



May Day

Issue 2

May 2024

This newsletter is to keep member's up to date with what is happening within the Durham City Freemen.

Guild News

The May Day guild day was held on the 13th of May in the Guild Hall in Durham.

First Calls

Robert Harold James Caulkin, (Joiners Company), to be admitted via Patrimony.

William Abby Clark, (Curriers Company), to be admitted via Patrimony.

Geoffrey Keith Newton, (Masons Company), to be admitted via Servitude.

Second Calls

Charlotte Victoria Middleton, (Joiners Company), to be admitted via Patrimony.

Third Calls

Leslie Kenneth Cleckner, (Joiners Company), to be admitted via Servitude.

Colin Wilkes, (Butchers Company), to be admitted as a Gentleman Freeman via Customary Freedom.

A speech was given by Mark Solan of the Solan, Conner, Fawcett Cancer Trust outlining the work that the Trust does in the City area and beyond. He thanked the Charitable Trust for the financial help that it has given.

Chair; Garry Dunnill. Deputy Chair; Neil Graham. Secretary; Bryan Proud

Wardens:

Bryan Proud	Barbers Company.
Mac Williams	Butchers Company.
Theresa Ford	Cordwainers Company.
Iain Wilmshurst	Curriers Company.
Dave Howard	Drapers Company.
Ann Thurlow	Joiners Company.
Neil Graham	Masons Company.
Garry Dunnill	Plumbers Company.

Deputy Wardens:

Alan Metcalf	Barbers Company.
Vincent Syson	Butchers Company.
Gary Bankhead	Cordwainers Company.
Vacant	Curriers Company.
Trevor Carter	Drapers Company.
David Neale	Joiners Company.
Alan Richardson	Masons Company.
Arthur Lockyear	Plumbers Company.

Diary Dates

Apprentice Award Night 28th June 2024

Lamas Guild Day 5th August 2024

Wardens Meeting 5th September 2024

Wardens and Deputies 12th September

Annual Dinner 26th October 2024

Management Changes

There have been a few changes to the makeup of the management committee for the Freeman. Due to the retirement of Alan Metcalf on ill health grounds, the Wardens have elected Garry Dunnill to take over as Chair. An introduction to Garry is set out below. There has also been another change, that of the Membership Secretary, Eric Bulmer. He has retired after a long time in the post of Membership Secretary and as Chairman of the Freeman before that. Eric will remain as chairman of the Charitable Trust. The management team thanks both Alan and Eric for the hard work they have done.



Chairs Address

I would like to thank Alan Metcalf for his help over the last few weeks, getting me up to speed and thanks to Bryan Proud for all the unseen work that he carries out behind the scenes.

This is not a one-person role; it requires all our team of wardens and deputy wardens to work together for the future of Durham City Freeman.

This is a 3-year role therefore I do not intend to talk for too long or I will have nothing left for future meetings.

I have lived in Durham all my life having attended local schools before becoming an apprentice within the city and a freeman in 1997 with support from Alan Atkinson Snr.

Over the years I have been involved in the training of many, apprentices and strongly believe in the continuity of learning in the workplace.

As some of you will already know as Durham City Freeman, we have an Apprentice Award Scheme, and the presentations will be made on the 28th of June in the Town Hall. All are welcome. I would like to thank Neil and his team for arranging this.

This is the last time that this Mayor and Mayoress will attend our Guild Day, and I hope they have enjoyed being a part of this tradition.

They are at the end of their tenure and hope it has been an enjoyable year, however I guess a rest and a holiday will not be amiss.

At this point I would like to ask our guest speaker Mark Solon of the Solar Connor Fawcett cancer trust to speak.



Apprentice Group Report

Following on from last year's highly successful Durham City Freeman Apprentice Awards Programme, I am pleased to inform you that this year's awards programme is now well underway, with over twenty-five nominations being whittled down by the selection panel to nine outstanding winners in eight trade categories, with one overall winner.

This year's winners are;

Joseph Moore, Brickwork, Alderson Building Services

Neil Willis, L4 Networking Engineer, New College Durham

Graham Penfold, Stonemasonry, Durham Cathedral

Romilly Green, Hairdressing, New College Durham

Abi Howlett, Painting and Decorating, New College Durham

Lewis Minto, Plumbing & Gas, Bernicia

Harvey Nichol, Electrical Apprentice, Mears Ltd

Robin Erskine, Joinery, Durham Cathedral

Liam Thynne, (Overall Winner), New College Durham

It is pleasing to note that this year's nominations have been even more diverse than last year, with twenty percent of the apprentices nominated being female, as well as nominations being received directly from Durham Cathedral and from several small independent businesses, including Aldersons, Nicholsons and Sons, Johnson Heating & Plumbing, and Focus Joinery.

Further testament to the growth and diversity of the apprentice award scheme is reflected in the backgrounds of the students put forward. Starting at level 1 through to level 6, from York College to New College Durham, from first year students to apprentices that have been forced to break their training before being able to complete their apprenticeship journey with a new employer.

Supporting and rewarding apprentices who work, live or train within the city boundaries is something that I believe is fundamental to the foundations of Durham City Freeman and the Apprenticeship Award Scheme is a positive beginning in reaffirming the Freeman of Durham as the custodians of the City's trade heritage.

The group leader Neil Graham would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that has been involved in the programme for their continued commitment and support. I would also like to ask all Wardens, Deputy Wardens, and members to make every effort to attend the celebration on the 28th of June at Durham Town Hall.



Members Meeting

A members meeting was held in the Guild Hall on Tuesday 2nd April. The meeting was well attended, and several points were raised by members. These were; to examine the implications of holding a party night for the younger Freeman; Induction meeting for Deputies to outline their roles and our expectations from them; and the Setting up a higher profile for the organisation using social media.



Management Vacancies

The Wardens and Deputies are always on the lookout for capable Freeman to come and help with the management of the guild. The usual starting point is a deputy where you will get to understand how the guild is managed. The time commitment is about 4 meetings per year. If you are interested, then please get in touch via the secretary.

Introducing the New Chair of Durham City Freeman

Garry Dunnill



I became a Freeman of the Plumbers Guild on the 3rd of February 1997, having been proposed by Alan Atkinson Snr.

After leaving Gilesgate Secondary School at the age of 15 I started working for Harold Fairclough Ltd Hallgarth Street Durham and at the age of 16 signed indentures to start my apprenticeship as a Heating Engineer.

I continued my studies after joining the National Coal Board to be a technician engineer at Charles Trevelyan College in Newcastle upon Tyne, which enabled me to go to Newcastle Polytechnic to gain a diploma in Building Services.

At this time, I joined RW Gregory & Partners. Consulting Engineers in Newcastle as a cost planning engineer where we produced Bills of Quantities. Following this I moved back to Durham and started working for T G Armstrong & Partners Consulting Engineers as a mechanical consulting engineer, during this time I designed numerous projects through-out the country.

After a number of years there I returned to the installation side of the industry and purchased with help from family members Eric Whitfield (Durham) Ltd Plumbing & Heating based in Broompark. During this time, we trained numerous apprentices in both plumbing and heating, some of whom went on to win awards within the industry.

We developed the company within the industry and established an air conditioning side where we worked on a national shopfitting programme though-out the U.K., Eire, Belgium and Holland for Vision Express and many other local establishments.

We continued with the company working on major projects for local Universities Councils, the Health Authority, Catholic Diocese and Durham Castle and various other projects in the north east.

Within this period, I was appointed Chairman of the local Heating Ventilation Contractors Association and organised fund-raising dinners, general/training meetings and inter industry meetings with the electrical contractor's association, with the help of a local secretary and represented the area on its national committee. Subsequently I was invited to join the national committee for training within the industry. This was over a 28-year period.

I have always been proud to be a Freeman of Durham and as one of the longest serving Freeman of Wardens feel it is my time with other members to help with the continuation of this long-established tradition by putting myself up for election as Chairman of the Wardens.



Any comments on the format, content, and any future ideas you may have for content please get in touch via secretary@durhamcityfreemen.org

This newsletter has been sent to those members who have supplied their e-mail address; however, it is available to view on the website. If you no longer want to receive this newsletter then please contact the Secretary to have your address removed.