

SEA OF RED ENSIGNS

After the Service has been concluded the days programme continues by the placing of the Red Ensign tokens in the sunken garden of the WWII memorial. The Sailor's Society circulate their many contacts who write a tribute which is then returned to the Sailor's Society. This tribute may be to someone they have lost or who is retired or is still serving at sea. These tributes are placed in the Sunken Garden by volunteers. It is incredibly moving with cadets and veterans, side by side, on their knees together planting the flags. It is a magnificent sight when viewed from the main garden looking down on nearly 1,000 Red Ensigns, everyone a memory of that special someone. The band will play a selection of tunes during the time the Red Ensigns are being placed in the sunken garden.



Parade President and Patrons

PRESIDENT
Commodore Bill Walworth OBE RFA

PATRONS
Prof Brian Cotton C. Eng FIEE
J Fitzpatrick MP, Shipping Minister
Rt Hon C Kennedy MP
Cmdr John Ludgate DL, Tower Hamlets RD RNR
Master of Honourable Company of Master Mariners
Mayor of Tower Hamlets
Capt Martin Reed MN
Cmdr David Squire CBE JP
Leslie Thomas OBE

Donations Welcome
Please send to:

Merchant Navy Day Commemorative Service Fund
(MNDCS FUND)
Capt M F Mathison FEI MNI
296 Laceby Road, Grimsby DN34 5LW
Tel: 01472 277266
e-mail: R546060@aol.com

mna
The Merchant Navy Association
from ship to shore, from past to present



Merchant Navy Day Commemorative Service and Reunion



Trinity Square Gardens
Tower Hill, London

TRINITY SQUARE GARDENS

The Merchant Navy Day Commemorative Service has become the premier event of its kind in London and is held on the Sunday, in September, nearest Merchant Navy Day at the national memorial to the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets in Trinity Square Gardens at Tower Hill.



THE MERCHANT NAVY

Just nine hours after Prime Minister Chamberlains announcement on the "wireless" on the evening of 3rd September 1939 the Donaldson liner "Athena" was torpedoed, without warning, 250 nautical miles west of Inishtrahull, Ireland. Eighty three passengers and eighteen crew, including female stewardesses, were lost. One in four British merchant seafarers eventually lost their lives alongside many more from those in the eight countries who were also part of the Allied Merchant Navy during WWII.

During the Falklands Conflict 47 Merchant Ships and 22 RFA's were dispatched 8,000nm after very rapid refits in UK shipyards. Once again shipyard workers and stevedores made an invaluable contribution and over 5,000 merchant seafarers were awarded the South Atlantic Medal. Merchant seafarers have served the United Kingdom for centuries. In exploration and trade, war and conflict, the line was never broken. The Red Ensign has flown on merchant ships since about 1625. Today 95% of our freight trade is by sea, 426m tonnes annually. This contributes nearly £50bn to the UK's annual GDP. The sector provides 890,000 jobs which includes 33,600 UK seafarers.

A SPECIAL DAY

The Merchant Navy Day Commemorative Service (MNDCS) is not a Remembrance Day Service. This is a special day for all seafarers and their supporters to recognise the strategic and often critical role of the Merchant Navy in the life of this Nation. A day when all those involved in the shipping industry can meet in honour and respect of those who "go down to the sea in ships". It is not only a day to commemorate but also to celebrate the continuing role of the maritime sector and the opportunities this offers future generations in the years ahead.



This colourful and moving event, which includes the widely acclaimed parade of seafarers, is attended by a host of maritime associations and organisations, diplomatic and military personalities, members of local and national governments and a welcome to visitors from overseas.

ARRIVAL

The programme begins at 11.00am when the gardens are opened. The parade marches off at 12.30pm from Mark Lane and along Great Tower Street before entering Trinity Square Gardens. The Service begins at 1.00pm and finishes at 2.00pm. There is a seating area for those who need to sit during the service. Guidance to receptions will be circulated with the invitations.

There are no special car parking arrangements but limited on-street parking is available. Tower Hill tube station is a few yards from the memorial. Dress is uniform, lounge suit or blazer. Medals are worn.