in London only. Thereafter, as it gave up responsibility for fire escapes and attendants, it gradually spread its remit for the bestowal of awards countrywide. It maintains this function today. By 1970 it had considered over 20,000 cases. The Society has made awards of Certificates, medals, cash sums and, on occasion, watches.

Ms number	Description	Years covered
Ms 34980	Minutes of general and committee meetings. Include brief details of applications for, and grants of, some awards (by no means are all minuted).	1844-1998
Ms 34982	Annual reports. Include awards, arranged by case number. Until 1949 they give name of recipient, occupation, award, date and cause of fire, person rescued and location of fire. Thereafter they give only a brief description of the incident, and details of the recipient and award.	1892-1974 (incomplete)

Printed Sources

Brief notices of awards bestowed by the state (but not campaign medals) are recorded in the London Gazette. A scanned version of the London Gazette is now available online for the 20th century (www.gazettes-online.co.uk). The original records of such awards are held at The National Archives, Kew, Surrey TW9 4DU, 020 8876 3444, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk.

See also P E Abbott and J M A Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards* (London, 1981), which contains details of each award with reference to where original records are held and where citations can be found.

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