

James Patrick COLLINS, Constable, Liverpool and Bootle Constabulary. 11th April 1972

James Brian McDONALD, Constable, Liverpool and Bootle Constabulary.

Constable McDonald was on duty at the barrier on the Prince's Landing Stage when a man, who had earlier discharged himself from the Psychiatric Ward of a hospital, removed his clothing and jumped into the 'River Mersey'. The Constable immediately shouted to a colleague and then dived into the water and managed to grasp hold of the drowning man about six yards from the quayside. The officer had taken a lifeline with him which he threw to his colleague who had to lie flat on the stage in order to pull the two men in. The rescued man became hysterical, but although Constable McDonald felt himself being sucked under the stage, and despite the man's struggles he succeeded in maintaining his hold on him. Constable Collins arrived at this point and on seeing the difficult situation immediately plunged fully clothed into the river and managed to reach the two men and give assistance. Meanwhile other policemen had gone in search of a boat and had engaged the assistance of a Customs and Excise launch. A rope was lowered to the men and a lifebelt placed over the rescued man, but by this time Constable McDonald had been in the water for some time and was exhausted and the police Inspector in charge of the rescue operations gave instructions for him to be lifted out of the water. The other two men were too heavy to be lifted out in this way. The Customs and Excise launch had by now arrived at the scene and a rope was tied round the man who was hauled on board, Constable Collins then let go of the life-line, but due to the oily state of his body and clothing he slipped and was in danger of being sucked under the launch by the tide, but a man who was on a ladder which had been lowered over the side of the stage managed to grab one of his arms and a policeman on the launch grasped his tunic and he was pulled from the water. All three men were taken to hospital. At the time of the rescue the tide was ebbing, the speed of the ebb current was in the region of six knots and conditions were " choppy ". It is almost certain that the man would have drowned but for the prompt action of these two constables, and in continuing the long and strenuous struggle against the elements to rescue him at considerable risk to their own lives they showed determination and courage of a very high order.