
Sir William Hillary was a man with a mission to save lives at sea. He had witnessed terrible scenes of shipwreck, recruited volunteers to battle stormy seas in heroic rescues and successfully championed the plight of families left destitute when their loved ones were drowned. But Hillary recognised that more could be done to preserve lives.

In his appeal pamphlet, Hillary outlines his idea to create a national organisation responsible for saving lives at sea. He had a vision that help would be given automatically to all those in need of rescue all around Britain’s coastline.

He outlined that the way to achieve this would be to:
- provide lifeboats to stations around the coast
- man them with trained crews ready to rescue at any time
- provide incentives to encourage brave volunteers, such as payments if they were injured, or payments to their bereaved families if they were killed at sea.

He published and distributed hundreds of copies of the first edition of his appeal and targeted the Admiralty Board as the likely organisation to make his vision a reality.

In order to reach a wider, even international, audience, Sir William Hillary then printed a second edition to which he added an emotive introduction stressing the extreme urgency of forming a National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck.

1. How would you describe Sir William Hillary’s choice of language in the first extract? Make a list of words to support your decision.

2. How does Hillary draw attention to the problem of shipwreck? List the rhetorical devices he uses to persuade others, giving examples for each one.

3. Which emotions is Hillary trying to evoke?
7. Sir William Hillary’s proposed aims of the institution are shown in order of priority from highest to lowest. What values do the proposed aims of the institution illustrate?

8. What are the values of today’s RNLI? Use RNLI.org to find out.