



# City of Durham **Freemen**

Newsletter 2012



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# Foreword

Happy New Year for 2012.

2012 promises to be perhaps the most significant year in many centuries for the Freeman of Durham City. Our efforts to change our membership criteria to make it possible to recruit women Freeman have finally been successful. At the Lammas Guild Day in August 17 women applicants had their First Call. A subsequent Second Call was made at the Martinmas Guild Day in November. No objections have been raised so on 6 February this year 17 women will become the first ever female Freeman in our history. More on that is reported later.

Our involvement in the community has continued. We have now given in excess of £65,000 to support community projects and organisations in the past 10 years. Perhaps the most exciting of these involvements is the prospect of sponsoring an apprentice employed with the Cathedral's Dean and Chapter. This takes us back to our roots in trades and crafts and reinforces our association with the Cathedral.

Our greater numbers and higher public profile has resulted in a lot of interest from the press over the year. The enhanced coverage has prompted the Wardens and Trustees to adopt a Press Protocol which I draw attention to in this issue of the Newsletter.



It is a matter of concern that our records of Freeman who live beyond the boundaries of the City District are incomplete. We are trying to rectify this but need members to tell us of anyone who is a Freeman but who does not seem to be included in our mailings. Could any change of address also be passed on to me please?

We also continue to maintain our legal interests in land from which we draw our income. Our Clerk and Receiver along with Trustees have spent many hours in negotiation with a variety of bodies in order to clarify and reinforce our situation and for this the Freeman are deeply grateful.

Finally I am delighted to report that during 2011 I was able to meet on a number of occasions with members who are interested in becoming more involved with the organisation and to have a greater awareness of our affairs. The annual diary now includes scheduled dates for these meetings to which I cordially invite all members.

John Heslop  
Tel: 0191 386 8264 | Mob: 07792 655031  
e: [hezza@talktalk.net](mailto:hezza@talktalk.net)

## Philip Wills - Clerk & Receiver

The Sands - Review of 2011

2011 has seen a great deal of activity in respect of the legal affairs of The Freeman. Detailed discussion with the County Council has been taking place on a regular basis with regard to safeguarding the rights of the Freeman. This resulted in a draft Deed which records the basis of The Freeman's grazing rights and the right to hold circuses and fairs on The Sands. This document would also serve as a basis for applying for registration of the rights at the Land Registry.

The draft document has yet to be finalised and executed as there is still some way to go on the negotiated terms between the County Council and the Freeman.

The Freeman have agreed in principle to dispose of their interest over a small section of land immediately adjoining the former ice rink. This is to allow the former ice rink site to be disposed of by the County Council. The Freeman have employed Rook Mathews Sayer, valuers, and BHP Law, solicitors to agree terms and the issue is likely to be concluded in 2012.

2011 was also a year during which a rent review became due for the car parks on The Sands. Negotiations with the Estates Department at the County Council are well underway and it is anticipated that these will be concluded during 2012.

During the course of the year a number of unusual projects for the use of The Sands were discussed. Of considerable interest was the proposed production of Peter Pan in a large marquee. This would have been a major first for Durham and the region. After numerous visits and meetings with representatives of the Freeman, sadly the production became a victim of the present economic climate but it is hoped that similar proposals will be forthcoming in the future. Universal Pictures also requested use of The Sands for filming a major Hollywood film. Sadly, filming was withdrawn from Durham due to budget cuts and the visit was cancelled.

The annual visit of the Easter Fair took place and was well supported by residents of the city. Although there were a number of approaches by circuses, (including Big Kid, Moscow State) the Freeman agreed to allow a new circus – Circus Vegas, from Ireland to use The Sands in the autumn. This was a successful event and the site was left in excellent condition by the operators. A number of proposed events were also rejected as unsuitable.



Philip Wills  
Clerk and Receiver



# Diary Dates for 2012

## Guild Days

(Commencing at 11.00 a.m.)

The meetings are always on a Monday and begin at 11.00 a.m. Guild Days are presided over by the Worshipful Mayor of the City of Durham. All Freemen, their families and the general public are most welcome. Calls for new members and subsequent inauguration take place on Guild Days.

- 6 February 2012 (Candlemas)
- 14 May 2012 (May Day)
- 13 August 2012 (Lammas)
- 5 November 2012 (Martinmas)

## Meetings of Wardens

(Commencing at 1.00 p.m.)

Wardens meet together in advance of their meetings with Trustees (see below) in order to discuss agenda items and other business. The meetings are held in the Guild Hall commencing at 1.00 p.m. and chaired by the Chairman of the Wardens, John Heslop.

- 27 January 2012
- 4 May 2012
- 28 September 2012
- 7 December 2012

## Meetings of Trustees and Wardens

(Commencing at 2.00 p.m.)

Trustees and Wardens meet four times a year. These meetings are also held in the Guild Hall. These are traditionally held on a Friday commencing at 2.00 p.m. and chaired by the Chairman of the Trustees, Roger Norris.

- 27 January 2012
- 4 May 2012
- 28 September 2012
- 7 December 2012

## Member meetings

(Commencing at 6.00 p.m.)

Member meetings are a relatively new innovation and are arranged in response to Freemen who want to have greater awareness of the organisation and play a more active part in its affairs. The meetings are held in the Guild Hall on a Thursday beginning at 6.00 p.m.

- 12 January 2012
- 5 April 2012
- 13 September 2012
- 22 November 2012

## Annual Dinner

The Annual Dinner of the Freemen will be held in the Town Hall on 13 October 2012.

# City of Durham Freemen



With thanks to Roger Norris – Chairman of the Trustees.

The traditional objects of Guilds to which the Freemen belong are to maintain high standards of workmanship by Durham City Apprentices and to engender good fellowship in society and religion. By early modern times sixteen Guilds were established in the City of Durham:

## 1. Weavers and Websters (1450)

*(A webster is a weaver, a term deriving from the Old English webbestre, that is, a woman weaver, extended to include male weavers.)*

## 2. Cordwainers (1458)

*(A cordwainer works with leather for shoes and boots – the name derives from cordovan, alluding to the trade centre of Cordoba, Andalusia, Spain, which, when subject to the Damascus Caliphate in the 11th and 12th centuries, was known for its white goatskin.)*

## 3. Barber Surgeons, Waxmakers, Ropers and Stringers (1468)

## 4. Skinners and Glovers (1507)

## 5. Butchers (1520)

## 6. Goldsmiths, Plumbers, Pewterers, Potters, Painters, Glaziers and Tin Plate Workers (1532)

## 7. Barkers and Tanners (1547)

*(A barker gets bark from trees or logs and extracts the bitter tannin for the process of leather-tanning.)*

## 8. Drapers and Tailors (1549)

## 9. Merchants (incorporating Grocers (1345), Mercers (1393), Salters (1394), Ironmongers (1464) and Haberdashers (1467) (1561)

## 10. Fullers and Feltmakers (1565)

*(A fuller dealt with woolen cloth at an early stage in production, cleaning and thickening it to get rid of dirt or grease. He fulled or whitened or purified the cloth. It was a messy process and involved stretching the cloth on frames or tenters, hence tenterhooks.)*

## 11. Curriers and Tallow Chandlers (1570)

*(A currier is a curer of leather (with brine or salt or low heat to get rid of bacteria and excess moisture), preparatory to clean-soaking, liming, tanning (with tannin or chromium sulphate) or tawing with alum.)*

## 12. Freemasons, Rough Masons, Wallers, Slaters, Paviours, Plasterers and Bricklayers (1594)

13. Blacksmiths, Lorimers, Locksmiths, Cutlers, Bladesmiths and Girdlers (1610)

*(A lorimer (or loriner) is a maker of harnesses, bits, spurs and metals for bridles and saddles – the word comes from the Latin lorum, plural lora, viz. reins. A girdler makes belts or girdles – his craft was often associated with that of cordwainer.)*

14. Saddlers and Upholsterers (1659)

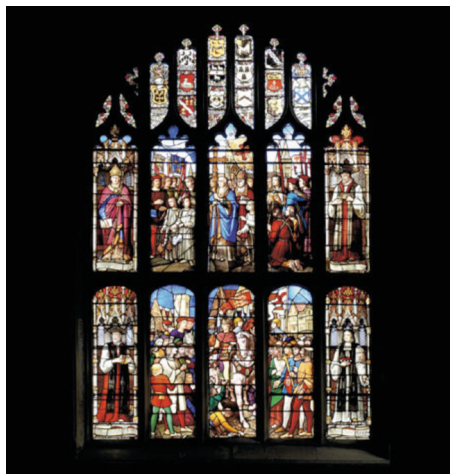
15. Carpenters, Joiners, Wheelwrights, Sawyers and Coopers (1661)

16. Dyers and Listers (1667)

*(A lister or litster was a dyer of cloth, etymology Middle English litster to dye.)*

Of these the Barbers, Butchers, Cordwainers, Curriers, Drapers, Joiners, Masons and Plumbers survive.

Admission of Freemen is regulated by the Durham City Council Act 1985 (Elizabeth II 1985 Chapter xxix) providing admission by Servitude (completion of an Apprenticeship in Durham City) or by Patrimony.



Durham City Freemen hold the Herbage Rights on The Sands and the historic right to erect Market Stalls. Their quarterly Guild Days for the Admission of Freemen take place in the Guild Hall when each applicant swears an oath of loyalty to the Sovereign, the Bishop and the Mayor, as well as fealty to the Society and Fraternity of the Art and Mystery of their assigned Craft Company. The Freemen Plate is displayed in the Guild Hall together with armorials and pictures.

# Wardens & Trustees

On the 1st January 2012

## 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 386 8264)
David Atkinson	
Barbers' Company	(0191 375 0855)
John Stout	
Butchers' Company	(0191 386 6517)
Joe McElwee	
Cordwainers' Company	(0191 373 4394)
James Magee	
Drapers' Company	(0191 304 5203)
Robert Brown	
Joiners' Company	(0191 377 2271)
John Atkinson	
Masons' Company	(0191 384 4946)
Harry Robson	
Plumbers Company	(0191 386 6017)

## Trustees

The activity 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.	(0191 384 0840)

Treasurer:	
S. Atkin Esq.	(0191 523 8918)
P. Bramwell Esq.	(0191 386 8066)
Dr. W. E. Chapman	(0191 372 2885)
P. Conway Esq.	(0191 386 8216)
N. T. Hart Esq.	(0191 384 0840)
G. Oliver Esq.	(0191 386 7471)
M. Proud Esq.	(0191 386 7615)



*Jim Magee (Warden of the Drapers Company)*



*John Atkinson (Warden of Masons Company)  
and Norman Hart (Trustee)*



## Women Membership

The Freemen have been aware for a number of years that our admission criteria which restricted the membership to men were totally anachronistic in the modern world. It has been widely reported that we have tried to change the criteria in order that women can be eligible for the Freedom as well as their male colleagues and family members. We thought that the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act of 2009 had solved our problems. Sadly our legal advice was that since admission to the Durham Freemen was regulated by the Durham City Act of 1975 there was still an obstacle to overcome. After a number of exchanges with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government we were advised that the Durham City Act had to be interpreted in the context of the new legislation and we were therefore free to modify our criteria.

To date we have 23 applications for the Freedom submitted by women and other expressions of interest have also been received. It is particularly pleasing that we not only have women joining us as Hereditary Freemen but also women who are following the Durham and Guild Servitude route into the Freedom.

We look forward to this new dimension to the City of Durham Freemen and welcome applications from anyone who is eligible to join us.



*(Photograph Courtesy of The Northern Echo)*

*Lynn Swann – who served her apprenticeship with Stuart Wright Undertakers and is eligible through both Durham and Guild Servitude as she works in Durham and Stuart is a Freeman of the City.*

## Membership Information

On the first day of January 2011 there were 89 in-district members (who live within the traditional administrative boundaries of the City) and 54 ex-district members.

In-district members are eligible to receive an annual distribution from Freeman income. In 2012 this will be paid out at the Martinmas Guild Day on 5 November 2012.

Criteria for membership of the City of Durham Freeman are:

### **Guild Servitude;**

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

### **Durham Servitude;**

Applicants must have 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 whether or not such trade is the trade of an extant guild;

### **Hereditary Freedom;**

Applicants must be the son or daughter of a Freeman of the City of Durham.

### **Customary Freedom;**

Males and females who have attained the age of 18 years who are not otherwise qualified in accordance with the criteria above may be admitted as Freeman in accordance with past precedent established through custom and practice and approved by the Wardens.

### **Honorary Freedom**

Durham County Council can confer Honorary Freedom to individuals that it considers to be worthy. The Honorary Freedom is separate and distinct from the Freedom overseen by Wardens and Trustees of the City of Durham Freeman.

Anyone wishing to become a Freeman should contact the Warden of the appropriate Company or the Chairman of the Wardens. All applicants should be able to provide sufficient documentary evidence of entitlement for consideration by the Wardens of the Guilds meeting collectively. The decision of the Wardens in respect of any claim to Freedom of the City shall be final.

Because of the increased numbers of applicants and associated cost implications, the Wardens and Trustees have agreed with a suggestion from members that a small fee should be charged for processing applications. This has been set at £20.00 and will be payable on application by applicants who have not yet had a First Call.

## New Freeman - Guild Days 2011

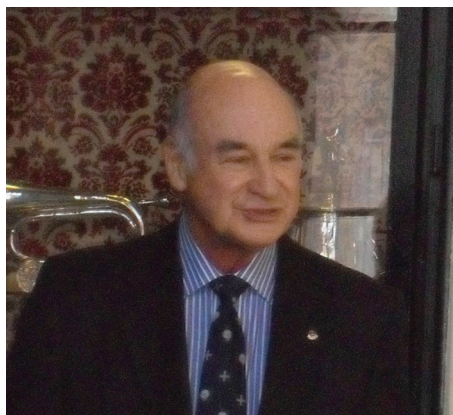
Only two new Freeman were sworn into the Freedom during 2011. They are both most welcome.

### Candlemas Guild Day 7 February 2011

Kieran Atkinson      Company of Barbers

### Martinmas Guild Day 7 November 2011

Michael Chapman      Company of Butchers



*Mike McMinn*

In addition we were thrilled when our former Treasurer Mike McMinn agreed to become a Gentleman Freeman at our Candlemas Guild Day in February.

## Applications for membership received during 2011

At the Lammas and Martinmas Guild Days First and Second calls were made without objection for:

Barbara Charney	Company of Curriers
Karen Crawford	Company of Curriers
Charlotte Crawford	Company of Curriers
Sandra Heslop	Company of Curriers
Kate Luther	Company of Curriers
Laura Provett	Company of Curriers

Mary Hayes	Company of Drapers
Adele Smith	Company of Drapers
Dorothy Snowball	Company of Drapers

Robert Clarkson	Company of Joiners
Christopher Fenwick	Company of Joiners
Lynne Swann	Company of Joiners
Ann Thurlow	Company of Joiners

Vera Davidson	Company of Masons
Ann Mallen	Company of Masons
Beverley Renwick	Company of Masons
Amy Wesencraft	Company of Masons

Alison McDonough	Company of Plumbers
Katherine Wortley	Company of Plumbers

Subject to there being no objections at the Third Call these applicants will be granted the Freedom at the Candlemas Guild Day on 6 February 2012

At the Martinmas Guild Day First calls were made without objection for:

Tony Raybole      Company of Cordwainers

Alex Milbourne      Company of Drapers

Dean Brown      Company of Joiners

Joan Donkin      Company of Joiners

Theresa Ford      Company of Joiners

Peter Gilroy      Company of Joiners

Irene Squires      Company of Joiners

Claire Wigham      Company of Joiners

Pat Billsborrow      Company of Plumbers

Second calls for these applicants will be made at the Candlemas Guild Day on 6 Feb 2012. Third and final calls will be made at the May Day Guild Day on 14 May 2012. Subject to there being no objections raised they will then be granted the Freedom.



## Meetings of Members

During the year we have fixed dates for Guild Days and for the Annual Dinner which are outlined in the Newsletter. Early in 2011 the Wardens were asked to explore the potential for an additional programme of meetings for Freemen over the year. It was suggested that these meetings could lead to

- greater opportunities for Freemen to contribute to and learn about the business and affairs of the organisation
- a more inclusive ethos
- an enhanced public profile
- activities with which Freemen can become involved.

Three meetings were arranged during the year each taking place on a Thursday evening at 6.00 p.m. in the Guild Hall. Members who attended felt that the meetings were useful and informative. They also gave members the opportunity to comment on outcomes from meetings of the Wardens and Trustees and to contribute to future agendas.



In order to facilitate this dialogue with Wardens and Trustees four meetings have been scheduled in 2012 (please see Diary Dates). Each meeting will be held shortly before a scheduled meeting of Wardens and Trustees. It is hoped that as many members as possible will take advantage of the member meetings which are scheduled during early evening in order to maximize access to all members





*Stewart Atkin*

### **Treasurer – Stewart Atkin**

2011 was a very difficult year for treasurers of associations such as The City of Durham Freemen. During the year we saw prices rising and investments falling. Interest rates continue to be at record low levels and it is impossible to find anyone paying interest on deposits which match the rate of inflation. If reserves do not keep pace with inflation then our spending power is diminished year on year. Your Trustees and Wardens did agree to put some reserves aside for the long term and benefit from guaranteed interest. This has enabled the Freemen to maintain support for the community by way of financial giving.

We are delighted to be close to concluding arrangements for a sponsorship arrangement whereby the Freemen will make a significant contribution to the costs of an apprenticeship in the heart of Durham. This is a major step which will run for 3 years and reinforce the link between the Freemen and the trade crafts which are so closely connected with our origins.

### **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 £40.00 per member.

As indicated in earlier newsletters 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 2012 distribution will take place at the Martinmas Guild Day on 5 November 2012.

## Press Protocol

The City of Durham Freeman have built up a very healthy and mutually beneficial relationship with local press and media. This relationship enables us to raise the public profile of the Freeman and to engage with the community of which we have been an integral part for many centuries.

As our numbers grow and the organisation increases in size it is important that we have an even greater regard for our reputation and image. Clearly our relationship with the press is central to this.

We are fortunate that George Oliver has become one of our Trustees. George has a wealth of experience with the press and media. He was a reporter for many years with a variety of newspapers in the region and prior to his retirement was Press Officer for Durham County Constabulary.

Because of the increased need to carefully manage our public profile, George has agreed to monitor our links with the Press and advise on press releases and publicity. Wardens and Trustees have agreed that all statements to the press should be referred in the first instance to either John Heslop, the Chairman of the Wardens or to our Clerk and Receiver Philip Wills.





## Annual Dinner 2011

Our Annual Dinner was held on October 15 2011 in the Town Hall and was another resounding success. Numbers in attendance were the highest for some years reflecting the growing interest in the Freedom and membership of the Freeman.

On this occasion our speaker was Andrew Martell who talked to us about his work in the Stock Exchange.



*Andrew Martell*

Andrew is Divisional Director for Brewin Dolphin, Newcastle, where he specialises in the management of private investment.

He is a former High Sheriff and is Deputy Lieutenant of County Durham. He is also Chairman of St John

Ambulance, President of Elizabeth Finn Care and Director of the County Durham Foundation.

The dinner is organised every year by our Chairman of Trustees, Roger Norris, to whom we all owe a great debt of gratitude. We are also grateful for the help and support of all of the Town Hall staff and our caterers T&I Bell.



*Joe and Doris McElwee*



*Annual Dinner at Town Hall*

## Community Activity

The City of Durham Freemen are fortunate to have income from our interest in the Sands in Durham. Our Clerk and Receiver Philip Wills and Trustee Norman Hart have been diligent in ensuring that these interests are maintained and protected. Stewart Atkin, our Treasurer has been assiduous in maximising the best return for our funds. As a consequence we have been able to support a number of community activities over the years, donating in excess of £65000 to local organisations and projects since 2003.

As reported in last year's Newsletter the Freemen donated £2000 to the Durham Johnston School project to restore and rededicate its War Memorial. Students from the school gave a presentation about the memorial to the Candlemas Guild Day in February.

We were happy to donate £800.00 to the Mayor's Charity Appeal.

Former Council Solicitor Richard Langdon is appealing for support to sponsor his fund-raising attempt to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. The funds raised will go to St Cuthbert's Hospice. The Freemen were happy to donate £5000.00 to Richard's challenge and wish him and the Hospice all good fortune.

One of the traditions of the City and it's surrounding communities is the colliery brass band. We were pleased to present Esh and Bearpark Colliery Band with a cheque for £1000.00 to help with their running costs.

The County Durham Society for the Blind and Partially Sighted do tremendously good work for their members despite having no formal sources of funding. The Freemen have given £1000.00 to the Society to help with the production of its Talking Newspapers.

St John Ambulance are known throughout the country for their unstinting voluntary work, providing first aid cover for all kinds of public events and offering first aid training to organisations and individuals. Many thousands of volunteers seek to fulfil their mission to make the difference between a life lost and a life saved. We were happy to be able to present the Durham Branch of St John Ambulance with £1000.00.

Sadly strokes are an increasing problem for individuals and families in the modern world. The County Durham Stroke Club has recently been established and meet fortnightly at Bede Lodge Social Club in Framwellgate Moor. The Freemen donated £1000.00 to the Club and wish the organisers and their members well.

Negotiations with the Works Department of the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral have resulted in an agreement in principle for the Freemen to sponsor a plumbing apprentice over three years. Although detail of the sponsorship is still to be finalised we are very excited to be involved in a scheme which takes the Freemen back to our roots and in association with one of our oldest partners.



Funding by the Freeman will be considered for projects which:

1. promote trades, crafts and vocational initiatives
2. promote the City of Durham
3. are geographically within the traditional administrative boundaries of the City
4. related to issues of particular need

If members are aware of any organisation or project that it might be appropriate for us to support please get in touch with John Heslop, Joe McElwee or Stewart Atkin.



*(Photograph courtesy of the Northern Echo)*

