

Merchant Navy Memorial

The Merchant Navy Memorial Trust (Scotland)(MNMTS), whose patron is HRH The Princess Royal, aims to create a lasting Memorial at the Shore, Leith, to commemorate the loss of more than 6,500 Scottish Merchant Navy personnel who gave their lives in the two World Wars, other theatres of conflict and, during peacetime, in service along the trading routes of the world.

The Shore has been chosen as the location for this new Memorial since Leith was Scotland's premier port for more than 300 years, and served as Edinburgh's trading port for more than 700 years.

In addition, the Memorial will recognise the 132 years of service dedicated to the Merchant Navy by Leith Nautical College (1855-1987) and its training ship, "Dolphin".

The Memorial, which has been designed by the award-winning Scottish sculptor Jill Watson, will take the form of a 4.5m sandstone column featuring seafaring scenes in bronze relief. It is hoped that the Memorial will be unveiled in November 2010.

Lord Provost George Grubb said: "I am delighted to be launching this public appeal for funds to help create a lasting tribute to those who sacrificed their lives on our behalf. The Port of Leith has played a critical role in Scotland's seafaring past, so it is entirely fitting that the new monument should take pride of place here at the Shore. There are countless families here in Edinburgh, across Scotland and beyond whose forebears served this country at sea. I very much hope this call for support will be answered and allow us to erect this permanent memorial here in Scotland's capital. This monument will be of national and international importance and significance."

William R. E. Thomson, Chairman of the MNMTS, whose family owned the respected and world-renowned Ben line for 170 years until 1996, said: "Having spent my working life involved in

the Merchant Navy, I am delighted that at last proper recognition is to be given to Merchant Navy seafarers, whose contribution to our nation's welfare has gone almost unnoticed. This is so deserved.

"We aim to raise £180,000 to achieve the objective of the Trust and so far have raised, mainly from shipping sources, just over £125,000. We still have some way to go and are appealing to the general public, particularly those with merchant seafaring connections, to support this very worthwhile charitable cause which is already attracting international interest."

Jill Watson said: "The design for such an important memorial and sculpture is to do justice to the skill, bravery and huge contribution made by Scottish merchant seamen. With this sculpture I would hope to inspire young people who, in Scotland, have luckily not known great wars. It may give them a sense of adventure and look out towards the rest of the world. In the past our nation had more awareness of the sea that surrounds us; this sculpture may also awaken the awe and romance of the sea."

Details of how to make donations are available at the new MNMNTS website