



Durham City Freemen



Yearbook 2022

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All images by Geoff Kitson except where stated.

Foreword

John Booth Chairman of the Wardens

I wish a happy and prosperous New Year to you all, and start by saying what an honour and privilege it is to be serving the Durham City Freeman as Chairman of the Wardens.

We must hope that 2022 offers a new beginning for us, bringing some kind of normality to living our lives again, allowing us to enjoy being with friends and family.



It's that time of year when it is usual to reflect on the previous year's activities and measure the progress and development of the Freeman. I would first like to sincerely thank our Trustees and in particular Patrick Conway, Philip Wills and Malcolm Proud for the work and effort they have devoted to the Sands Deregistration Inquiry. Patrick, Chair of the Trustees, brings us up to date with the outcome of the inquiry in his report later in the yearbook.

Over the past twenty three months we have put our Guild Days and Annual Dinners which are the cornerstone of our activities on hold, we also had to postpone the Butchers Company 500th Year celebrations. However, this has not prevented us from planning ahead and preparing for when we can enjoy these activities throughout the coming year.

I am pleased to inform you that we hope to hold our first Guild Day in February, the Candlemas Guild Day. Due to the number of candidates to be admitted, this will be an all day event celebrated in the Town Hall, where eleven new candidates will be sworn into the ranks. Five candidates will be sworn in at the morning ceremony and six being sworn in at the afternoon ceremony. A buffet lunch will be provided, giving us an opportunity to meet the new Mayor and socialise.

We continue to move the organisation forward and during the year we, assembled three working groups to look at organising the Butchers Company 500 Year Celebrations, updating the Structure Papers of the management group, and researching Modern Apprenticeships and admission to the Freeman via servitude.

I am delighted to say that preparations are complete for the Butchers Company 500th Year Celebrations on Saturday 14h May 2022, if you would like to help out on the day please contact Kathleen Vasey the Freeman Secretary.

Work is also well under way to establish a Freemans award for excellence in craft skills, piloted in the first year with Durham County Council. Following a review, the project will be offered to other companies employing apprentices in the city.

My thanks go to Theresa Ford and Neil Graham for leading the working groups, who have been tireless in their commitment in undertaking the tasks.

I would like to thank all members who took the time to respond to the Distribution Ballot and also thank Kathleen Vasey for organising it. I can confirm that 75% of the membership who returned ballot papers, voted to bring to an end the distribution and use the funds to support charitable causes.

A restricted fund will be created, to support apprentices and promote excellence in craft skills and future awards.

Sadly 2021 saw the passing of Roger Norris a former Gentleman Freeman and Chairman of the Trustees. Roger's obituary can be found in the pages that follow.

This year saw the 100th Birthday of Connie Hotchkiss who became a Freeman in 2014. There is a feature about Connie later in the Yearbook. We wish Connie the very best of health and many happy returns for the future.

Earlier this year, Anne Thurlow stepped down as chair of the wardens. I thank Ann for her work. I can also report that Robert Elliott has stepped down as Warden of the Masons Company. I thank Bob for his commitment and contribution to Durham City Freeman over the years.

Mr Iain Peverall has been appointed Deputy Warden of the Joiners company and Dr Alan Richardson became the new Deputy Warden of the Masons Company. I look forward to working with them over the coming months.

The Freeman Charitable Trust have continued to support and fund activities in the community during the pandemic. I would like to thank Alan Ribchester, Stuart Atkin and Eric Bulmer who do a superb job in ensuring your funds are well invested and distributed wisely to worthy causes within our local community.

John Booth
Chairman of the Wardens

A Message from the Worshipful Mayor of Durham County Councillor Arnie Simpson



I appreciate that 2021 was still a strange year for many of us but we seem to be slowly returning to a 'new normal' life following the Pandemic.

It was a shame that Guild meetings and the Annual Dinner were postponed last year but I look forward to seeing some of you in February, fingers crossed.

I too had to wait a while for my Mayor Making Ceremony. My predecessor ended up being in post for 2 years.

I have decided to raise money for the NHS Charities Together. I hope you agree that our NHS continues to do us proud in the most trying of times.

I wish the Freemen and their families all the best for 2022.

Councillor Arnie Simpson
The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Durham



Diary Dates for 2022

All meetings will be in the Guildhall with the exception of the Candlemas and Martinmas Guild Days and the Annual Dinner, which will be held in the Main Hall.

Annual Dinner Saturday 22nd October 2022

Butchers Company 500 Year Celebrations Saturday 14th May 2022

Guild Days 11:00 – 12:30

Candlemas Monday 7th February 2022

May Day Monday 9th May 2022

Lammas Monday 1st August 2022

Martinmas Monday 7th November 2022

Warden's and Trustees Meetings 2:00 – 4:30

Friday 21st January 2022

Friday 22nd April 2022

Friday 23rd September 2022

Friday 18th November 2022

Warden's and Deputy Wardens Meetings 6:00 – 7:30

Thursday 13th January 2022

Thursday 14th April 2022

Thursday 15th September 2022

Thursday 10th November 2022

Member's Meetings 6:00 – 7:30

Tuesday 18th January 2022

Tuesday 19th April 2022

Tuesday 20th September 2022

Tuesday 15th November 2022

Charitable Trust Meetings 1:00 – 2:30

Monday 10th January 2022

Monday 18th April 2022

Monday 26th September 2022

Monday 7th November 2022

Wardens and Trustees

If you have any comments, or suggestions relating to any aspect of the work of Durham City Freemen please contact the Warden of your Company. The activity and business of Durham City Freemen is overseen by the Trustees.

Wardens

John Booth
Chairman of the Wardens
Barbers' Company
Tel: 0191 3733381

Abiodun Williams
Butchers' Company
Tel: 07496 374168

Alan Metcalf
Cordwainers' Company
Tel: 01740 657624

Ian Wilmhurst
Curriers' Company
Tel: 0191 3861703

Kathleen Vasey
Secretary to the Freemen
Drapers' Company
Tel: 0776 1035675

Ann Thurlow
Joiners' Company
Tel: 0191 3779706

Neil Graham
Masons' Company
Tel: 07835421640

Garry Dunnill
Plumbers' Company
Tel: 01388 748496

Deputy Wardens

Theresa Anne Ford
Deputy Chair of the
Wardens
Joiners' Company

Iain Peverall
Barbers' Company

Dave Howard
Butchers' Company

Neil Graham
Curriers' Company

Trevor Carter
Drapers' Company

Dr Alan Richardson
Masons' Company

Arthur Lockyear
Plumbers' Company

Trustees

Chairman
Patrick Conway OBE
Tel: 0191 3868216

Vice Chair
Malcolm Proud
Tel: 0191 3867615

Clerk and Recorder
Philip Wills
Tel: 01388603073

Treasurer
Stewart. Atkin
Tel: 0191 5238918

Peter Bramwell
Tel: 0191 3868066

Kenneth Howe
Tel: 0191 3840589

Richard Scotlan
Tel: 0191 6827708

Cannon Michael Everett

Alice Ambrose Thurman

Helen McMillan

New Warden of the Plumber's Company



Garry Dunnill

Garry was born in Durham and after leaving Gilesgate Secondary School at age 15 he gained an apprenticeship as a heating engineer with Harold Fairclough of Durham, while there he worked at the cathedral, churches and schools in the Durham area.

He then joined the NCB to further his studies gaining a diploma in Building services, and progressing his career, working as a consultant for RW Gregory and Partners and T G Armstrong and Partners of Durham.

In 1983, he went back to his roots and with help from family purchased a local heating and plumbing company which grew from 5 to 100 employees. During this period, he was Chairman of the local trade organisation H.V.C.A. (B & ES) and was a member of the national training committee.

Garry became a freeman in 1997 joining the plumber's guild. He is now retired and spends time supporting his son who has an air conditioning business in Durham, and helping to look after his grandchildren.

New Warden of the Mason's Company



Neil Graham

Neil has lived in Durham since the age of seven and attended Gilesgate Secondary Modern School and later New College Durham as part of his apprenticeship and management training.

He started his career for The City of Durham Council in 1976 as an Apprentice Electrician. After successfully completing his apprenticeship in 1980 he then worked as part of the team which maintained the housing stock and the municipal buildings, including the Town Hall, Old City Baths, Council Offices and Sports Centres.

In 2008 Neil took on the role of Electrical Supervisor, managing a team of electricians responsible for repairs and refurbishment of the City Council's housing stock and buildings. He was a Union Rep and Health & Safety Rep for several years.

Neil continued in the role of Supervisor as the Authority transferred to Durham County Council and later when it moved to the private sector and became Believe Housing, before retiring in 2019. His hobbies include going to the gym, cycling, swimming and photography.

Deputy Wardens

Deputy Wardens were introduced following the adoption of the sustainability paper in 2019. They have proven to be an enormous asset to the management team, sharing roles, duties and offering future planning support.

Deputy Warden Joiners Company and Deputy Chair of the Wardens



Theresa Ford

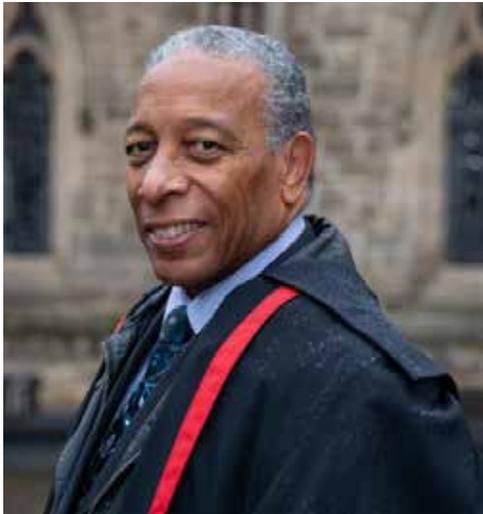
Theresa was born in Durham, and lived and worked in Durham in clerical and accounts departments all her working life.

On leaving Whinney Hill School at 15, she started work at Joshua Wilson Bros Head Office in Gilesgate Moor, a food distribution company to small local convenience stores in Co Durham, where she became the supervisor of the Purchase and Sales ledgers before leaving to start her family in 1974 raising three boys who are all Freemen.

Theresa returned to work in 1990 being employed at Topline Recruitment Services in their accounts / wages department. In 1996 she joined the staff in the Admin and Clerical offices of HMP Frankland Prison, working on the Switchboard, and within the departmental offices.

In 2001, she left to work with husband's business, giving her more time to work with the student properties she owns. Theresa retired in 2005 to enjoy visiting and spending time with her children and grandchildren, all of which live in different parts of the country.

Deputy Warden Drapers Company

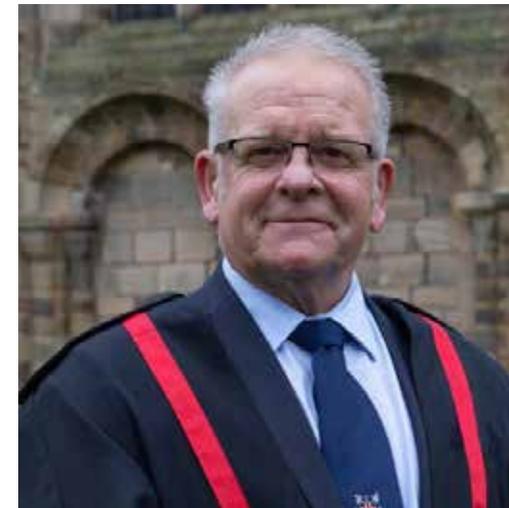


Trevor Carter

Trevor, a father of two, arrived at Durham University 50 years ago and, after graduating, taught maths and computer sciences in county schools for 20 years before setting up his own IT training business.

He served as a governor at various schools for 15 years and represented the North East Region at the National Governors' Council. In retirement, he is vice chairman of the Durham Pointers, whose volunteers welcome tens of thousands of visitors to the city every year, a steward at Durham Cathedral and a volunteer at the World Heritage Site Visitor Centre. He also mentors Durham University students and, as Beadle, fronts Durham University's academic processions and other ceremonies.

Deputy Warden Butchers Company and Freeman's Grassman



Dave Howard

Dave moved to Durham in the sixties, educated at Belmont Secondary School and New College Durham.

He started work as an apprentice Electrician for Durham City Council in 1976 and 43 years later after working for the same firm all be it a changed organisation (Durham City Council then taken over by Durham County Council then taken over by County Durham Housing group and now Believe Housing) retired. He now helps his Step Daughter with her dog walking business Muddypaws based in Langley Moor.

Dave became a Freeman of Durham City in November 2003 joining the Butchers Company and later was given the privilege of becoming The Grassman for the Durham City Freemen, a post that requires him to look after the interests of The Sands grassed area for the Freemen.

Deputy Warden Plumbers Company



Arthur Lockyear

Sixty-seven-year-old Arthur, brought up in Seaham and now based in Durham, served as an operational fireman in stations in Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead. While with the fire service he helped organise Remembrance Day parades in Sunderland and since 2014 has played a key role in Durham City's Remembrance Parade and the Durham Cathedral Festival of Remembrance.

He is the author of the book "Warriors in Fire Boots" – a tribute to the valour of firefighters and has taught the Japanese martial art of Aikido in Durham for over thirty years.

Arthur was instrumental in bringing many internationally renowned martial arts masters to the city and as a consequence of his efforts a three part television documentary, entitled "Budo Sai," was commissioned by Tyne Tees Television and syndicated internationally. He is a well-known teacher of and writer on Aikido and is currently a 5th Dan Black Belt.

Deputy Warden Barbers Company



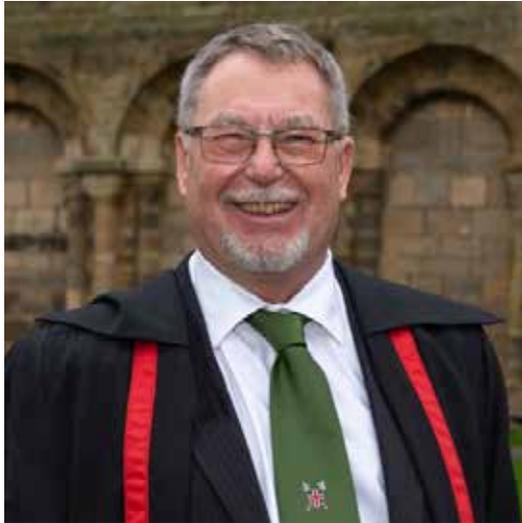
Iain Peverall

Iain Peverall is assistant workshop manager with the County Durham and Darlington Fire Brigade.

The 36-year-old oversees the work of the brigade's team responsible for the upkeep of more than two dozen fire engines, eighty other cars and vans, as well as a string of specialist fire-fighting appliances.

After leaving school he started his working career with the brigade as an apprentice coach builder and lives in a former mining village with his wife Emma, a deputy head teacher, and their two children.

Deputy Warden Masons Company



Dr Alan Richardson

Dr Alan Richardson, an associate professor of civil engineering at Northumbria University, was brought up in the family construction business in Durham City and mixed his first batch of concrete at the age of ten.

Dr Richardson, who lives on the outskirts of the city, took over as managing director of the family business in 1973 at the age of 21 following the death of his father. He stayed until 1996, collecting national awards along the way, before leaving to take a teacher training course.

That move led to further study for a master's degree in project management at Northumbria University before he went on to complete his doctorate in civil engineering at Newcastle University nearly ten years ago.

The links of his extended family stretch back to the early 1800s and Dr Richardson said it was “an absolute joy” to follow his grandfather Ralph into the Masons’ Company. “I have been really looking forward to it,” he added.

Tenure of Appointment

Deputy Wardens

COMPANY	DATE ELECTED	END OF TERM	ELECTIONS
Barbers Deputy Iain Peverall (Joiner)	1 st October 2021	30 th September 2024	September 2024
Butchers Deputy Dave Howard	3 rd March 2020	2 nd March 2023	February 2023
Cordwainers Deputy Vacancy			
Curriers Deputy Vacancy			
Drapers Deputy Trevor Carter	3 rd March 2020	Jan 2024	February 2023
Joiners Deputy Theresa Ford	3 rd March 2020	2 nd March 2023	February 2023
Masons Deputy Dr Alan Richardson	11 th November 2021	10 th November 2024	October 2024
Plumbers Deputy Arthur Lockyear	3 rd March 2020	2 nd March 2023	February 2023

If you are interested in becoming a Deputy Warden please contact:

Secretary to the Freeman
Kathleen Vasey
Tel: 07761035675
e-mail: kathleenvasey@aol.com

Tenure of Appointment

Wardens

COMPANY	DATE ELECTED	END OF TERM	ELECTIONS
Chairman John Booth	May 2021	May 2024	April 2024
Barbers John Booth	Jan 2021	Dec 2023	Dec 2023
Butchers Mac Williams	Sept 2020	Sept 2023	Aug 2023
Cordwainers Alan Metcalf	June 2019	June 2022	May 2022
Curriers Iain Wilmshurst	Jan 2019	Dec 2022	Nov 2022
Drapers Kathleen Vasey	Jan 2021	Jan 2024	Dec 2023
Joiners Ann Thurlow	May 2020	May 2023	April 2023
Masons Neil Graham	Dec 2021	Dec 2024	Nov 2024
Plumbers Garry Dunnill	Feb 2021	Feb 2024	Jan 2024

Companies will be informed when an election is to take place.

Details of forthcoming elections and the procedure for an election of a Warden will be posted on the website and can be obtained from the Secretary of the Freeman.

Members to be Admitted in 2022

Candlemas Guild Day 7th February 2022

Due to the Covid Pandemic and restrictions put in place by the government, in the interest of member safety we felt it necessary cancel all face to face guild days in the Guild Hall.

With the restrictions now somewhat relaxed we have planned our next face to face Guild day to take place on the 7th February 2022.

The morning ceremony will begin one hour earlier at 10:00am with a break for refreshments over the lunchtime, the afternoon session will start at 1:00pm.

Ivan Barrie Arkless (Plumbers) to be admitted via Servitude.

Mr David Balls (Butchers Company) to be admitted via Servitude.

Ms Joanne Booth (Plumbers Company) to be admitted via Patrimony.

Lewis Daniel Brolls (Barbers Company) to be admitted via Patrimony.

Amy Elizabeth Faulkner (Barbers Company) to be admitted via Patrimony.

Mr John Henry Ferguson (Plumbers') to be admitted via Servitude.

Mr Peter Christopher Granlund (Masons') to be admitted via Patrimony.

Anna Claire Holden (Drapers Company) to be admitted via Patrimony.

Mr Bryan Proud (Butchers') to be admitted via Customary Freedom

Charles Reading Robinson (Plumbers) to be admitted via Servitude.

Mr Robert William Ribchester (Cordwainers Company) to be admitted via Patrimony.

Current Membership at January 2022

Barbers' Company

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

Butchers' Company

Bancroft	David	George	Mr	Howard	David	Richard	Mr
Bregazzi	John		Mr	Laws	Steven		Mr
Chapman	Michael	Andrew	Mr	MacDonald	Ian	Edward	Mr
Chapman	Robin		Mr	Milbourne	Malcolm		Mr
Dodds	Kevin	Barry	Mr	Oliver	George	Robert	Mr
Forster	Guy		Mr	Patterson	Thomas	William	Mr
Forster	Heather		Ms	Pickering	George	Robert	Mr
Forster	Jonathan	Paul	Mr	Staveley	Susan		Mrs
Forster	Stephen	James	Mr	Williams	MacDonald	Abiodun	Mr
Hart	Norman	Thomas	Mr				

Cordwainers' Company

Davidson	Peter	Richard	Mr	McElwee	Jack	Denby	Mr
Davidson	Peter		Mr	McElwee	Joe		Mr
Greenwell DL CBE	Arthur	Jeffrey	Mr	McElwee	John	Denby	Mr
Heron	David		Rev	Metcalf	Alan		Mr
Heron	Mark	Annesley	Mr	Minto	Peter		Dr
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
McElwee	Doris		Mrs				

Curriers' Company

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

Joiners' Company

Bennett	Peter	Neil		Mr	Ford	Alan		Mr
Brown	Adam	Ridley		Mr	Ford	Regan	James	Mr
Brown	Darren	Ridley		Mr	Ford	Stuart	William	Mr
Brown	Dean	Ridley		Mr	Ford	Theresa	Anne	Mrs
Brown	Mark	Andrew	Charles	Mr	Ford	William		Mr
Brown	Rita			Mrs	Gilroy	Clifford	Richard	Mr
Brown	Robert	Dennis		Mr	Gilroy	Peter	Andrew	Mr
Brown	Jonathan	James	Edward	Mr	Hesp	Eric		Mr
Brown	Tony	Michael		Mr	Jopling	Trevor		Mr
Bryden	Irene	May		Mrs	Morris	Edward	James	Bowring
Bryden	Robert	Arthur		Mr	Morris OBE	Roger	John	Bowring
Clarkson	Andrew	Robert		Mr	Neale	David	Charles	Mr
Clarkson	Christopher	Paul		Mr	Neale	Michael	Paul	Mr
Clarkson	Nigel	David		Mr	Neale	Steven	Thomas	Edwin
Clarkson	Robert	William		Mr	Peverall	Iain		Mr
Clarkson	Ronald			Mr	Pritchard	Anthony	A.	
Dawson	Peter	Robert		Mr	Squires	Eric	Charles	Arthur
Donkin	Joan	Elizabeth		Rev	Swallow	Anthony		Mr
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	Nattrass	Sarah	Elizabeth	Mrs
Allison	John	Stuart	Mr	Reid	Sandi		Mrs
Allison	Malcolm	Nigel	Mr	Samuel	Barbara	Anne	Ms
Allison	Peter	David	Mr	Samuel	Tom		Mr
Angus	Pamela		Ms	Scott	Barbara	Jean	Ms
Arkley	Gillian	Roberta	Mrs	Scott	Charlotte	Anne	Miss
Brookes	Gillian		Ms	Scott	Vanessa	Laura	Miss
Carter	Trevor	Richard Earl	Mr	Smith	Adele		Ms
Crofton	Ted		Rev	Snowball	Dorothy	Margaret	Rev
Davidson	Vera		Mrs	Vasey	Andrew	David	Mr
Freelend	Leah	Felicity	Mrs	Vasey	David		Mr
Hayes	Mary		Ms	Vasey	John	Frederick	Mr
Hepburn	Alan		Mr	Vasey	Kathleen		Ms
Heslop	Victoria	Jane	Mrs	Vest	Alan	Cruddass	Mr
Jackson	Catriona	Margery	Mrs	Vest	Arthur		Mr
Jackson	Richard		Mr	Vest	David	Charles	Mr
Kingston	Barbara	Hilda	Mrs	Vest	Derek		Mr
Kothari	Ingrid	Allison	Mrs	Vest	Gavin		Mr
Lee	Jonathan	Mark	Mr	Vest	Joanne		Miss
Lyle	Susan		Ms	Vest	Mark		Mr
Mackay	June		Ms	Vest	Paul	Robert	Mr
Magee	Andrew	Fawcett	Mr	Vest	Rachel		Miss
Magee	Judith		Ms	Vest	Richard		Mr
Magee	Stuart	John	Mr	Vest	Roland		Mr
Middleton	Alan		Mr	Vest	Steven		Mr
Milbourne	Alexander	J	Mr	Watson	Judith	Gwen	Mrs
Milbourne	Andrew	John	Mr	Watson-Lee	Alexander	W	Mr
Milbourne	David	Michael	Mr	Watson-Lee	James	K	Mr
Milbourne	Michael	Stewart	Mr	Watson-Lee	Mark	Alexander Strachan	Mr
Milbourne	Rodney	James	Mr	Watson-Lee	Peter	James	Mr
Milbourne	Stephanie	Helen	Ms	Wilson	Thomas	Dobson	Mr
Mullaney	Kimberley		Mrs				

Masons' Company

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

Plumbers' Company

Abson	Philip		Mr	Heron	Clive	Emmerson	Mr
Allan	Patricia		Ms	Heron	Adam	Mark	Mr
Billsborrow	Patricia		Rev	Heron	Leslie		Mr
Booth	John		Mr	Inglis	Sydney		Mr
Brass	Andrew		Mr	Johnson	Peter	Alan	Mr
Brown	Alison	Jane	Mrs	Latue	John		Mr
Bulmer	Jane		Ms	Lockyear	Arthur		Mr
Bulmer	Sean		Mr	McDonough	Alison		Ms
Bulmer	Michael		Mr	Oliver	Alan		Mr
Bulmer	Eric		Mr	Pearson	Anne		Mrs
Cain	Elizabeth	Ann	Mrs	Pearson	Malcolm	Neil	Mr
Cunliffe	Lisa		Mrs	Todd	David	William	Mr
Davis	Margaret	Ruth	Mrs	Walker	John		Mr
Dunhill	Garry		Mr	Willey	Brian	Fawcett	Mr
Dunhill	Keith		Mr	Wortley	Katherine		Ms
Gent	Helen	Patricia	Mrs	Wortley	Melvin		Mr
Head	David	Colin	Mr				

Membership Summary

Company	Men	Women	In-district	Ex-district	Total
Barbers	20	6	7	19	26
Butchers	17	2	12	7	19
Cordwainers	17	2	8	11	19
Curriers	17	8	12	13	25
Drapers	36	27	19	44	63
Joiners	34	7	24	17	41
Masons	23	5	17	11	28
Plumbers	22	11	16	17	33
Totals	187	68	116	139	254

For further information regarding admission please contact the Membership Secretary:

Eric Bulmer
2 High Meadows
Brandon Village
Durham
DH7 8RW

Tel: 0191 3780554
Email: eckabulmer@btinternet.com

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

The Full Membership Criteria can be viewed on our website:

<http://www.durhamcityfreemen.org/admissions/membership-criteria/>

Obituary



Roger Norris, 1941 – 2021

Gentleman Freeman, and Chairman of Trustees 1995-2015

At the time of his retirement as chair of the Freeman trustees in 2015, Roger's peers recorded the significant contribution Roger had made to the 're-birth' of the city's Freeman. Ever modest about his own role, Roger instead cited the energy and vision of others. However, without his sensitive leadership and diplomatic skills, the necessary changes would not have occurred. Always respectful of the traditions and history associated with the Freeman, Roger, nonetheless, appreciated the importance of the organisation remaining relevant in a changing world.

Under his watch, women freemen were first admitted, a charitable arm established to award grants to local organisations and the Freeman became more outward looking.

Appointed a trustee in 1988, Roger Norris took over the chairmanship in 1995. Three years later he was sworn into the Cordwainers' Company as a Gentleman Freeman.

With characteristic generosity, Roger, on his retirement as chairman said, "I have thoroughly enjoyed the privilege of being chairman and being part of that special cornerstone of city life for so many years. I have been particularly fortunate in the support, friendship and fellowship I have received from the trustees, the wardens, and the companies of freemen over the years."

Roger Charles Norris was born in May 1941, the son of an RAF officer. The family moved to Whyteleafe in Surrey and later Cambridge and Bromley, where his father worked in the electronics industry, prior to joining the Air Ministry, specialising in telecommunications.

Graduating from Trinity College Dublin in 1963 with a degree in Latin and English, Roger was later awarded an MA from the same institution, as well as receiving a post graduate diploma in Librarianship from Sheffield University.

After a short period working in Edinburgh University library, Roger was appointed deputy librarian to the Dean and Chapter at Durham Cathedral in 1966. Thus began a lifetime of service to cathedral, city and county. Retiring in 2002, he was then appointed emeritus librarian at St Chad's College.

Throughout the 55 years he lived in Durham, Roger served many bodies other than the Freeman. He became honorary secretary of the City of Durham Trust, an office he later conceded provided an insight into the history of the city and importance of the preservation and conservation of its historic assets. For over forty years Roger was a member of the Durham Diocesan Committee for the Care of Churches, holding for a period the vice chairmanship. He held similar positions with the Victoria County History Trust and Northumbria Historic Churches Trust. Roger was also a former chairman of the Durham Council of Churches and president of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland.

With Douglas Pocock he co-authored *A history of County Durham* and later with Neil Jinkinson, *Stained glass of Durham Cathedral*.

Philip Wills, clerk and recorder to the Freeman said, "Roger was a remarkable and thoroughly decent man. Generous to the last and utterly self-deprecating, his tact and diplomacy in all things enabled him to negotiate difficulties with great skill and wisdom in challenging times. His care for others was paramount and a reflection of his Christian values. He was a great friend to all Freeman and others who knew and loved him. Roger will be sorely missed and I feel honoured to have been able to know him as a true friend".

John Booth, present chair of wardens said, " Roger was always regarded with great respect by the Durham Freeman. His dedication for our organisation was recognised and acknowledged by all. He will be missed all who knew him."

Patrick Conway, present chair of trustees said, "Roger Norris led a full life and contributed so much to his adopted city and county. The Freeman of Durham are fortunate to have benefited from his selfless interest in their traditions. He invited me to become a trustee and having known Roger as a fellow professional librarian for many years, I can testify to his sensitive generosity of spirit, respect for knowledge and ideas and above all tolerance of differing opinions."

Eric Bulmer, chair of the Freeman charitable trust commented " Roger provided the wardens with unstinting support and offered wise counsel to successive chairmen of the wardens. He was held with great respect and affection by the Freeman, who acknowledged his passion, enthusiasm and endeavor for our ancient organisation and will be sadly missed by his many friends and colleagues."

Roger Norris, truly an adopted son of Durham.

Connie Hotchkiss 100th Birthday Celebration



Mrs Connie Hotchkiss, a great-grandmother, who seven years ago was reported to be one of the oldest people in Britain to be newly sworn-in as a Freeman, has celebrated another milestone in her life this year her 100th birthday.

For most of her life, Mrs Hotchkiss, who has four children and nine grandchildren, was prevented from following her father Frederick Elliott into membership of the ancient order, which for nearly 700 years had been an all-male preserve.

National changes to equality laws paved the way for the City Freeman to admit, in 2012, the first 14 women who qualified by having served apprenticeships in Durham or were the daughters of existing freemen.

It was when Mrs Hotchkiss's son Ian was researching their family history he came across an on-line article in the Northern Echo, alerting him to the change in the rules that provided the motivation for his mother to "maintain the family link," following her father, Frederick Elliott, her brother Fred and his son Michael into the city's Masons' Company.

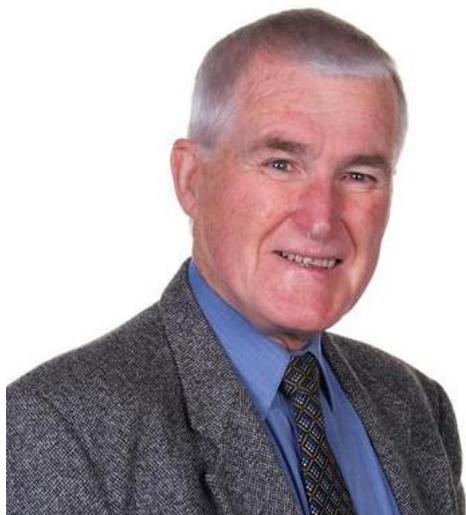
On Monday, May 12th 2014 Mrs Connie Hotchkiss was just four months short of her 93rd birthday when she was welcomed into the ranks of the Durham City Freeman, in a grand and historic ceremony staged in Durham Town Hall.

Mrs Hotchkiss travelled from her home on the Isle of Man to be admitted by Councillor Jan Blakey, the Deputy Mayor of Durham.

Afterwards, she said: "I wanted to keep the family tradition going. My brother was already a Freeman and I felt we ought to keep the link going."

The family link does not stop there. Connie's paternal grandfather, Joseph Elliott (1841-1893), was a master mason of Gilesgate, Durham St Giles and he was the younger brother of John Elliott (1837-1873), who was the great grandfather of the former Warden of the Masons' Company, Robert "Bob" Elliott.

Chair of the Trustees Report



While Covid 19 dominated personal, professional, economic and social life in 2021, the work of the Freeman continued, albeit restricted, conducted mainly through Zoom and other digital platforms

Trustees are ultimately responsible for the Freeman's assets, both tangible and intangible. As reported in the 2021 Yearbook, trustees opposed the application by Durham County Council to deregister an area of

common land, (the former coach park) adjacent to the new civic headquarters now almost completed. Our objections, and those of the parish council and local residents, resulted in the Planning Inspectorate deciding a public inquiry was necessary.

Due to the pandemic this did not sit until late April 2021. Conducted via a Youtube platform, the inquiry concluded in July and the inspector delivered his determination in October.

Regrettably the application to deregister was allowed. Robust arguments advanced by our barrister were discounted. As well as the historic and material interests of the Freeman, concerns about a precedent being set for further deregistration of common land on the Sands were presented. The parish council and many local people, as well as the Freeman, offered evidence about the distance and unsuitability of the proposed replacement land at Aykley Heads for use and amenity by residents.

The final determination helpfully included an appendix summarising the Freeman's rights over land at the Sands. This states, notwithstanding the

decision to deregister, that rents payable under various historic agreements with predecessors of Durham County Council remain, a point repeatedly emphasised by the local authority's barrister, during the Inquiry.

While there has been a difference of opinion with the County Council about deregistration, and indeed the earlier planning application for the civic headquarters, it is important a cordial working relationship is maintained with the local authority. Consequently two meetings involving the Freeman and the Parish Council, with the Leader of the newly elected Joint Administration and the Council Chief Executive took place in the second half of 2021. Discussions included safeguards against development on the now deregistered common land, and encroachment on the remaining common land. The Freeman are key to the history and traditions of our city, and in the 21st century provide support financially and in kind to local community organisations. The local authority recognises this work and also the contribution the Freeman can make to modern apprenticeship schemes. Further meetings to progress this work are being planned.

Elsewhere the work of the Wardens is recounted and trustees were pleased to endorse the Sustainability Review. The conclusions augur well for a proactive organisation. During the year John Booth took over from Anne Thurlow as Chair of the Wardens. I wish to record my thanks to Ann for her work and express my best wishes to John as he assumes the mantle. Trustees were also advised that Bob Elliott a longstanding Warden, has decided to stand down and Trustees wish to record our appreciation to him for many years' service.

The year also saw Phil Dyer retire as a Trustee. Through a challenging period Phil provided sound advice and thoughtful contributions to debate. He is being missed. Nonetheless we are fortunate to have welcomed Alice Ambrose-Thurman and Venerable Canon Michael Everitt as new Trustees.

In a rapidly changing and uncertain world Durham City Freeman are well placed to contribute to the life of our city.

Patrick Conway
Chairman of the Trustees

Treasurers Report

Covid has continued to dominate our planning, with most meetings being held via Zoom. This has saved in costs and indeed enabled short notice meetings to go ahead from the comfort of home.

There have been changes to the planned finances over the year. Yet again the dinner was cancelled and the Distribution ended. At the time of writing this report, the joint Trustees and Wardens Meeting has just approved the recycling of the Distribution funds towards supporting modern apprenticeships and trainees.



As in the past, surplus income continues to be donated to the Charitable Trust, whose work is reported elsewhere.

Our investment portfolio has made healthy gains in the past year, with some holdings encashed at a profit. Income remains on track and has not fallen to the extent anticipated at the start of the pandemic. Our brokers, Brewin Dolphin, actively manage the investments within the risk mandate set by the Trustees.

Our cash reserve remains healthy with liquidity overriding the lack of real income on bank deposits.

Stewart Atkin
Honorary Treasurer

Freemen Website

You can add a Freemen website shortcut icon to your mobile phone. This information appears on the Freemen website home page when launched from a web browser.

To add a link on your mobile phone simply follow the instructions below.

To add to your mobile home screen:

On iOS tap  and then 

On Android: use the **Add to home screen** option in your browser settings.

This link to the Freemen website will appear on your mobile phone



I am delighted to say we still have the services of Geoff Kitson our official photographer and George Oliver our Press Officer, who provide the copy and images for the local press and news articles posted on the website. Their combined efforts continue to raise a positive profile for our organisation.

If you require large resolution images suitable for printing, Geoff is only too happy to send them free of charge by emailing him at: geoffkitson8@yahoo.co.uk

www.durhamcityfreemen.org.uk

John Booth
Website Manager

The Charitable Trust

The last 12 months have been extremely challenging for charities and community groups, as they continue to support vulnerable members of our community.

During this period, the Freemen via the Charitable Trust, continued to respond to requests for support and we were pleased to award donations to the groups set out below

As well as responding to requests, members of the Charitable Trust visit each and every one of recipients who received a donation, to find out more about the important and often unseen work supporting the local community. This also enables us to inform them about the 'Freemen' and our historical connection with the City.

On behalf of the Charitable Trust, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Geoff Kitson and George Oliver, the Freemen's official Photographer and Press Officer, for their expertise and commitment in providing press coverage of the work of these local charities and community groups. Geoff and George are also major contributors to the website, that provides members with information regarding past, current and future activities relating to the Freemen.

Eric Bulmer
Chairman of the Charitable Trust

19/07/2021

Summer Picnics To Reunite Special Needs Children And Their Families

Hundreds of children with special needs are to be re-united at four huge fun-filled picnics organised by a leading County Durham charity to mark the end of their Covid isolation.

Until the virus struck, the Durham Area Disability Leisure Group (DADLG), a registered charity based in Gilesgate, Durham, worked for over 30 years to meet the "dreams and wishes" of youngsters. But their county-wide programmes of sport, leisure and social activities, staged during evenings, weekends and school holidays, providing the key face-to-face contact they and their families craved, was lost during the lockdowns.

A total of 200 children, some as young as two, will be eligible to attend the picnics - along with parents, carers and siblings - set to be staged in Horden Welfare Park, Chester-le-Street Park, Wolsingham Recreation Ground and Sedgefield's Hardwick Park towards the end of July and into mid-August. Project manager Lesley Clelland explained: "In March of last year we had to

take the very sad decision to halt all our usual activities - and then immediately thought hard about ways to provide some sort of interim service."

They first launched a regular newsletter and followed that with two-way "conversations" via photographs and feedback on social media and e-mail. Next came themed activity bags delivered to every family, then a "design-a-Christmas-card" competition resulting in the production of professionally printed greetings cards for every household.



At the end of June the group learned their bid to organise the picnics had secured a county council contract worth a total of just over £5,000 – enough to cover delivery of the "food and fun" project at the four venues. A gift of £250 from Durham's Freemen – which follows a £2,000 donation two years ago - will on this occasion be used to buy circus skills toys, which include juggling balls, spinning plates and diablo equipment.

"I do not see the day when we will stop our new activities and return to the old in this changing virus landscape. Rather it will be a transition between the old and the new, based on a careful risk assessment of each type of activity and venue. We will meet the challenge, even a one as big as this," added Lesley.

John Booth, Chairman of the Wardens of the Freemen and a member of their Charitable Trust said: "We are delighted and privileged to support DADLG whose work is outstanding, in providing leisure activities for children, young people, their parents, families and carers."

Teenager Cops Freeman's Apprenticeship Backing

Volunteer police cadet Charland Brain was awarded "top marks" for helping a crime fighting charity's mission to build safer communities.

Her work has now earned a special vote of confidence from Durham City's Freeman as she embarks on a career as an apprentice youth worker in the employ of the police.



Sixteen-year-old Charland, who lives in Chester-le-Street, devoted two years of her spare time to supporting the work of the Durham Agency Against Crime (DAAC) and logged a one-hundred per cent attendance record along the way.

Her commitment and determination to succeed so impressed the Freeman's Charitable Trust they offered her a £300 bursary to buy laptop software and other equipment needed in the first year of the two-year apprenticeship based at Derwentside College.

Durham Constabulary's apprenticeship scheme has been running for five years and the 20 cadets who have successfully completed the course have found employment. Among them are two who became full-time police officers, two are special constables, six are Police Community Support Officers and two went on to become teachers.

Charland Brain with Chief Constable Jo Farrell - Image courtesy Geoff Kitson DAAC – a partnership launched over 30 years ago by involving the public, private and voluntary sectors - currently has 75 cadets, aged from 11 to 18, on the books and are looking for more to help deliver crime prevention initiatives, assist with public safety events and get involved in community projects. Six cadets applied for apprenticeships this year – with Charland scoring the highest marks.

In addition to their college studies all apprentices work directly with primary schools, delivering instruction to "mini police officers" on internet safety and involvement in projects helping steer youngsters away from risks of being caught up in crime or anti-social behaviour.

DAAC's Executive Manager, Bryan Russell, said: "Charland's route to securing the apprenticeship has not been an easy one but her determination to succeed has been there for all to see. Covid too has played its part – the start of her course was delayed until the end of the month (March)."

Eric Bulmer, Chairman of the Freeman's Charitable Trust said: "Supporting apprentices during training has been a cornerstone of the trade guilds of the city for hundreds of years. We are delighted to maintain this element of our heritage by supporting Charland as she embarks on her training. We will follow her progress with interest and wish her every success."

29/05/2021

Freemen's Cash Helps Scouts' Funding Appeal Hit Target

A timely gift of £500 from Durham's Freemen has been instrumental in helping the scouting movement hit a target set to meet the costs of major improvement work at a large outdoor adventure and training centre on the eastern outskirts of the city.

Adaptations costing £32,000, are key to making a large two-storey building, known as Moor House, more accessible to teenagers and young people with mobility and special educational needs.



But the entrance and residential accommodation on the ground floor of the building needs vital changes to give greater freedom and independence to youngsters with physical and learning disabilities. The bill for the work was set at just under £32,000 and the bulk of money came from grants and pledges from charitable trusts, along with a contribution of £4,000 from Durham Scouts themselves.

A ground floor ramp, automated doors, the widening of some doorways and installation of emergency pull cords will give youngsters, who have been unable to fully enjoy their stay, greater "freedom, dignity and respect." The measures extend throughout the ground-floor dormitory and also include a bedroom adapted for four people with mobility issues. The Freemen's gift will specifically cover costs for the automated doors for that room, which also includes an en-suite facility.

"As well as the house we have a permanent tented village within the grounds and can on occasion, cater for jamborees for up to 3,000. The dorm provides residential opportunities for 40 young people and allows them the chance to tackle a variety of outdoor skills and qualify for badges during their stay.



Left to right

Kathleen Vasey Warden of the Drapers Company Durham City Freemen, Mark Ireland Moor House Trustee, Pip Cottam Centre Manager, Alan Ribchester Durham City Freemen Charitable Trust Trustee.

"The accommodation will offer everything from overnight to week-long stays and adaptations allow those with mobility and learning needs the opportunity to thrive in scouting.

"Over the past four years we have cultivated new links with schools whose pupils have physical or special educational needs. Until now they have not been able to fully enjoy their stay but that can now change. The Freemen's £500 donation completed our appeal for support," said Louise Barbe, a county fundraiser for Durham Scouts.

Alan Ribchester, a Freeman and a member of their Charitable Trust, said: "Prior to lockdown scouting continued to thrive and the facilities at Moor House have helped further the traditional ideals of scouting, as well as being great fun to use. The donation will help enormously broaden that appeal and the freemen are delighted their donation will help continue that development."

19/10/2021

Freemen Add Extra Punch To Durham's Young Boxers

Durham's Freemen are proving an even bigger hit with young boxing enthusiasts by repeating a donation first made a year ago to buy key pieces of training kit.

Last November a £300 gift from the freemen's Charitable Trust helped Brandon Boxing Club cover costs of a new punch bag and gloves. This month the Trustees decided to match their initial generosity, the same amount of money this time going towards coaching pads used to develop punching combinations.

The club has been operating for eight years from a purpose-built gym within the village cricket club's multi-sports complex.



Left to right

Euan 'The Mighty' Oakes(13), 'Amazing' Grace Kenny (12), 'Hurricane' Harvey Smith (13), and John 'TNT' Dixon (14)



The Chairman of the Charitable Trust, Eric Bulmer, said: "The Freemen are pleased to support a great community project which embraces all age groups and is enthusiastically organised and managed by a dedicated group of volunteers."

Boasting 150 members – a third of them female – it caters for a range of youngsters, some starting out as young as five. Two dozen of its leading exponents, most of them teenagers, take part in regular local, regional and national competitions.

"Finding funds to replace worn-out kit is a never ending challenge for any volunteer-led organisation like ours. The generosity of both individual donors and organisations like the freemen are vital to allow us to survive and thrive," said the club's Competition Secretary Alex Oliver, a civil servant awarded a British Empire Medal in 2017 for his services to the sport

Freemen's Pledge Guarantees Major Remembrance Revival

A vital donation from Durham City's Freemen has again helped underwrite the costs of staging one of the North East's biggest Remembrance Day parades.

The spectacle - through the streets of the city on Sunday, November 14, featured more than 500 military personnel, among them representatives of the vast majority of the country's "line" infantry regiments.



Arthur Lockyear, Eric Bulmer, David Cuthbertson and John Booth

A significant expansion of the city's parades in 2017 and 2018 enjoyed wide local support, including gifts from the Freemen totalling £1,500. Last year and in 2019 planned repeat events fell victims of national Covid restrictions.

More than 500 military personnel were among the expected 900-strong congregation who honoured the fallen at a service in Durham Cathedral, before taking part in a colourful march past through the central area.

The parade's volunteer organiser, retired fire-fighter Arthur Lockyear MBE, has been involved in preparations for similar events across the region for the past 30 years.

Mr Lockyear, sworn in as a city Freeman 18 months ago, said: "The organising team is once again most grateful to the Freemen for their gift, which makes it possible to provide bands to lead the various detachments on parade and make it a very special day for our veterans of all services and generations. We must never forget the debt we owe to our armed forces."

The parade, timed shortly after 11.30 a.m., was led by the Band and Bugles of the Durham Army Cadet Force and D Company, 8th Battalion, The Rifles. The "heavy" drill elements will include serving members of the Household Cavalry, Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and Royal Lancers. Additionally, there will be staff and trainees from the Infantry Training Centre representing all five regiments of Foot Guards, the Parachute Regiment, Royal Gurkha Rifles and other line regiments. The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Royal Army Medical Corps and 607 (Squadron) Royal Auxiliary Air Force from RAF Leeming were also be represented.

The military marchers were joined by strong detachments from Durham Constabulary and Prison Service staff from the city's jails, as well as Fire Service standard bearers from fifteen brigades, the Fire Brigades' Union and the London Fire Brigade Retired Members' Association.

Eric Bulmer, Chairman of the City Feemen's Charitable Trust, said: "Given our long historical connection with the city and interest in and value of the spirit of Remembrance we were once again delighted and honoured to give our support to help make this parade as great an occasion as possible, worthy of those we seek to honour."

16/11/2021

Freemen Bring A Breath Of Fresh Air To Mental Health Charity's Work

People seeking help and support from an independently-run mental health resource centre near the centre of Durham will now be able to enjoy a welcome breath of fresh air - thanks to a gift from the city's freemen.

Every week the Waddington Street Centre, a respected charity celebrating its 40th anniversary this month, has provided a haven for up to 120 members struggling to cope with the crippling stress of modern living, more recently aggravated by the new tensions created by Covid restrictions.



However, the lockdown closures provided the opportunity to give the terraced property a major face-lift, the result of the generosity of city developers. But the latest £250 donation from the Freemen's Charitable Trust will help meet the £1,000 cost of a new and welcome addition to the facilities which re-opened in August.

Centre manager Ali Lee explained: "One of our main features is a long lounge

extending into a café area which, in its turn, leads to a set of French doors. Beyond that is a pokey backyard - particularly gloomy when it's wet.

"Adding a canopy roof over the yard and colourful wall murals will turn it into a brighter protected space where anxious members, who might feel closed in, can sit in comfort and take a breather."

The centre's team of 20 volunteers look to relieve the worries of home life, illness or community conflict through a wide range of informal educational activities. Help is tailored to address each individual's needs, hopes and aspirations and embraces arts and crafts, writing and music workshops and exhibitions.

They also look to the extra value of theatre and cultural visits, as well as sporting activities. To that end they set a target of £40,000, to mark their 40th anniversary to cover costs of providing a new 14-seater mini bus to replace their ageing transport. To date they are less than 10 per cent of their target.

16/11/2021

Freemen Back Life-Line Service For Blind And Visually Impaired

A future of a vital communications link operated by a Durham-based charity for the blind has been guaranteed, thanks to the generosity of the city's Freemen.

Blind Life in Durham, which meets at Framwellgate Community Centre, provides a wide range of quality-of-life support to more than 70 members across the county.

A key tool used in the delivery of its wide-ranging service is a special printer used in the production of monthly CDs posted out to members.



Blind and wheelchair user Jim Welch, the organisation's chairman and founder, explained: "The technology provided by our existing machine gave us the ability to print directly onto the face of a monthly CD we post out to members. These custom-made labels are important in helping each recipient understand what each CD offers and avoids confusion.

"But the machine was simply worn out and a costly replacement, along with the inks it needs, was not easy to find. Without it we would have been in a fix but the Freemen's generous £300 gift means we can now keep this important link going."

Jim and his wife Margaret, the group's treasurer, launched the service in 2004 with the twin aims of promoting the welfare, independence and quality of life of members while, at the same time, voicing awareness of problems facing the blind and partially sighted among service providers and other organisations.

Their work is supported by two part-time employees, backed by a further 15 volunteers. Jim is also a board member of Health Watch County Durham, and a volunteer for promoting blindness and disability awareness for Durham Constabulary and other organisations.



Social activities for members include 'Skype' chat groups, a book club and monthly meetings in the community centre. Activities also offer up to three events a week and they also embrace new age kurling, new age bowls and Boccia (another indoor ball game developed for players with disabilities). In spring and summertime regular days out and theatre trips are also organised.

Eric Bulmer, who chairs the Freemen's Charitable Trust, said: "It is a privilege to support a locally based charity which helps its members become more independent and, at the same time, raise awareness among the wider community of the problems of being blind or partially sighted."

More information about Blind Life in Durham can be found on: www.blindlifeindurham.org.uk or telephone 01388 763501.

Moving Forward



As the New Year unfolds, 2022 promises to be a very exciting year in the Freemen calendar, giving us an opportunity to get together again in the Guild Hall and enjoy the Guild Day ceremonies. The Candlemas Guild Day will see eleven new members sworn into the ranks of the Freemen,

The Butchers Company 500th Year Celebrations event in May, will give us an opportunity to promote the rich history of the Company founded in 1520. We will be joined by the Worshipful Mayor of Durham Councillor Arnie Simpson and guests, to help us celebrate this milestone in the Freemen's history.

It is anticipated that the Annual Dinner will happen in October and I look forward to seeing a record number of Freemen at this special event in our calendar.

I mentioned in my foreword that we are currently working with Durham County Council to establish an award scheme to support apprentices through their training and recognise excellence in craft skills. This new exciting development project will encourage growth path innovation, offer opportunities to engage with employers, apprentices, and promote admission to the Freemen via servitude.

The initiative will strengthen partnerships, and future development to carry the organisation into the future.

The first award ceremony will take place at the Martinmas Guild Day 2022 and promises to be an exciting event in the Freemen calendar.

Our new structure, developed after the Sustainability Paper was introduced in 2019, has brought significant change in the way we share the workload and ideas, brought about by the introduction of Deputy Wardens into the management team. I can't express how important our Deputy Wardens and working groups are, without their commitment, development would simply not be taking place. I believe that together we can make a real difference, by facing the challenges of the future and moving forward positively, with relevance and purpose.

If you would like to become a Deputy Warden contact Kathleen Vasey the Freeman Secretary for more information.

You are all aware of the fantastic role our Charitable Trust plays in the community. If you know of any organisation or project that might be appropriate for the Trust to support please get in touch with Eric Bulmer the Chairman of the Charitable Trust.

It is also essential your contact details are up to date, I therefore ask that you forward any changes to your address, email and contact numbers to your Guild Warden or the Freeman Secretary.

John Booth
Chairman of the Wardens

