



STORIES FROM THE SEA

SHIPWRECK OBJECTS



BREECHES BUOY

Date made

Unknown

Object ref.

GRYEH : 1988.9

Credit

Great Yarmouth Museums

Description

The breeches buoy was invented to help save people from shipwrecks. It was used with Manby's mortar and other devices that fired ropes over to ships.

Once a line had been set up between the shipwreck and the rescuers, the crew had to slide down the rope. This was very dangerous: if they fell off the rope they would fall into the sea and drown. Also, if a sailor was injured or unconscious, they could not slide down the rope.

The breeches buoy solved this problem. It is a giant pair of canvas shorts, attached to a cork lifebuoy. This could be hooked onto the rope just like a zip line. Survivors could sit in the breeches and slide down the rope. If the rope snapped and they fell in, then the lifebuoy would stop them from sinking.

Questions

1. The lifebuoy is painted bright orange and white, why do you think this is?
2. Breeches buoys were carried on ships in case of emergency, but they were expensive and ships didn't have to carry them. Make a poster showing captains why the breeches buoy is a good idea.



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