

GENTLEMEN,—You may remember, when I inspected your Life Boat last summer, that I objected to her mode of construction as being much too heavy and clumsy for the Harbour of Whitehaven; and, that I suggested several alterations the particulars of which, I now transmit, at your request.

Having a great many years ago witnessed a melancholy scene of shipwreck, and seen men perishing at little more than the distance of 100 yards from the beach, it forcibly struck me, that though there was then no possibility of getting the Life Boat from the shore to them, on account of her unwieldy bulk, yet there was a great probability that some alterations in the method of constructing and managing Life Boats might be devised, which, upon good grounds, would hold forth the promising prospect of ease, expedition, and safety in all the common and general cases of shipwreck. Hence, it was, that to devise such a scheme became the object of my research ever after.

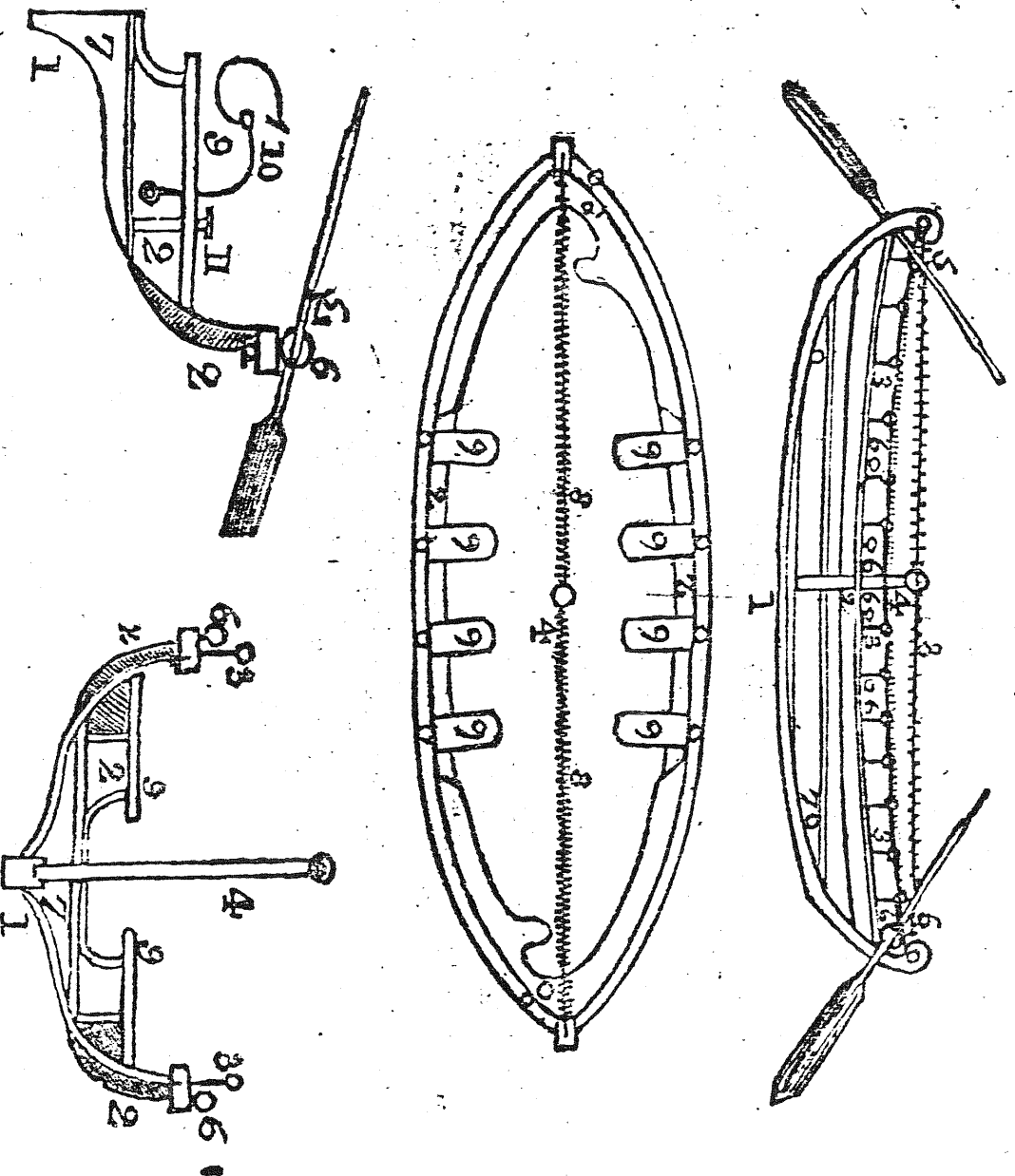
I cannot help observing, that your Life Boat is as awkward and unwieldy as the one I have described, and equally unfit for the purpose-intended; being one half too large and heavy, and presenting so much plank work above water, that it must be extremely difficult even for many hands to pull her against a strong wind and heavy surf on leaving the beach. In fact, she seems more calculated to land a cargo than the crew of any vessel likely to be stranded on the shore of Whitehaven. A Life Boat calculated to carry from a dozen to fifteen passengers, and which would only require seven or eight men to manage her in storm and tempest, I should conceive quite large enough for your port.

A Boat, for the purpose of preserving the lives of persons exposed to the horrors of shipwreck, should combine proper buoyancy—celerity of motion through the water—sufficient strength to bear the shock of striking against the beach—and security to those on board. She should also be built without high sides, and so lightly constructed (compatible with security) as to be easily managed.

These essential points seem combined in the construction of a Life Boat which I have seen, and of which the following is a representation.—The plan is so simple, and the effect so obvious, that I cannot allow myself to think that any seaman can entertain the smallest doubt, but that a boat so prepared would live in any sea whatever, could neither sink nor overset, and could carry in safety a number of people, in proportion to her size, over a bar, or from the wreck to the shore through any surf.

I am, &c.

A POST CAPTAIN.



REFERENCE TO THE FIGURES.

1. THE KEEL, which being made in a curved shape causes less friction in launching the boat into the water; and is easier turned head to the sea when aground than a level keel, besides being stronger.
2. CORK WOOD, nailed to the sides all round under the gunnel, and also packed inside under the side-benches round the boat.
3. IRON STANCHIONS, through which a rope is reefed strung with cork, and passing round the gunnel from stem to stern.
4. A SHOUT MAST, in the centre of the boat, to support a rope run fore and aft strung with cork similar to the sides.—The object of this is to preserve the boat in her position when encountering breakers; at the same time to afford a hold to the persons on board, and to bring the boat round in case of being upset; she cannot remain bottom up, but keeps suspended like a net in the water.
5. OARS, with a moveable stop to keep them in their places when shipped. The oars work within a ring and traverse on a centre, so as to enable the boatman to feather his oar to the wind, which prevents the motion of the vessel from being impeded; they are easier to manage when the vessel is struck by a heavy sea, and admit of being made short, on account of the lightness of the boat.
6. IRON RINGS, turning freely round upon a centre, through which the oars are worked with ease and safety; they can never be washed overboard, and when the boat gets alongside a vessel, the oars are laid parallel with the gunnel, quite out of the way.
7. THE BOTTOM, or hold of the boat—there is a tight caulked deck over this, and underneath it, the water introduces itself by a small opening at each end, which serves as ballast.
8. THE RAKE, reefed to the mast and from stem to stern.
9. BENCHES, for the rowers—four on each side—leaving a thorough gangway.
10. ROPE, to secure the rower in his seat, which is effected by tying the rope round the waist. The rope is reefed through a hole in the bench, with a piece of wood fastened to the end of it, which secures it, and gives liberty to the rower to stand upright—when sitting, he takes a turn round a cleat on the bench.
11. THE CLEAR.