'GOOD CITIZEN': NATIONAL AWARD TO MARK FATHER'S BRAVERY

Life-saver honoured for rescuing boy from sea

BY REBECCA SHEATH

A man has received a national honour for saving the life of an 11-year-old boy.

Alan Bailiss, 36, of Newbold Verdon, waded in to the sea at Hunstanton and dragged a boy to safety on the first night of a family caravanning holiday at the coastal resort.

Today, the Royal Humane Society said it was awarding Alan a certificate of commendation for his act of bravery after receiving a nomination from Norfolk police.

Alan said: "I just did what anyone else would have done. I don't understand how anybody could just stand there and not help in that situation.

"All I thought about was a boy who was not big or strong enough to be able to fight if he was picked up by the tide. I never thought twice about my own safety."

Alan Bailiss

"All I thought about was a boy who was not big or strong enough to be able to fight if he was picked up by the tide. I never thought twice about my own safety."

The incident happened when Alan took wife, Ann, and children Andrea, seven, and Abi, four, on holiday in July, last year.

On the family's first night, they visited a fun fair and Alan noticed a man staring towards the sea.

A young boy with learning difficulties had stripped naked and was wading through the sea.

Alan said: "Someone had called the police so we kept an eye on the boy while we waited for them to arrive.

"But he was getting deeper and deeper and the water was nearly up to his neck, so I knew I had to do something.

"I went in and held his hand thinking he would follow me and walk back but he had no interest whatsoever in coming back to shore.

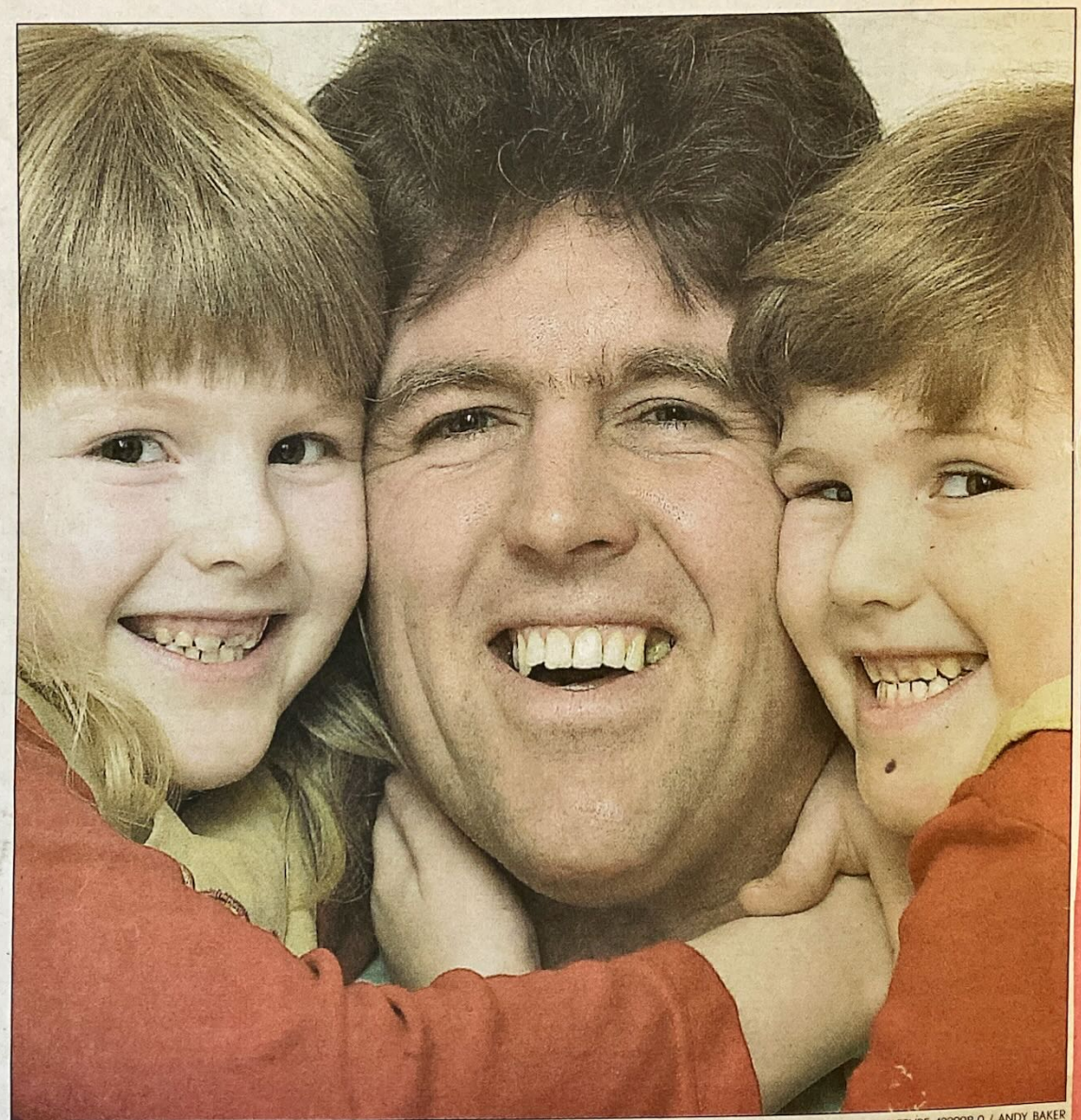
"I decided it was just tough, he was coming back whether he wanted to or not so I picked him up and carried him back kicking and shouting."

The family received a letter from the care home that was looking after the boy thanking Alan, but after that they forgot all about the incident until the Leicester Mercury called to tell Alan about his prize.

Wife Ann said: "He was just pleased that the boy was alive. He didn't do it for any kind of praise but I am very proud of him."

Major General Christopher Tyler, secretary of the Royal Humane Society, said: "But for his efforts, this lad could so easily have been drowned. Also, of course, it must not be forgotten that there was always the risk of him being swept out to sea by the tide.

"Thanks to the prompt action of Mr Bailiss, a death was avoided and everything ended happily. He richly deserves this award for his good citizenship."



PICTURE: 122998-0 / ANDY BAKER

OUR HERO! Andrea, seven, and Abi Bailiss, four, give dad Alan a big hug after hearing of his award