

RNLI MEMORIAL

Photo: RNLI/Nigel Millard



Five of these St Ives crew members lost their lives in a lifeboat in 1939 and are remembered on the memorial
Photo: Grahame Farr Archives

Concept

The RNLI memorial was dedicated in a ceremony held on 3 September 2009, the culmination of a project started in 2006 to create a single memorial to commemorate everyone who has lost their lives in the cause of saving others from the sea.

The idea was partially inspired by the

existing RNLI memorial books, conceived in the early 1970s by Lord Saltoun, a Trustee of the RNLI, which listed 438 names. It also complements the work of the National Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire, which includes an RNLI memorial area.

Sculptor

Sam Holland has been a member of the Royal Society of British Sculptors since 2001. Her other work includes the lifelike bronze memorial to the late Coxswain Dic Evans at Moelfre. For the latest memorial, she used marine-grade stainless steel to weld the dramatic 2.5m high figures in her own studio on a barge on the banks of the River Medway.

The plinth was made out of rolled steel plate and supplied by the company that manufactures fuel tanks for the RNLI.

Design

Over 400 applications for the design brief were made, resulting in 63 designs from artists and landscape designers being considered by the Memorial Project Group, which consisted of 25 members drawn from all areas of the Institution. The final choice reflects the need for the design to be timeless, yet demonstrating all the good that the RNLI stands for, such as the courage and humanity of our lifesavers, and in some aspects being inspired by the design of the RNLI Gallantry Medal.



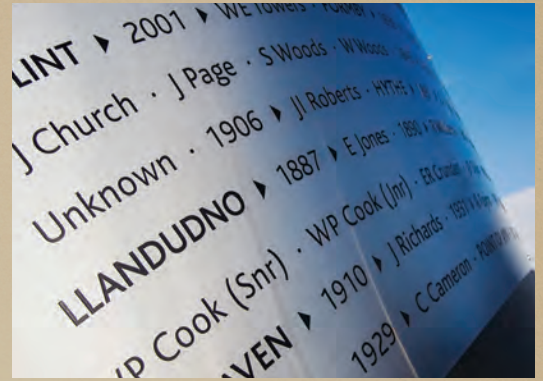
The names

The very broad brief was to endeavour to record all the names of those who have lost their lives attempting to save others at sea, and whose sacrifice is part of the history of the lifeboat community in their area.

We have names of those whose actions resulted in a lifeboat being located in their town or village, as well as those who were killed while helping in the launch of a lifeboat to undertake its vital work.

The quality of record keeping has varied over the past 200 years and, although the memorial books identified 438 souls, the memorial research discovered 778 in total.

Although we hope wholeheartedly that there will be no further additions to this memorial, we have made provision for such an eventuality, because the sea remains a hostile and dangerous environment, especially for those who are going to the aid of others.



Location

The current location, outside RNLI Headquarters in Poole, was deliberately chosen to both catch the public's eye and also act as an area of inspiration and point of contemplation for all existing and future volunteers and staff who pass through 'the home of the RNLI'.



Cost and upkeep

The memorial was funded by public donation and grants through the RNLI Heritage Trust.

This memorial has a programme of regular inspection and upkeep, which includes cleaning off the effects of the bird population at our maritime location!



Further research

A full list of the names and stations on the memorial is available from the RNLI Heritage Trust. Brief details of the circumstances of each death are recorded on the official station history of the relevant lifeboat station. Copies of these station histories can be viewed by looking at the individual stations' websites accessed through the main RNLI website.

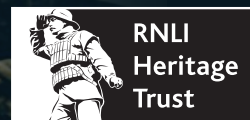
rnli.org.uk

The RNLI Heritage Trust

'The RNLI Heritage Trust seeks to communicate and celebrate the RNLI's common humanity and constant voluntary service saving lives at sea since 1824. We aim to inspire and inform current and future generations by making our museums and historical collections accessible to the public while ensuring these collections are maintained to recognised professional standards.'

The Heritage Trust is a subsidiary charity of the RNLI, established in 2004 to care for the future conservation and financing of the RNLI museums and collections. It relies on heritage grants and voluntary contributions for its support.

To find out more about the work of the RNLI Heritage Trust, or to make a donation, please contact us.



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