



Durham City Freemen



Yearbook 2025

The front cover image is of the Great Hall in the Town Hall.

The current complex replaced an earlier timber guildhall on the site which was built in 1356 and replaced by a stone structure commissioned by Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall in 1535. The earliest part of the current facility is the guildhall which was commissioned by Bishop John Cosin and dates to 1665.



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Editorial



I wish you all and your families a very Happy and Prosperous New Year in 2025.

Changes to management

Over the past year we have had to make sudden changes to the management structure. Changes have been made to the Chair, Vice Chair, Cordwainers Warden and Membership Secretary. The new occupants of the posts are detailed later in this yearbook. We are constantly looking forward to getting new Members involved in the running of the Guild.

Town Hall Closure

The Freemen have been affected by the closure of the Town Hall which commenced on the 23rd November 2024. The County Council intend to repair the structure which has been suffering from leaking roofs and falling plaster. The works are anticipated to last a period of six months but once work begins on these old structures you never know what might be found. The closure will affect many meetings that are normally arranged in the Guild Hall and new venues have been agreed with Durham County Council for us to continue our work.

Apprentice Award Scheme

The apprentice award scheme has been running for two years now and has been a success. However, the closure of the Town Hall will cause the Freemen some problems with this year's awards, which are currently being investigated.

Changes to the Durham City Freemen's Trustees

Linking the past with modern times is a very difficult path to follow and the Freemen are not immune from it. We live in a very litigious world, and we must protect ourselves from that new phenomenon. This is why the Trustees are considering changes to the way they operate. Fortunately, the Freemen themselves do have protection in the way they were set up. That was forward thinking those many years ago by our forefathers.

Masons Booklets

As some members will know there are two gaps in our history booklets, namely the Masons and the Cordwainers. One of our deputies Alan Richardson is now working to fill this gap and it is hoped that the Masons booklet will be available in 2025. The cordwainers booklet may be ready in 2026.

Looking into the future.

Do we need to change entrance criteria? For example, the modern-day trend is for couples not to marry, should this prohibit their children from becoming Freemen or should we allow them in via paternity?

Modern day apprenticeships do not involve indentures, as was the case in the past. Do we need to adapt to this changing world so that the Freeman can attract new members via the servitude route?

There are many risks to the future of the Freeman. One of these is financial, where we need to ensure that the finances of the Freeman are secure and at least growing in line with inflation. A recent report from the trustees has indicated that this is not so, and they are putting plans into place to ensure the finance is sound into the future.

Another risk identified concerns the age of our members. None of us are getting younger and if we do not attract new members then eventually the Freeman will cease to exist. We have three members who have 60+ years' service and 8 members with 50+ years' service.

The overriding purpose for the officers of the Freeman both trustees and wardens are to ensure that we look after our members and ensure that Durham City Freeman exists way into the future. To enable this to happen changes may need to be made into the way things are run in the future.

10 Years ago, we had 213 members, now we have potentially 280. I say potentially, because we have lost contact with several members with whom we are currently trying to reconnect, please see page 23. Our members cover the world as well as the UK, we are in Australia, Canada, Qatar, Spain and Sweden.

The view expressed in this editorial are the views of the editor and are not necessarily the views of Durham City Freeman.

Wardens and Trustees

Wardens

Garry Dunnill
Plumbers Company
Chair of the Wardens
Tel: 07739 325421

Neil Graham
Masons Company
Deputy Chair
Tel: 07835 421640

Bryan Proud
Barbers Company
Secretary
Tel: 07919 996551

Mac Williams
Butchers Company
Tel: 07496 374168

Alan Metcalf
Cordwainers Company
Tel: 07401 443210

Iain Wilmshurst
Curriers Company
Tel: 0191 3861703

Dave Howard
Drapers Company
Tel: 07871 041761

Ann Thurlow
Joiners Company
Tel: 07752 318953

Deputy Wardens

Vacant
Barbers Company

Vincent Syson
Butchers Company

Vacant
Cordwainers Company

Vacant
Curriers Company

Trevor Carter
Drapers Company

David Neale
Joiners Company

Alan Richardson
Masons Company

Arthur Lockyear
Plumbers Company

Trustees

Chair
Alice Ambrose Thubron

Richard Scothorn

Treasurer
Scott Cooper

Canon Michael Everett

Kenneth Howe

Helen McMillan

Catrin Morgan

Clerk and Receiver

Philip Wills

Durham City Freeman Calendar Dates 2025

GUILD DAYS:	11:00 – 12:30	Location
Candlemas:	Monday 3 rd February 2025	TBC*
May Day:	Monday 12 th May 2025	TBC*
Lammas:	Monday 4 th August 2025	TBC*
Martinmas:	Monday 3 rd November 2025	Guild Hall
Warden's Meetings	6.00 – 7.30	
Thursday	23 rd January 2025	The Story Mount Oswald Durham
Thursday	24 th April 2025	The Story Mount Oswald Durham
Thursday	25 th September 2025	Guild Hall
Warden's and Deputy Wardens meetings:	6:00 – 7:30	
Thursday	6 th March 2025	The Story Mount Oswald Durham
Thursday	3 rd July 2025	The Story Mount Oswald Durham
Thursday	30 th October 2025	Guild Hall
Thursday	4 th December 2025	Guild Hall
Members Meeting	6.00 – 7.30	
Tuesday	1 st April 2025	TBC*
Warden's and Trustees Meetings:	2:00 – 4:30	
Friday	24 th January 2025	The Story Mount Oswald Durham
Friday	25 th April 2025	The Story Mount Oswald Durham
Friday	26 th September 2025	Guild Hall
Friday	5 th December 2025	Guild Hall
Apprentice Awards Ceremony:	20th June 2025 Provisional	
Annual Dinner:	Sunday 5th October 2025 Provisional	
Charitable Trust Meetings	1.00 – 2.30	
Monday	6 th January 2025	
Monday	7 th April 2025	
Monday	8 th September 2025	
Monday	1 st December 2025	

*Some locations for meetings will be announced in the Newsletter when known.

New Chair of the Wardens

Garry Dunnill



I became a Freeman of the Plumbers Guild on the 3rd of February 1997, having been proposed by Alan Atkinson Snr.

After leaving Gilesgate Secondary School at the age of 15 I started working for Harold Fairclough Ltd Hallgarth Street Durham and at the age of 16 signed indentures to start my apprenticeship as a Heating Engineer.

At this stage of my career, I won the apprentices craft award 1972/1973 and represented the college at the National Apprentices Competition at Olympia in London.

I continued my studies after joining the National Coal Board to be a technician engineer at Charles Trevelyan College in Newcastle upon Tyne, which enabled me to go to Newcastle Polytechnic to gain a Diploma in Building Services. At this time, I joined RW Gregory & Partners, Consulting Engineers in Newcastle as a cost planning engineer where we produced Bills of Quantities. Following this I moved back to Durham and started working for T G Armstrong & Partners Consulting Engineers as a mechanical consulting engineer, during this time I designed numerous projects throughout the country.

After a few years there I returned to the installation side of the industry and purchased with help from family members, Eric Whitfield (Durham) Ltd Plumbing & Heating based in Broompark. During this time, we trained numerous apprentices in both plumbing and heating, some of whom went on to win awards within the industry.

We developed the company within the industry and established an air conditioning side where we worked on a national shopfitting programme throughout the U.K., Eire, Belgium and Holland for Vision Express and many other local establishments.

We continued with the company working on major projects for local Universities, Councils, the Health Authority, Catholic Diocese and Durham Castle and various other projects in the North East.

Within this period, I was appointed Chairman of the local Heating Ventilation Contractors Association and organised fund-raising dinners, general/training meetings and inter-industry meetings with the electrical contractor's association, with the help of a local secretary and represented the area on its national committee. Subsequently I was invited to join the national committee for training within the industry. This was over a 28-year period.

I have always been proud to be a Freeman of Durham, and feel privileged to be elected as Chairman of the Wardens.

New Deputy Chair of the Wardens and Re-elected Warden of the Masons

Neil Graham



I started my career for The City of Durham Council (CDC) in 1976 as an Apprentice Electrician. After successfully completing my apprenticeship in 1980 I then worked as part of the team which maintained the housing stock around the Durham area, and the municipal buildings within the city centre, including the Town Hall, Baths, CDC offices and sports centres.

In 1991 I was elected as a Shop Steward and Safety Representative for AEEU (Unite) which helped me develop my communication and presentation skills. As a Safety Rep I was later invited to take over the chairmanship of the CDC Health and Safety Committee, which lasted until the Authority was amalgamated with Durham County Council in 2009.

In 2008 I was appointed as CDC Electrical Supervisor, managing a team of 18 electricians. My duties then included chairing team meetings, personal development interviews, apprenticeship mentoring as well as maintaining Excel files to ensure compliance with statutory legislation.

I continued in the role of Supervisor as the Authority transferred to DCC and later when it moved to the private sector and became County Durham Housing Group.

After becoming an active member of Durham City Freeman, following my early retirement, I joined the management team. One of my first projects was writing a paper entitled 'Servitude and Admissions' which outlined likely issues that may affect the Freeman's membership, providing suggestions on how best to move forward and develop a more sustainable organisation.

In October of 2020, as part of a working group, the team began to plan and implement the Butchers 500 years celebration, which involved coordinating external groups, booking facilities, catering and entertainers as well as arranging for the attendance of VIPs and press etc.

Over the last year or so, I have also taken a key role in the team which developed and successfully implemented Durham City Freeman's Apprentice award celebrations in 2023 and 2024. I am now currently working towards our next Apprentice award event.

Being part of the Freeman and a member of the management team and it's working groups is a great honour and I look forward to being involved in the future development of Durham City Freeman, helping to make it more robust and resilient for the future and for the Freeman of the City of Durham to come.

New Warden of the Drapers

Dave Howard



I have had the privilege of being a Freeman since November 2003, and soon after being sworn in I became Grassman for the Freeman looking after the interests, activities, maintenance etc. of the Sands grassed area, working closely with the Clerk and Receiver and Chairman of the trustees and various Wardens.

More recently I became a Deputy Warden for the Butchers company allowing me to be part of a Dynamic and Focused management team.

I was involved in the organising and delivery of the Butchers 500th anniversary celebrations.

I recently played a major role in a project to design and source manufacturers to produce new gowns, badges, ties and scarves for Wardens, Deputies and Freeman.

It was an absolute honour to become a Warden and to enable me to carry on with my involvement in future events and projects, planning for the future of the Freeman.

New Warden of the Cordwainers

Alan Metcalf



I previously served as Warden of the Cordwainers from 2019 to 2022, I did not reapply for the position at the end of my tenure as I was working full time and found that I could not devote as much time to the position as I would have liked.

When I retired in January 2023, I applied for, and was successful in achieving, the position of Deputy Warden of the Barbers and I have very recently taken over the position 'minute taker', a role I held previously while Warden of the Cordwainers.

My devotion to Durham City Freeman is a matter of record, including a brief spell as Chairman although unfortunately I found this role to be too demanding and I resigned due to health reasons.

Re-elected Deputy Warden of the Masons

Alan Richardson



I am delighted to be able to continue to serve the Freemen of Durham as Deputy Warden of the Masons Guild and continue my support of the overall objectives of the Guilds teams.

I joined the Masons Guild of the Freemen of Durham as a grandson of, Ralph Elliott. I have great respect for him. He was a well-respected, bricklayer, Mason, Freemason, and DLI soldier in the First World War. He was a quiet man of great depth. His dress code put me to shame. The DLI taught a man how to polish shoes.

The Freemen of Durham Elliott family can be traced back to a single man. John Elliott 1776. 10 of the Mason freemen cohort are current descendants of this one man.

I must make it clear to the reader that my life has been saturated with brick laying, masonry, construction and trades. I became a small builder following in the family footsteps. One of my successes was to be the most successful company in the UK operating a Construction Confederation quality assured guarantee scheme. I served as vice chair of the Building Employers Confederation small builders' group. I then graduated to the executive board of the Construction Confederation overseeing national wage settlements and Health and Safety.

A contiguous career pathway was carried out being North East Chairman of the Chartered Institute of Building, achieving Fellowship status and also a chartered member of the Institute of Civil Engineering Surveyors. In 1996 I entered education and eventually became a senior scientist/Reader (Associate Professor/researcher - over 125 international publications to my credit) specialising in uses of concrete. A satisfying achievement, working with a European group RILEM was to help develop self-healing concrete using bacillus pasteurii bacteria spores to heal concrete cracks whenever and wherever they occur. This research could create self-repairing concrete structures for the future. I cast my first concrete beam with my father at the age of 10 years, so this was an obvious career pathway. I ended up being Northern Region chairman of the Concrete Society for 4 years, holding cutting edge seminars for industry and researchers.

The Mason's Guild is an obvious home for me, and I am proud to be part of this great historical lineage.

I often wonder when I look at the Masons' marks on the stone blocks in Durham cathedral. Could it be a long lost relative? We are part of a great lineage.

New Members Admitted in 2024

May Day 13th May 2024

Leslie Kenneth Cleckner,

(Joiner's Company)

Admitted via Servitude



Colin Wilkes,

(Butcher's Company)

Admitted as a Gentleman Freeman via Customary
Freedom



Lammas Guild Day 5th August 2024

Charlotte Victoria Middleton

(Joiner's Company)

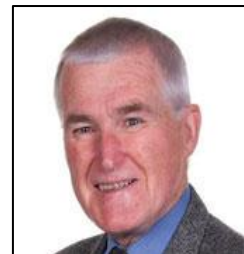
Admitted via Patrimony



Patrick Stephen Conway OBE

(Cordwainers Company)

Admitted via Gentleman Freeman



Martinmas Guild Day 4th November 2024

Robert Harold James Caulkin

(Joiner's Company)

Admitted via Patrimony



William Abby Clark

(Currier's Company)

Admitted via Patrimony.



Geoffrey Keith Newton

(Mason's Company)

Admitted via Servitude



Sybil Jean Charlton

(Draper's Company)

admitted via Customary Freedom Category (a).



Membership Criteria

Guild Servitude, Durham Servitude and Hereditary Freedom.

Admission by Application

Applicants should contact the Membership Secretary in the first instance.

Any man or woman who has attained the age of 18 years and has any of the qualifications set out below is eligible for consideration for admission to the Freemen of the City of Durham. The qualifications for eligibility for Freedom of the City of Durham are:

Guild Servitude

Completed service in an apprenticeship of at least three years duration in a recognised trade, or equivalent trained employment status deemed satisfactory to the Wardens of the Durham City Freemen with an employer who is a Freeman of the City of Durham.

Durham Servitude

Completed service in an apprenticeship of at least three years duration in a recognised trade, or equivalent trained employment status deemed satisfactory to the Wardens of the Durham City Freemen, in one or more trades within the Durham City boundary.

Hereditary Freedom

He or she is the son or daughter of a Freeman of the City of Durham.

Customary Freedom Admission by Invitation only

This entry process is at the discretion of the Wardens, if the invitee is accepted this obviates the need for the first two calls as the Wardens represent their members. Men and women who are currently serving as a Trustee of the Freemen cannot be considered under this item.

Men and women who have attained the age of 18 years who are not otherwise qualified in accordance with 1.2.3. above, may be admitted as Freemen in accordance with ancient local custom or practice subject to the approval of the Wardens.

All claims to Freedom of the City should be supported by sufficient documentary evidence of entitlement to be submitted for consideration by the Wardens of the Guilds meeting collectively. Following due consideration, the decision of the Wardens in respect of any claim to Freedom of the City shall be final.

Honorary Freedom, a civic honour conferred by the former Durham City Council or by Durham County Council linked with the Chartered Trustees, is distinct and separate from the Freedom granted through the eligibility outlined above and the approval of the Wardens.

The rights, duties and powers of the Durham City Freemen shall continue in accordance with the provisions of the Durham City Council Act 1985 and associated customary practice.

Customary Freedom category invitees are admitted via one call on a Guild Day.

A message from the Right Worshipful Mayor of Durham County Councillor Liz Brown



It was a great honour for me to have been elected Mayor for the civic year 2024/25.

As a Durham City native, I thought I knew about the Guilds and Freemen but until I became Mayor, I was not aware just how many worthy causes they supported across the City and County (including the Mayor's charities, which this year are Stray Aid and Feeding Families – thank you again!).

It has been an immense pleasure working with you all and I know the Freemen will go from strength to strength, as they have for the last few years.

Best wishes to you and your families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'L' and 'B' followed by a long horizontal line.

Councillor Liz Brown
The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Durham

Tenure of Appointment Wardens

Company	Date Elected	End of Term	New Elections
Chair Garry Dunnill (Plumbers)	13 th May 2024	12 th May 2027	April 2027
Deputy Chair Neil Graham (Currier)	6 th February 2024	5 th February 2027	January 2027
Secretary Bryan Proud (Butcher)	30 th October 2023	29 th October 2026	October 2026
Barbers Bryan Proud (Butcher)	21 st October 2023	20 th October 2026	October 2026
Butchers Mac Williams	15 th October 2023	14 th October 2026	September 2026
Cordwainers Alan Metcalf	25 th October 2024	24 th October 2027	October 2027
Curriers Iain Wilmshurst	10 th December 2022	9 th December 2025	November 2025
Drapers Dave Howard	8 th January 2023	7 th January 2026	December 2025
Joiners Ann Thurlow	1 st May 2023	30 th April 2026	April 2026
Masons Neil Graham (Currier)	19 th December 2024	18 th December 2027	November 2027
Plumbers Garry Dunnill	5 th February 2024	4 th February 2027	January 2027

Tenure of Appointment Deputy Wardens

Company	Date Elected	End of Term	New Elections
Barbers (Vacant)			
Butchers Vincent Owen Syson	24 th November 2023	23 rd November 2026	November 2026
Cordwainers (Vacant)			
Curriers (Vacant)			
Drapers Trevor Carter	3 rd March 2023	2 nd March 2026	February 2026
Joiners David Charles Neale	24 th November 2023	23 rd November 2026	November 2026
Masons Alan Richardson	11 th November 2024	10 th November 2027	October 2027
Plumbers Arthur Lockyear	3 rd March 2023	2 nd March 2026	February 2026
Membership Secretary Garry Dunnill	17 th June 2024	16 th June 2027	May 2027

Current membership at December 2024

Barbers' Company

Anderson	Jeffrey	Rowland	Mr		Faulkner	Amy	Elizabeth	Miss
Anderson	Mark	John	Mr		Faulkner	Kay		Mrs
Anderson	Peter	Stewart	Mr		Handy	Joyce		Ms
Atkinson	Alan		Mr		Kahane	Ahuvia		Prof
Atkinson	Carl	Alan	Mr		Milbourne	Phillip	John	Mr
Atkinson	David		Mr		Milbourne	Richard	James	Mr
Atkinson	Kieran	Andrew	Mr		Nightingale	Craig		Mr
Brolls	Hilary		Mrs		Nightingale	Gavin		Mr
Brolls	Lewis	Daniel	Mr		Nightingale	John		Mr
Calvert-Lee	Giles	Lindsey	Mr		Nightingale	Judith		Ms
Calvert-Lee	Rupert	Guy	Mr		Snowdon	Frederick	John	Mr
Calvert-Lee	Thomas		Mr		Weightman	Una	Dawn	Mrs
Coxon	Kevin	Lee	Mr		Wills LLM	Philip		Mr
Dunn	Dennis		Mr					

Butchers' Company

Balls	David		Mr		MacDonald	Ian	Edward	Mr
Bancroft	David	George	Mr		Milbourne	Malcolm		Mr
Chapman	Michael	Andrew	Mr		Oliver	George	Robert	Mr
Chapman	Robert		Mr		Patterson	Thomas	William	Mr
Dodds	Keven	Barry	Mr		Pickering	George	Robert	Mr
Forster	Guy		Mr		Proud	Bryan		Mr
Forster	Heather		Ms		Proud	John	Paul	Mr
Forster	Jonathan	Paul	Mr		Staveley	Susan		Mrs
Forster	Stephen	James	Mr		Syson	Vincent	Owen	Mr
Hart	Norman	Thomas	Mr		Wilkes	Colin		Mr
Howard	David	Richard	Mr		Williams JP	Macdonald	Abiodun	Mr
Laws	Steven		Mr		Williams	Christian	Philip	Mr

Cordwainers' Company

Bankhead	Gary		Mr		McElwee	Jack	Denby	Mr
Conway	Patrick	Stephen	Mr		McElwee	Doris		Mrs
Davidson	Peter	Richard	Mr		McElwee	John	Denby	Mr
Davidson	Peter		Mr		McElwee	Joe		Mr
Greenwell DL CBE	Jeffrey	Arthur	Mr		Metcalf	Alan		Mr
Heron	Mark	Annesley	Mr		Minto	Peter		Dr
Heron	David		Rev		Ribchester	Robert	William	Mr
Heron	Peter		Mr		Ribchester MBE	Alan		Mr
Joicey	Barry		Mr		Shotton	Barry		Mr
Lumley	David	Martin	Mr		Wright	Rebecca	Hanah	Miss
McElwee	Davey	John	Mr		Wright	Stuart		Mr

Curriers' Company

Charney	Barbara		Ms		Jones	Derek	Newton	Mr
Charney	John		Mr		Kitson	Leighton		Mr
Clark	William	Henry	Mr		Luther	Kate		Ms
Clark	William	Abie	Mr		Luther	Richard		Mr
Crawford	Karen		Mrs		Marsden	James	Robert	Mr
Crawford	Ron		Mr		Marsden	Nicola	Hazel	Miss
Graham	Neil	William	Mr		McDonough	Adam		Mr
Hall	Adrian	Matthew Edward	Mr		McMinn	Michael		Mr
Hall	Charles	Jonathon Peter	Mr		Ridley	Stuart	George	Mr
Hall	Oliver	Timothy Luke	Mr		Wilmshurst	Iain	Stuart	Mr
Heslop	Kris		Mr		Wilmshurst	Fionna	Louise	Miss
Heslop	Sandra		Ms		Wilmshurst	Holly	Alison Olivia	Miss
Howarth	Michael	David	Mr		Wilmshurst	Rebekah	Anne	Miss
					Wilson	Michael	Colin	Mr

Joiners' Company

Bennett	Peter	Neil	Mr		Ford	Alan	Edward	Mr
Brown	Rita		Mrs		Ford	Regan	James	Mr
Brown	Dean	Ridley	Mr		Ford	Stuart	William	Mr
Brown	Adam	Ridley	Mr		Ford	Theresa	Anne	Mrs
Brown	Mark	Andrew Charles	Mr		Ford	William	Edward	Mr
Brown	Tony	Michael	Mr		Gilroy	Peter	Andrew	Mr
Brown	Darren	Ridley	Mr		Hesp	Eric		Mr
Bryden	Irene	May	Mrs		Jopling	Trevor		Mr
Bryden	Robert	Arthur	Mr		Middleton	Charlotte	Victoria	Mrs
Caulkin	Robert	Harold James	Mr		Morris	Edward	James Bowring	Mr
Clarkson	Andrew	Robert	Mr		Morris OBE	Roger	John Bowring	Dr
Clarkson	Nigel	David	Mr		Neale	Michael	Paul	Mr
Clarkson	Robert	Wiliam	Mr		Neale	David	Charles	Mr
Clarkson	Christopher	Paul	Mr		Neale	Steven	Thomas Edwin	Mr
Clarkson	Steven		Mr		Peverall	Iain		Mr
Clarkson	Ronald		Mr		Pritchard	Anthony		Mr
Cleckner	Leslie	Kenneth	Mr		Squires	Eric	Charles Arthur	Mr
Dawson	Peter	Robert	Mr		Swallow	Anthony		Mr
Donkin	Joan	Elizabeth	Rev		Taylor	Llynne		Mrs
Fenwick	Alexander	Luke	Mr		ThurLOW	Ann		Mrs
Fenwick	Amalia	Jane	Ms		Trow	Stuart		Mr
Fenwick	Christopher		Mr		Wigham	Claire		Miss

Drapers' Company

Adamson	David	Ivor	Mr		Mullaney	Kimberley		Mrs
Allison	Peter	David	Mr		Natrass	Sarah	Elizabeth	Mrs
Allison	Malcolm	Nigel	Mr		Samuel	Barbara	Anne	Ms
Allison	Roger	Lewis	Mr		Samuel	Tom		Mr
Allison (Reid)	Sandra	Anne	Mrs		Scott	Barbara	Jean	Ms
Arkley	Gillian	Roberta	Mrs		Scott	Charlotte	Anne	Miss
Brookes	Gillian		Ms		Scott	Vanessa	Laura	Miss
Brookes	Matthew		Mr		Smith	Jasper	Niccolo Lupo	Mr
Carter	Trevor	Richard Earl	Mr		Smith	Jervis Clive	Calvert	Mr
Charlton	Sybil	Jean	Mrs		Smith	Adele		Ms
Crofton	Ted		Rev		Snowball	Dorothy	Margaret	Rev
Davidson	Vera		Mrs		Vasey	David		Mr
Freelend	Leah	Felicity	Mrs		Vasey	Kathleen		Ms
Hayes	Mary		Mrs		Vasey	Andrew	David	Mr
Healy	Victoria		Mrs		Vasey	John	Frederick	Mr
Hepburn	Alan		Mr		Vest	Gavin		Mr
Heslop	Victoria	Jane	Mrs		Vest	Arthur		Mr
Holden	Anna	Claire	Mrs		Vest	Mark		Mr
Jackson	Catriona	Margery	Mrs		Vest	Rachel		Miss
Jackson	Richard		Mr		Vest	Alan	Cruddass	Mr
Kothari	Ingrid	Allison	Mrs		Vest	Joanne		Miss
Lee	Jonathan	Mark	Mr		Vest	Paul	Robert	Mr
Lyle	Susan		Ms		Vest	Richard		Mr
Mackay	June		Ms		Vest	Steven		Mr
Magee	Andrew	Fawcett	Mr		Vest	Derek		Mr
Magee	Judith		Ms		Vest	David	Charles	Mr
Magee	Stuart	John	Mr		Vest	Roland		Mr
Middleton	Alan		Mr		Watson	Judith	Gwen	Mrs
Milbourne	Alexander	J	Mr		Watson-Lee	Alexander	W	Mr
Milbourne	Andrew	John	Mr		Watson-Lee	Mark	Alexander Strachan	Mr
Milbourne	David	Michael	Mr		Watson-Lee	Peter	James	Mr
Milbourne	Michael	Stewart	Mr		Watson-Lee	James	K	Mr
Milbourne	Rodney	James	Mr		Wilson	Thomas	Dobson	Mr
Milbourne	Stephanie	Helen	Ms					

Masons' Company

Browell	Duncan	James	Mr		Haunch	Nicola	Louise	Mrs
Browell	Martin	Elliott	Mr		Hotchkiss	Connie		Mrs
Clark	James		Mr		Johnston	Norman	Cyril	Mr
Clark	Peter		Mr		Mallen	Ann		Mrs
Cooper	George	Richard	Mr		Mann	Steven		Mr
Dent	Royston	Norman	Mr		Mawson	Nigel		Mr
Dent	Norman	R	Mr		Newton	Geoffrey	Keith	Mr
Elliott	Jack	Andrew	Mr		Nicholson	Paul	Douglas	Sir
Elliott	Matthew	James	Mr		Richardson	Alan	Elliott	Dr
Elliott	Elizabeth	Grace	Dr		Tindale	Peter	John Henry	Mr
Elliott	John		Mr		Tindale	Peter		Mr
Elliott	Robert	Lennox	Mr		Wesencraft	Amy		Ms
Elliott	Michael	Frederick	Mr		Wesencraft	John		Mr
Granlund	Peter	Christopher	Mr		Young	Gordon	Frank	Mr
Granlund	Alan	Campbell	Mr					

Plumbers' Company

Abson	Philip		Mr		Heron	Clive	Emmerson	Mr
Arckless	Ivan	Barrie	Mr		Heron	Leslie		Mr
Billsborrow	Patricia		Rev		Inglis	Sydney		Mr
Booth	Joanne	Marie	Miss		Johnson	Peter	Alan	Mr
Booth	John		Mr		Kitson	Sheila		Mrs
Brass	Andrew		Mr		Kitson	Stephen		Mr
Brown	Alison	Jane	Mrs		Kitson	Geoffrey		Mr
Bulmer	Michael		Mr		Latue	John	J	Mr
Bulmer	Jane		Ms		Lockyear MBE	Arthur	Clifford	Mr
Bulmer	Sean		Mr		McDonough	Alison		Mrs
Bulmer	Eric		Mr		Oliver	Alan		Mr
Cain	Elizabeth	Ann	Mrs		Pearson	Malcolm	Neil	Mr
Cunliffe	Lisa		Mrs		Pearson	Anne		Mrs
Davis	Margaret	Ruth	Mrs		Robinson	Deborah	Veronica	Rev'd
Dunnill	Keith		Mr		Robinson	Charles	Reading	Mr
Dunnill	Garry		Mr		Russell	Brian		Mr
Ferguson	John	Henry	Mr		Walker	John		Mr
Gent	Helen	Patricia	Mrs		Wiley	Brian	Fawcett	Mr
Head	David	Colin	Mr		Wortley	Katherine		Ms
Heron	Adam	Mark	Mr		Wortley	Melvin		Mr

Membership Summary

Company	Men	Women	In-District	Ex-District	Total
Barbers	20	7	5	22	27
Butchers	22	2	14	10	24
Cordwainers	20	2	11	11	22
Curriers	19	8	10	17	27
Drapers	39	28	18	48	67*
Joiners	35	9	25	19	44
Masons	24	5	17	12	29
Plumbers	27	13	21	19	40
Totals	206	74	121	158	280

* 1 person's location unknown

Sadly, this year saw the passing of a number of Freemen

Alan Dufton - Barbers Company
 Barbara Hilda Kingston – Drapers Company
 Clifford Richard Gilroy – Joiners Company

Our thoughts and prayers go to their families, friends and loved ones.

We have lost contact with several Freemen. If anyone can help us trace these Freemen, we would be grateful. Please contact the Secretary.

Mark Andrew Charles Brown - Unknown
 Tony Michael Brown - Stockton on Tees
 Lisa Cunliffe - Durham
 Peter Richard Davidson - Carrville
 Peter Davidson - Ushaw Moor
 Dennis Dunn - Burnhope
 Mark Annesley Heron - Ross on Wye
 David Martin Lumley - Langley Moor
 Nigel Mawson - Esh Winning
 Joanne Vest - Framwellgate Moor
 Judith Gwen Watson - Newcastle upon Tyne

Joiners 07/11/2005
 Joiners 05/08/2002
 Plumbers 03/11/2014
 Cordwainers 05/11/2007
 Cordwainers 08/02/1993
 Barbers 08/01/2004
 Cordwainers 08/11/2004
 Cordwainers 13/05/1996
 Masons 12/11/2018
 Drapers 12/08/2013
 Drapers 12/08/2013

Chair of Trustees

Alice Ambrose Thubron



It is with pleasure that I write a few words to you all about the year just past and the year ahead. The last 12 months have seen several changes within the Trustees. We all greatly mourned the death of Stewart Atkin, our dedicated and long-standing Treasurer. We also said fond farewells to Patrick Conway and Malcolm Proud after many faithful years of service to the trustee board. I know we are all immensely grateful for their contributions. We have welcomed Scott Cooper and Catrin Morgan as new trustees.

As I have settled into my new role as Chair of Trustees, I have been particularly grateful for the wise advice of our clerk and receiver, Philip Wills, who carries a vast amount of institutional memory. He has been of invaluable support.

The trustees have turned their attention to matters of governance arrangements and risk management. Over the next year we hope to enhance our governance by the adoption of a formal risk register. We are also focusing on the investment assets which we look after on behalf of the Guilds, making sure they are invested wisely so that we see capital growth which outpaces inflation. Our aim is to ensure that in the coming years, decades and even centuries the real value of the investments is at least maintained and hopefully enhanced. In simple terms, think about what £100 would have bought you in 1970 and think about what that would buy you today. It's a lot less due to inflation. We are thinking carefully about how the assets are invested in the stock market so that the freemen of tomorrow are at least as well off as the freemen of today.

Another area of specific focus for the coming months is safeguarding our precious heritage assets such as the silver in the Guild Hall and the framed crests for each of the guilds which hang on the wall. We are working with the Council's curators to discuss how to preserve these irreplaceable treasures which represent our history. Luckily, they have lots of experience and are very keen to work with us and assist us.

It has been a pleasure to hear regular updates about the number of new Freemen joining the Guilds over the last year. The Charitable Trust have also been very busy supporting a number of local worthy causes. I know that the Chairs of the Wardens and the Charitable Trust will write about these subjects so I will not attempt to replicate their words, suffice to say it is excellent that things have been so busy.

With good wishes for another busy and successful year for Durham City Freemen.

Treasurer's Report



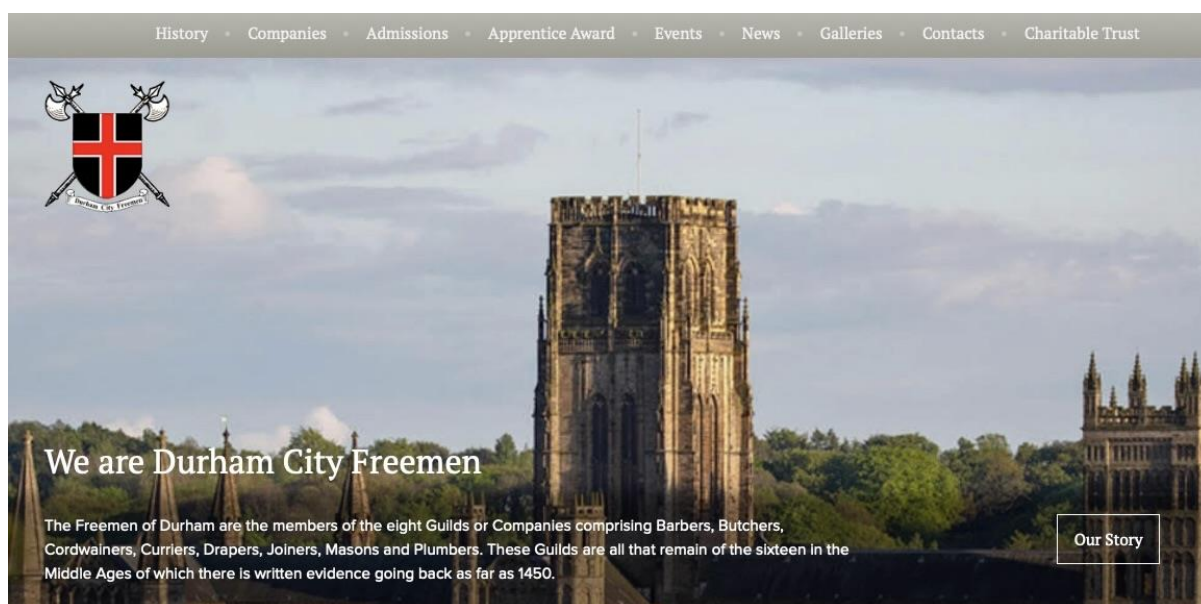
2023-2024 saw me take over from the late Stewart Atkin who was the Freeman Treasurer for many years. I am very grateful for his time & support in our handover during a challenging few months for both him and his family.

During 2023-2024 we saw a return on investment of £7.8k through Brewin Dolphin. This is a relatively small return and highlights the need to pay closer attention to the stewardship of our assets. We are thinking about whether our risk appetite remains appropriate giving we are investing for the long term.

We continue to take a frugal approach to our spending so we can develop a healthy cash reserve, which we need to protect the finances for the future freemen.

Scott Cooper
Treasurer

Informing our members



The Freemen's website www.durhamcityfreemen.org is at the centre of the distribution of information to the members. It is continuously being improved to clarify the information and getting it into an order where information is easily obtained. The website contains all contact details that anyone needs and includes photographs of the Wardens and Deputies so that they can be recognised when attending Freemen events.

It has information regarding our history, the details of the 8 companies; the Admission criteria and who to contact: the Apprentice Awards and Warden's meeting dates. The News section is continuously updated with records of what is happening within the Freemen and Charitable Trust activities. The galleries show all the photographs taken by Geoff Kitson at our events. Should you wish to contact your warden their contact details are there.

All the articles are produced by George Oliver our Press officer and Geoff Kitson our Photographer.

Copies of all the Yearbooks produced are also on the website for anyone to download. This is especially so for those members who live overseas.

Newly introduced this last year is a quarterly newsletter informing members of what has been happening on the Guild Days and giving, at times, the interesting stories of the newly admitted Freemen. These are now included on the website for those members who have not supplied the secretary with their email address.

Coming in the next year will be direct connections to Social Media.

Chairman of Durham City Freeman Charitable trust



The Charitable Trust has been extremely active during 2024 and awarded over 17 donations, totalling almost £20,000, supporting charities, worthy causes and training/education initiatives.

The high-level of activity coincides with the extremely difficult financial climate over the period that has severely impacted the work of charitable organisations.

The Charitable Trust has developed, a model of operation that brings it much closer to those charitable organisations working within our community by:

- Visiting organisations to understand more fully, the nature and objectives of their work.
- Acknowledging the valuable work that they undertake, particularly by those that are volunteering.
- Meeting with individuals and groups who are benefiting from donations and recognising the importance that the awards make to their day-to-day lives.
- Recognising the many and varied organisations that support the community within the boundaries of Durham City.
- Raising their profiles to a wider population, by creating informative and interesting press-releases with accompanying photographs.
- Maintaining contact with the recipients of donations to see at first- hand the difference each donation has made and to be aware of any planned future projects, where we may be able to assist.

Trustees

The Charitable Trust saw a number of changes to the group during 2024.

Alan Metcalf resigned in April. I thank Alan for his commitment and contribution during his time as a trustee.

Canon Michael Everitt was appointed by the Charitable Trust in September. Michael who is currently Canon Pastor at Durham Cathedral, is also a Freeman Trustee and a member of the Wardens and Trustees Group, that manage the affairs of the Freeman.

Geoff Kitson was appointed in November. Geoff, who is the Freeman's official photographer, has been a Freeman for many years. He served his time as a plumber with Frederick Dennison in the 1960s, where he gained the reputation as an outstanding lead worker, with much of his decorative lead work still to be seen at Durham Cathedral.

I am delighted to have Michael and Geoff joining the 'Trust' and I am sure they will bring with them, a wealth of experience for the benefit of the community of Durham.

Trustees

Eric Bulmer - Freeman (Chairman). Tel (07894) 064057, Email eckabulmer@btinternet.com

John Booth – Freeman. (Secretary). Email. boothjohn@gmail.com

Theresa Anne Ford - Freeman (Treasurer).

Alan Ribchester – Gentlemen Freeman.

Kenneth Edward Coatsworth Howe – Trustee of the Durham City Freeman.

Canon Michael Everitt - Trustee of the Durham City Freeman.

Geoff Kitson – Freeman and official photographer.

Recipients of Charitable Trust Donations 2024

- St Cuthbert's Churchyard Project.
- Down's Syndrome North-East.
- Go The Distance (GTD).
- Connor Solan Fawcett Cancer Charity.
- Durham Fringe.
- LionMouth Project.
- Coxhoe Community Centre.
- Amber Bee Mindfulness Project.
- Durham Quilters.
- Brandon Boxing Club.
- Durham County Stroke Club.
- Festival of Remembrance.
- Waddington Street Centre.
- Durham Food Bank (David Russell Trust)
- Apprentice Award Event.
- Remembrance Parade.
- Mayor's Charity Appeal.

Engaging with the Membership.

The Charitable Trust, although an autonomous body, exists informally as the charitable giving arm of the Freeman and as such would benefit from a closer relationship with its membership. To achieve this aim, the Trust is reaching out to Freeman asking them to contact the Chairman or Secretary, if they are aware of an organisation that they feel would benefit from a donation.

We would also hope that those individual Freeman would be able to attend a cheque presentation event of any successful application and gain a greater understanding of the work of the charity and the community it supports.

Eric Bulmer (Chairman of the Charitable Trust)

Apprentice of the Year Awards 2024

APPRENTICESHIP AWARD WINNERS ARE “TORCHBEARERS” TO THE FUTURE



Young house-building carpenter **Liam Thynne**, singled out for his “exceptional skills,” has been declared overall winner of a pioneering annual awards scheme showcasing the achievements of modern-day craft apprentices.

The project, launched in 2023 by Durham City’s Freeman, and supported by New College, Durham, considered 25 new hopefuls this year in eight trade categories, all supported by employers across the county.

From a short list of nine category winners the judging panel voted Liam the “Overall Apprentice of the Year.” Each winner received a certificate, an engraved crystal trophy and a £50 Amazon voucher from Durham’s Vice Lord Lieutenant, Mr. Michael Poole, at an awards ceremony in Durham Town Hall on June 28.

Nineteen-year-old Liam, from Ryhope, studied at New College while working for Focus Joinery, based in Houghton-le-Spring. His ability, innovative thinking and positive impact have, according to Neil Graham, deputy chairman of the Freeman and Warden of the Mason’s Company, made him an outstanding candidate.

“The Freeman and the eight surviving craft companies they represent, have long had a vested interest in apprenticeship training, believed to stretch back to the early 14th century and possibly beyond. Liam embodies the qualities employers have always sought, and which

continue to be reinforced by this new scheme,” said Neil. David Sayers, company director at Focus Joinery said Liam was nominated not only for his exceptional carpentry skills but his innovative approach to problem solving. “His strategic thinking provided effective solutions which contributed to the success of the projects on which he was working,” he said.

New College’s Director of Apprenticeships, Natasha Francis, said they were privileged to be part of the Durham Freeman’s Awards which recognized both apprentices and employers. As a leading Further and Higher education provider the college appreciated the vital role apprenticeships played in the region’s economy. “Our courses provide the training and work experience students need to progress their careers and offer employers a cost-effective way to plug the skills gap and upskill their workforce. Their achievements are testament to the enduring legacy of the excellence and craftsmanship which the Freeman uphold. We have been incredibly impressed by the passion and dedication the Freeman have shown in organizing the event. Congratulations are also due to the apprentices – you are the torchbearers whose success lights the way for the future,” said Natasha.



The eight other category winners, in alphabetical order, are –

Robin Erskine, aged 38, is married with a two-year-old daughter and from Chapel Green, Newcastle. As an apprentice joiner at Durham Cathedral, he has impressed supervisors with “exceptional skills and high quality of work” coupled with excellent communication and teamwork.

Robin, grammar-school educated and from Northern Ireland, worked first as a primary school teacher and then a civil servant before attending woodworking night classes in his journey to fulfil his life-long dream of becoming a joiner.

Romilly Green, from Consett and, at just 16, the youngest winner, has been attending New College since last September and works for AJ’s Cutting in her hometown. Her progress and skills as a hairdressing apprentice have been described as “amazing” and a “natural talent” by her tutors, who also point to her success in written exams. She is a popular member of the college cohort and labelled a “major asset” at the salon where she works.

Abi Howlett, 19 and from Chester-le-Street, has worked as an apprentice painter and decorator while studying at the college. Her development has proved a significant boost to Renew Professional Decorating Services based in the town and her preparedness to “go the extra mile” for the company’s clients has provided the basis for her employer to successfully expand his business.

Lewis Minto, a 24-year-old from Witton Gilbert, was the first student in his class to complete his plumbing and gas NVQ, serving as an inspiration to his peers. Labelled a “standout student” by staff he was able to help and support the progress of his classmates. Lewis started

his college plumbing course as a full-time student in 2017 but faced with a shortage of job opportunities in the trade, opted for a change of career as an assistant store manager. But his ambition to be a plumber never deserted him and he returned to his studies after being offered a job as an apprentice with Bernicia, a housing company which manages 14,000 properties across the region. He is currently based at the company's Pity Me offices on the outskirts of Durham.

Joseph Moore, aged 19, from Ushaw Moor, takes a "huge amount" of pride in his bricklaying work and is doubly valued not only by the team he is assigned to but also by management at Alderson Building Services, his employers. Clients too are positive about the high standard of his craftsmanship. "We certainly feel we have discovered a diamond in the rough," said the company's contracts manager, Ian Dunn.

Harvey Nichol, aged 19, is an electrical apprentice from Peterlee who attended East Durham College. He has been working for two years for the Mears Group which is responsible for managing 17,000 homes for central and local government and for the upkeep of 750,000 social housing properties across the country. He is part of a 350- strong workforce based in County Durham. Harvey's employers are convinced he will become "a great asset to the company."

Graham Penfold, a 49-year-old father-of-two from Esh Winning has worked in building and construction for more than 20 years until he injured his knee. He switched to a job as a general operative at Durham Cathedral in 2019 and impressed staff with his "meticulous approach to work and attention to detail." As a result of his "commendable eagerness to learn" Graham was encouraged to apply for a stonemason's apprenticeship. Since he began his studies at York College he has gone from strength to strength and is now within weeks of completing his training.

Neil Willis, aged 23, a computer networking engineer, who lives near Stanley, earned nothing but the highest praise from lecturers at New College. The standard of his early college and practical work singled him out for a "well deserved distinction" and he was offered a permanent job with the college's Academy Trust after completing his studies. He extended his studies to embrace cyber security in 2021 and his continued determination took him onwards and upwards to a Bachelor's Degree with Honours, labelled by staff as an "outstanding achievement." His continued dedication and loyalty has since earned him promotion.

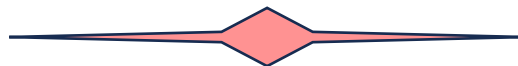
New College offers a wide range of apprenticeships covering over 70 different career pathways and an equivalent number of apprenticeship training programmes to 1,300 students. It also has an established contacts' network embracing 350 north east employers, ranging from Durham Cathedral to Nissan.

In addition to the apprenticeship awards the Freeman also donated money to charities supported by leading guests attending the Town Hall presentation. The Vice Lord Lieutenant's gift goes to the Teesside Family Foundation, the Mayor of Durham to Stray Aid and Feeding Families, the Chair of Durham County Council to Tiny Lives and Friends Together and Durham Cathedral's to the Peru Mission.



Special thanks to the Apprentice Working Group led by Neil Graham, and to New College Durham, Durham Cathedral and Durham University for their support and help.

Another special thanks to our Press Officer George Oliver and to our Photographer Geoff Kitson for the story and pictures.



Chair's Address

Moving Forward



I became a Freeman on the 3rd February 1997 and as with many new members work commitments prevented me from becoming too involved and in those days we did not have deputy wardens.

I started attending meetings and Guild Days when I retired and in February 2021 put myself forward for the position of Warden for the Plumbers Guild taking over from Eric Bulmer.

In May 2024 Alan Metcalf resigned from the post of Chairman of the Wardens and I was elected to take over as the new role.

This was a huge honour to become Chairman, and I am very lucky to have the help Alan has provided along with Neil Graham as Deputy Chair and Bryan Proud as Secretary, this is definitely not a one, person role.

It appears to have been a struggle for many years to get members to attend Guild Days, the annual dinner and other meetings. We are looking for ideas on how we can make any of the above more appealing to members, perhaps a different type of function, which may attract greater interest, we would be grateful for any new ideas. Please contact me or one of the wardens.

This year we had to cancel the annual dinner as we had a poor response and therefore, we have set up a sub-committee to look at taking this forward and making it more appealing.

Charters

The ancient charters on the walls of the Guild Hall are beginning to look a bit delicate and one has been damaged by the ingress of water into the building. We are looking at ways of preserving these artifacts in the hope that they will remain fresh for another 100 years.

Silver

The closure of the Guild Hall has made us look at the Freeman's silver in detail and to have the valuation of it updated as is common practice. The thought has struck the team of Wardens that many of our Freeman have not seen the silver as it is usually locked away in a vault in the Guild Hall. It may be possible for this silver to be placed on display somewhere in Durham for everyone to view it. Perhaps this could be part of our publicity to explain to the public what we are about.

With the Trustees, we are looking at the future finances of the Freeman to ensure they will continue for generations.

Earlier this year we started producing a newsletter and it has been well received by members who now feel they are being kept up to date with the work of the Freeman.

We must endeavour to try and get a better spread of ages to attend the meetings and participate in the further development of the Freeman and allow us to move forward with a better spread of ideas.

