

Honorary Freedom and Freedom of Entry

The highest honour that a Council can bestow on a person who has, in their opinion, rendered eminent services to the city or borough is **Honorary Freeman or Freewoman**.

A resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members of Council is required to admit the Honorary Freeman or Freewoman, but this does not confer any rights upon them.

The resolution would recite the particular grounds upon which the Council have come to their decision and details of the public service rendered by the recipient would be included. In some cases, the freedom resolution is passed at a special meeting of the Council and the formal presentation takes place at a special ceremony later.

The newly admitted Freeman or Freewoman may take the appropriate Freeman's Oath and sign the Freeman's Roll, his or her signature being witnessed by the Mayor and Chief Executive.

Associated with the Freedom of the Borough is the **Freedom of Entry** which is granted to units of His Majesty's Forces who have rendered conspicuous service and who are associated with the City or Borough.

The necessary formal resolution of Council is passed at a special meeting and the "freedom" formally presented at a special ceremony. The granting of the freedom provides a dignified and satisfactory means for the unit to be honoured and entitles them to march through the streets of a town with bayonets fixed, drums beating and Colours flying.

1974 – RAF St Athan

On 22 April 1974 the Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council resolved that in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 249 of the Local Government Act, 1972, confer on the Officer Commanding, the Officers and other Ranks, Royal Air Force, St Athan, the title, honour and distinction of the Freedom of the Borough and admit them collectively to be Honorary Freemen of the Borough in grateful recognition and appreciation of the sterling services of Royal Air Force to the nation in World War II and the friendly assistance and co-operation given since the establishment of the Station to the communities generally of Vale of Glamorgan and of the sincere efforts of the Station in support of civilian and service charitable organisations.

On 18 May 1974 the formal presentation by the Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council of the Grant of Freedom was made by The Charter Mayor Councillor Brinley Williams to Air Commodore S M Davidson CBE at the Royal Air Force Station, St Athan.

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1976 – Sir Raymond Gower MP

1 November 1976 - the Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council resolved that in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 249 of the Local Government Act, 1972, admit Sir Raymond Gower, an officer of Her Majesty's Supreme Court of Judicature and Member of Parliament for the Barry Constituency being a person who has rendered eminent services to the said Borough to be an Honorary Freeman.

The formal admission of Sir Raymond Gower as an honorary Freeman of the Borough was made by the Mayor Councillor Percy Chapple, at a Council meeting held on 13 April 1977.

1984 – Sir Cennydd Traherne KG

The Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council resolved that in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 249 of the Local Government Act, 1972, admit Sir Cennydd Traherne KG, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for the Counties of Glamorgan, formerly her Majesty's Lieutenant for Glamorgan, being a person who has rendered eminent services to the said Borough to be an Honorary Freeman.

The formal admission of Sir Cennydd Traherne KG as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough was made by the Mayor Councillor Cyril D Lakin, at a Council meeting held on 19 March 1984.

1984 – Sir Hugo Boothby, Bt

The Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council resolved that in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 249 of the Local Government Act, 1972, admit Sir Hugo Boothby, Bt, formerly Her Majesty's Vice Lieutenant for the County of Glamorgan, High Sheriff of Glamorgan and Her Majesty's Lieutenant for the County of South Glamorgan, being a person who has rendered eminent services to the said Borough to be an Honorary Freeman.

The formal admission of Sir Hugo Boothby, Bt, as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough was made by the Mayor Councillor Cyril D Lakin, at a Council meeting held on 19 March 1984.

1991 – Mrs Susan Eva Williams MBE

The Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council resolved that in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 249 of the Local Government Act, 1972, admit Mrs Susan Eva Williams MBE DStJ JP, formerly Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for South Glamorgan, Lieutenant for South Glamorgan and High Sheriff of South Glamorgan, being a person who has rendered eminent services to the Borough to be an Honorary Freeman.

The formal admission of Mrs Susan Eva Williams MBE DStJ JP, as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough was made by the Mayor Councillor H J W James, at a Council meeting held on 4 March 1991.

2004 – Merchant Navy Association

On 28 April 2004, the Vale of Glamorgan Council resolved that the freedom of the County Borough be awarded to the Merchant Navy Association (Wales) in recognition of the men who served in the Merchant Navy and for their service during the two World Wars.

The formal presentation of the Grant of Freedom by the County Borough was made at a ceremony in Barry on 16 April 2005. officiated by the Mayor, Councillor Emlyn Williams.

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2004 – Welsh Guards

On 28 April 2004, the Vale of Glamorgan Council resolved that the freedom of the County Borough be awarded to the Welsh Guards in recognition of the service provided to the Country since the Welsh Guards were formed in 1915 and for the close links that are developing and will develop as a result of the Welsh Guards being based within the County Borough.

The formal presentation of the Grant of Freedom by the County Borough was made at a ceremony in Barry on 16 March 2006. The Mayor, Councillor Margaret Alexander, presented a freedom scroll to Lieutenant Colonel Ben Bathurst, Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards.

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2008 – The Royal Welsh

On Saturday 21 February 2009, the Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan, Councillor Audrey Preston. granted the freedom of the County Borough to The Royal Welsh. Led by Goat Major David Joseph and Shenkin the goat, the regiment marched to Men of Harlech onto King Square, Barry.

The Mayor offered the freedom by reading from the scroll, she said: "The council do hereby confer upon the Royal Welsh the freedom of entry to the County Borough of the Vale of Glamorgan, and thereby the privilege and honour and distinction of marching through the streets of the county borough".

After a prayer from the Mayor's chaplain the Rev Moira Spence, Colonel Peter Gooderson said: "Men from the Vale have served for over 300 years in all of our antecedent regiments. The commitment of Barry and the Vale to service is highlighted by the Memorial Hall here in Barry and the memorial in Cowbridge, to name but two. These links mean that, to us, the granting of the Freedom of the Vale is much more than just a parade and a scroll. It is an honour and a privilege because it shows to us that one of the communities we value the most, values us. I cannot tell you how much it means to soldiers serving overseas that people back home are supporting them."

Following the presentation of the Freedom Scroll and the playing of the National Anthems, the regiment exercised their right and marched through the town.

The Royal Welsh

The Royal Welsh is a new regiment, born on St David's Day 2006. It was formed by the union of two Welsh infantry regiments: The Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the Royal Regiment of Wales. The First Battalion, having spent two years service in Cyprus (which included operational deployments to both Iraq and Afghanistan) is now established in barracks in Chester and will deploy to Afghanistan again later this year.

The Second Battalion, which represented The Royal Welsh at the freedom ceremony is based in new barracks in Tidworth and returned from its third tour of Iraq at the end of 2007. The Third Battalion, has bases across Wales and has deployed its Territorial Army Soldiers to both theatres of operations in support of the regular battalions.

2010 – Welsh Field Hospital

On Saturday 17 April 2010, the Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan, Councillor Emlyn Williams, granted the freedom of the County Borough to 203 Welsh Field Hospital (Volunteers).

The unit led by the Royal Welsh Regimental Band, marched onto King Square, Barry. Before granting the freedom the Mayor and HM Lord Lieutenant, Dr Peter Beck, inspected and chatted to the volunteers.

Councillor Williams said "I am delighted that we are able to recognise the unit and the valuable work they are doing both at home and abroad. Many brave soldiers seriously injured in various conflicts owe their lives to the magnificent treatment given by units such as The Welsh Medics. They continue to risk their lives to save those of others".

The unit's commanding officer, Colonel Kevin Davies said "The Vale council has shown its appreciation and acknowledgement of the significant contribution that Wales' Field Hospital makes in supporting UK operations. The council recognition is wonderful news and we at 203 very much look forward to receiving our right to march through Barry".

The 203 Welsh Field Hospital (Volunteers)

This is the only Territorial Army medical unit in Wales, and its personnel are all part time volunteers. They recruit healthcare professionals from across Wales from all disciplines - doctors, nurses, paramedics, radiographers, physiotherapists, biomedical scientists, dentists, dental nurses, pharmacy technicians, pharmacists and health care support workers.

Tracing its roots back to the First World War, the hospital is based in Cardiff, with detachments in Swansea, Crickhowell and Llandudno. In recent times, it has deployed personnel in support of operations abroad during the Gulf wars, the Balkans and the ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Following the presentation of the Freedom Scroll and the playing of the National Anthems, the unit exercised their right and marched through the town.

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2012 - HMS Cambria

On Saturday 31 March 2012, the Vale of Glamorgan Council awarded the freedom of the County Borough to the ship's company of HMS Cambria. They will exercise the honorary freedom with a ceremony and parade through the town of Barry.

HMS Cambria was commissioned in 1947 and originally based in Cardiff Docks. The present buildings at Sully, which are the former Service Married Quarters, were opened on 15 October 1980, starting a valued connection with the Vale of Glamorgan. Until 1993, Cambria's main operational role was the manning and operating of minesweepers. From 1984 until it was sold in 1993, Cambria operated a River Class Minesweeper, HMS Waveney, which was a familiar sight in Barry Docks throughout that period.

Since 1993, the RNR's role has undergone significant change. This change has become more pronounced since 2003, and a regular number of reservists from Cambria have served in Iraq, the Gulf and Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and the Balkans. Combined with deployments on board Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships and shore based posts, up to 25% of the ship's company have been consistently mobilised with the Royal Navy since 2003.

Many of the volunteer reservists have been recruited from across South Wales and the Vale of Glamorgan. The current commander of HMS Cambria, Commander Neil Pugh, says "It is a matter of great pride that the Reservists are able to serve in and for their home County and we are extremely pleased to have been given this honour".

The Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan, Councillor John Clifford, says "This is an important landmark in the close relationship between the Vale of Glamorgan Council and HMS Cambria and is in recognition of the service of past and present Reservists".

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2024 – Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)

On Sunday, 2nd June, 2024 during Barry Dock RNLI's *Festival of the Sea* weekend, RNLI volunteers and staff were officially presented their 'Honorary Freeman and Freewoman' status by the Vale of Glamorgan Council, recognising their commitment to saving lives at sea in the community and beyond.

These ceremonial titles have been awarded to the RNLI in what was a very special year for the lifesaving charity as it celebrated its 200th anniversary. The honour encompassed the whole of the RNLI's one crew across the Vale of Glamorgan, including Penarth and Barry Dock Lifeboat Stations, the lifeguard teams, fundraising, engagement and water safety volunteers and staff members.

Stuart McMillan, Chair of Barry Dock RNLI Lifeboat Management Group, was presented with a plaque from The Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan Councillor Elliot Penn on behalf of all the volunteers and staff. Mr. McMillan also addressed the crowd with a short speech about what this meant to the RNLI one crew in the Vale of Glamorgan.

After the ceremony Mr. McMillan added:

'It was a great honour to represent the RNLI and receive the plaque. Everyone who volunteers and works for the RNLI shares our charity's values and we all come together as one crew in our mission to save lives at sea.'

'We would like to thank the Vale of Glamorgan Council for recognising us with these honorary titles and the impact our work has had on keeping our communities across the Vale a safe place for locals and visitors to enjoy our coastline.'

Matt Childs, RNLI Area Lifesaving Manager said:

'We are all very proud to receive this recognition for the collective efforts of our lifesaving work here in the Vale of Glamorgan. We often talk about 'one crew' at the RNLI and this honour truly encompasses all that our one crew represents.'

'It's not just our incredible volunteers that crew our lifeboats who make it possible to save lives at sea, but it's the collective effort of everyone involved. From our fundraisers and water safety volunteers, to lifeguard teams and everyone else in between.'

The RNLI charity saves lives at sea. Its volunteers provide a 24-hour search and rescue service around the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland coasts. The RNLI operates 238 lifeboat stations in the UK and Ireland and more than 240 lifeguard units on beaches around the UK and Channel Islands. The RNLI is independent of Coastguard and government and depends on voluntary donations and legacies to maintain its rescue service. Since the RNLI was founded in 1824, its lifeboat crews and lifeguards have saved over 142,700 lives.

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