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An Analysis of Rescue Reports from The Netherlands

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An Analysis of Rescue Reports from the Netherlands

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Koninklijke Maatschappij tot Redding van Drenkelingen's [KMRD] (Royal Society to Rescue Drownings) in 2017 celebrated its 250th Anniversary. To mark the occasion, KMRD published a book '*Wanneer minuten uren duren*' (*When Minutes Take Hours*) in which the stories of twelve recent rescues are recorded. The book tells the story of these rescues and of those rescued and their rescuers. The stories are in the words of those directly involved, in their native Dutch language, which were recorded by author Arnold van Bruggen and photographer Morad Bouchour who accompanied those involved to the location where rescues occurred. The rescuers' efforts had been rewarded with bravery awards presented by KMRD.

The importance of the 'opportunist' rescuer as an aquatic 'first responder' was recognised in the 'Report of the Working Party on Water Safety' (HMSO 1977). The importance was reflected in the personal stories in the book which illustrated the blend of ingredients involved in rescues: the people [agents], the predicament [problem], the actions taken, the objects used, the causality [the effects intended and unintended of actions], the context [details surrounding the people and actions] and surprises (Kline, 1998, p. 178). The stories also conveyed the drama and the surprises felt by the participants (Kline, 1998, p. 180). "The method we have found most powerful for eliciting knowledge is to use stories.... If you can get them [i.e., participants] to tell you about tough cases, non-routine events where their skills made the difference, then you have a pathway into their perceptions, into the way they are seeing the world" (Kline, 1998, p. 189).

These stories give the opportunity to consider additional area of knowledge, the hopes, fears and stresses of those involved in the rescues as rescuers, casualties and bystanders. This is in addition to the more normally considered quantitative information of how many people were involved, general personal information of gender and age, what actions each undertook, as well as location and the time of day and time of year which indicated the aquatic environment in which the rescue took place.



Brendan Donohoe has had a long voluntary career in lifesaving and lifeguarding as a teacher, an examiner, a lifeguard trainer, assessor, and an administrator. He is currently President of RLSS IRELAND. He was awarded Honorary Life Membership in both Royal Life Saving Society (UK) and the Royal Life Saving Commonwealth Society. A founding member of The Lifesaving Foundation,

he has served as chairperson of the charity since 2010 and has presented numerous papers at international conferences.

Professor Joost Bierens MD, Ph.D. of the Netherlands has been involved in aquatic safety as a lifeguard, key member of major organizations, author, researcher, academic professor, congress chairperson, and international facilitator. His name has been linked with some of the contemporary greatest achievements in the history of world lifesaving including his role as the Editor of both editions of the *Handbook on Drowning* (2006) and its second edition, *Drowning* (2014). He also is the 2018 Ireland Medal recipient.

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