

Custom House,  
Cardiff.

3rd July 1939

Mr J. G. Cowie.  
C. P. M. Porthcawl.

With reference to the attached Press cutting (and to para 67 of the Establishment Instructions Volume 6,) please let me have a full report of the incident hereon for the information of the Commissioners of Customs and Excise. If possible please attach signed statements from two eye-witnesses.

C. W. J. MORGAN  
WATERGUARD SURVEYOR  
Cardiff.



The Waterguard Surveyor  
Cardiff

Porthcawl  
7th July 1939

Sir submitted I respectfully beg to report, that on Saturday 1st July 1939 about 6.30 PM whilst bathing at the bathing pool near the Breakwater, I heard shouts of Mr Cowie but from the position I was in on the lower platform I could not see anything one in difficulties when one of the bathers swam clear of the water & shouting to me & pointing to one of the bathers in difficulties. I immediately dived in to the rescue & was successful in bringing her to safety, she is a Miss Tessie Woodward of Downland, Windsor Road Porthcawl aged 12 years she had not bathed here before, she apparently tried to touch bottom in 16 ft of water  
attached please find two letters from witnesses I am Sir  
your Obedient Servant  
Flowie P. M.

# MR. COWIE SAVES HIS 30TH LIFE

*Daily Express Correspondent*

PORTHCAWL, Sunday.

HUNDREDS of visitors on the breakwater at Porthcawl last night saw Mr. J. G. Cowie, sixty-three-year-old Customs officer, dive into the sea and bring the total of lives he has saved up to thirty.

He was undressing for a bath when there came cries of help. Twelve-year-old Tessa Woodward, swimming with friends, had got into difficulties.

When Mr. Cowie reached the breakwater the child had disappeared. The spot was pointed out to him and he plunged in.

For a quarter of a minute he too was out of sight, then he came up twenty yards away with the child in his arms.

Artificial respiration was successful.

# Man of 63 Saves Girl from Sea

*From Daily Mail Correspondent*

PORTHCAWL, Sunday.

HUNDREDS of visitors saw Mr. J. G. Cowie, Customs officer at Porthcawl, dive into 16ft. of water here last night and rescue Tessa Woodward, aged 12, of Windsor-road, Porthcawl, who had disappeared when bathing from the slipway.

Tessa had been swimming and had not realised that she had got out of her depth. Feeling tired, she decided to rest, but failed to touch the bottom and sank.

Several bathers tried to reach her, but she had gone down for the third time when Mr. Cowie, undressing in a bathing box, heard shouts for help.

He dived in at the spot where the child had disappeared. When he came up 20 yards away he had her in his arms.

Artificial respiration was successful.

25

FILE No. <sup>39423</sup>  
19 39.

COLLECTOR OF  
CUSTOMS & EXCISE,  
SWANSEA.  
PROGRESSIVE <sup>200</sup>  
REPORT NO. 19 <sup>39</sup>



The Collector.  
H.M. Customs and Excise.  
Swansea.

Royal Humane Society Testimonial, presentation  
to Mr J. H. Cowie. C. P. M. Porthcawl.

In compliance with the Boards directions, your  
instructions of the 16th inst, and the wishes of Mr  
Cowie this presentation was duly made at the Watchhouse  
Port Talbot on the 17th inst.

There were present Mr J. H. Atwill Chief Preventive  
Officer, representatives of the Preventive Officer,  
Assistant Preventive Officer, and Watcher Grades,  
Mr R. Best representing the Port Sanitary Officials,  
Press representatives, and myself.

I attach hereto the Press report of the  
proceedings.

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
Waterguard Surveyor.

*Submitted in continuation of above  
file.*

*D. J. Ward*



## PORT TALBOT HERO

# MAN WHO HAS RESCUED 73 PEOPLE

"**L**EARN to swim and save coroners' inquests," was the advice of Custom Officer J. G. Cowey, of Port Talbot, after he had been presented with the parchment of the Royal Humane Society for gallantly saving the life of Miss Tessa Woodward, who got into difficulties while bathing off the breakwater at Porthcawl last June.

The presentation was at the Port Talbot Custom Office to-day, and, in handing the parchment, Mr. C. W. J. Morgan, waterguard surveyor, Cardiff, said Cowey's record of bravery was one of which they were all very proud.

Chief Preventive Officer J. H. Attwell said that at the age of 11 Cowey saved a lad from drowning, and since then had been the means of rescuing 73 people from drowning.

"I do not know whether that is a world record" Mr. Attwell continued, "but it is a magnificent personal achievement, and, in the accomplishment Comrade Cowey on many occasions ran the gauntlet.

"We are all very proud of him, and, although he is 63 years of age, he is quite fit and willing to risk his life again should occasion arise."

Mr. J. G. Flynn, waterguard, and Inspector R. Davies, of the Port Talbot Sanitary Authority, also spoke.

*J. G. Flynn*  
**SWANSEA BOYS' CLUB CONCERT**

