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Carnegie Hero Fund Trust Medal, bronze, 90mm, edge engraved 'Henry Bickerton. Chesterton. 25th February 1915.', the reverse inscribed 'For Heroic Endeavour to Save Human Life 1915', *minor edge bruising, nearly extremely fine, scarce*

£600-800

Carnegie Hero Fund case no. 2,225: 'Harry Bickerton, aged 43, a Fireman, of 27 Victoria Street, Chesterton, and Thomas Gleaves, aged 38, a Fireman, of 8 George Street, Chesterton, on the 25th February 1915, at considerable risk to themselves, rescued six men who were overcome by carbon monoxide gas in the engine dip workings at New Hem Heath Colliery, Chesterton, Staffordshire, the result of a fire which broke out in the haulage engine house. The following statement was submitted:

"About 3:15pm on the 25th February 1915, an engineman at the New Hem Heath Colliery was filling a paraffin lamp in the haulage engine house when he accidentally upset it, and the paraffin ignited, setting the engine house, which was to a great extent made of wood, in a blaze in a few minutes. The haulage engine is situated on the main 'intake', and as a result of the fire the whole engine dip workings were charged with smoke and carbon monoxide gas. There were 18 men in the dip workings and being overcome by the fumes were unable to make their way out. Harry Bickerton and Thomas Gleaves, Firemen at the Colliery, decided to try to make their way through the smoke and gas in an endeavour to rescue the others. They accordingly made their way through the red shag seam, and eventually encountered three men and two boys in a distressed condition. With difficulty Gleaves got them to a place of safety, while Bickerton went forward, and in 37 level, he found three men, only one of whom was alive. He tried to rouse this man, but felt himself being overcome, and turned back to 45 level, where one of the rescue brigades- ten of which had now come upon the scene- found him. He was able to inform them where the unconscious man was lying, and the latter was safely got out. Only six men were rescued, the remaining twelve being suffocated. The manager states that in traversing the area charged with carbon monoxide gas, both Bickerton and Gleaves were subjected to very grave danger."

The Bronze Medal is the highest award that the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust can bestow. Since 1909 when the first medal was bestowed, fewer than 200 medals have been awarded in the United Kingdom.