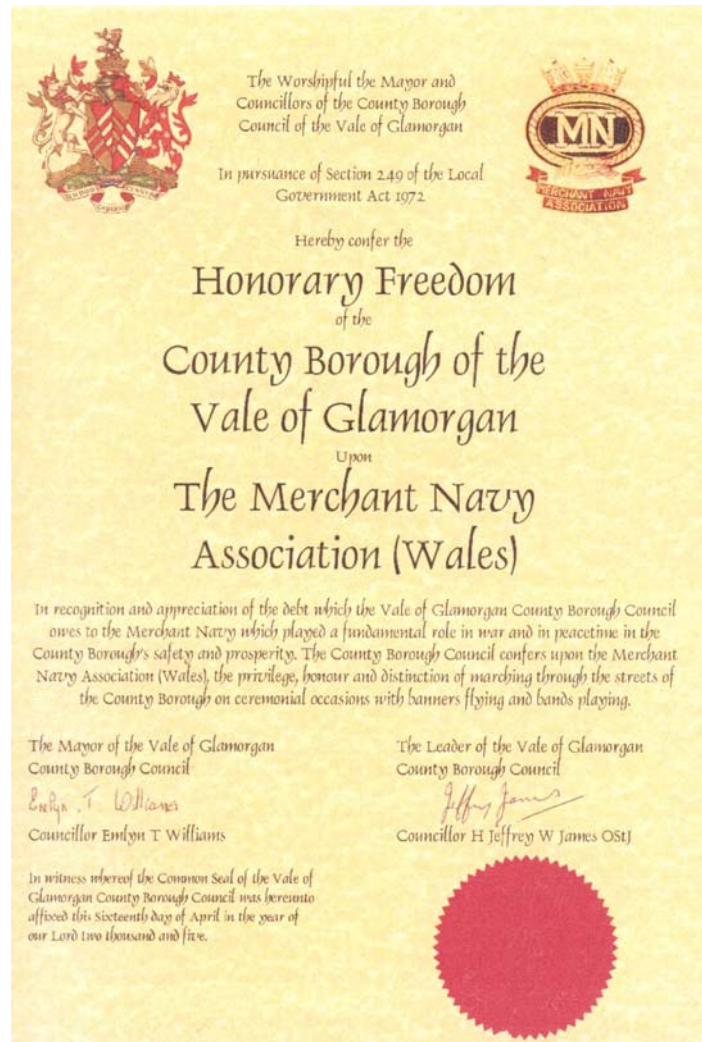


## FREEDOM

### Vale of Glamorgan – Merchant Navy Association (Wales) “Red Letter Day” Freedom of County Borough given to Merchant Seamen



**16/04/2005**

In what was described at the time by the Chaplain of the Merchant Navy Association (Wales), Barry branch - the Rev Malcolm Davies, as a "Red Letter" Day for the organisation, the Freedom - the highest tribute a County Borough Council can bestow - was conferred in a ceremony alongside the Merchant Navy Memorial outside the Vale Civic Offices.

The MN organisation became the first "Freeman" of the current authority in honour of the tremendous debt owed to the many merchant seamen who have served - and those who have died - especially during the two World Wars and other conflicts, and also those still active.

To commemorate the occasion in front of the Portland Stone memorial, which incorporates the names of merchant seamen who have given their lives at sea during the two world wars, Vale Mayor Cllr Emlyn Williams presented Barry branch chairman Jim Greenway with a "Freedom of the County Borough" certificate.

During a short period of reflection, Mr Davies referred to Britain's heavy reliance on the Merchant Navy over many years and especially during two World Wars and other conflicts.

Referring to the "very heavy loss of life" in relation to Barry alone, Mr Davies said 270 merchant seamen from the town died during the 1914-18 conflict and, in the Second World War, the figure was 637 men and boys, including some on their first voyage.

"Barry suffered most, with the highest number of casualties from the United Kingdom of merchant seamen lost at sea," he said. "The odds stacked against any merchant seamen were tremendous and are unequalled in the history of the sea," continued Mr Davies. "During these conflicts, no ship left port undermanned and few ships, ready for sea, were ever seriously delayed for lack of a full crew."

Thanking the Vale Council for bestowing the honour on the MNA, Mr Davies said: "As the Red Ensign flies so proudly alongside this monument, each one of us is privileged to be here and to rub shoulders with those older veterans who literally went through hell so that our country could survive."

Cllr Williams, who hosted the ceremony, said: "The ceremony is an expression of the high esteem in which the Merchant Navy Association is held both by the council in the area and its people.

"I'm sure this has meant a great deal to so many families who will have fond memories of a lost member or relation."

Following the laying of wreaths, there was a parade, marshalled by Harry Parry, comprising the Welsh Piping Society, standard bearers, merchant seamen, representatives of local organisations, including Army, Navy and Air Cadets, civic dignitaries and guests to the Memorial Hall.

Cllr Williams, the Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan, Capt Norman Lloyd Edwards, and Commodore Oliver Lindsay took the salute at a march past of merchant seamen.



**Vale Mayor Cllr Emlyn Williams presented the "Freedom" certificate to Jim Greenway, chairman of the Barry branch of the Merchant Navy Association (Wales). Also pictured are Vale Chief Executive John Maitland Evans, Mayoress Mrs Joan Williams and the Rev Malcolm Davies, chaplain to the Barry branch. The Merchant Navy Association (Wales) has become the first "Freeman" of the County Borough of the Vale of Glamorgan.**

**From the Merchant Navy Association (Wales), Barry Branch, archives.**