



**STORIES  
FROM  
THE SEA**

## SHIPWRECK OBJECTS



### SAVING THE CREW OF A WRECKED SHIP

### USING CAPTAIN MANBY'S MORTAR APPARATUS

#### Date made

About 1808-11

#### Object ref.

1. PAD8839
2. PAD8840
3. PAD8838

#### Credit

National Maritime  
Museum, Greenwich,  
London

#### Artist / maker

Nicholas Pocock

#### Description

The inventor George William Manby (1765-1854) was barrack master at Great Yarmouth where in 1807 he saw a small naval vessel, the *Snipe*, wrecked close to the shore with huge loss of life. It occurred to him that rescue in such a case required a rapid physical link with the land, so he borrowed a small military mortar from the Board of Ordnance and devised a means of using it to fire a rescue-line from the shore. The mortar fired a light line over the top of a ship, so that a stronger rope could be taken

out to it for people to slide down and reach the shore. It was first, and successfully, attempted when the brig *Elizabeth* was wrecked at Yarmouth on 12 February 1808, bringing Manby widespread fame and various awards. Before Manby died in 1854, over 1000 people had already been saved by this invention. He also devoted attention to improvement of lifeboats and was a pioneer of lifesaving by this means.

#### Questions

1. Look carefully at all three images – can you see how the Manby mortar works?
2. Can you see a lifeboat in one of the images?



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