

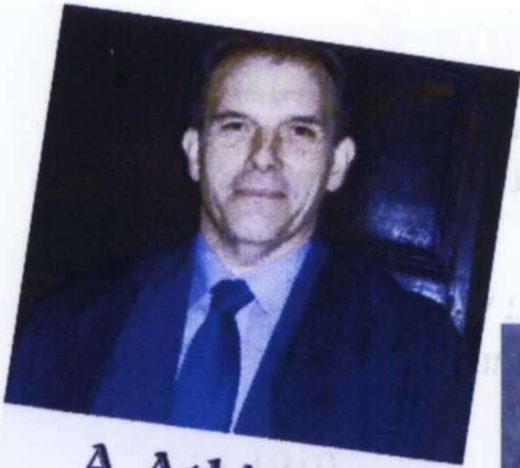


The City of Durham Freeman's News Letter

2009



Wardens



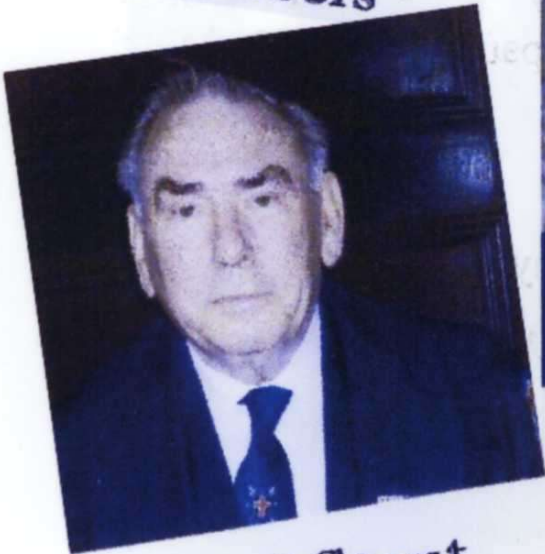
A. Atkinson.
Barbers



J. McElwee.
Cordwainers



J. Heslop.
Curriers



J. Stout.
Butchers



J. Atkinson.
Masons



E. Coldicott.
Plumbers



R. Brown.
Joiners



J. Magee.
Drapers

Introduction

2008 was a very busy year for the Freemen. We hope that the information set out in this Newsletter will outline the activities with which the Freemen have been involved and be of interest to you.

If you have any comments or observations that you would like to make please get in touch with the Warden of your Guild. Contact details of the Wardens are listed below.

Chairman J Heslop	- Curriers' Company	- 0191 3868264
A. Atkinson	- Barbers' Company	-
J.R. Stout	- Butchers' Company	- 0191 3866517
J.D. McElwee	- Cordwainers' Company	- 0191 3734394
James F. Magee	- Drapers' Company	- 0191 3845203
Robert R. Brown	- Joiners' Company	- 0191 3772271
John J. Atkinson	- Masons' Company	- 0191 3844946
Edwin H. Coldicott	- Plumbers' Company	- 0191 3866017

Dates For The Year 2009

Guild Days: Candlemas - 2nd February

May Day: 11th May

Lammas: 3rd August

Martinmas: 9th November

Trustee Meetings with Wardens:

30th January , 24th April, 25th September, 4th December

Visit To Newcastle Freemen: 6th June 2009 (provisional)

Annual Dinner: 17th October 2009 (provisional)

New Members

During 2008 we welcomed three new Freemen into the various Guilds. These

were: Michael Wilson - Curriers' Company (patrimony)

James Marsden - Curriers' Company (servitude)

Cliff Gilroy - Joiners' Company (servitude)

We hope they enjoy being Freemen and able to participate in our meetings and events. In addition we have a number of other applications who will be "called" during Guild Days in 2009. We look forward to their successful investiture.

Use of the Sands

The Sands continues to be a venue for a variety of events. We look forward to hosting the annual Easter Fair and welcoming the Moscow State Circus in September.

One of the difficulties we have encountered in recent times is the increased bureaucracy that is associated with public events such as these. The "Dreamscape" tragedy at the park in Chester-le-Street brought these matters into sharp focus and highlighted the need to ensure that all events are managed and monitored very carefully. All formal use of the Sands must satisfy the safety requirements of the Durham Public Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and carry appropriate insurances. In addition the Freeman are exploring our own public liability insurance in order to secure protection against any claims that might be made that include us as respondents.

We are also seeking to reinstate the gate to the Sands which was taken by vandals and which has allowed a variety of unauthorised and undesirable activities to be pursued. We have also written to the University and educational establishments to remind those in charge of events that permission to use the sands for organized activities must be sought before any activity takes place.

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Charitable Giving

Durham City Freeman are committed to supporting trade, crafts and vocational initiatives within the geographical and administrative limits of the City as well as promoting the City itself. We have continued to contribute to the welfare and benevolence of the City through charitable giving to a number of organisations.

Mayors Charity Appeal

This year the Mayor identified the County Durham Society for the Blind and Partially - sighted, as his official charity. The Freeman were happy to make a donation of £600 to the appeal.

St. Nicholas Bellringers Bell Restoration Appeal:

We were saddened to hear that the bells of our neighbouring Church of St. Nicholas were in need of restoration and happy to contribute to the appeal

Continued on **3**

....established by the bellringers to restore them. We donated £5000 to the appeal and hope that the bells will soon peal out again to welcome visitors and town-folk alike to the wonderful Church in our market place.

St Cuthbert's Hospice

Just before his sad death, our Chairman Alan Atkinson, spent some time with St. Cuthbert's Hospice. He was aware that although the catering arrangements at the Hospice provided an excellent service they were at full stretch and not able to offer an extended catering service to some of the functions that the Hospice hosts.

Durham City Freemen liaised with the managers and trustees of the Hospice to see how we could help. We donated £15000 to the Hospice which has been used to extend and refurbish the catering facilities. As a consequence guests and visitors are able to benefit from an enhanced service that has attracted both praise and thanks to a worthy and hard working establishment.

St.Cuthbert's Last Journey

The wooden sculpture of "St Cuthbert's Last Journey Home" carved by locally based artist, Fenwick Lawson, has attracted much critical acclaim. We were very interested to learn that an appeal had been launched to raise funds to make the sculpture into a bronze statue for permanent display in the City's Millennium Square. As a consequence the Freemen donated £2000 to the appeal and are delighted that the statue is now installed on the original pilgrim route and will attract pilgrims and visitors to the City for years to come.

Finchale Training College

Finchale Training College is a national specialist college based in Framwellgate Moor to the north of the City. It provides customized programmes of vocational rehabilitation to unemployed, disabled adults to help them gain and retain employment. The College has some 200 students at any one time half of whom are residential.

The College has been aware for some time that the accommodation offered to residential students has become less than ideal.....

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...It has begun a major programme of refurbishment and enhancement of the residential facilities and is appealing for financial support to secure the improvements.

Since the work of the College is closely allied to the training that is at the heart of the Freeman movement, Durham City Freeman have been pleased to be able to donate £10,000 to the appeal. The money will be used to convert two small and outdated residential units into a much larger and appropriate living space which will accommodate the particular needs of students for many years to come. The room will be named after the Durham City Freeman and will be dedicated when the conversion work has been completed.

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Church Service

On the 10th February 2008 the Freeman were invited to participate in a civic service at St Nicholas Church. We were able to join the procession of the Mayor with his Bodyguard, the Council Members and Officers to make a very striking ceremonial occasion. The Chairman of the Wardens read one of the lessons in a busy and well attended service.

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Freemen of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne

Earlier in 2008 we were delighted to welcome friends from the Freeman of Newcastle upon Tyne. We have a long and valued association with Newcastle Freeman but this is the first occasion that we have formally welcomed them to Durham. We had a very pleasant day together sharing time and the experiences of our respective organisations and meeting places. A fine decanter was given to us as a gift to mark the occasion and in return we presented our visitors with a framed photograph of Durham City kindly taken and prepared by John Atkinson (Warden of the Masons' Company).

We have been invited by the Newcastle Freeman to visit with them in the late spring of 2009 (provisionally 6 June 2009). The visit promises to be a very interesting and enjoyable event. Details will be circulated in due course when the arrangements have been finalized. We hope that as many Freeman and their partners as possible will be able to attend.

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Freemen of England and Wales

The 2008 Annual General Meeting of the Freemen of England and Wales, was held in Sale, Cheshire. Durham City Freemen were represented by Joe McElwee (Warden of the Cordwainers' Company) and John Heslop (Warden of the Curriers' Company and Chairman of the Wardens). The event was a sparkling affair which included a Civic Reception in Liverpool Town Hall and hosted by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool.

The AGM confirmed Colin Hardcastle as the new President. He succeeds Philip Bowman who chaired the meeting. Of particular interest to Freemen in the North East is the appointment of Stephen Healey as FEW Warden for the North. Stephen is a well known and respected Freemen of Newcastle upon Tyne and succeeds Joe Petty who filled the role for a number of years. Stephen will be the local point of contact between Guilds in the North and the FEW and will report on the activities of Northern Freemen to the meetings of the FEW Court.

The annual church service and parade was held in Hale and was a very colourful and impressive conclusion to a useful weekend.

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Annual Freemen's Dinner

The 2008 Annual Dinner of the Freemen returned to its traditional venue in the Town Hall following a temporary relocation to the Masonic Hall in 2007.

Once again our thanks go to Roger Norris (Chair of Trustees) who planned and organized a very enjoyable evening. Freemen and their friends and family from Durham were pleased to welcome friends and visitors from much further afield.

Our thanks go also to the speaker Arthur (Bill) Moyes who agreed to be our principle guest with little notice. Presentation is already in hand for the 2009 Dinner which will be held later in the year - in October. Details will be circulated when the planning has firmed up the arrangements.

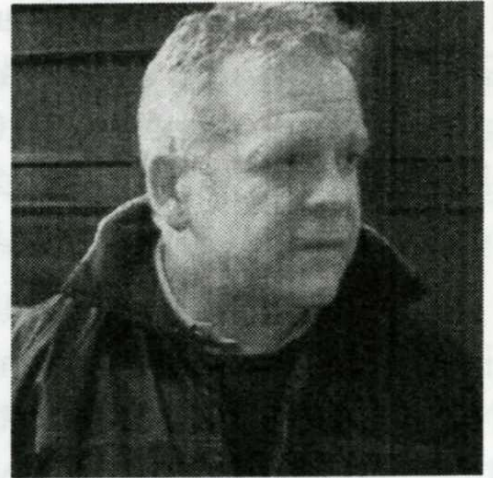
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Grassman

Since the death of Alan Atkinson Snr, the position of Grassman has been vacant. We are indebted to Ed Coldicott - Warden of the Plumbers' Company - for taking on temporary responsibility for oversight of the Sands and its management.

We are delighted that Dave Howard - a member of the Butchers' Company - has volunteered to take on this very important job. The herbage rights of the Freemen are central to our interests in the City and need to be monitored and managed in order that our responsibilities and rights are maintained.

This will be the first time that the Grassman has not been a Warden. This has been discussed by the Wardens and the Trustees and Dave has been invited to attend all meetings of the Wardens and Trustees as an ex-officio member. We look forward to working with Dave and benefitting from his enthusiasm and commitment.

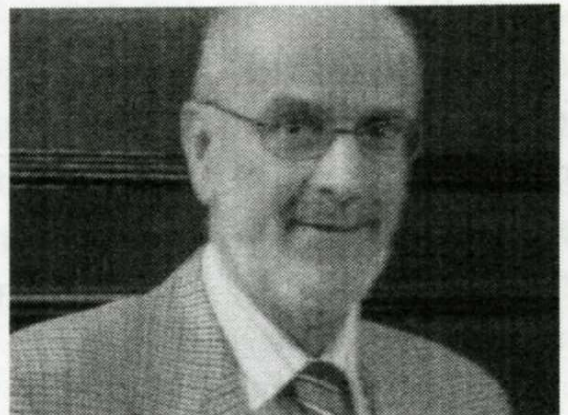


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Treasurer

Following the resignation last year of Mike McMinn who served us with great distinction as Treasurer and Trustee for many years, we are pleased to welcome Stewart Atkin as our new Treasurer and as a Trustee. Stewart is well known in the Durham area as a financial professional and also through his charitable involvement in a number of settings.

Stewart has already made a significant contribution to our financial planning and we look forward to working with him for many years to come.



Annual Distribution

The traditional distribution from our funds to Freemen living within the administrative boundary of Durham City was made in November at the Martinmas Guild Day. As indicated in the last news letter our Trustees advised us that each recipient of the distribution should sign a declaration that they will be responsible for any tax liabilities associated with the payment in order that the Freemen are not deemed to be employers or liable for deduction of tax at source.

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Borough Freedom Bill

At last we feel fairly confident that the rules regulating the admission of Freemen across the country will be changed to reflect modern times and contemporary culture. Although the Borough Freedom Bill is a Private Members Bill, it has the support of the Government and was drafted by Government officials. If it is enacted, it will empower local Freemen to establish their own admission arrangements without requiring a change to primary or secondary legislation. Principally it will make it possible for Freemen to admit women into the Guilds; a development that is long overdue and one that will be welcomed by Freemen across the land.

We will keep members informed of the progress of the Bill as the change in legislation will have significant and far reaching impact on the traditions and organisation of Durham City Freemen.

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Reorganisation of Local Government

On April 1st 2009, the existing arrangements for the administration and governance of Durham City will pass to a new Unitary Authority. The existing City Council will cease to exist and the responsibility for the affairs of the City will lie with Durham County Council.

This change will have significant potential for Durham City Freemen as our traditions, customs and rights are deeply embedded in the current organization of local government.....

Continued on **8**

.....We are alert to the difficulties that this will present and are examining the impact of the change and how it is to be managed. Fortunately we have a very competent board of Trustees who are working with the Wardens to ensure that our interests are protected and preserved. In particular we owe a great debt of gratitude to Philip Wills (Clerk and Receiver) and Norman Hart (Trustee) who are carefully guiding us through the technical and legal issues associated with the transfer of governance. We are also blessed with a Chair of Trustees who is tireless in his attention to the interests of the Freemen. Roger Norris has already begun to explore the mechanisms that will prevail in Local Government after 1st April 2009 with a view to establishing functional and harmonious working arrangements.

We thank our friends in the Durham City Council for the partnership and friendship they have shared with Durham City Freemen for many, many years and wish them all well as we move into an uncertain future

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Freemen's Ties

They are now available in two colours

Green or Purple

£10 each

Available through your Warden

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The late JIM BROWN

It was with great sadness that we learned of the sudden death of Jim Brown in October 2008. Jim had not been ill or unwell which made his death such a tragic shock to his family. Jim succeeded his father as Warden of the Joiners' Company and maintained a family involvement in the Freeman that has lasted for many years and generations. Our thoughts and prayers are with his widow Rita and family.

We are pleased Jim's son, Robert, put himself forward to succeed his father as Warden. Members of the Joiners' Company were contacted by the Chairman of the Wardens. The response was to elect Robert as his father's successor.

Robert's election to the Warden post was endorsed by the Trustees at their meeting in December and he was installed formally at the Candlemas Guild Day in February.

We thank Robert for taking up the role and wish him well as he takes forward a family tradition and a key Freeman responsibility.

Donations towards



St. Nicholas



The Journey



St. Cuthbert's Hospice



Finchale Training College