



# Durham City Freemen



*Yearbook 2026*

*Front cover image is a view of the Guild Hall for Remembrance Sunday*

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## **Contents**

Chair's Report .....	Page 1
Secretary's Report .....	Page 3
The Right Worshipful Mayor of Durham .....	Page 5
Wardens and Trustees .....	Page 6
Durham City Freeman Calendar Dates 2026 .....	Page 7
New Appointments .....	Page 8
New Members Admitted in 2025 .....	Page 9
Membership Criteria .....	Page 10
Tenure of Appointments: Wardens .....	Page 11
Tenure of Appointments: Deputy Wardens .....	Page 12
Current Membership at December 2025 .....	Page 13
Chair of Trustees Report .....	Page 19
Treasurers Report .....	Page 20
Apprentice Awards .....	Page 21
Informing our Members .....	Page 22
Charitable Trust and the Future .....	Page 23
Vision for the Future .....	Page 24

## Chair's Report



I hope you all had a great Christmas and are having a good New Year.

The role of Chair never fails to throw up many challenges and 2025 has been no different. I must thank Bryan Proud (Secretary) and Neil Graham (Deputy Chair) for all their help along with all the Wardens and Deputies as it is definitely not a job that can be carried out alone.

Hopefully we can come up with ideas that may attract a younger group of members to participate in the workings of the Freemen with new ideas and to push through to become Deputies and Wardens to maintain the Durham City Freemen for years to come.

We tried and failed with the Annual Dinner again this year for whatever reason we were unable to attract sufficient interest. From talking with other organisations, we appear to be not alone with this and again it is maybe a way that younger members could come up with suggestions that would attract a cross section of ages.

On a brighter note, we tried a BBQ at Durham Rugby Club and this was well received, next year we hope to add some form of entertainment and music. Thanks to Vincent Dave and Neil for organising this.

Due to the closure of the Town Hall for refurbishment works we had the Martinmas Guild Day on the 3rd February 2025 in the County Hall, strange not to be in the Town Hall with photos on the steps.

Due to the works in the Town Hall, we cancelled the Apprentice awards as we did not feel it was right to have this in any other surroundings than the Town Hall, we are underway with the awards for 2026 (Thanks Neil Graham) and notice for this will be on our new Web Site.

The May Day Guild Day 14th April 2025 was held at The Story, Mount Oswald and due to a problem we had with the catering at County Hall in February, we had with the coffee a slice of Victoria Sponge cake that was very nice (Thank you Rob) If you have never been to The Story it is well worth a visit for a look around and a coffee. This was Mayor Liz Brown's final Guild Day. Vincent Syson, Warden for the Butchers gave an excellent talk and demonstration of the Northumbrian Pipes.

Lamas Guild Day on 4th August saw us back in the Guild Hall. It was good to be back home. At this meeting I had to report that the Charitable Trust had made a decision to shut down after 10 years of good work. I feel I should point out at this stage that the Charitable Trust was a standalone company and the decision to close was made without any consultation with the Freeman. This was the first Guild

Day for the new Mayor Mr Gary Hutchinson, I had been invited to Gary's Mayor making Ceremony on the 11th June and what a privilege to witness this.

Martinmas Guild Day was held on the 3rd November 2025 in the Guild Hall, and we saw for the first time the replacement Charters on the wall, the enhanced colours, I believe, make them look better than the originals. The originals are being kept in The Story in a conditioned environment for safe keeping. Rob King gave us an excellent presentation on the works that had been carried out in the Town Hall and I believe we all came away with a lot of additional knowledge. Rob also reminded us of the Town Hall tours and I suggest all interested to learn a bit more about our Town Hall should take these up.

Geoff Kitson, our official Photographer, has decided to resign from the position and I would like to thank Geoff for all of his work over the years. We have been looking for someone to help with the media work and can confirm that Daryl Metcalf has volunteered to take up the role of Media Officer.

We have now completed the remaining Guild booklets for the Masons and Cordwainers Guilds thanks to Deputy Warden Alan Richardson. Alan has spent a lot of time doing research and formatting the booklets and I would like to thank Alan.

Most of our booklets and publicity leaflets need to be updated and brought into line with recent operational changes of the Durham City Freemen, the first being the Brief History of Durham City Freemen, Alan has again put his head above the parapet and is working on this, thanks Alan.

As one door closes with the Charitable Trust another opens. The Wardens and Deputies are working on a new model to continue with community giving albeit at a reduced level of funding that we can afford for now and controlled totally by the Wardens and Deputies. This will be covered on a later newsletter and on the website.

By now we should have our new Web Site up and running in its new format, I hope it is easier to navigate and it should have a better look on the mobile phones, thanks John Paul Proud for all your work on this.

## Secretary's Report



### Numbers of Freeman

At the time of writing the total number of Freeman stands at 278. Over the year four new Freeman were sworn in, with a further three who have been deferred to a later date to suit the applicants. We are a global community and have Freeman in Australia, Qatar, Spain and Canada.

Out of the total we have 120 (43%) living within the district and 157 are living out of the district. A total of 73 female (26%) and 205 men (74%).

### Deaths

It is sad to report that over the year we have lost eight Freeman from our ranks. They are;

Sir Paul Douglas Nicholson who was from the Mason's Company.  
Alan Ribchester MBE who was from the Cordwainer's Company.  
Anne Pearson who was from the Plumber's Company.  
Norman Cyril Johnston who was from the Mason's Company.  
Connie Hotchkiss who was from the Mason's Company.  
Alan Heburn who was from the Draper's Company.  
Geoff Newton who was from the Mason's Company.  
John Walker who was from the Plumber's Company.

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

### Website

The current website is being given a facelift to bring it up to modern day standards. This has always been a source of information on the activities of the Freeman both past and present. The plan is to make it more user friendly especially for those who use their mobiles to see what's on the website.

### New Appointments

There have been changes to the management structure over the year. Bob Elliott was elected to be Deputy Warden of the Barber, Dave Howard was elected as Membership Secretary, Alan Metcalf changed his title to become Assistant Secretary and Vincent Syson was elected as Warden of the Butchers.

### Lost Members

Over the years, Freeman move around but sometimes they forget to tell us where they have moved to. We now have 10 Freeman who we have lost contact with, they are:

Mark Andrew Charles Brown (Unknown) . . . . . Joiners - 07/11/2005  
Tony Michael Brown (Stockton on Tees) . . . . . Joiners - 05/08/2002  
Lisa Cunliffe (Durham) . . . . . Plumbers - 03/11/2014  
Peter Richard Davidson (Carrville) . . . . . Cordwainers - 05/11/2007  
Peter Davidson (Ushaw Moor) . . . . . Cordwainers - 08/02/1993  
Dennis Dunn (Burnhope) . . . . . Barbers - 08/01/2004  
Annesley Heron Mark (Ross on Wye) . . . . . Cordwainers - 08/11/2004  
Martin Lumley David (Langley Moor) . . . . . Cordwainers - 13/05/1996  
Nigel Mawson (Esh Winning) . . . . . Masons - 12/11/2018  
Judith Gwen Watson (Newcastle upon Tyne) . . . . . Drapers - 12/08/2013

If anyone has any information as to the whereabouts of anyone of the list, can they get in touch with the Secretary.

### Closure of the Town Hall

As was reported in the 2025 edition, the closure of the Town Hall had caused us a few problems with finding alternative venues for our meetings. The Candlemas Guild Day was held in Durham County Hall and the May Day Guild was held in The Story building at Mount Oswald. The meetings of the Wardens, Wardens and Deputies and Wardens and Trustees were held at The Story. We are thankful to the staff of The Story for helping us to continue our work. The Town Hall was opened in time for us to hold our Lammass Guild Day there in August.

### Members Meetings

Due to lack of interest our members meetings have been postponed for a year and we are trying a new system where members can ask a Warden or Deputy any questions at the end of the normal Guild Days. If a member cannot attend a Guild Day, then queries can be sent to the Secretary who will ensure an answer is given.

### Moving of May Day Guild Day

The May Day Guild should happen on the first Monday in May, however this will always fall on a bank holiday. The Wardens have agreed that the Guild Day will in future be the second Monday in May.

### Newsletter

Our Newsletters are produced after every Guild Day to keep members up to date with what is happening with the Freeman. They have been well received but are only available to those Freeman who have supplied their email address. A copy of the newsletter is also available on the website.

### Keep Us Up to Date

As has been mentioned above we would be very grateful if you could keep us up to date if you change your address. Please check the letter you received with this Yearbook and see if we have your contact details correct. It helps us to keep you informed.

## The Right Worshipful Mayor of Durham



As the 422nd Mayor of Durham, it has been a great honour and privilege to chair the quarterly Guild meetings for the Durham City Freeman and to take part in welcoming new Freeman.

The Freeman were members of the historic Trade Guilds that held power and influence for more than 300 years and played a significant role in shaping the City of Durham and its rich heritage.

They remain central to Durham's history and traditions, offering both financial and practical support to local organisations. Over the past ten years the Durham City Freeman have generously donated over £200,000 to deserving community causes, including my own chosen charity St Cuthbert's Hospice.

The Durham City Freeman also have a long and proud tradition of representing craftsmen, artisans and businesses of our City.

I wish the Freeman and their families every happiness and continued success for 2026.

Councillor Gary Hutchinson  
The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Durham

## 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

Vincent Syson  
Butchers Company  
Tel: 07974 058603

Alan Metcalf  
Cordwainers Company  
Tel: 07401 443210

Iain Wilmshurst  
Curriers Company  
Tel: 07713 428441

Dave Howard  
Drapers Company  
Tel: 07871 041761

Ann Thurlow  
Joiners Company  
Tel: 07752 318953

### Deputy Wardens

Robert Elliott  
Barbers Company

Vacant  
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 Thurman

Treasurer  
Scott Cooper

Kenneth Howe

Helen McMillan

Catrin Morgan

Richard Scothan

Clerk and Recorder  
Philip Wills

## Durham City Freeman Calendar Dates 2026

### Guild Days (11:00am – 12:30pm)

Candlemas	Monday 2nd February 2026	Guild Hall
May Day	Monday 11th May 2026	Guild Hall
Lammas	Monday 3rd August 2026	Guild Hall
Martinmas	Monday 2nd November 2026	Guild Hall

### Warden's Meetings (6:00pm – 7:15pm)

Thursday	22nd January 2026	Guild Hall
Thursday	23rd April 2026	Guild Hall
Thursday	24th September 2026	Guild Hall

### Warden's and Deputy Warden's Meetings (6:00pm – 7:15pm)

Thursday	5th March 2026	Guild Hall
Thursday	2nd July 2026	Guild Hall
Thursday	29th October 2026	Guild Hall
Thursday	3rd December 2026	Guild Hall

### Warden's and Trustee's Meetings (2:00pm – 4:30pm)

Friday	23rd January 2026	Guild Hall
Friday	24th April 2026	Guild Hall
Friday	25th September 2026	Guild Hall
Friday	4th December 2026	Guild Hall

### Apprentice Awards Ceremony

Friday	5th June 2026	Town Hall
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## New Appointments

### Re-elected Curriers Warden



**Iain Wilmshurst**  
**10th December 2025**

Iain joined the Freeman in 2004 and following the election of John Heslop to the post of Chair of the Freeman Iain took over the role of Warden of the Curriers Company. He has remained in this post for approximately 20 years.

### New Barbers Deputy



**Robert Elliot**  
**19th May 2025**

Robert served for a number of years as Masons' Warden and Membership Secretary when he collated the membership records and established the database and created the privacy policy.

### New Membership Secretary



**David Howard**  
**28th June 2025**

Dave was admitted to the Freeman in November 2003, and shortly afterwards was asked to take up the position of Grassman. He then became a Deputy Warden of the Butchers Company and then a Warden of the Drapers Company.

### New Butchers Warden



**Vincent Syson**  
**19th December 2025**

My interest in the management side of Durham City Freeman came not long after being sworn in at the Lammas Guild Day in 2023. It was always my intention to give my time and energy (where possible) to the organisation and I hope this was evident in my role as Deputy Warden of the Butchers Guild.

## New Members Admitted in 2025



### May Day Guild Day 2025

Thomas Kitson  
(Curriers Company)  
Admitted via Patrimony.



### Lammas Guild Day 2025

Daryl Metcalf  
(Cordwainers Company)  
Admitted via Patrimony.



### Martinmas Guild Day 2025

Gary Wilkinson  
(Joiners Company)  
Admitted via Servitude.



### Martinmas Guild Day 2025

Christopher Atkinson  
(Cordwainers Company)  
Admitted via Servitude.

## 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:

#### 1. 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.

#### 2. 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.

#### 3. Hereditary Freedom

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

#### 4. 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.**

## Tenure of Appointments: Wardens

Company	Date Elected	End of Term	New Elections
<b>Chair</b> Garry Dunnill (Plumbers)	13th May 2024	12th May 2027	April 2027
<b>Deputy Chair</b> Neil Graham (Currier)	6th February 2024	5th February 2027	January 2027
<b>Secretary</b> Bryan Proud (Butcher)	30th October 2023	29th October 2026	October 2026
<b>Barbers</b> Bryan Proud (Butcher)	21st October 2023	20th October 2026	September 2026
<b>Butchers</b> Vincent Owen Syson	19th December 2025	18th December 2028	November 2028
<b>Cordwainers</b> Alan Metcalf	25th October 2024	24th October 2027	September 2027
<b>Curriers</b> Iain Wilmshurst	10th December 2025	9th December 2028	November 2028
<b>Drapers</b> Dave Howard	8th January 2024	7th January 2027	December 2026
<b>Joiners</b> Ann Thurlow	1st May 2023	30th April 2026	April 2026
<b>Masons</b> Neil Graham (Currier)	19th December 2024	18th December 2027	November 2027
<b>Plumbers</b> Garry Dunnill	5th February 2024	4th February 2027	January 2027

## Tenure of Appointments: Deputy Wardens

Company	Date Elected	End of Term	New Elections
<b>Barbers</b> Robert Elliot (Mason)	19th May 2025	18th May 2028	April 2028
<b>Butchers</b> (Vacant)			
<b>Cordwainers</b> (Vacant)			
<b>Curriers</b> (Vacant)			
<b>Drapers</b> Trevor Carter	3rd March 2023	2nd March 2026	February 2026
<b>Joiners</b> David Charles Neale	24th November 2023	23rd November 2026	October 2026
<b>Masons</b> Alan Richardson	11th November 2024	10th November 2027	October 2027
<b>Plumbers</b> Arthur Lockyear	3rd March 2023	2nd March 2026	February 2026

## Other Posts Election Timetable

<b>Membership Secretary</b> Dave Howard	28th June 2025	27th June 2028	May 2028
<b>Assistant Secretary</b> Alan Metcalf	25th April 2025	24th April 2028	March 2028
<b>Photographer</b> Vacant		Open Ended	
<b>Press Officer</b> George Oliver		Open Ended	
<b>Grassman</b> Dave Howard		Open Ended	
<b>Website Manager</b> John Proud		Open Ended	
<b>Publicity Officer</b> Daryl Metcalf		Open Ended	



## Current Membership at December 2025

### Barbers Company

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

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

### Curriers Company

Charney	Barbara		Ms	Kitson	Thomas		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	Mr	McMinn	Michael		Mr
Hall	Charles	Jonathon	Mr	Ridley	Stuart	George	Mr
Hall	Oliver	Timothy	Mr	Wilmshurst	Iain	Stuart	Mr
Heslop	Kris		Mr	Wilmshurst	Fionna	Louise	Miss
Heslop	Sandra		Ms	Wilmshurst	Holly	Alison	Miss
Howarth	Michael	David	Mr	Wilmshurst	Rebekah	Anne	Miss
Jones	Derek	Newton	Mr	Wilson	Michael	Colin	Mr

### Joiners Company

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

### Drapers Company

Adamson	David	Ivor	Mr	Mullaney	Kimberley		Mrs
Allison	Peter	David	Mr	Natgrass	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	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	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	Granlund	Alan	Campbell	Mr
Browell	Martin	Elliott	Mr	Haunch	Nicola	Louise	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	Nicholson	Paul	Douglas	Sir
Elliott	Jack	Andrew	Mr	Richardson	Alan	Elliott	Dr
Elliott	Matthew	James	Mr	Tindale	Peter	John Henry	Mr
Elliott	Elizabeth	Grace	Dr	Tindale	Peter		Mr
Elliott	John		Mr	Wesencraft	Amy		Ms
Elliott	Robert	Lennox	Mr	Wesencraft	John		Mr
Granlund	Peter	Christopher	Mr	Young	Gordon	Frank	Mr

### Plumbers Company

Abson	Philip		Mr	Heron	Adam	Mark	Mr
Arckless	Ivan	Barrie	Mr	Heron	Clive	Emmerson	Mr
Billsborrow	Patricia		Rev	Heron	Leslie		Mr
Booth	Joanne	Marie	Miss	Inglis	Sydney		Mr
Booth	John		Mr	Johnson	Peter	Alan	Mr
Brass	Andrew		Mr	Kitson	Sheila		Mrs
Brown	Alison	Jane	Mrs	Kitson	Stephen		Mr
Bulmer	Michael		Mr	Kitson	Geoffrey		Mr
Bulmer	Jane		Ms	Latue	John	J	Mr
Bulmer	Sean		Mr	Lockyear	Arthur	Clifford	Mr
Bulmer	Eric		Mr	McDonough	Alison		Mrs
Cain	Elizabeth	Ann	Mrs	Oliver	Alan		Mr
Cunliffe	Lisa		Mrs	Pearson	Malcolm	Neil	Mr
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	Willey	Brian	Fawcett	Mr
Gent	Helen	Patricia	Mrs	Wortley	Katherine		Ms
Head	David	Colin	Mr	Wortley	Melvin		Mr

### Membership Summary

Company	Male	Female	In-District	Ex-District	Total
<b>Barbers</b>	21	7	5	23	28
<b>Butchers</b>	22	2	14	10	24
<b>Cordwainers</b>	20	3	11	12	23
<b>Curriers</b>	20	8	11	17	28
<b>Drapers</b>	38	28	18*	47*	66
<b>Joiners</b>	36	9	26	19	45
<b>Masons</b>	22	4	15	11	26
<b>Plumbers</b>	26	12	20	18	38
<b>TOTALS</b>	205	73	120*	157*	278

\* 1 person location unknown

### Freemen of England and Wales

We receive the Journal from the Freemen of England and Wales twice a year. If any one of our members wishes to receive a copy of the journal electronically, then please get in touch with the Secretary who will forward a copy on to you as and when we receive it.

## Chair of Trustees Report



It's been another fantastic year for Durham City Freeman. It has been really heartening to hear about the hard work of the Wardens and their deputies encouraging new Freeman to join and following the journeys of our apprentices.

We spent most of the last year holding our regular meetings at exile at the Story at Mount Oswald, just outside Durham because the Guildhall in the Market Place was undergoing crucial renovations. We were very grateful that they were able to host us. It was a joy to finally be able to return late in 2025 to the Guildhall when it reopened.

Over the last year while the Guildhall was being renovated, we took the opportunity to have preservation work carried out on our precious Charters so that they will be preserved for future generations to enjoy. We also had a professional review of our heritage silver carried out so that we could ensure it was appropriately insured.

It has been a very positive year for our finances also. We took the decision over a year ago that we needed to bolster our financial resources to ensure that we would be able to rely on our investments to provide an income stream to fund the activities of the guilds if our other income streams reduced or fell away.

High inflation in recent years had meant that the real terms value of our investment assets had started to erode. The trustees were keen to ensure that future generations of freeman would enjoy at least as much income in real terms when adjusted for inflation as the current generation. With this in mind, we switched the way we were investing our funds to a focus on capital growth for the longer term rather than short term revenue. Investment reports from our fund managers, Brewin Dolphin, show that this strategy is working well and we are starting to make up lost ground.

This change in strategy to building back up our investments has meant that there has been a short term reduction in the level of our charitable donations. During the year we were informed by the trustees of the Charitable Trust that they had decided to wind up the trust. A wide range of local good causes received support, including apprentices.

We are all grateful for the impact of the Charitable Trust over the years, and for the hard work of its trustees. Going forward the wardens and deputies of Durham City Freeman have expressed a desire to continue charitable giving, albeit on a more modest scale. This will be undertaken by donations directly from Durham City Freeman to local charities rather than via a separate charitable vehicle.

## Treasurers Report



During 2025 we saw an increase in our investment return, this shows that our strategy to make up for lost capital value is progressing as we hoped.

Our spending has been rationalised by the wardens and a good tight control of our spending. During the year we spent money on looking after our precious heritage assets, such as the charters and a valuation/inspection of our silver.

We will continue to build our investments so that we remain a sustainable organisation for future generations.

## Apprentice Awards



Throughout their history, Durham City Freemen have maintained strong connections with apprentices and the companies operating within the city. For many years, both the Wardens and the Freemen have sought to recognise and celebrate the excellence, achievements, and skills of local apprentices. In 2021, a small group of Freemen began exploring ways to establish an apprentice awards celebration to showcase the accomplishments of apprentices working, training, or living in Durham.

Thanks to the efforts of this group, along with the Wardens and Deputies, the first apprentice awards ceremony took place at the Town Hall on 27 March 2023, where thirteen apprentices were honoured with a prestigious engraved glass trophy, a signed certificate, and a £50 Amazon voucher, each presented by the Lord Lieutenant on behalf of the Freemen.

Following the 2024 awards, which saw nine winners selected from twenty-five nominations submitted by local businesses, New College Durham, Durham University, and Durham Cathedral, the Freemen were informed by the County Council that the Town Hall would be closed for extensive renovations, affecting plans for the 2025 apprentice awards. After careful consideration and discussion with the Wardens and Deputies, it was agreed that relocating the awards to an alternative venue would compromise the event's prestige and significance. Consequently, the decision was made to postpone the awards for a year, using this time to reflect on ways to expand and further enhance the programme for 2026.

Looking ahead, the Apprentice Awards celebration is hopeful of attracting an increased number of nominations from both the business and training sectors. There is also an ambition to introduce a new category recognising companies and organisations that have made outstanding contributions to supporting apprentices across the greater Durham City area.

The Freemen's hope is to continue building on the foundations of the awards, to consult with partners, review feedback from previous events, and explore new opportunities for collaboration and outreach. By embracing change and seeking input from apprentices, businesses, and educational institutions alike, the Freemen aim to ensure that future awards are even more inclusive and impactful.

Moving forward, it is hoped that the Freemen can refine the nomination and selection processes, broaden the range of recognised trades, and further celebrate the remarkable achievements of apprentices and the organisations supporting them, strengthening the legacy and relevance of the awards for years to come.

## Informing our Members



The Freemen's website [www.durhamcityfreemen.org](http://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 plus the Apprentice Awards and meeting dates. The News section is continuously updated with records of what is happening within the Freemen and charitable giving. The galleries show all the photographs of our events.

Should you wish to contact your Warden their contact details are on the site.

Copies of all the Yearbooks produced are also on the website for anyone to download. This is especially important 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.

The trade booklets are now available to download from the web site.

Coming in the next year will be direct connections to social media, via Facebook and Instagram.



## Charitable Trust and the Future

It is with regret that we have to announce that at a recent extraordinary meeting of the Durham City Freemen Charitable Trust, the following resolution was agreed unanimously by the Trustees to close the Charitable Trust.

### Resolution

Due to the mounting difficulties of retaining sustainability and maintaining the ethos of the Charitable Trust, it is proposed that the Durham City Freemen Charitable Trust be dissolved and that the assets of the Charity be distributed in accordance with clause 20 of the Declaration of Trust dated the 23rd of January 2015, made by Roger Charles Norris, Stewart Atkin, Alan Ribchester and John Heslop and that the Charity Commission for England and Wales be notified in accordance with the said Declaration of Trust.

Dated 22nd July 2025

The remaining funds held by the Charitable Trust have now been distributed.

However, the Wardens have agreed to continue the role of the community giving albeit in a different format and with a reduced financial contribution. Durham City Freemen have a long history of supporting worthy causes and charities within the locality and want to continue this into the future.

Garry Dunnill Chair of the Wardens said “detailed plans have yet to be finalised, but it is hoped that the new project would be up and running from the start of April 2026.”

The details of the new community giving scheme will be announced on our website [durhamcityfreemen.org](http://durhamcityfreemen.org)

## Vision for the Future

**To protect the heritage, history and traditions of the past, while ensuring that Durham City Freemen are relevant and robust enough to meet the challenges of the future.**

The Freemen of Durham, members of the eight Guilds or Companies, have a rich history dating back to the Middle Ages. They have always been closely linked with the freemen of the city’s guilds or trade companies. To protect this heritage and ensure its relevance in the future, several measures can be considered:

### Preservation of Traditions:

Continue to uphold the traditions and practices of the Freemen, such as their meetings, ceremonies, and guild activities. This helps to keep the history alive and allows future generations to understand and appreciate their heritage.

### Education and Outreach:

Organize events, workshops, and seminars to educate the public about the history and role of the Freemen. This can help to increase awareness and appreciation of their heritage.

### Adaptation to Modern Contexts:

While preserving traditions, it’s also important to adapt to changing times. This could mean updating certain practices or adopting new ones which align with the modern context but still respect the essence of the Freemen’s heritage.

### Engagement with the Community:

The Freemen can play an active role in the community, contributing to local events, initiatives, and charities. This not only makes them more relevant but also allows them to give back to the community.

### Inclusion and Diversity:

Ensuring that the Freemen are inclusive and diverse can help to make them more robust and relevant. This could involve encouraging participation from people of different backgrounds, ages, and genders.

The Freemen should work with the Freemen of England and Wales both for the concept of freedom in general and other bodies of Freemen in Cities and Boroughs where they still exist.

By balancing respect for the past with adaptability for the future, the Durham City Freemen can continue to be a vibrant and important part of their community. These are the current aims for the Freemen and they should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that they are fit for purpose.



*Photograph Courtesy of Kristal Tara*