Galley Radio

Merchant Navy Association – Edinburgh & Forth Branch

SUMMER 2026

A warm welcome to all, with another edition of Galley Radio, where we cover some of the events that have happened during the Summer session. The end of May was a busy time, as can be seen from the following snippets, but in general we have been very active throughout the summer.

A FINE DAY OUT

May 22nd saw the second of our walks in Edinburgh. This time we met by the Water of Leith Visitor Centre before heading on to the Union Canal to cross the Slateford Aqueduct. At Kingsknowe, we cut down in to Colinton Dell to follow the Water of Leith back towards our starting point.

The photo shows our group stopped at the Craiglockhart Grotto. Built some time in the 1830's by Dr. Alexander Monro, its interior was originally elaborately decorated with shells. Climbing back up on to the Union Canal we headed along the towpath towards Edinburgh city centre. Originally named the Edinburgh and Glasgow Union Canal in 1822, it runs 31 miles from the Lochrin Basin in Edinburgh to Falkirk and was primarily used for coal transport. With the advent of the Edinburgh to Glasgow railway opening in 1842, the canal gradually fell in to decline and was closed to commercial traffic in 1933.

Unfortunately, we lost one of our members on the route, as his desire for refreshment was greater and he ended up in the Athletic Arms (more commonly called "The Diggers", due to its proximity to the nearby Dalry cemetery). The main body of the group made it to Bennetts Bar for a brief refreshment before heading to the Golf Tavern on the Meadows for some much needed lunch. Thanks again to all who participated.

SMALL CHANGE

A thirsty AB runs from his boat to the nearest bar and shouts to the bartender: "Give me ten shots of your best whisky, quick!"
The bartender pours out the shots, and the sailor drinks them as fast as he can.
The bartender is very impressed and exclaims: "Wow. I never saw anybody drink that fast."
The AB replies: "Well, you'd drink that fast too, if you had what I have."
The bartender says: "Oh my God! What is it? What do you have?"
"50p!" replied the AB.

POTENTIAL EVENTS for 2026

The events posted here are not specifically for the branch to attend as a group, but more in the way of a suggestion for individuals, should they wish to attend.

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

As most of you will be aware, August is the month for the Edinburgh Festival, Fringe and Royal Military Tattoo. There are so many events ongoing from 7th – 29th August, too many to list here, but below are some links to the web pages for reference:

www.eif.co.uk

www.edfringe.com

www.edintattoo.co.uk

FESTIVAL OF FLIGHT

For those with an interest in aviation, there is the International Ayr Show on 4th – 5th September at Ayr. Air show, including Red Arrows, Typhoon, Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, Falcons Parachute display and Grob 115 trainer aircraft.

RETROS 'N' RUST

If it's old bangers you are in to then get yourself along to Vogrie Country Park by Gorebridge, near Dalkeith. Sunday 6th September, from 11.00 to 15.00 sees a fine collection of classic bangers. If you have one yourself, take it along.

POTENTIAL EVENTS for 2026

VOGRIE POGRIE FESTIVAL

11th – 14th September, again in Vogrie Country Park, there is entertainment for kids/grandkids and adults alike. Everything from art shows, clowns, circus acts,music,face painting and storytelling

www.vogriepogrie.com

TITANIC EXHIBITION

From 28th November to 14th February 2027 at the Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, by the airport there will be an exhibition on the famous RMS Titanic, with artefacts and stories from the ship.

Tickets from £21.99

www.titanictickets.com/edinburgh/

ENCHANTED FOREST

Now in its 25th year, the Enchanted Forest at Pitlochry, Perthshire offers a great evening's entertainment to see a fantastic light show in Faskally Woods.

www.enchantedforest.org.uk

ONE OF THE FEW

30th May saw the return to the Isle of Cumbrae to pay our respects with a service and wreath laying ceremony at the Allied Services Memorial at Sheriff's Port on the west side of the island. It is one of the few memorials dedicated to include the Merchant Navy along with the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

The ranks of Merchant Navy representatives were swelled, as there were three members from the Glasgow branch, three from Edinburgh & Forth branch as well as an ex-BP colleague from Arran and our good friend, John Mortimer, bearing the MN Standard.

Our thanks once again to the RBLS Cumbrae Pipe Band for their excellent playing at the event and to the RBLS Millport Branch as hosts. Our thanks and appreciation also goes to Reverend Stewart Young, himself a Royal Marines veteran and padre for 19 years, for his poignant sermon. Finally, many thanks to Jim Holmes from the Glasgow Branch for his rendition of the poem "In Waters Deep", by Eileen Mahoney.

STRIKE A LIGHT

Whilst on the subject of the Cumbraes, we move south from Great Cumbrae in the Firth of Clyde to Little Cumbrae. As a mostly uninhabited island, Wee Cumbrae was once the hunting ground reserved for kings and lords, including King Robert II and his mother Marjorie, the daughter of Robert the Bruce. The island is also the final resting place of the 7th Century Saint Bey and home to Scotland's second lighthouse.

The original lighthouse was the second ever constructed in Scotland in 1757. Built by James Ewing, it was coal-powered and positioned in the very middle of the island at the highest point, on what is called Lighthouse Hill. Sailors, unfortunately, complained that the light was frequently obscured.

The more traditional lighthouse was designed and built in 1793 by Thomas Smith on behalf of the Commissioners of the Northern Lights, with the original oil lamps being replaced by Argand Lamps in 1826. It also had the first foghorn installed in Britain in 1865. The tower was refurbished in 1956 and solar power installed in 1974.

Lighthouse keepers and their families lived on the island until the 1977 when the last functioning lighthouse was automated. It was decommissioned in 1997 and a light on a tower close to the former generator house is now in operation.

POTENTIAL EVENTS for 2026

GIANT LANTERNS

If you fancy another kind of light show with a difference, try the Giant Lanterns at Edinburgh Zoo. On selected dates between 14th November and 21st February 2027. With an out-of-this-world space safari twist, from glowing galaxies to towering cosmic creatures, get ready to explore a luminous interstellar adventure like never before.

www.edinburghzoo.org.uk/events-experiences/events/edinburgh-zoos-giant-lanterns

FANCY A TIPPLE

If you fancy a "classier" night out, Edinburgh Cocktail Week begins Friday 2nd October through to Sunday 11th October offering £6 signature cocktails at over 100 bars and access to the Cocktail Village at Festival Square. Wristband tickets are available on line from £10 for weekends, or £12 for the full week.

www.edinburghcocktailweek.co.uk

FOREIGN SHORES

Recently one of our members, Cathryn Moir, had the opportunity to visit Chicago whilst on holiday and came across a memorial to America's Armed Forces. When it was dedicated on August 22, 1972, the eternal flame was Chicago's first memorial to honour the dead from previous wars, including World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Great to see they also recognise their Merchant Marines as part of the national security and support structure.

FAREWELL TO A GRAND LADY

It is only fitting that we give a mention to the passing of Vivien Foster OBE, past President and co-founder of the Merchant Navy Association. Vivien was a remarkable person whose warmth and kindness touched everyone around her and she will be remembered her for the support and friendship she offered to many.

She did much to raise awareness of the commitment and sacrifice of merchant seafarers during war and conflict. She was at her happiest during the annual Merchant Navy services at Tower Hill, laying her trademark White Anchor at the memorial, feeling proud as she watched the standard bearers march past with the Red Ensign. In her words, "I proudly carry the White Anchor for remembrance. It bears far more relevance to those seafarers whose only grave is the sea."

Ned Kelly, from the Edinburgh and Forth Branch, was in attendance at the funeral service in Devon, on behalf of the Merchant Navy Association. Fare winds and calm seas Vivien.

REUNITED IN REMEMBRANCE

This year, the RFA reunion location was selected for Edinburgh, initially rendezvousing in "The Angle" at the foot of Leith Walk on Saturday 30th May at 11.00. Once the initial muster was completed, the group then proceeded by foot, tram and taxi to the MN memorial at "The Shore" in Leith.

On arrival at the memorial at 13.30 the group began to reassemble, sending out lookouts and rescue party for the strays, as far as Ocean Terminal. Once everyone was accounted for and mustered, the service began.

An introduction and welcoming address conducted by Jim Garson, who then led with the tributing and moving reading of the names of the RFA seafarers who had "Crossed the Bar" in the past year, a total of 37 shipmates were announced, from all ranks and departments who have passed, Retired, Ex and serving of the RFA service.

Steve Prin then proceeded to read "Crossing the Bar" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, using the metaphor of a sea voyage to depict a serene passage from life to death.

POTENTIAL EVENTS for 2026

WHAT A DRAG!

If you fancy a beer festival at a very different location, why not try a few of the local beers at the 1722 Waggonway Heritage Centre at West Harbour Road in Cockenzie.
On Saturday and Sunday 5th & 6th September from 2.00 – 10.00pm each day. The site is being used to revive part of one of Scotlands original railway, where they would transport salt in horsedrawn carriages between Cockenzie and Tranent. Fine ales in rustic surrounds AND FREE ENTRY

https://happeningnext.com/event/waggonway-beer-festival-eid3a0dvx6hk2

UP SPIRITS!

The Edinburgh Gin & Rum Festival will be held at Central Church,
2 West Tollcross on Saturday 21st November. There will be 120 gins and rums from handpicked distillers. There will be music. There will be cocktails. There will be free samples. There may be sore heads in the morning….

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/gin-rum-festival-edinburgh-2026-tickets-1916461049589?msockid=13a69b3428f367ab33e189c629486676

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.
Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.
For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

Jim Garson then laid the RFA wreath, thanked everyone for their attendance, establishing the collection, then all retired to local hostelries for further reminiscing and swinging lanterns with tales of old. A number of shipmates couldn't attend the reunion due to distance, ill health, mobility reasons and being on active service at sea. Their sincerest wishes were well received. In all there were 41 RFA seafarers attended, some with their wife's or partners. This year's reunion was led by Steve Prinn, who also arranged the collection of the wreath.
The RAS (Replenishment At Sea) Group is a voluntary group made up from Retired, Serving and Ex RFA Seafarers of all ranks and departments. The heads of the group are Matt Rowberry and Shirley Davey who arrange for a RFA wreath to be presented to recently deceased seafarers funeral who have "Crossed the Bar" and the annual reunions at the selected city for that year to be laid at the local Merchant Navy Memorial.
This group relies on donations and collections to fund the wreaths. A collection of £600 was achieved during this reunion, well done to all. The "RAS GROUP" can be contacted via "Facebook" for details of future reunions and donations.

Article and photos courtesy of Jim Garson

HOW AM I DOING?

Norman, an old retired sailor, puts on his uniform and heads for the docks once more, for old time's sake. He engages a woman of the night and takes her up to her room. He's soon going at it as well as he can for a guy his age, but needing some reassurance he asks, "How am I doing?"
The lady smoothly replies, "Well Norman, you old sailor, you're doing three knots"
"Three knots?" he asks, "What's that supposed to mean?"
She says, "You're knot hard, you're knot in, and you're knot getting your money back".

POTENTIAL EVENTS for 2026

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

At the July meeting, a proposal was made to have Christmas lunch at Howies restaurant on Waterloo Place again, where we had our Christmas lunch in 2025. The restaurant has not yet confirmed their menu for the lunch, but once we book, there will be a requirement for meal orders before October. Places need to be booked by September, but it is expected that the price of the lunch will be £2.00 dearer than last year, so you are looking at £39.50 per person.
There will be a £20 per head deposit required, which comes off the price on the day.

Options given for a date was Friday 11th December, but this date looks like it might already be full, so it is proposed we look at 4th December as an alternative. Details will be posted on social media to get an idea of numbers

WELL FIRED

The question is always asked, "What did the Romans do for us?" Well, it seems that they had an organised fire service for a start. One of the many interesting facts gleaned at the Museum of Scottish Fire Heritage at McDonald Road Fire Station, where Dave Ferries (QSFM) gave an evening talk on the history of fire-fighting entitled "Through Smoke and Time".
After one of our recent meetings, the discussion had turned to our fire-fighting training. Several who had attended courses at McDonald Road Fire Station in Edinburgh remembered the heat and the degree of realism the Brigade were trying to portray in the mock-up of the ship they had on site.

When the opportunity arose to be able to visit the site again, four stalwart members went along to attend the superb talk. The bonus was being able to visit the museum "after hours" to see the collection of historic artifacts.

It certainly made you wonder, "How on earth did they manage to fight fires with THAT?"

One of our members, David Reid recalls his time during fire-fighting courses……

BAPTISM OF FIRE

A few of us recently visited McDonald Road Fire Station for a historical talk on the history of the Scottish Fire Fighting Service. Now, many if not most of us have been here in the past. To simulate realistic fire-fighting conditions in a ship a somewhat novel approach was thought up and in 1966 a section of a ship was constructed at McDonald Road Fire Station in Edinburgh by Messrs. Henry Robb Limited, Shipbuilders, Leith. This shore bound vessel was built not only to train fire brigade personnel, but also members of the British Merchant Navy, who cannot call on a fire brigade's help to fight fires on their ships at sea and who are well beyond the aid of outside assistance. This intense training greatly added to the experience of members of both Services.

Of all fires, it is generally agreed by fire officers that those which take place on board ship are amongst the most difficult to fight. Almost all ship fires are, in effect, basement fires and have to be approached from above, through the heat and smoke. As this type of fire is about the most difficult to be tackled by professional fire fighters, how then must the untrained Merchant Navy officer or seaman feel when confronted with a fire situation at sea, who has no access to help from professional fire fighters.
In view of the number of fires which take place at sea and which, unfortunately, can cost human lives, it was to be hoped that many shipping companies would send their staff for training at this new fire school. Courses were developed and run for the benefit of those who had command as well as for persons with the physical responsibility for fighting fire and for fire prevention. Certainly, something had to be done to cut back on the appalling fire loss figures both in monetary terms and human lives.

POTENTIAL EVENTS for 2026

MERCHANT NAVY DAY

Thursday 3rd September is Merchant Navy Day and the branch will once again be holding a memorial service at the Scottish Merchant Navy Memorial, opposite the Malmaison Hotel in Leith at 11.00.
Parking will be limited, so best get down there for around 10.30 if looking to participate, or even just as an onlooker.
After the event, branch members and selected participants will be invited to the Vine Trust Barge at the east end of the Albert Dock, beside the Fingal.
Pass the word to MN friends and colleagues.

What started out as shipboard fire training for companies that were interested in this for their personnel, soon became mandatory when the Government body, the MNTB, realised the effectiveness and necessity for the Safety of Life at Sea.
I first attended McDonald Road on 31st August 1970 when I was a new Deck Cadet at Leith Nautical College. Thankfully and happily this one day of theoretical and practical fire-fighting left me blissfully unaware of what was come down the line. To gain my first Certificate of Competency I had to again visit the Station. From the 8th January 1974 to the 11th, I was subjected to 4 days of what could only be described as Hell. Searing Heat, fire, boiling steam, thick cloying smoke whilst wearing badly fitting fire suits and heavy SCBA. All under the control of the highly experienced fire officers. Health & Safely didn't exist and we came to know them as "The Psychopaths." Ultimately, we couldn't be trained by better instructors. I was awarded my Fire Fighting Training Certificate.
Little did I realise the real necessity of this training when only a few months later I was making the lifeboats ready for evacuation before fighting a severe engine and boiler room fire on a BP Tanker in the Red Sea. My first of 4 serious onboard fires during my seagoing time. I returned to the Station in 1999 as Master for specialised training in Command and Control and also for the control and suppression of fire onboard Gas Tankers. McDonald Road was the first of its type for the training of British Merchant Seaman but others followed, South Tyneside, Warsash, Fleetwood. I attended ST in 2009 for the 4 day Advanced Firefighting and again in 2016 for a 2 day updating Proficiency in prevention and fire-fighting.
On our visit for the talk and visit to the museum I was looking forward to seeing the old ship again, little knowing that during the reconstruction of the Station in 2017 it was demolished.

Article and picture courtesy of David Reid

A SAD FAREWELL

It is with sadness and regret that we say farewell to one of our members, Duncan Beaton.

Duncan passed away peacefully on Wednesday 17th June.

Duncan was one of the mainstays on the Fisheries Research Vessel, SS Explorer, where he happily volunteered his time in helping with the restoration of the vessel.

His knowledge and humour will be sadly missed. A minute's silence was held during the June meeting as a mark of respect.

Oil & Water

A second mate and third mate boarded a quick shuttle flight out of London, headed for Hamburg. One sat in the window seat, the other sat in the middle seat. Just before take-off, a second engineer travelling to the same ship got on and took the aisle seat next to the two. The second engineer kicked off his shoes, wiggled his toes and was settling in when the third mate in the window seat said, "I think I'll get up and get a coke." "No problem," said the engineer, "I'll get it for you." While he was gone, the third mate picked up the engineer's shoe and spit in it. When the engineer returned with the coke, the second mate in the middle seat said, "That looks good, I think I'll have one too." Again, the engineer obligingly went to fetch it and while he was gone, the second mate picked up the engineer's other shoe and spit in it. The engineer returned and they all sat back and enjoyed the rest of the short flight to Hamburg. As the plane was landing, the second engineer slipped his feet into his shoes and knew immediately what had happened. "How long must this go on?" the engineer asked. "This fighting between our ranks? This hatred? This animosity? This spitting in shoes and peeing in cokes?"

POTENTIAL EVENTS for 2026

GOLF OUTING

Another golf outing is being considered for later this year. Possibly at Silverknowes Golf Course in Edinburgh. Dates and details will be firmed up at the August meeting on Friday 28th.

EDINBURGH OKTOBERFEST

The beer festival takes place at Central Hall, West Tollcross with wonderful German live music, food and steins of beer, served in the blue and white Bavarian atmosphere. Open, Thursday 8th October from 16.00 to 23.00 Friday 9th 12.00 - 16.00 (Lunch) and 16.00 - 23.00 – Saturday 10th from 10:30.14:30, 15.00 -19.00 and 19:30-23:30. Real Oktoberfest music all day/evening, so dust off your Lederhosen and your Dirndl and get down there!!

https://edinburgh-oktoberfest.co.uk

HERE'S TAE US, WHA'S LIKE US...

Armed Forces Week is a national campaign to build public understanding and support for the Armed Forces community, including regulars, reserves, veterans, cadets, cadet adult volunteers and military families. It culminates in Armed Forces Day, which was June 27th this year, with parades throughout the country.

At the Armed Forces Day in Edinburgh this year the Edinburgh and Forth branch of the Merchant Navy Association were invited to attend the parade from Charlotte Square, along George Street, to St Andrew Square. It was a great privilege to be able to fly the Merchant Navy branch standard and represent the "4th Service" among the ranks of our military associates.

FUN WITH AN 80 YEAR OLD

Friday 3rd July saw a gathering of the Merchant Navy Association “clans”, from Glasgow, Dumfries and Edinburgh aboard the 80 year old sea-going paddle steamer, Waverley, for a trip “doon the watter” to Dunoon and Rothesay. Although the weather wasn’t at its best, it didn’t dampen the spirits on the day and everyone had a great time catching up with friends and colleagues. The lamps were certainly swinging that day!! Special thanks to Calum Bryce and Iona McLean from the Glasgow branch for organising the trip. Their efforts were greatly appreciated.

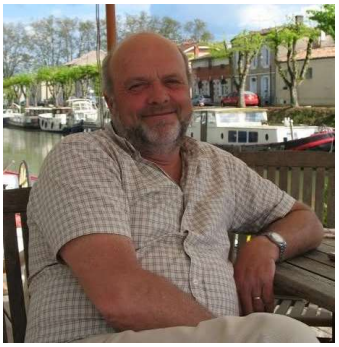
Our trip took us down the river from her berth at the Science Museum, past some of the old docks, the KGV dock, BAE Systems and past the sites where the cross-river ferries used to run (sadly replaced with bridges these days). Under the Erskine Bridge and past Bowling, where we saw the monument to Henry Bell, who first introduced the first commercially successful steamboat service on the Clyde with his vessel “Comet”. On, past the historic Dumbarton Rock, towards Port Glasgow, passing Ferguson Marine and Dales Dry Dock, which had the long-delayed Calmac vessel, “Glen Rosa”, with the “Isle of Arran” ferry going to lay up in the basin. Sweeping by the Greenock port we crossed the Clyde to Dunoon, where we had a couple of goes at coming alongside!! We then proceeded down to Rothesay and stretched our legs ashore for a while before heading back to the vessel for the return trip to Glasgow, via Dunoon again. It was great to see the 80 year old vessel looking spic and span and for an engineer, it was great to be able to view the triple expansion steam engine in action. I’m sure there will be a return to the Waverley at a future date.

POTENTIAL EVENTS for 2026

WALK OF THE TOWN

Next walk will likely be in September at some point
Looking to go from the Royal Commonwealth Pool on Dalkeith Road and head along past Duddingston, Niddrie, Bingham, The Jewel to Eastfield (by Joppa) ending at the outskirts of Musselburgh for some refreshments and sustenance. Date to be confirmed

A FOND FAREWELL



Unfortunately, another of our members crossed the bar recently. Our good friend Tom Hollows passed away peacefully on July 7th in the Margaret Kerr Hospice in the Borders General Hospital.

Tom was never more at home than on his barge, "Easyvie", cruising round the canals in France, but when he was home in Galashiels, he would often join us in reminiscing about his seafaring days.
He will be sadly missed. A minute's silence was held during the July meeting as a mark of respect.

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Friday 24th July saw our third organised walk for the group. We all wondered if we had worn the right kit for the walk as, at the starting point at Roseburn, the weather was overcast and there was a little spit in the air. We needn't have worried as the weather improved as we progressed down the Water of Leith Walkway and jackets were soon cast off. It's hard to believe you were in Edinburgh city centre whilst walking by the river surrounded by idyllic greenery.

Our walk led us down to the picturesque buildings at Dean Village, once a site for milling flour for over 800 years, with 11 mills using the flow of the river to power the mills. It was at this point that some of the troops succumbed to the charms of a small ice-cream vendor to cool them down. A little further down river is the famous St. Bernard's Well, originally built in the 1790's to house a mineral spring well which came from an underground aquifer. The lady standing in the centre is Hygieia (from whose association with health and cleanliness we get the word "Hygiene".

The charm of the Water of Leith ended for us at Canonmills, where we detoured on to a former railway path past Warriston, Goldenacre and on to Trinity, finally bringing us to the shore at Wardie Bay, between Granton and Newhaven. Here a short walk along the road led us to our final destination at the Starbank Inn for refreshments and sustenance. Thanks again to all that attended. There are already thoughts for the next outing in hand.

….NOR ANY DROP TO DRINK

An old captain and his first mate are reminiscing about their days on the Arctic convoys of World War II together.
Captain: "All through those terrible, dark, storm wracked nights, you never once failed to bring me a steaming full mug of tea on the night watch. How on earth did you manage it without ever spilling a drop?
First mate: "Well Sir, since you ask, I used to take a swig of your tea in the galley, then spit it back in the mug when I got to your door."

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WELL DESERVED

Hearty congratulations goes to one of our members, Majid Alikhani, for receiving an Inspiring Volunteer Award 2026. Majid retired from a long career as a marine engineer and joined the Forth and Clyde Canal Trust as a canal boat crew volunteer, wanting to stay connected to the water while sharing his extensive skills. Over the past two years, he became an invaluable and highly capable crew member aboard the FCCT boats, quickly gaining confidence and earning the respect of colleagues and passengers alike. Alongside his practical expertise in boat maintenance and engine work, he plays an important role in training and encouraging new volunteers, bringing humour, positivity and reassurance to the Canal Trust team while helping to keep the boats running safely and effectively. Here, Majid is seen receiving his award from Robert Aldridge, Rt. Hon. Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh

A DEDICATED FOLLOWER OF FASHION

One of our members, to give him his full title, Reverend Dr Iain May BSc MBA BD DMin, Minister of the Church of Scotland (Retired), although retired, still keeps his hand in at various ceremonies, such as Merchant Navy Day and more recently, seen here with our good friend Mike Bullock, CEO of the Northern Lighthouse Board, during the naming ceremony of their newest vessel "Pole Star". As a mark of recognition of this, the branch proffered upon him a new stole, which included the MN logo and "Red Duster"

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL SERVICE

2026 marks the 79th Edinburgh International Festival, with the theme "All Rise", a rallying cry for artists and audiences alike, encompassing collaboration, resilience and ascendance. The Festival Service, held on Sunday 9th August at St. Giles cathedral celebrated all the communities of Edinburgh in their contributions to welcoming visitors and over 2000 artists from 47 countries, making the Festival a truly international event. The Edinburgh & Forth branch of the Merchant Navy Association were honoured and privileged to be included among the attendees at the service, being recognised as one of the contributors to the social aspect of Edinburgh's community. On returning to the City Chambers, Robert Aldridge, Rt Hon. Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh gave his thanks to all for their support and attendance on the day.