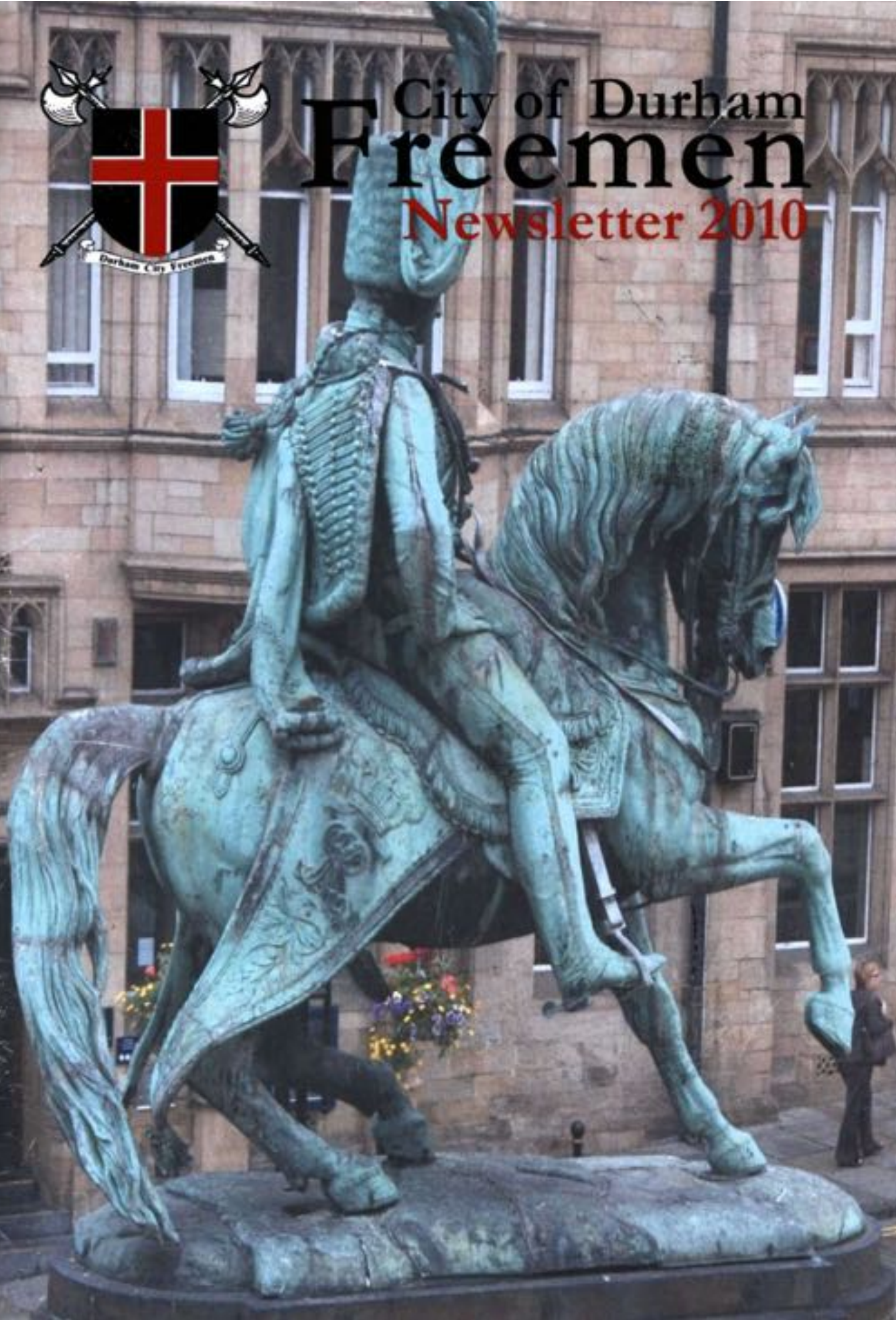


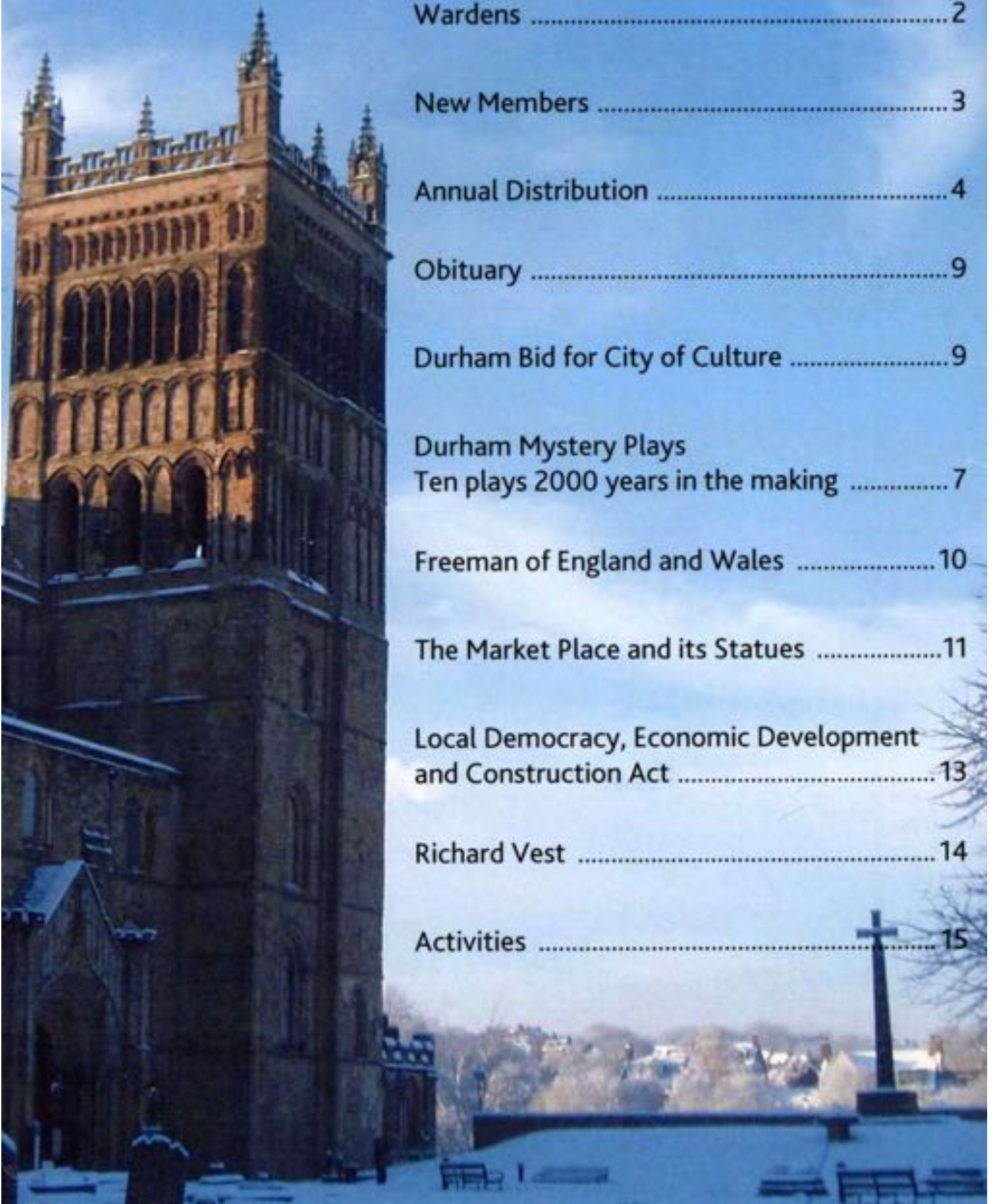


City of Durham Freemen Newsletter 2010



CONTENTS

Foreword	1
Wardens	2
New Members	3
Annual Distribution	4
Obituary	9
Durham Bid for City of Culture	9
Durham Mystery Plays Ten plays 2000 years in the making	7
Freeman of England and Wales	10
The Market Place and its Statues	11
Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act	13
Richard Vest	14
Activities	15



FOREWORD

Greetings.

I hope that the noughties were good to you and you are looking forward to the new decade.

2009 was a relatively quiet year for the Freemen. It was also one of the momentous for centuries. You will understand that contradiction when you come to the piece concerning the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act which has significant implications for the membership of Guilds across the land.



Our traditional activities have continued with a fair and a circus on the Sands. Our annual dinner was again a very enjoyable social occasion. An equally pleasant social event was our visit to the Freemen of Newcastle upon Tyne.

We were happy to welcome 4 new Freemen in 2009 and hope that they enjoy and value their membership.

The donations made by the Freemen to the Mayor's Charity and Finchale Training College have been put to good use and these projects are moving forward. St Nicholas Bells Restoration Appeal and Cuthbert's Last Journey, to which we also contributed, can now be heard and seen enriching the life of the City.

During 2009 Durham City Council was subsumed into the much larger unitary Authority of Durham County Council. A Chartered Trust has been established in the City which we hope will allow many of the traditions and heritage of the City to survive and prosper.

The City itself has also been in the news with a vigorous bid to become the nation's city of Culture in 2013. The geography of the market place has also been a source of controversy largely focussed on the location of the landmark statue of Lord Londonderry.

We are also excited that a tradition of the Guilds from medieval times is being revived with the production of Mystery Plays in various locations across the City.

The Freemen of England and Wales have a new President and a new Warden for the North. We look forward to the annual AGM and get together in September which this year will be held in Berwick upon Tweed

We hope that you will find the newsletter of interest and look forward to seeing you during 2010.

John Heslop - Chairman of the Wardens

Tel: 0191 3868264

Mob: 07792655031

e: hezza@talktalk.net

WARDENS

If you have any comments, observations or suggestions relating to any aspect of the work and organisation of Durham City Freemen please make contact with the Warden of your Company who will ensure that the issue is addressed.

Chairman:	John Heslop	Curriers' Company (0191 3868264)
	Alan Atkinson	Barbers' Company
	John Stout	Butchers' Company (0191 3866517)
	Joe McElwee	Cordwainers' Company (0191 3734394)
	James McGee	Drapers' Company (0191 3045203)
	Robert Brown	Joiners' Company (0191 3772271)
	John Atkinson	Masons' Company (0191 3844946)
	Ed Coldicott	Plumbers' Company (0191 3866017)

The activities and business of Durham City Freemen is overseen by the Trustees.

Chairman:	R. C. Norris, Esq.	(0191 384 2949)
Clerk and Receiver:	P. Wills, Esq.	(01388 603073)
Treasurer	S. Atkin, Esq.	(0191 523 8918)
	Col. R. Hirst, M.B.E., T.D., D.L.,	(0191 3864692)
	Dr. W. E. Chapman	(0191 3722 885)
	N. T. Hart, Esq.	(0191 384 0840)
	M. Proud, Esq.	(0191 386 7615)
	P. Bramwell, Esq.	(0191 386 8066)
	J.A. Cole, Esq.	(0191 386 9838)

Guild Days during 2010 will be held in the Guild Hall on the dates below. The meetings begin at 11.00 a.m. and are presided over by the Worshipful mayor of the City of Durham. All Freemen, their families and the general public are most welcome.

Candlemas	1 February	2010
May Day	10 May	2010
Lammas	9 August	2010
Martinmas	8 November	2010

Meetings of Trustees and wardens are also held in the Guild Hall commencing at 2.00p.m. and Chaired by the Chairman of the Trustees, Roger Norris.

29 January	2010
23 April	2010
24 September	2010
3 December	2010

The Annual Dinner of the Freemen will be held in the Town Hall on 16 October 2010

New Members

During 2009 4 new members were welcomed as Freemen:

Ronald Clarkson

Joiners' Company (Servitude) (May Day)



Mr James Robert Marsden

Curriers' Company (Patrimony) (Martinmas)

Robert Chapman

Butchers' Company (Servitude) (Martinmas)



Paul Vest

Drapers' Company (Patrimony) (Martinmas)

We are also processing a number of requests to become Freemen. Subject to there being satisfactory evidence of entitlement and no objections we look forward to awarding the Freedom to:

Guy Forster - Butchers' Company (Patrimony)

Stephen Forster - Butchers' Company (Patrimony)

Kris Heslop - Curriers' Company (Patrimony)

Richard Luther - Curriers' Company (Patrimony)

Kevin Lee Coxon - Barbers' Company (Patrimony)

Steven Clarkson - Joiners' Company (Patrimony)

Christopher Clarkson - Joiners' Company (Patrimony)

Annual Distribution

The traditional distribution from our funds to Freemen living within the boundary of Durham City was made in November at the Martinmas Guild Day. The level of payment was revised during 2009 to £40.00 per member.

As indicated in the last newsletter our Trustees advise 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.

The 2010 distribution will take place at the Martinmas Guild Day on 8 November 2010. Our records show that the following Freemen qualify for the payment:

**Resident in the City of Durham on the first day of January 2010
who are entitled to the Income of Properties and Investments
belonging to the Freemen**

BARBERS' COMPANY

ATKINSON, Alan, 28 Rowantree Avenue, Gilesgate Moor, DH1 1DU (Warden)

ATKINSON, C.A., 28 Rowantree Avenue, Gilesgate Moor, DH1 1DU

ATKINSON, D.T., 8 Featherstone Road, Newton Hall, DH1 5GW

DUFTON, A. F., 68 Mackintosh Court, DH1 1PZ

KITSON, G., 2 Rose Cottages, Station Road, West Rainton, DH4 6SG

SNOWDON, F.J., 22 Bay Court, Ushaw Moor, Durham DH7 7RU.

STONEBRIDGE, A., 1 Crawford Close, Sherburn, DH6 1JA

BUTCHERS' COMPANY

STOUT, J. R., 77 Buckinghamshire Road, Belmont, DH1 2BE (0191 386 6517) (Warden)

CHAPMAN, R., 22 Ashdown Av. Gilesgate Moor, DH1 1DD

DODDS, K.B. 32 Monks Crescent, Durham, DH1 1HD

HOWARD, D. R. 3 The Sands Flats, Durham City, DH1 1LH

LAWS, S., 25 Raby Road, Newton Hall, DH1 5NJ

MILBOURNE, M., 7 The Wynds, Esh Winning, DH7 9DT

PATTERSON, T.W., 12 Firtree Close, Brandon, DH7 8QY

PICKERING, G.R., 21 Ushaw Terrace, Ushaw Moor, DH7 7PD

WESENCRAFT, C., 51 Swinside Drive, Belmont, DH1 1AF

CORDWAINERS' COMPANY

McELWEE, J. D., 12 Rose Court, Esh Winning, DH7 9ND (0191 373 4394) (Warden)
CHILTON, Thomas, Flat 9, The Sands, DH1 1LH
DAVIDSON, Sidney, 20c Church Street, DH1 3DQ
DAVIDSON, P.1 Denver House, Broom Lane, Ushaw Moor, DH7 7LQ
DAVIDSON, R..P. 113 Grinstead Way, Carrville, DH1 1LY
HOPE, A., 49A Claypath, Durham
LUMLEY, D. M., 108 High Street South, Langley Moor, DH7 8EX

CURRIERS' COMPANY

HESLOP, J. 250 Finchale Road, DH1 5PR (0191 386 8264) (Warden)
GRAHAM, Neil William, 46 The Orchard, Pity Me, Durham, DH1 5DA
HOWARTH, Michael D., 2 Taylor Avenue, Bearpark, DH7 7AY
JONES, Derek N., 14 Pringle Place, New Brancepeth, DH7 7JB
KITSON, Leighton, 14 St Mary's Drive, West Rainton, DH4 6SP
MARSDEN, J. "Staffa", Hillcrest, Claypath, DH1 1RB
MCDONOUGH, A, 131 Woodland View, West Rainton, DH4 6RJ
RIDLEY, S. G., 53 Kepier Crescent, DH1 1PG
WILMSHURST, I. S., 18 Gardners Place, Regent Green, Langley Moor, DH7 8XZ

DRAPERS' COMPANY

MAGEE, James Fawcett, 26 South Crescent, DH1 4NF (0191 384 52030) (Warden)
MAGEE, A. F., 57 Priors' Grange, Pitlington, DH6 1DA
MAGEE, S. J., 8 Durham Moor Crescent, Framwellgate Moor, DH1 5AW
MIDDLETON, Alan, 60 Gilesgate, Durham, DH1 1HY
MILBOURNE, F., 5 Edge Court, Sunderland Road, DH1 2JY
MILBOURNE, R. J., 32 William Street, Bowburn, DH6 5DY
VASEY, Charles, Jnr., 29E Hylton Road, DH1 5LS
VASEY, J. F., 23 Wakenshaw Road, Gilesgate, Durham, DH1 1EW
VEST, Alan Cruddass, 54 Alnwick Road, DH1 5NN
VEST, D. C., 18 Douglas Villas, Durham, DH1 1JL
VEST, Gary, 4 Commercial Street, Brandon, DH7 8PL
VEST, Paul, 82 Moor Crescent, Gilesgate, DH1 1DD
VEST, Richard, 82 Moor Crescent, Gilesgate Moor, DH1 1DJ
VEST, Robert Cruddass, 54 Alnwick Road, DH1 5NN
VEST, Tom Williamson, 70 Whinney Hill, DH1 3BG
VEST, W. H., 31 Brandon House, Grove Road, Brandon, DH7 8BW
WILSON, Thomas Dobson, 143 Bek Road, DH1 5LH

JOINERS' COMPANY

BROWN, Robert Ridley, 73 The Grove, Coxhoe, DH6 4AP (Warden)

BROWN, Adam Ridley, 73 The Grove, Coxhoe, DH6 4AP

BROWN, D.R., 2 Cooperative Terrace, Coxhoe, Durham, DH6 4DQ

BRYDEN, R. A., 7 East View, Sherburn Hill, DH6 1PL

CLARKSON, R., 8 Valley View Ushaw Moor, DH7 7LS

DAWSON, P. R., 1 Farewell View, Langley Moor, DH7 8JX

FORD, A.E., 5 Cooperative Terrace, Coxhoe, DH6 4BQ

FORD, S. W., 92 Lansdowne Road, Coxhoe, DH6 4DL

GILROY, C. 17 Deans Walk, Gilesgate, DH1 1HA

HESP, E., 19 Oswald Court, Durham, DH1 3DH

JOPLING, T., 2 Mitford Close, High Shincliffe, DH1 2QE

NEALE, David Charles, 98 The Grove, Coxhoe, DH6 4AP

NEALE, M.P., 2 Burn Street, Bowburn, DH6 5AN

NEALE, S. T. E., 15 Grange Crescent, Coxhoe, DH6 4BD

MASONS' COMPANY

ATKINSON, John Joseph, 15 Tenter Terrace, DH1 4RD (0191 384 4946) (Warden)

CLARK, C. D., 84 Swinside Drive, Belmont, DH1 1AF

CLARK, Peter, 14 Pond Street, Shincliffe, DH1 2PS

DENT, N. R., 8 Red Briar Walk, Pity Me, DH1 5EX

DENT R.N. 16 West Farm Court, Brrompark, DH7 7RN

ELLIOTT, P. S., 6 Howlcroft Villas, Neville's Cross, DH1 4DU

GRANLUND, Alan C., 82 Wantage Road, Carrville, DH1 1LR

JONES, John R., 18 Long Acres, Gilesgate, DH1 1JF

TINDALE, Peter, Paradise Farm, Shadforth, Durham, DH6 1NJ

WESENCRAFT, J., 49 Highgate, Durham, DH1 4GA

YOUNG, G. F., 32 Birkdale Gardens, Belmont, DH1 2UJ

PLUMBERS' COMPANY

COLDICOTT, Edwin H., Cartref, Hillcrest, DH1 1RB (0191 386 6017) (Warden)

ABSON, P., 1 Stanhope Close, Meadowfield, Durham, DH7 8XE

DUNNILL, G, White House, Neville's Cross, Durham, DH1 4JP

DUNNILL, K, White House, Neville's Cross, Durham, DH1 4JP

HEAD, David C., 1 South Green, Hett Village, DH6 5LY

HERON, Harold, 4 Mitchell Street, DH1 4DQ

HERON, Leslie, 19 Lowlands Road, Brandon, DH7 8NN

INGLIS, S., 30 Willow Tree Avenue, Gilesgate, Durham, DH1 1EA

JOHNSON, Peter Alan, 24 Mains Court, DH1 5EY

ROBSON, Harry, 16 Winchester Road, Newton Hall, DH1 5QU

WATSON, Hayden, Newholme, Sherburn Road, DH1 2LA

WILLEY, B. F., 35 Broad Meadows, Bowburn, DH6 5DA

WORTLEY, Melvin, 4 Chapel View, West Rainton, DH4 6RS

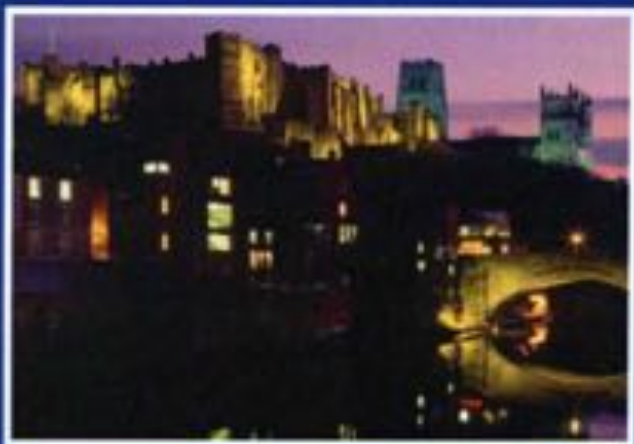
Obituary

We regret to record the death, on 9th April 2009 of Dr George Anthony Lobjoit Johnson aged 83years. The Funeral Service was at Durham Cathedral on 22nd April. Tony had retired as a Trustee of the Freeman recently due to ill health. He was a distinguished colleague of Professor Sir Kingsley Dunham and retired from Durham University as Emeritus Reader – though he continued to follow his profession. He also took up an important role in the management of Durham Cathedral Voluntary Stewards, always providing a friendly welcome there with his enthusiasm for his Cathedral and his City and with his delightful smile. He was an expert on the geology of the North East of England. Tony had lived in Quarry Heads Lane for many years and Trustees and Wardens alike valued his kindly, generous, thoughtful and self-deprecating wisdom.

We also regret to record the death in 2009 of John Barlow of Banbury, Oxfordshire, who was admitted to the Plumbers' Company on 8th February 1999.

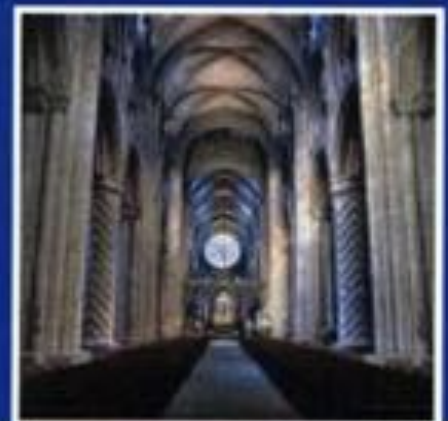


Durham bid for UK City of Culture



Durham will be representing the North East in the new UK City of Culture competition which was launched on the back of the success of Liverpool's tenure as European Capital of Culture in 2008. One of 14 cities / areas to put in a submission in December. Durham's bid is centred on its picture perfect city but is designed to bring benefits to the whole of the County and the region, a key feature of what is expected of the eventual winner.

Putting 'culture' centre-stage gives Durham the chance to raise its profile as a visitor destination, create new jobs, generate investment and create a lasting legacy for the County's residents. The bid team are waiting to hear if Durham has reached a shortlist invited to submit a more detailed bid and the winner should be announced at the end of the Summer.



Back the bid at www.durhamcityofculture.co.uk

Durham Mystery Plays

Ten plays 2000 years in the making

Article by Simon Stallworthy – Director of the Gala Theatre

The tradition of mystery plays goes back to medieval times, and they were most common in the 15th and 16th centuries.

They present the 'history of the world' from the mystery of God's creation, through the birth, death and resurrection of Christ, to the Last Judgement.

To the people who first drew together to perform and watch the Plays, the battle between Good and Evil was not theoretical theology, but an all-pervading fact of life. Disease and sudden death were an ever-present threat.

The cycle of plays is made up of a number of individual pageants. These separate episodes were originally presented by different guilds of craftsmen - which were also known as 'mysteries', hence 'mystery plays'. Different guilds often presented highly appropriate stories, for example, the Grocers, Bakers and Millers performed The Last Supper, and the Ironmongers undertook The Crucifixion.

The plays grew over the following centuries into huge pageants. Some cycles had as many as 40 plays and would take many days to perform. Some academics cite plays starting at 4.30am and, following several performances around the town on a cart, the exhausted players would finish by torchlight at midnight.



Unfortunately, in the late 16th Century, as England became more anti-papist puritanical, many began to call for the end of the mystery plays which some claimed smacked of popery.

It is recorded that Elizabeth's spymaster, Walsingham, insisted that all scripts should be handed into local authorities for censorship against papist doctrine and other anti-liturgical content. It is believed that hundreds, if not thousands, of scripts were promptly burned.

Four cycles - or part cycles - did, however, survive. York, Wakefield, Chester and the oddly named, 'N - Town' plays are believed to be the only remaining 15th century sets of mystery plays in existence.

A single play survives from the cycles at Newcastle, Norwich and Northampton, and from Brome in Suffolk. All the evidence points to widespread staging of Biblical drama in later medieval England, and it is almost certain that mystery plays were performed in Durham by the Guilds of the City, though no evidence of the cycle survives.

Durham Mysteries 2010 is an innovative and contemporary revival of Durham's medieval mystery play cycle for a modern audience.

Gala Theatre's Simon Stallworthy is the project's Creative Director: "When I first moved to Durham I thought there might be some mystery plays, like with York, but pretty quickly I found they had been lost over the years. I thought, it be interesting to take the mystery plays - The Fall of Lucifer, Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, The Nativity, Cain and Abel - as a starting point and commission some new plays by asking writers, 'Which mystery plays would you choose?'; How would you write it?"

Durham Mysteries 2010 will be staged 27 - 29 May 2010 at the Gala Theatre and Durham Cathedral, with the centrepiece being the culmination of the cycle performed on The Sands in a purpose built arena stage. Each play will be performed by a regional community group, such as a college, or a village, or youth theatre, reminiscent of the medieval tradition of a separate guild taking on a play.

More information can be found at www.durhammysteries.co.uk.





Freemen of England and Wales (FEW)



Philip Bowman

It was with great sadness that the FEW learned of the sudden and unexpected death of its immediate Past-President, Philip Bowman.

Philip was a member of the Company of Scriveners in the York Guild of Freemen. He served as Master of the York Guild and subsequently as President of FEW from 2005 until 2008. His funeral took place at Bishopthorpe Church in York on 2 September 2009 when many FEW members were present.

Warden for the North

During 2009 Tom Petty stood down as FEW's Warden for the North after a number of years service. He has been succeeded by Captain Stephen Healy, Freeman of Newcastle upon Tyne. We were delighted at Stephen's appointment and were happy to welcome him to our May Day Guild Day on 11 May 2009.



Annual General Meeting



The Annual General Meeting of the Freemen of England and Wales was held in Stafford in September 2009. The National President Colin Hardcastle managed the business of the meetings and the Freemen of Stafford hosted what was a very warm social occasion.

Durham City Freemen were represented at the AGM by John Heslop (Warden of the Curriers' Company & Chairman of the Wardens) and Joe McElwee (Warden of the Cordwainers' Company) who will be happy to provide details of the AGM and its outcomes.



The Market Place and its Statues

There has been considerable controversy in recent months concerning the remodelling of the Market Place. Plans to make the area more accessible and amenable with seating and improved surfacing are not accepted by everyone as a suitable development of this ancient space.

Perhaps most controversy has been generated by the part of the plan which would see the relocation of the statue of the Marquess of Londonderry. The proposal is to move the statue to a site at the head of Silver Street and facing toward St Nicholas' Church. Currently the statue has been removed and taken for restoration.

Roger Norris writes:

The 3rd Marquess of Londonderry, the founder of Seaham Harbour, has been elegantly commemorated in Durham Market Place since 2nd December 1861 in the form of a fine equestrian monument by brothers Raffaele and Michele Monti. The extensive iron frame has supported the lively and admired statue, and from an original plaster of Paris model has been created the largest statue of its kind, at the time, made by the innovative method of electrotyping, or galvano-plastic. George Walker's contemporary guide to Durham says "It may be said that Galvanism is to sculpture, what printing is to literature."



The Marquess in full dress army uniform, astride his horse, faced towards Saddler Street and Silver Street and provided a symmetry with the Guild Hall. This has recently been enhanced at the far end of the Market Place by the repaired statue of Neptune and its historic allusion to the provision of running water to the City early in the 18th century.

Marquess Charles' wife, Frances Anne, had paid for the complete rebuilding of the chancel of the nearby St Nicholas Church in 1858. It was all a part to the major building works for the Town Hall, the New Markets and St Nicholas' Church, of which the Town Hall interior is the most imaginative, spectacular and colourful reminder of the gifts and values of craftsmanship, work and artistry.

At noontide on Wednesday 28th October 2010 the equestrian statue was removed from its plinth and the head cut from the body of the Marquess. This unnecessary humiliation probably indicates the attitude of the planners to the significant body of objectors to the radical and controversial proposals for the Market Place. Ostensibly the statue has been

taken for repair and cleaning – though it is clear that the original intention of the artists' process was to achieve a patina reminiscent of classical Greek and Roman bronzes. The Planning Committee of the new Unitary Authority of Durham County Council passed the proposals for the relocation of the statue, which emanated from Durham 2020 Vision, by a majority of one vote.

Another part of the "revitalisation" plan would see the relocation of the much travelled statue of Neptune to a site outside of the Market square.



Neptune, the Roman god of the sea, was located in the Market Place in 1729 when he was given to the City by George Bowes.

George Bowes was a very active developer of the Durham coalfield during the 18th Century. He was elected MP for County Durham in 1727 (probably by the Freemen at the time!) He had a number of ideas that would enable collier ships to gain access to Durham and carry coal to the lucrative markets in the south.

None of the ideas were realised but as a reminder of his vision he presented Neptune to the City. Originally the statue was a "pant-cover" sitting atop a public drinking well. Neptune remained there until 1923 when it was decided that he should be moved to Wharton Park. Sadly vandals and mother nature reduced the statue to a sorry state until restoration work was carried out in the 1980s.

After a thankfully brief stay in the gas showrooms in Claypath he was returned to the Market Place in 1991, 68 years after he was removed. At the time of writing his future location is uncertain.

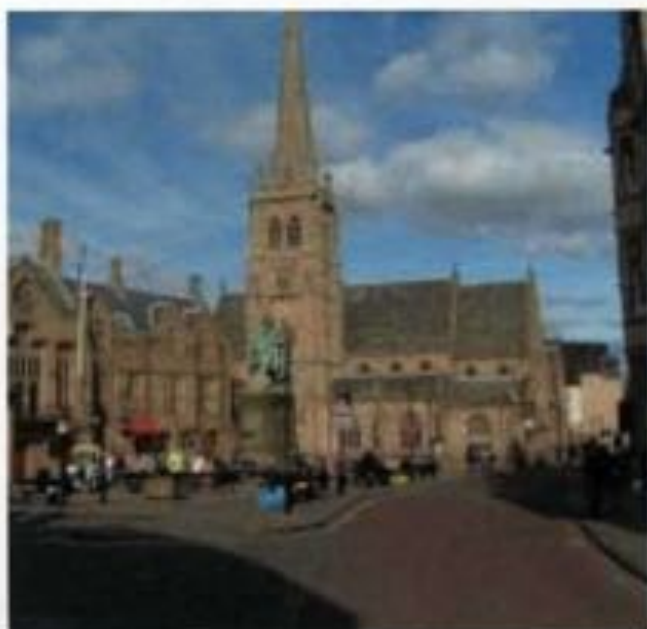


Illustration of the market place in 1830, showing Neptune and the piazza in front of the church. The building in the far corner next to the church is the New Place of the Neville family, and to its left stands the Guild Hall.

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act

For a number of years we watched the progress of the Borough Freedom Bill through Parliament. It was a very simple Bill designed to enable Guilds to revisit their membership criteria in general and more particularly to empower them to admit women into the Freedom. Sadly the Bill foundered every time it was introduced and Freemasonry across the country was frustrated and irritated.

In 2009 the Government agreed to incorporate legislation relating to this issue in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill. Freemen are grateful for the contributions of local and national politicians in drafting and amending the Bill which went through the parliamentary process and became law when it received the Royal Assent on 12 November 2009.



The Act makes it possible for Guilds to determine their admission criteria locally and for these decisions to be endorsed by national legislation. In particular it gives women the same entitlement as men to the Freedom.

The Wardens and Trustees of Durham City Freemen are delighted that this legislation is in place. We are currently examining the implications of the Act and what we need to do in order to ensure that its provisions are used to maximise our potential as an organisation.

Richard Vest

We were delighted to be contacted by Richard Vest of the Drapers' Company who has recently embarked upon a career in the Army. He writes:

Well I guess the best place to start while discussing the Army would be its selection process.

I went to Glencourse in Scotland where I was tested both physically and medically over the period of two days. For my medical they had to make sure that I met the right criteria to pass and had no defects in my health. For the physical side of things I had to attend a 1.5 mile run in which the pass time had to be under 10 minutes. Fortunately I ran the course in 9.18 which was a personal best at the time. After the two days were finished I had a final interview in which I was welcomed to the Army. It was a great relief to me that I finally made it after a long process of application.



I then went on to my basic training which would be 14 weeks of introducing us to the ways of the army and moulding us into soldiers. It was a time of ups and downs. I spent 20 weeks in total in basic training as a result of breaking my arm half way through. When I finally made it through to the end it was all worth it as my family watched my pass-out parade, one of the proudest moments of my life.

I am currently in phase 2 at Winchester where I am learning my trade with the AGC SPS. I am hoping to progress throughout the army in the future and tackle anything that comes my way, which will also make me a better person.

The Adjutant General's Corps is a corps in the British Army responsible for many of its general administrative services. As of 2002, the AGC had a staff of 7,000 people. It was formed on April 6, 1992 through the amalgamation of several separate services.

The Staff and Personnel Support (SPS) Branch was formed from the Royal Army Pay Corps and the Women's Royal Army Corps, as well as the staff clerks of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, followed by the All Arm's Clerks from the remainder of the British Army.

Activities

Visit to Freemen of Newcastle upon Tyne

Some 40 or so Freemen from Durham City accompanied by their wives and partners were welcomed at Newcastle Civic Centre by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Michael Cookson and Lady Mayoress, Mrs Doreen Cookson. The Durham Freemen were accompanied by the Dennis Southwell, the Worshipful Mayor of Durham and Mrs Elspeth Southwell, the Mayoress.



Speeches of welcome were made on behalf of our hosts by the Lord Mayor and by the Vice Chairman of the Stewards Committee, David Wilson. The Lord Mayor's Office presented a terrific buffet lunch which was followed by a guided tour of the Civic Centre including the Silver Gallery and the Council Chambers.

Our hosts then took the Durham party on a guided tour of Newcastle upon Tyne. The visit included many of the areas in which the Freemen of Newcastle have an interest such as the Town Moor and Holy Jesus Bungalows.

The tour ended at the Guildhall where a city guide gave a brief history of the building. Newcastle Freemen were presented with a table top glass candle holder bearing Durham City's coat of arms. Our hosts in return presented us with Robin Walker's History of the Newcastle Freemen and a commemorative plate. John Heslop expressed a vote of thanks on behalf of Durham City Freemen which was responded to by David Wilson.



Easter Fair

Once again we were delighted to welcome the Easter Fair to the Sands which has been run by the Clark family for many years. The Fair was once again a resounding success and enjoyed thoroughly by the people of the City and beyond. The land was left as found by the organisers and for that we are once more very grateful.

Circus

The Moscow State Circus visited the Sands in September and provided the community with a colourful and exciting event. Once again our Grassman reported that the site had been left in good order.



Annual Dinner

Once more the freemen are in the debt of our Chairman of Trustees Roger Norris who yet again organised a very successful and most enjoyable annual dinner. More than 70 guests enjoyed a wonderful meal and social occasion.

We were delighted to welcome James Ramsbotham DL as our guest and after-dinner speaker. James is Chief Executive of the North East Chamber of Commerce and gave an interesting and enjoyable talk. As ever we were made most welcome by the staff of the Town Hall to whom we offer our sincere thanks.



St Nicholas Bells Restoration

The restoration of the bells at St Nicholas Church in the market Place was a beneficiary of support from the Freeman during 2009. We are delighted that the bells are now reinstated and ringing out once again over the City from our neighbour. Wardens and Trustees have been invited to take part in a service of celebration and dedication on 30 January 2010. We look forward to that and to remembering Alan Atkinson to whom our involvement is dedicated,



Commemorative Plaque

We are delighted that the Parochial Church Council and the Diocese have agreed that a plaque be installed in the bell ringing chamber which marks the involvement of the freemen in the restoration and dedicates the contribution to Alan Atkinson, who died in 2007. Alan was the former Chairman of the Wardens and Warden of the Barbers' Company

