

Castellum



Bear in Space

**No.77
2024/25**

THE MAGAZINE OF THE DURHAM CASTLE SOCIETY

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We have a fantastic team of housekeepers, porters and catering staff who do a brilliant job to support the college community and smooth running of University College.

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Change of Address

To ensure the Society has your contact details (postal, phone and email), please notify any changes to the **Alumni and Development Manager at University College, The Castle, Palace Green, Durham, DH1 3RW** or castle.alumni@durham.ac.uk



EDITOR'S JOTTINGS

So, a reunion in July. That's what we're promised for 2026, and indeed 2027. At least the weather should be better, and you'll be pleased to know we won't be clashing with the Miner's Gala, which one College deliberately arranges to give an experience which reunion attenders would not have had as an undergraduate. I support the Gala, and am one of the "Marras", but I'm not sure I would want to build a reunion around it. Dates are on the facing page.

Another packed edition, with a new printer and thinner paper and 1,300 printed with many more going out to online subscribers. With membership becoming automatic, this may be the last edition financed from the coffers of the Durham Castle Society. The Treasurer notes the change at the very back of the magazine. 46 pages of Clubs, Societies and Committee reports, and a great deal of other activities means we cover different parts of Castle life each year. Note in particular the notification of the Stockton and Darlington Railway 200th Anniversary which centres on the original opening date of 27th September 2025. Celebrations began with a whistle Up at railways, especially heritage ones, on January 1st, and there is a launch in Bishop Auckland on Saturday 29th March.

Andrew Hemmings, who wrote the article on page 112, probably is unaware that as well as selling railway tickets, I also publish the National Rail Map. 2024/5 having sold out, revised and improved reprints are now available at my website railmap.org.uk. Please have a look and if you buy a copy of the paper map you will also get a .pdf version for personal use only. The map features over 2,700 stations with all sorts of interesting additional information (like three letter codes), including, for the first time, the major heritage railways too.

The end of this personal plug reminds me to mention we have an article this year written by artificial intelligence, Chat GPT to be precise.

We have a few pages on Anthony Salvin who restored the Castle Keep (not the Great Hall, as mentioned!). See what you think of the prose on page 102.

Mention of pdf's reminds me that we have The Lavenham Press printing Castellum for the first time. They specialise in schools, colleges and universities work, whereas some of our printers have had to ship out copies for binding, or printing, which is all very messy and adds time to the process. Based in Suffolk, Lavenham are highly mechanised and considerably cheaper and will mail out the copies from our Excel membership database without having to move magazines around. We should be able to mail copies from Monday 10th March. Print readers will know, from the date you read this, whether they managed it.

Thanks to Ellen Crabtree, Julia Bonner and Olly Lendrum who proofread the magazine this year. And also Georgina Worton-Boughen (Union and Societies Officer) who co-ordinated the Green pages so well we decided not to risk putting it in alphabetical order.

Alex Nelson
March 2025

Durham Castle Society Reunions

Friday 11th to Sunday 13th April 2025

Friday 17th to Sunday 19th July 2026

Friday 16th to Sunday 18th July 2027

Contributions to Castellum on any subject of interest to Castlemen are very welcome at any time. These are best sent by electronic mail to alexnelson@dunelm.org.uk

Please quote **CASTELLUM**
in the subject line

Contributions for Castellum 78 please by January 31st, 2026

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME 2025



The normal pattern of the Society's year was a little different in 2024, with our annual reunion and AGM taking place in April. There were fewer college rooms available, so many of us stayed in a hotel or one of the other colleges. I decided to stay in the building I had always known as Old Shire Hall, the main administrative building for the University during my time in Durham, now reborn as the

rather grand and luxurious Hotel Indigo. The reunion dinner was fully sold out, with a packed Great Hall, the innovation of live music from Castle's Dragonfly string quartet, and the College Toast proposed by space scientist Dr Natalie Starkey, from the class of 2005.

I'd like to express my thanks to Katie Bertram, who provided maternity leave cover for our Alumni Development Manager Julia Bonner. Katie took the lead in organising an excellent reunion weekend for us all.

As I touched on last year, I had something of an "adventure of a lifetime" in June and July, driving a 1964 Volvo 122S Amazon in The Africa Rally, a charity run covering about 5000 miles in a month with daughter Kaz (Grey College 2014-2017) as co driver. We collected the car in Malawi, drove her down to South Africa for the start of the rally, then up through Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania and Kenya.

We had the privilege of a brief visit to a kindergarten on the edge of the Nkhotakota wildlife reserve in Malawi, supported by one of our charities.

You really appreciate how fortunate we are to have access to the education and resources we have each benefited from, when you see the enjoyment and enthusiasm of these young children who have so little.

The Volvo was loaded into a shipping container in Mombasa and is now home with us and has a UK registration number. A trip to Durham, the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales in the Volvo is planned in the coming weeks, unfortunately not soon enough to get a photograph in front of the Castle for Castellum.

With Julia Bonner back in her role (Katie Bertram having moved on to look after the alumni of St John's College) we had a very well attended event in September at Leighton House in Kensington. The London events provide an opportunity to catch up with friends (and meet new ones) for those people who aren't necessarily able to come to the Durham reunion. We're always open to suggestions of a venue for a Castle Society get together anywhere in the UK, and our alumni have also been involved in supporting some of the international events run by the University. Sadly Wendy Powers (Principal & Associate Pro Vice Chancellor) suffered an injury which kept her off work for several months, so she wasn't able to join us.

We were already very familiar with Dr Ellen Crabtree, Vice Principal, through her involvement with meetings of the Society and the Trust, but it was great to see her step up to the role of Acting Principal for a four month period, until we could welcome Wendy back from her sick leave.

The Castle Society and the University College Durham Trust can only run with the help of a group of willing volunteers, some of whom have been involved for many years. As chair, one thing I really appreciate is the new generation of volunteers who have come forward. Oliver Lendrum has been helping Alex Nelson produce Castellum, Patrick Hayes has become something of a historian / archivist for the Society, Charlie McKeever has come on board as our new secretary (and helped put technology in place for a hybrid AGM), Chris Silberberg has led discussions on the future of the Society, the Thorp Society has been rejuvenated by Sophie Draper and Rachael Rhodes, and many other volunteers, too many to mention, have

joined to serve as trustees and committee members. I feel that as some of us long standing officers are able to gradually pass on responsibility to a new generation, the Society and the Trust will continue to be well looked after, with continuity but also with new ideas and perspectives that help to ensure that we remain relevant to all our membership, as well as to recent graduates.

I hope to see many of you again at this year's reunion, and hope that 2025 will be the year you can re-establish or renew contact with your peers and with the College.

Kevin Hawes



PRINCIPAL'S LETTER



Greetings from the windswept Durham peninsula –

My, what a blustery winter we're experiencing here in the North-east! Fortunately, no major impacts or damage to our beautiful college home. Were you to visit Durham today you'd experience the construc-

tion site Palace Green has become – PG Library is having its roof replaced and the Almshouses and Pemberton Rooms are being prepared for a two year works package addressing critical needs spanning foundation to roof. Happily, the construction phase of our Norman Chapel conservation project is complete and the Fellows' Garden enhancement project will be underway by the time you see this edition of Castellum.

As you'll see throughout this robust Castellum, we've enjoyed another fabulous year here at University College. We welcomed our wonderful new Chaplain & Solway Fellow, celebrated Alex Nelson receiving the University's esteemed Dunelmensis Award, hosted several renowned Academic Fellows, sponsored our talented Chapel Choir's summer tour to Rome, hosted the largest Castle Alumni reunion, and much more. Perhaps you saw on television that we also welcomed Matt Baker and his parents on one of their well-known 'Road Trips', as well as BBC's Lucy Worsley for her 'Investigation:1066'.

Unsurprisingly, the JCR and MCR student leaders remain active partners in college community building efforts through formals, balls and other social events, sport and society engagement, Castle Outreach efforts, peer welfare support, music and theatre ensembles, library and archives initiatives, and so much more. I don't refer to our college with the term 'learning community' lightly – the myriad ways students engage in co-curricular

activities are truly impactful to their learning and development as young adults, and it is a privilege to be part of their journey.

There are a few other highlights from the past year I'd like to mention. Led by esteemed Castle alumnus and former Slater Fellow, Dr John Munns, the college has hosted a series of *Hidden Heritage* workshops with multi-disciplinary scholars from across the UK exploring the Norman Chapel's origins and history. Not only have these Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded workshops been a fantastic collaborative opportunity for these esteemed academics, but recent works in the SCR/Senate Suite (above the Chapel) have revealed surviving pre-1135 architecture in this range of the Castle and enabled further in-depth research. We anticipate sharing the exciting findings with you in next year's Castellum.

Illuminating our college home's designation as an accredited museum, the Tunstall Gallery was the site of an MA student exhibition about the Norman Chapel conservation and construction project last summer. Titled *Repair & Care: The Norman Chapel Project* and in coordination with our Curator, Gill Rennie, the student scholars gathered artifacts discovered during excavation, interviewed Archaeological Services and Brims Construction colleagues, researched other historic construction projects here at the castle, and created an interactive exhibition. This opportunity brought the students' academic studies to life in a very practical way as well as delighting and informing visitors all summer long. Gill and our VP Ellen Crabtree worked with colleagues and local artists to host two other pop-up exhibitions here at Castle this year – *A History of Durham's Black Students* (during Black History Month) developed by DU faculty and *The Craftivist Recipe Archive*, a travelling collection of 'Recipes for Change' started by the Peterlee Arts Café and facilitated by artist Lady Kitt. Each exhibition provides an catalyst for teaching and learning in our community.

This year at University College we have also reimagined the leadership of our Senior Common Room. After several years of member feedback and an ongoing challenge recruiting new leaders to a traditional SCR executive team, a new model of engagement is being piloted to assist in revitalizing

the SCR community. Rather than formal roles such as President, Vice President, etc, which can be perceived as huge and time-consuming commitments, we now have an SCR Steering Group (SSG) of 12-15 volunteers to think together, partner with college office and activate ideas to benefit the membership and the college. The shift away from formalized roles is already enabling us to be more creative, to adapt to volunteers' varying schedules and commitments, and to engage more members. Check out www.castlescr.com for more information.

A letter from me would not be complete this year without sharing some broader university news regarding the current financial position. You'll no doubt be aware the entire HE sector is struggling to balance increasing expenses and limited tuition revenues, in our case mostly related to PG international student enrolment. Significant staff reductions will be made over the coming months. At the time of writing, I'm not sure how this will affect Colleges but I am unfortunately confident it will in some way. Among other things, Jeremy Cook, the PVC-Colleges & Student Experience is leaving DU in late March for the COO role at King's College London and the DU post is not being replaced in favour of a reorganization enabling savings. Please know that I and the other Heads of College have been assured by the Vice-Chancellor and Provost that maintaining our commitment to the Collegiate Model is a top priority alongside teaching and research. Additionally, every effort is being made to maximize voluntary departures through voluntary severance and redundancy schemes before resorting to compulsory redundancy. Having served in senior roles at other universities wrestling with similarly difficult and painful decisions, I trust our DU senior leaders will keep student learning always in focus throughout. You can learn more about the University's financial position at: <https://www.durham.ac.uk/about-us/notices/financial-position-2025/>

Finally, and on a more personal note, I will conclude with messages of gratitude. I continue to be amazed by the depth of pride and commitment felt by our college alumni, and I couldn't be more grateful for the myriad ways this manifests. Whether donating time, expertise, feedback,



Principal Wendy Powers at the awarding of the Dunelmensis award to editor Alex Nelson

connections or money, Castle alumni never cease to amaze me. As I'm sure many of you will agree, our interim Alumni Engagement Coordinator and Castle alum, Dr Katie Bertram, did a fantastic job shepherding our alumni activities while Julia was on parental leave. Katie was the driving force behind last year's largest reunion ever, and we couldn't be more grateful for all she did and led last year. Some of you will know I spent most of Michaelmas 2024 on medical leave following an accident resulting in emergency surgery on both knees. The entire college leadership team stepped up and took on additional responsibilities while I was off. In particular, Ellen served as Acting Principal, Sukanya as Acting VP and David as Acting AP during this time, which allowed me to rest easy knowing our community was in excellent hands. My pride in and gratitude for colleagues, student leaders, SCR and alumni volunteers surrounds us all just as the Wear surrounds our beloved Castle.

With all best wishes for a wonderful 2025,

Floreat Castellum!

Wendy

NOTES FROM THE VICE-PRINCIPAL



What's happened over the last twelve months in University College? Castle students continue to co-create a range of social, cultural and intellectual opportunities to strengthen and challenge our community. Staff kept the Castle ship steering whilst our Principal Wendy recovered from surgery, demonstrating that there's learning opportunities whatever your role here.

Highlights from this year include:

A new addition to the College calendar, Castle Community Action, Castle Music and with support from Castle Theatre Company came together to devise and lead the Primary School Concert, with funding from the University Widening Participation fund. The first event in March 2024 saw over 100 primary school children from four local schools join together at Castle for a series of workshops culminating in a 'Musicals' concert for parents and supporters. Not a dry eye in the house! We are thrilled this collaboration will continue for 2025 with another concert in the diary for later this term.



October saw the election of a new raft of postgraduates eager to shape and lead the Middle Common Room for 2024-25. College staff led a robust induction programme to help students understand more about their roles and ongoing support as these students take on leadership alongside their postgraduate studies. This is especially challenging given that many students are here for a one-year Master's, so it's particularly laudable that they get stuck in to give back to their new college from the start of their time here.



It's been a joy to work with three of our Freshers, and Dr Yu Gu (SCR member and mentor) to ensure our celebrations to mark Lunar New Year and Chinese New Year are meaningful for the many members of Castle hailing from East Asia.

When Castle went to Rome to see the Pope: he said, come on in, and sing for us in the Vatican! Our Chapel Choir had the privilege of touring Rome in September 2024, with two concerts and sung mass in St Peter's Basilica. It was a pleasure to be the concierge to the choir, who put on an impromptu performance for the Ambassador to the Holy See when invited for a drinks reception. Many thanks to outgoing Director of Music, Tom Parker, for enabling this extraordinary opportunity for the choir, which was featured on BBC no less.



This year we have also continued to find ways to support research into the history and heritage of Castle as part of the World Heritage Site; from MA students working with our Curator Gill to devise the exhibition Repair and Care in the Norman Chapel (digital exhibition available online <https://stories.durham.ac.uk/repair-and-care/>) to partnering with academic colleagues for the AHRC-funded Hidden Heritage network, to ongoing reciprocal relationships with the Institute

for Advanced Studies and Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies. It is a privilege to live and work in Castle and be able to share these opportunities with world-leading academics to enrich our community.

Dr Ellen Crabtree
Vice-Principal

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

It is a delight to have been so warmly welcomed since I first walked through the Castle gatehouse in April to begin my time as Chaplain and Solway Fellow. During Epiphany Term 2024, in the absence of a chaplain, the student Chapel Team did sterling work in sustaining the life of the chapel. In recognition of this, they were deserved recipients the following term of the Helios Award for teamwork.

My particular thanks among this team go to William McCarthy, who served as Sacristan until his graduation in June, and to Dominik Mitterer, the readers' co-ordinator, who is now in the final throes of his PhD.

In recent terms Dominik also ably organised termly Taizé and Compline services in the Norman Chapel, as well as well-attended workshops on Ignatian prayer and on praying the rosary. We have been blessed to benefit from his consistency and ability to draw people together to make things happen.

One cannot be in conversations around Castle without being aware of the challenges of maintaining our ancient buildings. As is covered elsewhere, the Norman Chapel project was completed in the summer. Pleasingly, this has enabled the chapel to resume its roughly weekly use for services. Similarly, over the summer works were undertaken to strengthen the Tunstall Chapel organ loft, after a falling organ pipe revealed larger structural issues. For much of the academic year 2023-24, the area below the loft was



covered in scaffolding poles, with access to the chapel restricted to services. It has been wonderful since September to see the chapel open each day, with the full intercessions board at the back of chapel one sign of the importance of the sacred space to many students and visitors. For now, we simply await final restoration of the decorative organ pipes, which are an almost unique example of seventeenth-century pictorial organ decoration. My thanks to the Castle curator, Gill Rennie, for her assiduous work in taking these complex projects forward.



Our chapel choir have been in very good voice over the past year. Over the summer we said farewell to Tom Parker, who served for two years as a committed and highly able Director of Music. The choir had a particularly busy summer. In the UK, they sang in Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral, and St George's, Windsor. But it was their tour to Rome, including singing for Mass in St Peter's Basilica, that was a memorable highlight. The event was picked up by local media, with Tom making a commanding appearance on local BBC radio's breakfast show!

Thankfully our new Director of Music, Barney Howard, has continued where Tom left off. The choir are in fine voice, and in Alan Erdelyi and Henry Hiscock we have two excellent organists. The choir's tour this year will be to Stockholm in early July, and they will also be singing around London in the same churches as last summer. They would be delighted to welcome alumni in the area to their events. And as ever, we are always pleased to welcome alumni and visitors to our Thursday choral evensong – do stop in if you are nearby!

Sam Hole
Chaplain and Solway Fellow



*The Castle choir after singing
at Westminster Abbey*

CATALOGUING CASTLE INTERNSHIP

The Cataloguing Castle internship was funded through the Infinity Programme, Durham University's Disability and Careers & Enterprise teams' programme which offers fully funded eight week summer internships to students who identify as autistic. The Infinity Programme aims to break down barriers and create a supportive environment where autistic students can unleash their potential and gain invaluable work experience.

This summer we were interns for Cataloguing Castle, a project to sort through and catalogue documents from the college office, dating from the 1950s to present. Most of these files have been taken to Palace Green for the University Archives, which was a historic moment at the end of our internship!



Ella: This internship has been a great opportunity for me as a recent History graduate and upcoming Master's student in Library and Archives Studies. During the internship, I gained experience working in the archives and understanding how they work, as well as getting to learn more about Castle's history. The most enjoyable finds for me were the insights into student life across the decades, from Castle Theatre Company plays to student profiles, and from scholarship prizes

to an incident spilling wine on Rysbrack's bust during a formal! Another highlight was making displays sharing our findings, which included a social media campaign and physical roller banners. It was also great to connect with alumni archivists in career chats to find out about their experiences and the different areas of archival work. Overall, the internship has been an amazing experience that will help me in my future endeavors!



Dan: The Cataloguing Castle internship was a great opportunity for a current undergraduate in Ancient, Medieval and Modern History while also looking forward towards a career in the archival and special collections fields. Through the internship I was able to gather an understanding and knowledge not only of the workings of archives but also of Castle's great history even if it was just a small glimpse through the period

we were looking at. Some of the things that I found truly enjoyable were discovering the letters from the First Ladies Society in 1988 asking for permission to become a formal society (including the Master's agreement via memo) to reading some of the Hunter Davies Prize winning articles through the year. The most rewarding for me was the handwritten letters and correspondence from the earlier years between the students and Masters. Apart from the archival work, it was also very rewarding to produce some social media posts, which can be seen on the Castle Instagram, and physical banners that will be able to see hopefully soon. This internship has been a great experience that will be helpful for my future decisions and has been one I will forever have fond memories of.



Taking the archives to Palace Green! (l-r: Ellen Crabtree, Gill Rennie, Dan Adamson, Ella Blake and University Archivist Jonathan Bush)

ECR FELLOWS

This year we have continued to run our new Early Career Researcher (ECR) Fellowship, supported by our Slater Fund. The life of students on postgraduate research degrees such as PhDs is often hard – isolated, without obvious moments of success or completion, and with significant uncertainty about the future. To support our students in navigating this stage of academic life, we appointed three ECRs to offer support, nurture, and collegiality. James Oakley (classics), Maresa Reill (accounting) and Tadhg O’Laoghaire (philosophy) have spent the first months of the year getting to know some of our Castle PhD students. They will be running projects supporting matters like resilience in academia, and interdisciplinary working. Thank you to them for the enthusiasm and expertise they bring to our community.

Sam Hole
Chaplain and Solway Fellow



SENIOR STUDENT’S REPORT 2024–2025

Dear Castlemen,

Freshers week

To those of you reading who I have not yet met, my name is Shoaib Islam, this year’s Senior Student. Assuming my role in June, preparations for Freshers’ Week began. The Executive, including our Social Chair, Olivia Grace Smith, along with our newly appointed role of Head Frep (replacing the responsibilities of the dissolved Development Officer) tirelessly planned the event. I can proudly say that the introduction of the new role helped make the week a great success. We’ve seen enormous fresher engagement shown by levy subscription as well engagement from our most diverse student cohort to date.

Lost College space

Matriculation saw the Freps observing from the sun terrace (pictured), a now rarely used part of College. We also had words from the outgoing MCR President George, who had just finalised our JCR-MCR sports and societies merger agreement. A sharp Castleman’s eye will notice the distinct lack of a ‘welcome home’



banner hanging from the Normal Gallery windows because for the second year running the Executive have not been able to reside there owing to structural issues. The lack of officers living in has definitely been felt and made working together harder than ever, however, construction continues (pictured) and the College Office expect it to be at least a few years before the Committee can return to living there. For now, however, I would like

to build a document of sorts to maintain the history and significance of Norman Gallery. So I urge any Castle Alumni with photos, stories and anecdotes of their fondest memories of the space to email me at castle.seniorstudent@durham.ac.uk.

Speaking of lost space, the JCR has regrettably also faced a loss of the welfare room due to construction works on the Pemberton Building on Palace Green, and will shortly lose access to Fellows' Garden as construction begins in the new year. Thankfully the Welfare Team have found a new home in the Lower Tunstall and Wendy has kindly offered the Principal's Garden for use during balls.



I must also mention that I am also very grateful to the College Office for maintaining an easy working relationship throughout the months without Principal Wendy Powers who is now back in college and acquainting with our new freshers.

Achievements

On a more positive note, the JCR Executive and College Office have worked to adjust the Ball Fund to ensure its value and impact on students receiving the Durham grant. We have also seen great success in the reopening of the toastie bar, investing in air fryers and menu additions. Without forgetting the La La Land themed Ladies Night 2024 which saw a full attendance and a much needed cloakroom in the Chaplain's Suite; protecting guests from the winter temperatures. All thanks to be given to the Ball Chair Lucia and her committee who thanklessly work, maintaining grandeur while battling ever-growing restrictions on the Castle – looking over old Castellums I so wish we could still enjoy some fireworks.

Aside from JCR achievements, I would also like to highlight the continued dominance of Castlemen in all facets of the University; this year,



Castle's Eliza Herzog is President of Durham University's Charity Fashion, Zach Cook as President of Durham's Tennis team, Alex and Victory as presidents of Durham's Finance Society and Ayasha Nordiawan as Head of Palatinates Indigo.

From a University-wide perspective, as the Presidents' Committee, it's been a tough year. We started the year off strong campaigning against the removal of University funded meals for our Feps who volunteer their time to run Freshers' Week, but this was only the beginning. As the University struggles against financial pressure, we've worked to ensure minimal impact on students, campaigning against room inspection procedures and more recently the reduction in opening hours of the Bill Bryson Library to name a few. The next few years will be formative for the University, as ever increasing budget cuts and pressure threaten the college system. On top of this, during a cost of living crisis, the impact on students and the

JCR as a whole will only worsen unless changes are made.

The beauty in roles like this is that you get to do everything for the first time and once, using bits of a handover and some willpower, the Executive carry out their responsibilities as best as they can. As always things will go wrong and fires will be fought as we've seen over the years, but iteratively, the way things are done are improved year on year and I can proudly say the college has seen one of its best years; not only through how we work as a team but also through its inclusivity, the opportunities provided and general mindfulness of all groups within our college community. And as election season approaches, I am confident that the hard work of my Executive and all JCR officers will continue through to June Ball.

I would also like to thank the generous donations following last year's edition, including to Castle Community Action (CCA) and Chess Club. CCA has seen one of its best years in its history with more engagement and enthusiasm than ever, all thanks to our Outreach Officer, Ele James, and her team. They will shortly be putting on their annual schools into Castle event later this Epiphany. The revived Chess Club has had new boards added to their collection, seeing an even larger group of players than last year.

As we move into Epiphany, I continue working on my aims for the JCR before I finish my tenure and I prepare to hand over to my successor. I hope that they take pleasure in serving the interests of the JCR and enjoy and learn from the job as much as I did. Next year will be weirder than most as I continue on into my final year of studies, reading Biology gaining my integrated Masters – a very rare occurrence to still have the ex-senior student present (some would argue not so rare if we're counting Sian and Charlie!).

**Thank you for reading and as always,
Floreat Castellum**

This year we suffered the great loss of a valued and gifted member of our student community, Joe Ashmore. Joe was loved by his friends for his kindness, empathy, intelligence and love of music.

BASKETBALL

Castle basketball has already taken some serious strides this year! The Men's As sit 5th in Division 1 with a 2-3 record, boasting strong wins such as our Movember charity match against Hatfield, raising £50 (thanks Jonathan) and featuring a half-time performance from Hild-Bede-Castle Cheer Club! Another big highlight for the As was the close and very competitive 50-45 win over Grey As which featured many new players and even some spectators! Division 2 is clearly where our Men's B team is meant to be because we are killing it with a 3-1 record, currently putting us at 3rd in the table. The women's team has been dominating in friendlies and even got the chance to go to Loughborough to compete in the Varsity competition! The women's league has now officially begun, and we have combined our powers with the women of Ustinov College (we do what we must when there aren't enough players). We're off to a flying start with a win, 32-15, in the first game of the season over Trev's/Mary's/Snow/South (it could be worse than I guess). In very exciting news, the club now owns something!!! in the form of six Wilson basketballs and a bag to put them in. Hooray! There's lots more to look forward to, with games, tournaments (and maybe some socials) throughout the year - all of which our alumni are very much invited to!

Patrick Timmins, President 2024/25

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE NETBALL CLUB (UCNC)

UCNC has had a fantastic season so far! Our A team is competing at a high level in Division 1, facing some tough matches with a few more to go. They've also progressed straight to Round 2 of the Netball Cup after receiving a bye and are gearing up for their first knockout match.



Clockwise:
Women's A Netball Team
UCNC social
Women's B Netball Team

Off the court, UCNC is thriving socially. We've welcomed a fantastic influx of freshers, kicking off the year with a brilliant welcome social last term and another one in the works. Our social scene remains as strong as ever—whether it's a post-training or post-match pint, we might not be the most competitive club in the league, but we're certainly the most fun!

Caitlin Elliot and Tallis Hill, Co-Presidents 2024/25



Meanwhile, our B team has tackled a highly competitive season. Although they were unfortunately knocked out in the first round of the Cup, we're hopeful that the A team can push further and seek redemption. Our C team has been relentless in Division 3 after earning promotion from Division 4 last season, continuing to prove their strength on court.

At training, we've recently been focusing on driving at angles and reoffering to make full use of the court, as well as tightening our man-on marking and perfecting quick transitions at turnovers.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LAWN TENNIS CLUB (UCLTC)

University College Lawn Tennis Club has become an absolute powerhouse in college tennis following huge successes in the 2023/24 academic year. Our A team cruised to the top of their pool in the Premiership League with huge wins from this year's current exec team (barring social sec of course). Also,



coming from nowhere, Castle's B team dominated their pool in the First Division and earned a much-deserved promotion into the Premiership! It wasn't all hard work however, UCLTC celebrated the end of exams with our (soon to be) annual mixed doubles tournament. With 21 pairs signed up to play the day was long but a major success – our current captains Betty and Jenson had to establish dominance by winning the whole tournament together. However, they were followed closely by Issy and Esh. This year, training began immediately to see if we could follow up our year of wins. Weather permitting, the turnout was very



impressive, so I suspect we'll see an amazing summer this year (special thanks to the dedicated few who were ready to brave the cold). With such a strong player base I have no doubt the As and Bs will thrive in the top league, the only thing left to see is whether the Cs will be there to join them next year...

Anna Franklin, President 2024/25

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CRICKET CLUB

A great deal of anticipation has been building amongst the members of the University College Cricket Club as the 2024/25 season rapidly approaches. With indoor training and matches commencing this term we look to build momentum as a club both on and off the field, inspired by some of the greats of our past and excited by some of the most promising talent intake we have seen in our years. We look to be set for an illustrious summer with depth culminating throughout each year group and an ever-increasing demand for game time within the ranks after a heavily rain-affected season last year. Despite the disappointment of such a disjointed summer, we were truly formidable indoors, dominating Maiden Castle's green carpet throughout; only to fall short at the last hurdle in the final to South College for the 23/24 season, (surprising – we know).

The executive body this year will consist of Huw Harris and Joe Du'Gay as co-presidents combining with Max Hooper as outdoor captain and Joshua Green as indoor skipper to form a strong skeleton for the club as we search for greatness. Socially the club also looks to go from strength to strength, with our traditional group of faithful supporters led by Boris Ollie and Harry Laventure, who I don't recall ever missing a game, consistently upholding standards of attire and appropriate hydration/fuel/chat. Not to mention the desperate yearning for our dearest tradition and most coveted dates in the calendar where leather continues to meet willow and leave no stone unturned in this beautiful city we are fortunate enough to call home.

As we write this, we both truly get goosebumps at the urgently approaching reality of the fun that's about to occur for Durham's most flare cricket club this year, and it's so exciting to see the shared enthusiasm that has grown for the great game within our community as a result of the passionate leadership and participation of such great characters in years gone by.



Freshers Fair



Summer social

With this being said, the club faces great challenges with the new costs of facility hire and umpire payments imposed by 'Team Durham' and Maiden Castle which have increased exponentially in recent years, where membership subs have been forced into implementation against our desires as a club. As a result, we have pressing concern as an exec that this may affect those who are looking to try something new at university or access college sport the most. This directly contradicts our principles as a club where we encourage universal accessibility and participation for all, regardless of ability/experience, something we fear may now be less possible to ensure despite our best efforts at raising enough funds. Ultimately the extent of these new costs act as a deterrent to all playing members, which is a great shame in our minds, as it is Castle sport that has afforded us some of our fondest memories of our time here so far.

Joe Du'Gay and Huw Harris, Co-Presidents 2024/25

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE MIXED LACROSSE

The first half of the season was bound to be challenging, with our A's playing in the Premiership and Durham having some exceptionally anti-lax weather. However, the club has risen to the challenge, and our fresher intake has consisted of some amazingly talented players, leaving me as president in the unique position as the least qualified on the pitch at all times. To get a sense of the high quality lax on display, I highly encourage any alumni to check out our Instagram, [@castlemixedlax](#), to read our match reports, which capture the spirit of UCML.



Led on the pitch by our two experienced captains Issy and Mimi, Castle lax has made some striking developments; for one, a majority of the team now actually understands the rules, which up until this point were taken as vague suggestions. While our efforts are yet to produce some wins, memorable moments are abundant, whether that be the opening match of the season against Mary's during a ferocious storm, our Movember charity match against Chad's, or playing against a literal England player, the first season has been anything but dull.

While the frequent weather alerts have cancelled many a match and training, our social secs Anna and Ella have remained unphased and led the club on many a social whether rain or shine. The club remains to be a place where Castle students can come together, regardless of any sporting ability, to enjoy making fun of the sport, other colleges, and ourselves.

Alec Symington, President 2024/25

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE WOMEN'S ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB (UCWAFC)

UCWAFC has kicked off another fantastic season, continuing its remarkable growth year after year. With an incredible group of talented and enthusiastic women from across all three years, our club has become a vibrant community both on and off the pitch. After earning promotion to the Premiership last season, we've entered this year with energy and determination. It's been fantastic to welcome so many new players, including those who had never played football before joining UCWAFC. We began the season with a four-week training block organized by Durham University, which saw excellent participation from our new recruits. This training culminated in a tournament featuring all the colleges, which, despite a 9am start proved to be a great success. Our first league match was against Ustinov, where the team brought their A-game, securing an impressive 5-1 victory. Epiphany Term promises a busy schedule, with a match every week, and we're determined to keep the momentum going. If you're ever in Durham and fancy playing a match with us, let me know—we'd love to have you join! On the social front, we have had many a great night out in true UCWAFC style. From cowgirls, to babies, to a full Nativity cast, we have graced Durham with some fabulously inventive costumes. It has been exciting to watch the club grow and become a fun part of Castle's social scene. Looking forward to the Easter break we have our first ever UCWAFC tour! A group totaling 30 of UCWAFC's finest members will be embarking on a five-day tour to Barcelona. Immense levels of grace and decorum are, as ever, guaranteed. Highlights include attending a Barcelona Women's match, trying



our hand at bubble football, and lots of bar crawls. We will be sure to keep our Instagram and Facebook updated with our antics so do give us a follow on there! It has been a real privilege to captain UCWAFC so far this year. We have a wonderful group of girls, and the games and socials have both been a highlight of this year. UCWAFC continues to grow, and there is so much to look forward to. Here's to another unforgettable season!

Maggie Naylor, President and Captain 2024/25

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE MIXED NETBALL CLUB (UCMNC)

It has been an exciting year so far for Castle's newest (and, according to an exclusive poll of our members) best sport! In our second year of existence, and with most of our past team graduated/ "job hunting"/ sitting on the sofa, much needed doing to strengthen foundations ahead of the league beginning in Epiphany. Fortuitously, our Freshers' Fair was an unparalleled success with (82) signups that had Castle's most popular sports blushing, provoking outrage from the underperforming (worse) Women's Netball Club who cried foul about table placement preference. Nonsense.

This early success has translated into training, matches, and socials – ending each of these at the Swan for some team bonding. We finally have kit to call our own (thank you Castle Society!), making training and separation from UCNC an actuality. We currently stand strong with around 30 committed players. Moreover, we tested the mettle of our newest members in friendly fixtures against Mary's and Hild Bede, 25-12 and (I lost count) a piece.

As I write, the league season begun with victory over Cuth's and we sit atop Premiership Pool B's table, a position I'm sure we'll retain. On the

social side, we've had our inaugural bar crawl, with a satisfyingly drunk and messy conclusion. Massive thanks go to my co-captain Anousha whose invaluable passion and tactical knowledge has us incredibly well-positioned for the future. While the team is very young, I'm confident that we'll continue to grow, and I look forward to the day when the team is synonymous with Castle sports.



Mixed Netball team 2025

Rodderick Turner and Anousha Treon, Co-Presidents 2024/25

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB (UCRFC)

The 17th Century historian Thomas Fuller once observed that 'it is always darkest just before the day'. This time last year, my predecessor rightfully lamented UCRFC participation at 'an all-time low', fearful for struggles of an 'unprecedented manner'. Esteemed alumni, it is my sincere pleasure to declare that the club stands tall today once more, fortified and reinvigorated.

Coming into Michaelmas with the new executive committee of Alex Maciver-Redwood and Oliver McAninly as team captains, Harry Laventure as Club Captain, and Alex Verdin as Social Secretary, it was clear that we found ourselves in limbo. Apprehensive about first-year buy-in, efforts were made to secure sponsorship from long term host and friend The Dun Cow, as well as pecuniary pastures anew in partnership with Shaheen's. Negotiations for further funding were fruitful, the club shop

and kit redesigned, but we knew that the true litmus test would come in the calibre of our new members.

Our freshmen have done anything but disappoint. Training sessions have repeatedly harboured over thirty members (nearly half of whom are athletically talented).

Moreover, our old friend the social tradition has been on sparkling form: welcome drinks was exceptional fun as ever, our exhibitions of support for the football floodlit were positively roaring, and Michaelmas culminated in Christmas carols aplenty in one riotously festive post-curry ramble to The Cow.

On the pitch, we have looked decidedly 2010s French. Eager to prove dominant in the smaller pond of Division 1 we annihilated John Snow 36-17, even after they'd stolen our playbook a week before. We were next unfortunate to find the referee on Mary's payroll; having suffered a deluge of cards, and enough penalties to eclipse the minutes ('dissent, sir?'), we succumbed 15-5 to a far inferior side. A momentary lapse in mindfulness let slip a competitive game with Aidan's 27-21. These injustices have only stoked our commitment, as proven by a second destruction of John Snow this weekend just gone (29-15). We remain titillated by the upcoming floodlit campaign, complete with bagpipes, customised hymns, drummers, and – as always – the spirit of Castle on the sidelines.

It is our firm ambition to restore Castle's calibre as a force in Durham's collegiate rugby circuit. We have proven ourselves to possess the raw materials, and I hope to write you in the coming months with news of success and revelry in the great game.

Also please do keep your eyes peeled for our upcoming alumni group - Castellum Barbarians RFC – I daresay that big things are on the way. If you would like to find out more, email cbrfc1071@gmail.com



Harry Laventure, President 2024/25

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB (CASTLE AFC)

The season has been tough, but as the A's skipper, Luca 'Skibidi' Wills, said in the first A's game of the season, 'Live as brave men; and if fortune is adverse, front its blows with brave hearts'. We have employed such an ethic, seizing each day as it comes and finding sources of joy that are not rooted in successes on the pitch. So many times have we found ourselves in the jaws of defeat and succumbed to it. But that is not to the discredit of our club, as we have some fine footballing talent and there have been so many memorable moments. The A's, B's, C's and D's remain fierce fighters in their respective leagues, and thanks to Max O'Sullivan, our social secretary, we remain unbeaten on various sidelines and within countless smoking areas. Let me pass it on to Sam Ashley for a run-down of Castle D's season so far.

Following on from the great success last year with promotion to division 5 the team has passionately attempted to rise to the demands of the new league. Some star players have shined through such as Mide up top with a debut hat-trick, Mr Reliable Tallantire playing every position on the pitch and Higgs and Ball forming a rock solid partnership reminding me of Prime Terry and Carvalho. However, despite from



star performances the team has managed one win from six. But as said by Delia Smith “let’s be avin ya” and that’s what I saw for the rest of the league as Castle D are coming back stronger. With only the lesser teams in the table left to play and expertly led by Captain Smashley the relegation fight is strongly on our side. Watch out C’s.

George Peach, President 2024/25

Samuel Ashley, Captain of the D team 2024/25

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE RUNNING SOCIETY (UCRS)

UCRS is a welcoming community joined by its love for running. Whilst not the biggest society (yet!), we are engaged in and dedicated to our training and the wider college. We offer three sessions a week; mostly social 5Ks, but also some longer runs. During Michaelmas, for example, we ran to Finchale Priory and back, finishing with a well-deserved coffee.



In November, we joined Castle in supporting Movember, running different lengths based on statistics provided by the charity. On the initiative’s final run, we hung motivational messages around the city. This term, we are collaborating with Castle Outreach to run the Gatehead Half Marathon in support of local charity Olivia Inspires, with unpressurised ‘training sessions’ in the leadup.

We pride ourselves on being non-exclusive; you don’t need to be a

hardcore ‘runner’ to be part of UCRS. More social events are incoming to prove as much, following last term when we dominated the Mary’s mile as well as a good few Bailey bars.

A major asset of UCRS is that you can come and go as suits. Whilst consistent with our three weekly runs, times and lengths vary so that most members can make at least one. We have, however, cultivated a group of regulars whose commitment has led to definite progress. This development is evident in our excellent participation and performance in inter-college relays.

Following last year’s success (winning ‘Best Club’) we continue to push for growth without forgetting our core principles of inclusivity, sociability, self-improvement and fun.

Amy Bunce, President 2024/25

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BOAT CLUB (UCBC)

UCBC has built on a fantastic year of training to become the largest and most active social club in College. We also row. The club finished a competitive 2023/24 season with the Men’s 1st IV and Women’s 1st VIII reaching the finals of Durham Regatta and also celebrating our 190th anniversary in the Bishop’s Dining Room, by means of a fantastic 3-course dinner, and an even more fantastic selection of cheese and port. Moving onto the 2024/25 season, UCBC successfully recruited experienced school and club rowers to bolster our senior squads. Popularity in the boat club can partly be attributed to the socials which have continued in their growth to now comfortably boast the largest attendance in College. The Bailey Boat Race set the tone for the rest of the year when 110 keen freshers and returners descended on the Bailey in the hope of finding a ‘buffalo’. As tradition dictates, we followed the usual route of college

bars i.e. the ones we hadn't been banned from yet, and completed a series of challenges and games along the way to educate the first years in the ways of Castle fun. In the most (dis)orderly and (lacking in) sober manner, our penultimate stop preUndie saw us enter an old boat club favourite, Chad's. Severely undartboarded (please see the UCBC section, Castellum Issue No.76 as to the reason why) meant banners had to suffice for this particular tradition. This would however begin the club's habit to be (un)politely evicted from various college bars over the rest of the term. Competitiveness on the water has only improved this year as a result of the purchase of new ergs to aid our land training, as well as a move down to the much larger Tees River for eight-boat training ahead of the Women's and Men's Head of the River Races (8th and 22nd March respectively). With water sessions now three to four times per week, supplemented by ergs and weight training, the top crews are training to six days a week and I greatly look forward to seeing how the squads perform at WeHORR and HORR later this term. The novice programme has been as successful as ever with the Men's 1st IV securing a second place finish in the Novice Cup. The hard work from our novice captains and vice-captains, Flo Sandbloom, Heloise Foltier, Ben York and Mimi McLean-Brown, has set the club up to successfully integrate the novices into the seniors to ensure the depth of future squads and to enable us to competitively enter a strong fleet of boats into races. A fresh addition to the social calendar, 'Navy vs Pirates', saw attendance reach triple digits, with a healthy quadruple amount of



The Men's 1st IV in 'Klute' at Durham Small Boats Head 2025



The Women's 1st VII after their training session on the Thames March 2024

didge being consumed along the way. Social Secs, Seb Lees and Jack Jordan, organised an event as lively as a scene from 'Captain Philips', which did result in UCBC being banned from St Mary's for the rest of the year. An unscrewable door-knob on the front entrance is surely asking for trouble. I blame the pirates. The socials in 2024 culminated with our annual Christmas meal, hosted this year by our new sponsor, Shaheens. The exclusive hiring of 24 North Bailey was a resounding success, demonstrated by the fact that the 120 attendees tripled the bar's minimum spend in a little over an hour. I did have the pleasure of waking up to a message from the manager of the bar firstly informing us that they (thankfully) don't check their CCTV footage, and secondly, asking when we can return to boost their profits. Socials in Putney remain as well-attended as ever. The introduction of a New Year's alumni social on 3rd January gave our rowers the opportunity to meet members of our alumni club, Floreat Castellum Boat Club (FCBC) and a chance for the exec to scout out the best clubs in Putney for our return in March. I hope many of you are able to come and cheer on the crews at the WeHORR and HORR races where UCBC will then be returning to the Ramna Curry House on 22nd March to celebrate the end of a successful head season. I also look forward to seeing you at our alumni socials for Durham Regatta in June, and later, at Henley Royal Regatta in July. FCBC continues to provide invaluable support to UCBC, through generous financial donations as well as advice and guidance, which has enabled the boat club to compete for the spot as third fastest college against ***field. The alumni's recent purchase of a Wintech 4+, 'Klute', has been a fantastic addition to the fleet and I look forward to

seeing FCBC's membership grow year on year. If you are interested in joining our alumni club, then please do get in contact with David and Robert at FCBC by emailing 'robert.brownell@ucbc.co.uk'. I politely encourage you to check out our regularly updated website, www.ucbc.co.uk, Facebook group, 'Floreat Castellum Boat Club' or Instagram page, @ucbcdurham, for news on the squads, race reports, as well as information on our alumni events that take place throughout the year. I thoroughly enjoy meeting members of our rowing alumni and seeing photos, hearing stories, or bits of history about Castle's oldest society. Our history is what makes this 191 year old club so special and my email (oscar.s.gray@durham.ac.uk) is always open should you find yourself in Durham, or wish to share a particular memory from your time as a part of UCBC. To finish off, I want to use this opportunity to thank my exec for their hard work and dedication. I have every confidence that rowing at University College will continue to flourish for another 191 years, and then many more years after that.

Oscar Gray UCBC President 2024/25

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE HOCKEY CLUB (UCHC)

UCHC has had a great start to the 2024/25 season with both the men and women's team now playing in the Premiership. We've had many talented freshers join the team and a fantastic Izzy Gilbey step in as goalkeeper for the women's team. This is possible thanks to the JCR's generosity and some sponsorships



UCHC half time match team talk



Castle v St Cuthberts match at the end of January 2025 with a 2-1 win to Castle!



Castle Freshers Fair 2024

that have enabled us to acquire a brand new goalie kit as well as short corner masks. Our club is active and dedicated, always showing enthusiasm even for our many rainy Sunday 9pm fixtures. Both the men's and women's team are doing well in the league, only a couple narrow losses and some dodgy umpire calls... A special shoutout goes to the girls that help the boys out from time to time to be able to field a full team (with subs!). The club has tremendous energy on and off the pitch; our social secs have been amazing at organising lively socials like our full club Christmas dinner and I'm sure many more are to come. We look forward to the upcoming fixtures, notably the knock-out cup matches and taking revenge on our rivals on Castle x Hatfield day.

Mathilde Plantenga, President 2024/25

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL CLUB (UCVC) MIXED

This year marks a fresh start for UCVC, as we continue to grow and evolve while maintaining our status as one of the most vibrant and welcoming societies in the Castle community. While we no longer have sponsorship

from Urban Base, we have worked extra hard on new recruits, ensuring that the club remains strong. Thanks to the University College Funding Committee, which provided extra funds for much-needed protective equipment, UCVC has been able to sustain its momentum and offer players the support they need to compete at their best.



With the enthusiasm and dedication of our new members, UCVC continues to run smoothly, allowing us to remain competitive in the league, where we are currently second in the table. This fresh energy has also helped us stay strong in the inter-college Premiership as we push towards our goal of securing top rankings. Additionally, we are still aiming to win Castle Hatfield Day and the Festival of Sport, two milestones that would be an incredible achievement for the club.

Beyond competition, UCVC remains committed to charity efforts, with our annual 'Burning Balls' tournament continuing to bring players of all abilities together in support of Olivia Inspires, a cause close to the heart of our community. Thanks to our new recruits and dedicated members, UCVC is thriving both on and off the court, ensuring that the club remains a welcoming and ambitious space for all.

George Zhang, UCVC President 2024/25

'THE BEARS' CHEERLEADING-HILD BEDE AND CASTLE COMBINED TEAM

Dear Castle Alumni,

We hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the start of the New Year! As the cheerleading team reflects on an exciting Michaelmas Term, we wanted to share some of the highlights that made it truly special.

This term, we had incredible opportunities to cheer on various sports teams, with one of the most memorable moments being our support at the charity basketball match against Hatfield. The energy from both the players and the crowd was contagious, and we loved being a part of such a fantastic event.

Our exec team has been incredible in creating a fun and inclusive atmosphere, hosting brilliant socials like 'Dress as Your Type' and 'Aliens and MIB'. These events have not only brought the team closer together, but have also been a great way for our freshers to make new friends and feel welcomed into the College.

One of our most exciting sessions this term was the 'Bring a Buddy to Cheer'. We had many new faces join us to try cheerleading for the first time, and it was a blast seeing so many new people discover what we love about the sport.

Looking ahead, we're gearing up for our biggest event of the year—our competition against the other college teams. We can't wait to showcase all the hard work we've put in!

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to sharing more updates with you in the future!

Best wishes, Hild Bede Castle Cheerleading Team



Natalie Ottesen Aas and Amelia Harvey, Co-Presidents 2024/25



Badminton training at MC

BADMINTON

University College Badminton Society is as strong as ever, boasting competitive Men's, Women's and Mixed teams all within the Premier or Div 1 intercollegiate leagues. Although we have lost many competent players in the last few years, the recruitment efforts taking place in our weekly training sessions have been successful in introducing both young Axelsen's and up-and-comers to Castle Badminton life, and the future is looking bright, especially with all our new equipment.

The social side of Castle Badminton has also undergone a renaissance with such socials as "The Shuttle-Shot Social" where participants flaunted their badminton and cardio skills around Palace Green while drinking out of leaking shuttlecocks, though you may see the problem with this method of beverage delivery.

All in all, Castle Badminton is taking serious strides into the next academic year and far beyond.



Badminton challenges at a social

Benjamin Kolicic, President 2024/25

CHAPEL CHOIR

The term 'to hit the ground running', despite its meaning, sounds awfully painful. I am no physics student, but I could probably tell you with some certainty that falling from a height whilst maintaining forward motion would really test the limits of a man's bone structure. This was indeed what happened to me at the start of Michaelmas Term last October. Taking over as Director of Music at University College from the esteemed Tom Parker meant holding three days of auditions in Induction Week for only sixteen places in the chapel choir, as well as for two organ scholar positions. Much coffee was quaffed. Many paracetamols were taken. It was, however, a process worth enduring sevenfold, as this year's choir is truly superb. The field of candidates was very strong this year, and Kate Ryan (the choir manager) and I had to make some tough decisions on who to accept, but the fruits of our labour have proven to be extremely sweet. As a result, as well as the regular Evensongs and Eucharists, the choir is setting out to do its first post-pandemic CD recording in memory of a talented Castle alumnus, David Knowles. It will include a range of largely unrecorded anthems, mostly by composers who went to Durham University – Sir Edward Bairstow and Francis Jackson CBE – as well as recording a potential commission from a more recent graduate, Ben Rowarth, and a set of works by the American composer Amy Beach. This is on top of a three-day London residency in Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral, as well as a Sunday in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle and an international tour to Sweden and Denmark. It is our will to encapsulate this high point in choral music at Durham in perpetuity, which is costly, and so I humbly ask you as alumni to support this project if you are so willing. Details on how to give can be found through Julia Bonner, the College's Alumni and Development Manager.

Barney Howard, University College Director of Music 2024/25

CHESS

Following the remarkable success of last year's launch, Castle Chess Club has quickly become a vibrant, uplifting and inclusive society in College. Since its inception, the club has attracted members of all levels, from complete beginners to seasoned pros, and has fostered a strong sense of community.



Castle Chess Club gathers in the Great Hall every week, where members engage in both friendly and competitive matches, honing their technical skills whilst enjoying the break from the busy demands of academic life.

As the newly appointed President, I am incredibly proud to carry forward the legacy of Xander, whose passion for the club helped transform it into what it is today. I intend to build upon his vision, helping expand the club even further. Thanks to the generous donation from Castle alumnus, John Crowther, we are currently in the process of securing new chess sets, organising a wider variety of inter-collegiate tournaments and planning some exciting social events. One of the anticipated highlights will be a celebratory team dinner, providing members the chance to socialise outside the chessboard and celebrate the community we've built.

Looking ahead, with Castle X Hatfield day nearing upon us, we are preparing our opening strategies for a day of intense matches and good-natured rivalry. We can't wait to showcase our skills and team spirit.

Thanks to a fantastic group of executive members, from Vice-President (Ethan Arnold), to the people that help plan our socials (Poppy, Anna and Anousha), our club is more dynamic than ever and I look forward to seeing the club continue to thrive.

Emma Ainsby, President 2024/25

PRIDE SOCIETY

We are a society aiming to create a safe space for LGBTQ+ students. We have socials running from film nights to bar crawls to try and make sure there is something everyone can enjoy. One of the highlights of last year was a joint event with the Dawdon Community Centre, which ended up with us all going to Durham Pride together. The picture is of some of the banners we made in our banner painting session. Coming up, jointly with the Lowe Library we are doing something for LGBTQ+ history month.



As a whole the society is aiming to create a safe space for LGBTQ+ students within College as well as raising awareness around LGBTQ+ issues.

Nico Chambers, President 2024/25

THE KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS SOCIETY (KCSOC)

The Krishna Consciousness Society (KCSoc) is an inclusive platform for spiritual seekers and deep thinkers, open to all, regardless of faith or background. Guided by the Vedic Scriptures through the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, our society focuses on nurturing the mind, body, and soul while fostering connections at a higher level of consciousness.

This year, KCSoc hosted multiple meditation sessions, welcoming members from diverse faiths: Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and atheist alike. These sessions catered to both beginners and seasoned practitioners, offering guidance through different stages of meditation.

Locally, we enriched our members with unique events like instrument practice, led by a Finnish instructor, where participants learned mridanga, harmonium, and kartals while chanting. We also held thought provoking discussions on topics such as seeking the purpose of life and joy, and navigating student challenges.

Interactive Hatha yoga sessions revealed the spiritual essence behind each posture, while kirtan sessions at the Oriental Museum for Diwali and Holi brought rhythmic energy to life. At the Castle vs. Hatfield day, we distributed Prasadam and spiritual books, including the Bhagavad Gita, funded through generous contributions. Even our pub crawl, unusual for a society that doesn't drink, sparked curiosity and conversations about a higher way of living.



Shatakshi & Edwin, Co-Presidents 2024/25

Our retreats were a highlight, with four organised by national KCSoc across England, including two at Bhaktivedanta Manor in Watford, a serene ISKCON temple gifted by George Harrison from The Beatles. These blissful experiences featured mantra chanting, workshops, yoga, meals and joyful kirtans.

BOARD GAMES SOCIETY

We are a society that meet up on a regular basis with the aim of playing board games. It is a fun and welcoming society for everyone giving students a calm environment to take a break from busy student life. Our one social of the year is coming up this term, being the toastie bar crawl, which was started as a way to have an alcohol-free bar crawl.

Nico Chambers, President 2024/25

CHAMBER CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA (CCO)

Last term was a busy one for Castle Choir and Orchestra. After a term full of rehearsals, our ensembles joined forces to host a sold-out Christmas Concert in the Great Hall. We were delighted to welcome over 180 people to the Great Hall, including alumni, for a minced pies and mulled wine reception, followed by festive music. Orchestra performed selections from Tchaikovsky's 'The Nutcracker', and Choir took on a range of choral



CCO Christmas Concert December 2024

favourites, from 'Carol of the Bells' and Philip Stopford's 'Lully Lulla Lullay' and 'Christmas Blessing', to the more modern 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas'. The two ensembles then joined together for the festive favourite 'The First Noël'. A huge thanks to Conductors Anthony Sutch, Amelia Mclean-Brown, and Scarlett Rawbone for their efforts in leading the ensembles and curating the programme.

This term we are looking forward to our Epiphany Concert, provisionally scheduled during the final two weeks of term. If you are around Durham we'd love to see you – please reach out to CCO President Callum Tilley at castle.cco@durham.ac.uk for further information. CCO are also contributing to the Primary School music day and concert, our annual outreach initiative where we welcome local state primary schools to Castle for a day of arts and music making before performing to their parents.

If you wish to stay in touch with CCO and receive the termly alumni newsletter please contact us at the email address above, or reach out on social media. We'd love to hear from you and welcome you back to Castle if you're around.

Callum Tilley, Castle Music President and President of CCO 2024/25

CASTLE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Greetings, readers of Castellum, and a warm welcome to the Environment Committee!

I would first like to give a quick thanks to last year's Environment and Sustainability Officer, Henry Morris, for all his hard work in getting the committee to where it is now – it was a pleasure to work with you.

In the three years since the pandemic, Castle Environment has gone from strength to strength, and the executive committee now boasts 9 dedicated members – the biggest it has been in recent years.



We are working hard to cement the solid foundations that we laid last year, and to build on them this year. The academic year began with the success of Castle Freshers' Fair, where we had an erg bike competition to demonstrate the 'power of the pedal' and so 40 people pedalled their way to a free mini cactus, with one lucky person winning a free pint (in a reusable cup, of course), on us.

More fun followed as we embarked on the first ever (yes, you read that right) Castle Environment bar crawl. Accompanied by some fellow environment enthusiasts, we made our way down the Hill from Van Mildert and ended up at the Undie, paying a visit to college bars that use reusable cups.

Soon after this came our first allotment session of the year, where some of Castle's finest gardeners braved the cold to clear the beds, ready to be planted up with some hardy winter crops shortly before Christmas. We have plans to plant some more flavourful crops in the spring with the aim of making a meal with the produce at the end of the year – any chefs out there, get your aprons at the ready!

On the information side of things, we have been keeping Castle up to date with sustainability tips on our Instagram (@[castleenvironment](https://www.instagram.com/castleenvironment) now has almost 500 followers) and with our fortnightly newsletter in the Castle Newsletter and (soon to be) Castle Crier.

We had our COP29 Debrief on 29th January, which proved so successful last year that people asked us to make it an annual event – so we have! It was another night of constructive climate conversation, with the

right balance of warning, to spur us into action, and hope, that change is coming.

We also have plans in the works for a big talk on sustainable fashion (hopefully with the Head of Depop) towards the end of Epiphany, and a workshop on ecoanxiety and talking about climate change constructively, possibly with the help of the Durham Wildlife Trust.

Last but certainly not least, we are continuing to push our college sustainability policy through the Castle JCR. It is not yet free from contention, but we have made progress from last year and so we hope that we can soon begin implementation.

Having been on the committee for three years now, and on the Durham University Climate Society executive committee last year, I have been lucky enough to see the environmental movement expand massively at Durham, among both students and staff (with the help of Greenspace), and it has been a privilege to be a part of it. Seeing all this positive action blossom has given me genuine hope in the face of ever bleaker news stories, like the recent wildfires in Los Angeles. Call me naïve, but Castle Environment has shown me that real change is not only possible, but even an increasing reality.



I would like to end by thanking my current committee for all their hard work so far. They have been reliable and enthusiastic, and I cannot wait for what the rest of the year will bring! I have no doubt that the committee will continue to embody Castle's motto, *Non Nobis Solum* ('Not for Ourselves Alone'). Floreat Castellum!

Alex Martin, Castle Environment and Sustainability Officer, and the Environment Committee 2024/25

FIRST GENERATION SOCIETY

After a brief hiatus, the First Generation Society is back with renewed vigour and a fierce commitment to supporting students from First Generation families. We're more determined than ever to make a lasting impact.

Our mission is to create a supportive community for students who are the first in their families to attend a Russell Group University, empowering them to thrive both academically and socially.

We kicked off Michaelmas Term in the Great Hall, partnering with Castle's Intersectional Feminism Society for a powerful screening of *Becoming*, Michelle Obama's inspiring documentary. As a first-generation graduate, the former First Lady's journey resonated deeply with us, reflecting the unique challenges faced by first-gen students in higher education.

Looking ahead, we're thrilled to host a LinkedIn speaker event, where an industry expert will share invaluable insights on networking and career growth. We're also collaborating with University College Welfare to bring you Working Class Week, celebrating social mobility and empowering students to break barriers.

With a strong team led by President Evie Miller-Soleil and Vice-President Jessica Dailey, we're focused on mentorship, connection, and opportunity.

This year is set to be our most transformative yet as we continue to uplift and inspire the next generation of leaders. Join us as we champion inclusivity and progress at Durham!



Evie Miller-Soleil, President 2024/25



CASTLE FEMINIST SOCIETY

Some very exciting socials have marked the start of this academic year for Castle Feminist Society (Castle FemSoc).

As a society, we have tried to focus our events on more relaxing and fun socials, however some more informative events are yet to come. Our main aim is to create an inclusive and welcoming space for students to discuss issues regarding intersectional gender equality.

In the first term this year, we started off with a tote bag painting evening, which allowed new members to socialise and showcase their artistic skills. We have equally organised a movie night with Castle FirstGen, in which we watched Michelle Obama's film on her biography, "Becoming", which highlighted her role as a first-generation student and feminist. We equally organised a joint social with DADS (DU Debate and Discussion Society), in which we discussed the interesting topic of gender and its impact on economic and job opportunities. Finally, we finished the term with an exciting bar crawl with Castle PrideSoc, celebrating the end of term.

We aim to continue with these exciting and informative socials throughout the year, with plans for a charity bake sale, a Paint and Sip social, a seminar talk on intersectional feminism and another movie viewing.

Elisa Gooding, President 2024/25

CASTLE CHRISTIAN UNION SOCIETY

For almost 100 years, students across Durham University have met in small groups to explore what the Bible has to say and to evaluate its claims for themselves. At Castle Christian Union, we're delighted to have been able to continue this tradition in College. With numbers declining over recent years due to various reasons, it has been a real joy to have had so much interest over the past year.

It all started at the Castle Freshers' Fair, where many stopped by the table with both testimonies and questions. Amidst the turmoil of leaving home and beginning a new chapter, students explained that their anchor had been lifted, and what they once accepted unquestioningly as true no longer seemed so secure. For some, that translated into a need to go deeper into the accounts of Jesus, instead of trusting hearsay. For other students, it provided an opportunity to grow amidst a caring Christian community.

Over the terms, many of these students have attended our weekly Explore sessions, in which we have been looking at the life of Jesus. Together, we have wrestled for truth, considering historical context, the lens of worldview, and personal testimony.

We are so grateful to the Lord for how He has grown us—in numbers, yes, but far more importantly, in spiritual understanding. As I write this, we look forward to Events Week 2025, where all students will have the opportunity to see that Jesus REALLY is the Saviour of the world. Soli Deo gloria.

Jake Bell, President 2024/25

CASTLE YOGA AND PILATES SOCIETY

Castle Yoga meets regularly to stretch, strengthen, and unwind, taking some time away from everyday stresses. We welcome all and any abilities, simply encouraging people to follow along as best they can. This was how I learnt, following YouTube practices and slowly gaining confidence with strength, flexibility, and balance. Castle Yoga classes incorporate a range of movements, drawing influence from different styles, for a workout which still leaves one relaxed.

We practice in the Bishop's Dining Room every Sunday evening for a restful end to the week. Doing yoga in such a beautiful place is certainly surreal, adding to the general 'pinch-me' experience of Castle.

I've been happily overwhelmed by the interest this year. Previously, yoga has been a small society, so I was pleased to find so many keen to get involved and would only love to accommodate everybody! We currently have a booking system, with spaces allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. We hope that, in the Summer Term, there will be the opportunity to practice in the courtyard or Fellows' Garden. This means lots more people can come each week, making the most of the new mats we were able to buy this year!

I've had some truly lovely feedback, with people saying that even these short sessions are something to look forward to, making a real difference to their week. I'm so pleased to be able to share my passion and bring people a little joy and relaxation remote from the uni chaos.

Amy Bunce, President 2025/25



MAGNOLIA-INTERNATIONAL HOUSE BAND

Magnolia is Castle's own International House Band, created to highlight the diversity of Castle through music through its diverse and flexible membership and choices of music genres. We are by far the most diverse society in our college, with members of various nationalities and ethnicities, such as Malaysia, Vietnam, China, Korea, India, Kazakhstan, Japan, the U.S., Hong Kong, Australia, Italy, and the U.K. (probably more, but we lost count). Honestly, if the United Nations had a house band, it would be us—except we're cooler, louder, and don't require diplomatic immunity.

The decision to have open rehearsals and be a non-auditioned band was made on our core philosophy that music should be fun and accessible to everyone, highlighting the diversity of Castle and how supportive Castle music is to everyone.

Our band aims to create a freeing and enjoyable atmosphere by emphasising everyone's freedom as much as possible. From the rehearsal dates and the set lists in gigs, the members of the bands have the greatest say in them.

This year, Natalie Law (electric guitar) and Mia Stevens (drums) contributed one of the greatest parts in aiding the band's orchestration by organising the rehearsal locations, gigs, and set lists. In addition to their amazing talents on their instruments, major props to them for their patience and tolerance in getting this band up and running to this point.

Amira Dvorak (bass) was an absolute gem- not just because she's a great bassist, but because finding a bassist is like finding a unicorn, and we were not about to let her go. Also, she has impeccable music taste, which enabled us to have a different set list for each gig (thank god we don't spend the entire year playing the same songs).

Paloma Antao (acoustic guitar) brought the perfect cosy vibe to our songs—because, let's be honest, Taylor Swift and Coldplay just wouldn't feel right without her.

Noah Court and Lizi Tran were our star keyboardists and were honestly lifesavers when it came to adjusting keys on the spot to match vocals. Both classically trained and blessed with perfect pitch, they made all of us feel slightly worse about our own musical abilities.



Band rehearsal

Nathan Jones (saxophone) added the essential "jazz hands" (metaphorically speaking) to our band, elevating our music with that sultry sax sound and broadening the genres of music we can fully explore.

Lastly, Freya Cotterill (vocals & keyboard) and Max Pilkington (bass) were our trusted seniors of the band who stepped in whenever we needed them despite their insane schedules. Between jobs,

academics, and life, they still found time to help keep the band running (and yes, we have two bassists—which is more than we can say for most bands, so we're feeling pretty smug about it).

Continuing our strong performances from last year's Castle Day, our band started strong this year by performing in Castle Freshers' Week, South Freshers' Week, John's Bailey Ball and Valentine's Day Dinner at Stephenson College.

Since we didn't have the regular college band night as we had in the previous two years and college gigs becoming more competitive, we had to work extra hard to get our name out there. But, with our tight-knit band playing musical pieces that the members actually enjoyed playing, we were able to have an enjoyable, successful year.

At the end of the day, Magnolia is all about making music without turning it into another source of stress. With recent improvements in the Castle Music Society's structure, we even had better financial clarity—meaning we managed to fit in proper bonding time by treating ourselves to post-gig and end-of-term dinners, which were arguably the most important part of the experience.



Castle Day 2024

Throughout our shared love of playing music, being students from the UK and all around the world, our band members have gotten together to create the most wholesome and supportive society, and it is solely to the members that it is owed to.

Here's to another year of music and good vibes!

Jasmine Lee, Magnolia President and Vocal 2024/25



The string orchestra at the Leech Hall Concert

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY (UCCMS)

University College Chamber Music Society's first year has seen promising growth. Thus far, we have formed a number of ensembles, including a string quartet, an oboe quartet, a viola ensemble, a chamber choir, and string orchestra, and have plans for wind quintet and early-music ensembles. Additionally, we have held a number of events: a salon in the Bishop's Dining Room in March, an open rehearsal in May, and a concert in Leech Hall in December. The greatest of these was the concert, which included the string quartet, oboe quartet, and string orchestra and repertoire such as Borodin's String Quartet No. 2, Elgar's Andante and Allegro, Holst's Brook Green Suite and Warlock's Capriol Suite. In the coming terms, we hope to hold more events and help embed music-making more deeply within the life of the College.

CASTLE CHARITY FASHION SHOW (CCFS)

The Castle Charity Fashion Show is a unique, exciting event held every year in the Great Hall of the Castle. Outfits from both local and international designers are showcased, all while raising funds for vital local charities. The entire event, both models and the executive committee, is comprised of Castle students showcasing their creativity, leadership, and passion.

Last year, the show's theme was 'Paradise Lost', the epic poem by John Milton. The poem's theme of the inherent duality of man was explored through both the carefully chosen garments and the dynamic music choices.



Most importantly, CCFS24 was able to raise over £7k for our two charities, Olivia Inspires and RTprojects through various fundraising initiatives, including a tremendous effort from the models who raised over £100 each individually. Not only was this a 400% increase in revenue from previous years, but this year's show also was able to foster a strong relationship with the chosen charities.

As Director, I had the opportunity to meet Olivia's parents, the founders of the charity. Olivia was a Natural Sciences student at Castle in Durham before she tragically passed away in 2018. The charity, Olivia Inspires, raises money to provide grants to underprivileged youth, enabling them to achieve their potential in STEM, the arts and sports.

I also had the incredible opportunity of visiting RTprojects. RTprojects is a local charity based in the Northeast which helps people who are enduring poor mental health. They provide people with the opportunity for creative expression and to be part of a safe, supportive community. They help people develop emotional resilience and coping strategies towards recovery.

Sara Zubaidi, President 2023/24

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BALL COMMITTEE

This year, I've had the privilege of leading the University College Ball Committee in organizing some truly unforgettable events. Following the success of last year's June Ball with the theme Equinox—an extraordinary night celebrating the balance between light and dark—we were determined to continue delivering magical experiences.

Our first ball of the year, Ladies' Night, transported guests to the golden age of Hollywood with a La La Land theme. Castle was beautifully transformed into a world of vintage glamour, featuring a live jazz bar, stunning



décor, and a variety of entertainment, from swing boats to classic cocktails. To improve the guest experience, we also introduced a cloakroom, ensuring greater convenience throughout the evening. The night was a magical escape and set the tone for an incredible year of events.

At the start of the year, I had the pleasure of attending an alumni event, where I spoke with many former students who were excited by the possibility of returning for the June Ball in the future. Their enthusiasm highlighted the strong connection alumni still feel to Castle, and I know they will be



Photos from June Ball 2024

particularly interested to hear what we have planned for this year's event.

Despite challenges posed by ongoing room closures—including the Senate Suite, Norman Gallery, Octagon Room, and, this year, the Fellows' Garden—



we remain committed to delivering a spectacular 12-hour celebration steeped in tradition. We also welcome the return of Palace Green after its unexpected closure last year, allowing us to reclaim an iconic space for the Ball. The team has been working hard to reimagine our spaces and create an immersive experience that upholds the legacy of this historic event.

Financial accessibility has also been a key focus this year. For the first time since before COVID, we froze ticket prices for Ladies' Night to ensure the event remained affordable. Additionally, I worked closely with the JCR Treasurer to restructure the Ball Fund, creating a more effective financial intervention to help more students who want to attend college balls. Our dedicated finance and sponsorship teams have also secured new partnerships, including rescue flats, love corn and maintained our relationship with Red Bull, allowing us to maintain the high standards of our events without increasing costs for students.

As we celebrate 136 years of the June Ball this year and prepare for Halfway Hall in Epiphany term, the committee looks forward to delivering more unforgettable memories for University College.

<https://thejuneball.co.uk/>

Lucia Luing Turnbull, University College JCR Ball Chair 2024/25

CASTLE DRESSES

Castle Dresses has had a fantastic start to the year, thanks to a dynamic new executive committee bringing fresh ideas and energy. The Michaelmas Open Day was extremely popular, with over 40 Castle students renting dresses.

Looking ahead, one of Castle Dresses' main goals is to enhance the legacy of Castle Tails, making the scheme more accessible and inclusive for the Castle community. Our talented seamstress team, led by Clara Von Baeyer, have been working on creative ways to repurpose some of our less popular dresses into stylish bow ties and pocket squares for the June Ball.

We are also exploring ways to extend the reach of Castle Dresses beyond Castle itself. Conversations with other colleges are underway to explore potential collaborations, allowing more students access to our wardrobe. Additionally, following last year's success, we will once again be providing dresses for the Grey College Fashion Show, further increasing awareness and engagement with the scheme.

As we move forward, we are eagerly anticipating our upcoming events, including the Epiphany Open and our June Ball Open Day, any luck hosting the June Ball open day outside (weather dependent)!

Natalie Wilmshurst, President 2024/25



Warm Hearts workshop

WARM HEARTS

Warm Hearts is a charity project I founded to support NHS hospitals, alleviate the pressures the NHS is facing, and bring kindness, compassion, and warmth back into healthcare. Warm Hearts sessions take place every week in Castle, where volunteers engage in voluntary projects that support our chosen hospitals. We have made sunshine boxes for children in hospital, donated Christmas presents and handmade cards, organised charity picnics, and are in the process of making baby hats and blankets for prematurely born babies across the UK, whilst fundraising for Zoe's Place, a baby hospice in dire need of funding.

Warm Hearts is a warm and welcoming community which facilitates students of every identity and background to make meaningful connections, have fun, learn new skills, and give back to the NHS. My long-term ambition for Warm Hearts is to fundraise enough money to

open a charity psychiatric hospital to treat young people with mental health challenges with kindness, compassion, and patient-orientated care and implement larger schemes, services and acts of kindness across NHS hospitals.

I have served the NHS for six years as a volunteer and through paid employment and have witnessed first-hand the drastic decline in funding, resources, and ultimately compassionate, informed practices that facilitate patient rehabilitation. My experiences working in a children's psychiatric inpatient facility, emergency medicine, and voluntary befriending in geriatrics solidified my understanding of just how vital kindness and compassion in healthcare truly are to the recovery of a patient. When services are so stretched, even vital care such as timely interventions and procedures are not always facilitated, so the first sacrifice in these instances are most usually the non-critical services and compassionate patient-oriented communication and interventions, leaving patients disengaged and dysregulated by the chaotic, seemingly uncaring environment.

Through Warm Hearts I aspire to create a calm, compassionate and connecting environment for service users where they feel seen, understood, and able to engage in their recovery journey via the implementation of Warm Hearts acts of kindness, services, donations, volunteers, and the founding of our own charity hospital.

Until then, it is just so enriching to have such a warm, welcoming, and kind community of volunteers and a safe space to spread this kindness and compassion to those who need it most. The Warm Hearts executive team, volunteers, and wider college and university community have been so unbelievably supportive and receptive to Warm Hearts, which has facilitated us to flourish as much as we have and continue to grow and do great things together.

Eleanor James, Warm Hearts founder

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

I have had the privilege of fulfilling the role of Outreach Officer this academic year, and we've had such a meaningful, impactful, and connecting time thus far as Castle Outreach. My primary role as Outreach Officer is to oversee Castle Community Action (CCA), which is comprised of various divisions endeavoring to support a plethora of community initiatives- Elderly Care, Schools Into Castle, Primary Education, Homelessness Care, Castle Environment, and the Charities Committee.

We set out to increase our participation and awareness of what we do within College by organising participation opportunities such as welcome talks, the CCA brunch, and I had the upmost privilege of meeting with Nigel and Paula, to discuss how we could continue to support Olivia Inspires as a college, which was such a meaningful, important, and insightful meeting and relationship to continue. We then organised a charity formal which raised funds and awareness for two of the three charities we support: Eating Distress North East and RT Projects, and shortly after held our annual charity CCA Auction. With the generous support of everyone in College coming together to help out, we had a successful evening, and every penny raised will be utilised to continue the work we do as Outreach.



Before long, Christmas was upon us and our outreach festivities materialised into collecting donations for the Festive Food Drive and the Christmas card appeal for local care home residents where we donated over one hundred Christmas cards! We additionally held a festive collaboration with Castle Welfare and organised our CCA festive afternoon, where we gathered to make Christmas cards for the elderly, wrap Christmas presents for children in hospital, made eco-friendly Christmas decorations, raised money for RT projects, and collected clothes donations for homeless people in our local community via a bake sale.

Our plans for the term ahead, include but are not limited to, our CCA Valentine's paint and sip in aid of Eating Distress North East, partaking in the Gateshead Half in aid of Olivia Inspires, organising a second charity formal in aid of Olivia Inspires, organising a primary school concert and school visits, and an afternoon tea with Age UK.

Alongside the bigger events and appeals in college, every CCA division lead has taken great initiative and dedication to continuously contribute to our local community via Sanctuary 21 volunteering, primary school visits, allotment and environment campaigning, fundraising, and donations to local care homes and hospitals. It has been a privilege to witness the passion, dedication, and impact that CCA delivers; I truly could not be any prouder or more in awe of a group of people.

Eleanor James, Outreach Officer 2024/25

CAMPAIGNS COMMITTEE

In 2024, the Welfare Team split into two separate committees: the Campaigns Committee and the Welfare Committee, headed by the JCR Campaigns and Welfare Officers respectively. They come together to provide both proactive and reactive welfare support to the college community.



Made up of our Community Officers (formerly Minority Officers) and Campaigns Assistants, the Campaigns Committee organises our college campaigns! So far this year, we have organised seven campaign weeks: Housing Matters, SHAG Week, Movember, Think B4U Drink, Northern Lights, Social Mobility Week and Disabilities Awareness Week.

Some highlights have been the infamous SHAG Party, an evening of celebrating sexual health and self-expression in the Undie complete with themed drinks, toasties, the SHAG Playlist and more!

In collaboration with Georgie (USO) and Team Castle, we organised the Movember campaign, raising money for men's health whilst spreading awareness, and growing questionable moustaches.

On a more serious note, the Working Class Officer (Evie) and I organised a very successful LinkedIn Workshop for Social Mobility Week, helping to equip our Castle students with some essential networking tools whilst enjoying some pizza.

Coming up, we have the annual Culture Formal and its associated campaign week celebrating cultural diversity at Castle and looking towards next term we have our Stress Less and Pride Week campaigns!

Scott Hickman, JCR Campaigns Officer 2024/25

CASTLE SOCIETY AGM 2024 MINUTES

Minutes of the 2024 annual general meeting of the Durham Castle Society held in the Undercroft Bar, University College, Durham at 10am on Saturday 13/04/2024.

Committee Members in attendance:

- Kevin Hawes, KH (77-80); Chair, *Durham Castle Society*
- Charlie McKeever, CM (17-22); Secretary, *Durham Castle Society*
- Martin Gunson, MG (73-16); Treasurer, *Durham Castle Society*
- Alex Nelson, AN (80-83); Editor, *Castellum and College Advisory Board representative*
- Wendy Powers, WP; Principal, *University College, Durham*
- Katie Bertram(19-25), KH; Alumni Engagement Coordinator, *University College, Durham* (Maternity Cover for Julia Bonner Alumni and Development Manager)
- Chris Silberberg, CS (14-17); Committee, *Durham Castle Society*

Society Members in attendance (20):

Paul Everson; Robin Brown; David Wilkins (61-64); Douglas Denham St Pinnock (73-76); David Waters (61-64); Roy Todd (1956-1960); Nick Mercer (73-76); Jonathan Pearson (87-91); David Hollington (67-70); David Goody (73-76); John McGornick (55-58); Oliver Lendrum (95-99); Martin Sexton (58-61); John Abbot (05-08); Patrick Hayes (20-23); David Hatens (61-64); Bill Fairurn; Nicholas Spong; Robert Leigh (19-23); Robert Whitcombe (73-76).

With the following joining via Zoom (10): Alec Blissett; Alistair Gibb; David Young; Mahnoor Tariq; Mark Bulsing; Nick Butt; Graham Saunders; Robert Beckley; Sophie Courtiaud and Denis Antor.

Others in attendance:

Ellen Crabtree (Vice-Principal), Ananya Nair (JCR Senior Student 23/24), Robert Almqvist (JCR Vice Senior Student 23/24), Shoaib Islam (JCR Senior Student Elect 24/25).

Apologies for absence:

- James Rowley; Trustee, *University College Durham Trust*
- Matthew Maneely; Trustee, *University College Durham Trust*
- Sophie Draper, *Durham Castle Society Committee*
- Edward Gunson; John Pelican (69-72), David Morgan (59-63).

The secretary apologises for any errors or omissions in the above names.

I. Introductions:

Kevin Hawes

The chair introduced himself and welcomed all to the meeting and indeed the weekend as a whole. The chair welcomed Wendy Powers and Katie Bertram and thanked them for their work in preparation for the meeting, particularly to Katie who is covering for Julia whilst she is on maternity leave. He also thanked the college staff for letting us impose ourselves for the weekend and graciously hosting us. KH introduced the committee that were present and noted that Charlie McKeever has been co-opted as secretary after Tim Bratton had resigned from the role, alongside thanking the committee for the work throughout the year on various virtual meetings, which has enabled the committee to meet more frequently and engage with the College Officers from anywhere in the world.

KH explained how we were once again trialling a hybrid zoom meeting, with hopefully more success than previously. This is in the form of a webinar which meant zoom attendees couldn't see other attendees or comment in a chat function. However, they could see the committee on camera, hear anyone in the room speaking or asking questions along with

asking questions virtually via a live Q&A.

The chair spoke about how the University has changed to an opt-in subscription model rather than the previous opt out model which has limited the society's subscription along with engagement which is something which will be discussed in detail later. There was an open call for suggestions of how the society can better tap into the support of the some 12,000 active alumni of the College.

KH received reports of two deaths and the chair expressed his sorrow for the loss and encouraged anyone willing to reach out to Alex Nelson to write an obituary for Castellum.

Reports of Death:

Chris Bakalarski (67-70), Andrew Digwood (95-98)

2. Minutes of the previous meeting, published in Issue 75 of Castellum:

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and accepted on a general aye.

3. Principal's Welcome and Report

Wendy thanked everyone for joining and welcomed both those in the room and on Zoom back to their home at Castle. The Principal noted that she would share more details of what the College is up to during the reunion dinner but shared an update that she was thrilled to report that College life is back to full swing, there is an abundance of sports, music, societies and events occurring within the College community and there is very little trace of the effects of Covid-19 left within the University.

The College has welcomed a musician in residence, Ezé, originally from Burkina Faso, over the past few months who has helped develop the culture of the community in a variety of ways including working with students in the classroom as well as conducting videos and interviews with student journalists and culminating in creative pieces and a student

led documentary which is due to be released very soon.

Wendy reported that the conservation works within the Normal Chapel had since uncovered a void underground which requires further work to the originally planned work. However, a positive has been drawn from this that student leaders took the opportunity to plant a time capsule containing such items as college stash, June Ball badges, a copy of Palatinate newspaper along with various other dated memories to open years down the line.

An update was shared about the college make up now, with roughly 1100 undergraduates and 500 postgraduates. WP noted it as a challenge to balance the sharing of such precious space and time in the Castle but relationships between the common rooms have developed over recent years and student leaders are working hard to share this. Furthermore, the College Office has put time and funding into developing the student leadership teams of the JCR and MCR, with an Exec away day with the incoming exec to support their development as student leaders. Stephanie Burette, the previous chaplain, had finished her three year post and has moved on to a University best left unnamed in Oxfordshire...However, Wendy is looking forward to welcoming the Rev'd Dr Sam Hole as he begins his chaplaincy starting next week. WP also expressed her thanks to Patrick Hayes for supporting Michael Hampel in the morning's chapel service in the Tunstall Chapel.

Finally Wendy concluded by noting that Peter Slater, son of the previous Master Leonard Slater, had visited Wendy in Durham and sent their best wishes to everyone as Peter had recalled many fond memories of growing up in both Durham and Lumley Castle. Peter has photos with his children and grandchildren under his Father's portrait in the Great Hall.

Wendy opened the floor to questions. She received a question about how the Thorp club ties into the work of the society by former MCR President, Nicholas Spong. Kevin Hawes explained how the vision is that the Thorp Society would be treated as an MCR specific wing of the society and Wendy explained that the Thorp Society used to be a membership club similar to

the JCR's Van Mildert Club to recognise those who have contributed. In recent years this has transitioned more into a support network to begin to develop a stronger MCR-alumni connection now that the PG community is about 1/3rd of the college. Sophie Draper has been co-opted onto the society committee to lead this development. There have been various Thorp events, primarily in January as this times well with PG graduations. The society would love to hear from MCR members on their thoughts for how the Thorp Society can be intertwined with the Castle Society to support postgraduate members.

4. Report of the Alumni Engagement Coordinator

Katie Bertram expressed her pleasure to meet everyone and how she has enjoyed touring various alumni and their children over her time covering Julia's maternity leave. Katie explained how there has been a dynamic 'Castle to Careers' series and the society is always open to anyone willing to contribute to sharing their experiences in a careers talk. Katie shared that on 11th September there will be an alumni event in London with more details to follow and she was thrilled to confirm a sold out reunion dinner of 200 attendees that evening.

Roy Todd asked a question how the percentage of state students in relation to independently educated students has changed over the years and what the University is doing to counter this and increase the number of state educated students accepted into Castle. Wendy Powers noted that many principals are based within an academic department, but her role is within the PVC's office and covers the areas of recruitment and diversity so she is well-versed to speak on the topic. She acknowledged the ebbs and flows of the state/private school divide over the years and that the culture has indeed changed in various ways over the years, however, there is now an entire university team dedicated to working to widening participation within the University.

In fact, the Office for Students requires an access and participation plan for various groups of people such as first generation, state school educated,

black British, disabled and working class students. Wendy is involved with developing Durham University's plan for this and she is more than happy to share the plan including what bridge work is done with these students once it has been submitted in July. WP commented how social and peer interactions are often the largest issue, not the academic challenges, so she is keen to continue to develop this as she has done in her 4 years at Castle.

Charlie McKeever further added that the JCR has an outreach group called Castle Community Action which has branches which are actively working with the local community, including the state school community in terms of academic and career mentorship, including GCSE and sixth form students attending events within the Castle to reinforce that university is for everyone within County Durham, not just the privately educated. Kevin Hawes concluded this section by reminding the room that it is no longer viewed as just 'our Castle' and the College works hard to enforce the College as the Castle of the people of Durham and we are lucky to look after it in our few years at Castle.

5. Report of University College Durham Trust

Kevin Hawes covered this report due to apologies received by other trustees. The Trust was due to meet a week after the AGM. At a basic level the Trust covers a few areas; to receive donations and manage this via Rathbones' investment and disperse this money appropriately.

KH reported that the annual investment report had just come in advance of the trustee meeting, with around £1.5million within the account, growing slowly year on year. However, this is growing at a little bit of a disappointing rate and this performance could be described as adequate. A discussion will be held to discuss Rathbones' performance. The chair also noted how the trust often underwrote investments whilst donations are incoming to prevent frequently liquidating funds. KH thanked all donors, be that one off or continuous for their support to the Trust and the College. Furthermore, the Trust is eligible for Gift Aid further increasing donations

by 25% which goes a long way to supporting the College.

Alistair Gibb asked a question from Zoom on behalf of David Mallet to confirm if the UCDT accounts could be published in Castellum. Alex Nelson noted that the report is probably too large to be published effectively in practice but there is no reason why it couldn't be shared. Katie Bertram and Kevin Hawes shared that the report is currently available on the Charity Commission website.

6. Report of the representative on the College Advisory Board (CAB)

Alex Nelson explained his role on CAB which meets once a term consisting of the College Principal with other College officers and representatives from all common rooms. Wendy uses this time to share updates with everyone and it is an open forum for discussion and Alex uses this time to take any concerns of the society to the College officers and student leaders.

7. Report of the Editor of Castellum

Alex Nelson shared that the society had just published a fantastic bumper edition of Castellum with a focus on clubs and societies with 55 pages of content produced from these groups which is brilliant.

Charlie McKeever questioned if this will continue each year as members of the society enjoy reading such content. Alex said it is unlikely he will be able to edit the same quantity of content every year however he is happy to edit as much content as students are willing to provide for him and encouraged students to continue to share the goings-on of the college for him to publish. Alex continued it is great to see how many things remain the same and some things are progressing, for example the concept of a dress hire agency in the times of an all male college would have been laughable.

There was a question from Patrick Hayes if print copies could be provided to current students. Alex shared that this would be financially unviable but in the print run there are a number of spare copies so these are passed around the college such as the Lowe and SCR. Furthermore, Alex often

bumps into exec members and begins discussions for articles for Castellum and is indeed always in receiving mode for article suggestions.

Wendy added how Castellum is available online not just in print copy for anyone to read and various copies are placed around the college for students to read. WP also shared that Oliver Lendrum had stepped up to help Alex with editing with the intention of Alex retiring as editor in a few years. Jonathan Pearson shared his thanks to Alex for his continued efforts with Castellum and how he looks forward to reading it each year.

Kevin Hawes concluded this section that there are roughly three interim mailings from Katie per year and the current model is to pay £10 a year for a subscription of a physical copy of Castellum.

8. Reports of the JCR, MCR and Thorp Society

Ananya Nair, JCR Senior Student, and Rob Almqvist, JCR Vice Senior Student, shared brief updates from the JCR however summarised that full reports could be found in the most recent Castellum. However, the highlights concluded that engagement is as high as ever, the Castle is certainly not falling. Furthermore there has been a recent change that the MCR pays a stipend to the JCR to allow MCR members to join JCR sports teams. This benefits the JCR as they receive both the money and quality players and benefits the MCR as it allows members to partake in sports that may not have had the interest at MCR only levels.

9. Reports of the Treasurer and Presentation of Society Accounts

Martin Gunson introduced that the accounts had been published in the most recent Castellum and these were approved by the attendees. Martin explored how the cost of Castellum has gone up and with printing and extortionate postage £10 barely covers the cost so this will likely need to be increased in the near future.

Otherwise, the society is in ok stead but income is slowing down

drastically so expenditure shall have to be limited. Some elements such as the Lowe Library fund can be cut back as this budget now comes from other funding streams within the college.

MG explained how lifetime membership subscription from freshers was no longer a thing and the society needed to look at a different time in a student's time at Castle, perhaps during graduation. Wendy explained that during freshers' week students are met with a significant amount of costs including gowns, JCR levy, freshers' week pass to name a few which normally comes to around £300 for an undergrad or £100 for a postgrad so alumni membership was not a reasonable cost to expect a new student to pay.

Jonathan Pearson supported trying to engage new members towards the end of their time at the college but questioned how this works in terms of GDPR once they have graduated. Kevin and Katie confirmed that there is a data sharing agreement in place and the Alumni Office has the clearance to contact graduates however, Wendy noted this can sometimes be a slightly lengthier process than desired.

Charlie McKeever further supported that in students' final term is a great time to start to engage the finalist students, however this should be done on a free basis. Students are often at the most poor in this term due to indulging and celebrating after exams and not yet receiving a grad salary. Perhaps 6-12 months after graduation is the best time to approach the subject of membership as students will have likely begun to receive a steady salary at this point, however more should certainly be done to engage students as they leave the college and keep them interested in being a part of the society.

Rob Almqvist concluded this section and led onto the next by sharing how there are annual internal facebook groups for students and various society and alumni groups and invited any members on facebook to join these groups if they find them.

10. Discussion of the future of the society

Following on from the previous section, Chris Silberberg began an exploration into how the societies membership is dropping which is limiting its finances but primarily its membership and there is a clear lack of younger generations engaged with the society which of course bodes poorly for the future. Chris explained that both the funding and communication models need drastic overhaul and opened the floor to suggestions.

Nicholas Spong shared that the real value he took from the society is the in person experiences and the opportunity to enjoy the Castle again. He felt more could be done to promote career and mentor requests and perhaps recent Alumni could be more specifically targeted and reached out to as staff may be aware of them. This will help current students and engage younger alumni. Nicholas added he was happy to donate some of his time towards a scheme of some description but would prefer in person as opposed to Zoom for example. CS added that there are opportunities available outside of the society, for example he currently mentors a student via the Durham Leadership Framework. Kevin Hawes added on to Nicholas' comments that MCR members may also be looking for mentorship about finding funding and academic routes not just course specific details or career prospects.

Wendy added that college officers actively approach alumni however alumni are encouraged to contact castle.alumni@durham.ac.uk if they are willing to share their time in any way. Furthermore, she noted that often students prefer an in person mentorship which can be a challenge of being based in the North East. However, students on the exec may like to be mentored by previous exec members for example, it doesn't always have to be about career or academic mentorship so please do reach out to offer any support.

Jonathan Pearson asked how we can make it clear to students what the society is about, why they exist, and that the benefits of the society are the ability to get a large group of different generations together and remind them what Castle is truly about. Furthermore, the society is more than this.

How can members support the college community and what can they do to give back to the college that gave them a lot? Everyone should feel like Castle is a lifelong home and becoming a member is a lifetime honour. Jonathan proposed that perhaps younger alumni could help students navigate the difficulties of being a student, the middle aged can help navigate careers, and the silver haired brigade can help current students imagine life as a student in a different time.

Rob Almqvist commented how he is a very active member of the current JCR and even he isn't sure entirely what the society does so there is definitely communication work that could be developed. It is a lifelong community that has tangible benefits to students and he has really enjoyed an invite to the reunion weekend, however there is a significant cost barrier to the weekend for younger graduates due to the cost of dinner, accommodation and travel. What events could be held more frequently and locally to graduates to start smaller level engagement. If alumni have access to a venue they could offer up for events this would be appreciated. Ananya Nair added that her year often struggles to find graduate jobs, could alumni support finalists on application support. Shoaib Islam shared how competitive internships are and advice from those in professional settings would be greatly appreciated and he looks forward to attending the reunion next year to see what has progressed.

A question from those on Zoom was asked about what clubs and societies can apply for funding. Wendy Powers explained how the common rooms have funding for clubs and societies on a termly basis and also a new outreach funding scheme for outreach initiatives not covered under CCA. The college, university and various other sources of money offer funding to students through applications and bursaries for a broad range of activities including academic travel, sports, hardship and so much more.

Charlie McKeever reminded everyone that often the big push is about how alumni can financially support the college. However alumni are so much more than just money and offer a wealth of experience, careers, degrees and life choices. Please reach out if you can help in any way, be

that mentoring or support or perhaps if you have contacts to suppliers the JCR may benefit from such as sports suppliers to receive equipment at lower purchase prices.

Chris and Katie wrapped up the section with a summary confirming this was only the beginning of the discussion about the future of the society and they welcome any further ideas to be shared.

11. Election/Re-Election of DCS Officers

As there were no other nominees the officers and committee members of the DCS remained as stands, passing on a general aye, including those on Zoom.

12. Election of Committee Members

Election of four new committee members was required with two remaining until 2027 and two until 2026. Kevin Hawes commented that we had received nominations from the below, including two that are not based in the UK, but this is no longer a barrier as most of the committee's work is done via Zoom and he would be open to adopting more additional members than the required four.

Nominees:

Alec Blissett (2001); Denis Antor (2023); Isabella Hanger (2023 MCR); Piers Baker (2017); Paul Everson (1988); Mark Pinner (1998); Chiara Di Battista (2023), Nick Butt (1981).

KH continued that it is great to see a positive spread of ages which support the society's goals to engage more younger members and develop a spread of generations across the society as a whole. Kevin suggested that constitutionally we could just accept all of these as committee members. Douglas Denham St Pinnock, a former chair of the society, spoke to confirm this was the case and formally proposal to co-opt and elect all candidates and that we should welcome the interest of multiple people for the first

time in a while. These younger generations could be the future and pick up the mantle of various roles as others step down. Douglas continued that we need to reflect why there were almost no women in the AGM and something must begin to change to rectify this.

All candidates were voted onto the committee via a general aye.

13. Appointment of nominative trustees to UCdT

Jenny Dell and James Rowley were due to retire by rotation but are happy to stand again. However, this decision doesn't fall to the DCS but to the trust itself.

14. AOB

A 'Get Well Soon' card was passed around for John Atkin (John the Maid) as he had hoped to attend the reunion but had taken a turn of ill health.

15. Date of Next AGM

The date of the next AGM is Saturday 12th April 2025, the time is to be confirmed.

There being no further business to be declared, the chair declared the meeting closed.

Charlie McKeever, Secretary

If you would like to make a donation to support our student clubs and societies, please head to:
<https://castlealumni.enthuse.com/sportsandsocieties>
or scan the QR code





50TH ANNIVERSARY FRESHMEN



Reunion 2024







Holi Festival MCR 2024



Holi Festival MCR 2024



June Ball 2024



Castle-Hatfield Day



Graduation 2024



Hidden Heritage



Hidden Heritage



Choir in Rome

CHAPEL CHOIR IN ROME

'Perhaps the most culturally significant thing a Durham choir has done in a long time', words that were bandied about in the leadup to University College's Chapel Choir tour to Rome and the Vatican. Though meant largely in jest it marks the first time a university choir from England has sung in the Vatican since 2017, and the first time a Durham choir has sung in the Vatican ever – the importance of which cannot be overstated (though I will certainly try in this article).

Recounting the whole of our tour is an impossible task and a necessary one – as the saying goes: 'when in Rome do as the Romans do', or is it 'what happens in Rome stays in Rome?' In any case I am sure that the choir would appreciate my discretion.

The tour began as all English excursions to the continent do – with a pint in Stansted (so much for when in Rome). However, when we landed late on a hot Roman evening preparations were made for our first of three long days of singing (though not without sampling the local cuisine – the traditional saltimbocca was particularly a highlight).

Our first day was spent rehearsing and performing at St Ignazio di Loyola, church of the painted dome, home of the Jesuits, the height of the Roman Baroque style and heaving with unruly tourists waiting for a mirror selfie. Indeed at the entrance some of us were stopped by an angry Italian who thought we were skipping the queue: we had but to point to a picture of us in the shrine of Saint Cuthbert on an A-board outside the church and strolled in with the arrogance of an Anglican choir about to show the Romans how proper English choirs sing. Our repertoire for the evening (curated by our marvelous former director Tom Parker) consisted of typical Schola Romana pieces by Palestrina and Anerio followed by works from Byrd, Beech and some more indulgent English numbers from Bairstow, Bainton and Dove. The concert was a grand success and finished with a choir meal in a nearby restaurant opposite the Pantheon, certainly no Paddies for those familiar.

Our second day, and the reason why we were in Rome, was spent at the Vatican singing at St Peter's Basilica, arguably the most important church in Europe. We were ushered through the queues by a young official who had to turn away three American tourists who tried to pay him to skip the queue (to our amusement). Upon entering our organists familiarized themselves with the organ, and we began 'spiritual elevations' before mass. The music was primarily Palestrina including his 'Tu es Petrus': 'You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church'. These famous words are written around St Peter's Basilica, and it was a true honour to sing in the place where the Saint lies. The Spiritual elevations were followed by a Catholic mass in which we were accompanied by some of the resident men of the Vatican choir. After mass we were received at the British Embassy to the Vatican and enjoyed drinks and canapés, giving a small recital to the Ambassador and his family. It was a very special day and members of our choir will treasure the memory of for a lifetime – and perhaps inspire a future generation of Durham students to do the same!

Our final day of singing came after a day of leisure and relentless sight-seeing by members of the choir. It was spent at the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Lucina de Minore, a much smaller venue, though rich in its artwork, boasting several sculptures by the great architect Bernini. We sang holy mass followed by a small concert, an emotional farewell for those members of the choir that we would not see come the new term and our director Tom who lay down his baton to Bainton's great work: 'And I saw a new Heaven'.

University College's Chapel Choir Tour to Rome 2024, is certainly something I will cherish forever and the highlight of my time here at Durham. Whilst I cannot convey to you dear reader the many 'in jokes', late night walks, aperol spritzes at the bar, candlelit meals, morning espressi and general tomfoolery that happens between such good friends, I hope you will understand some of what transpired in what some have called: 'the most culturally significant thing a Durham choir has done in a long time'.

Giancarlo Coia, Tenor.



CASTLE CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA TAKE ON DUBLIN

From 12th to 14th of June, Castle Choir and Orchestra (CCO) visited Dublin, Republic of Ireland, for a social and cultural tour to celebrate their hard work and success throughout the year. Eight members of the society opted to go, and during the three days we engaged in Irish culture and history, attended live music events (as befitting a music tour), and perhaps consumed one too many pints of Guinness.

Arriving on Wednesday 12th, we made our way to the hostel and set up camp. That evening we went to a live music venue, watching a performance by Irish musician Declan Greene. As befitting a music society on tour, one of our choir members, Lucy Clennell, got on stage at the musician's

request and sang, which was well received by both CCO members and the wider audience. That evening, we made the most of the music venues that Dublin had to offer, before returning to the hostel for our first night.

On Thursday, we started off by exploring some of the culture and history of Dublin. We visited the oldest parish church in Dublin, St Audoen's Church (Church of Ireland), which is also partially a museum relating to the physical church itself and the history of Ireland. We also visited the magnificent John's Lane Church (Church of St Augustine and St John), admiring the beauty of Ireland's Catholic art and heritage. That afternoon we headed to the Guinness Storehouse, where we learned about the brewing process, developing advertising, and general history of one of Ireland's most famous cultural outputs. Afterwards, we stopped off at the Gravity Bar, where we enjoyed our free pints of Guinness and the panoramic views of Dublin. That evening, we went to Temple Bar and enjoyed live music in this internationally famous venue. We then explored some more of Dublin's bars and music venues in the famous Temple Bar area (and had a few more pints of Guinness – call it cultural immersion), before heading back to the hostel.

On the Friday we decided to immerse ourselves in as much Irish culture and history as possible in the time we had. This included a jam-packed itinerary to Trinity College, Dublin and its Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin Castle, the National Gallery of Ireland, the National Archaeology Museum (which our medieval literature student, Becca, found particularly fascinating), the Irish Parliament at Leinster House, and National Library of Ireland with its exhibition on William Butler Yeats. Following this extensive tour of Dublin, we made our way back to Durham.

The tour was a fantastic opportunity for CCO to enjoy our extremely successful year. As well as sold-out concerts in all three terms, including a joint concert with Trevelyan College Orchestral Society and Trevelyan College Choir, we founded two chamber quartets which hosted their own concerts and played at both internal and external events, and contributed to outreach initiatives including the Primary School Concert. As a society

we strive to make classical music accessible, hence our non-auditioned policy for our choir and orchestra, and this also plays into our monetary decisions. Our funding does not come from membership fees but rather the profits generated from our concerts in an attempt to make our opportunities accessible to all. Our tour formed part of this policy and was heavily subsidised by the society to render it accessible and reward members for their hard work throughout the past two years.

This financial stability, and therefore the tour itself, would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our outgoing President for 2023–2024, Bella Rossington, our executive committee, and every single society member that gave up their time to rehearse and perform. Their efforts ensured our success as a society, both musically and financially, allowing us to offer initiatives like the tour. This also culminated in CCO winning Society of the Year for 2023–2024, signifying our success over the past year.

Off the back of our successful year, CCO are looking to establish an alumni network and mailing list to keep former members updated and engaged if they so wish. This would include invitations to concerts and other events, and would be a way of remaining connected to friends and society members beyond your time at Castle. If you are interested at all, please do drop me a message at castle.cco@durham.ac.uk or the Instagram [@castle.cco](https://www.instagram.com/castle.cco) – I would be delighted to hear from you. This year has been an immense success for CCO, and I look forward to the year ahead.

Callum Tilley
President of Castle Choir and Orchestra 2024–2025

MISSION: SUCCESS

COVER STORY

The Castle Bear has reached 30,000 feet, making Castle the first college to near space!

My name is Benjamin Kolicic, I'm a third-year mathematics student at Castle and president of the Castle Spaceflight Society. I've planned the launch of the Castle Bear to near space for nearly two years, investing hundreds of pounds of College funding and my own savings in the project.

How do you launch a roughly 1kg box containing Castle's finest Castell-onaut, tracking and filming equipment to the upper atmosphere? A high-altitude weather balloon.

Unsurprisingly, launching a weather balloon to 30,000 feet and retrieving it can be an extremely difficult task: a perfectly selected launch window with clear skies and low wind, one month's notice to the Civil Aviation Authority, insurance providers in the know about when and where the project would take place, and on top of this: resourcing industrial amounts of helium and tech that wouldn't freeze up and die in the -40°C environment. If all of the above is accounted for, a slightly strong gust and our mascot lands deep in the sea, a camera fails and no footage, the tracker fails and no retrieval, the balloon pops too close to the ground, mission failure. It was daunting and it certainly wouldn't have happened without my team: Xander Spencer-Jones, Jessica Horsfield, James Clarke, Alex Maciver-Redwood, Hugo Negrón and Alfie Baker just to name a few.





The Launch

October 3rd 2024, atop Observatory Hill we prepared all technology and made sure our mascot was strapped in tight for his long journey up, calling the mission: 'Castellum 1'.

11.03am: Launch

As soon as we launched I received a phone call from an amateur pilot planning to fly over Durham after lunch, I had to warn him to look out for flying Castlemen and to steer clear of our skies.

A quick journey down to the North Yorkshire Moors, our landing location as predicted by specialist balloon software; but no matter how good the simulation, we were really at the mercy of the winds. On this trip, we ran into our first issue when the GPS aboard the Castellum 1, our only lifeline, cut out at around 8km above ground. This was expected as the capsule went above satellite coverage, the problem being that we didn't pick the GPS back up as it passed back into satellite range. This was a huge problem as now the entirety of the Yorkshire Moors, 1,430 km², became a potential landing spot. We combed the predicted landing location for two days until we could be sure all onboard electronics were dead, from dawn till dusk, destroying our shoes in the mud of the hilly terrain, but no luck. All was lost.

The Recovery

October 9th 2024, with Epiphany Term now in full swing, it was easy to get distracted from the crushing emotional and financial loss of our brave Bear sitting in some unknown field, in some unknown valley of some unknown corner of the Yorkshire Moors. I get a call. A farmer from Old Sheepfold Farm said he'd found our box and called the number on it! After the electronics had been dead for a week our Castell-onaut was found in a field about 3km from our predicted landing location!

October 11th 2024, 9.35am: Recovery.

Making History

Not only is Castle the first Durham College to reach near space, but we are the first college of all the collegiate UK universities' colleges too! I plan to put together a short film of the journey as the pictures you see now don't quite cut it. I also plan to move 'The Castle Bear that Went to Space' from my room in Owengate, where he is currently retired, to the Castle Archives for all to see and be inspired by.

I believe that after all this I have fulfilled the promise I made in last year's Castellum: to prove objectively that Castle IS the best college in Durham (and now the UK) and to any of the naysayers – "Have you been to space?"

Ben Kolicic



ANTHONY SALVIN RESTORER OF THE KEEP

Anthony Salvin (1799–1881) may not be a household name, but his life and work left an indelible mark on the architectural and historical landscape of England. Salvin was one of the most influential Gothic Revival architects of the 19th century, celebrated for his sensitive restorations of medieval castles and his own architectural commissions. From Durham Castle’s timeless grandeur to the idyllic charm of Scotney Castle, Salvin’s work bridged the gap between past and present, blending respect for historic integrity with his own creative flair. This essay explores Salvin’s fascinating life, his notable restorations, his collaborations with his son, and the legacy of his commissions.

Early Life and Architectural Influences

Born on October 17, 1799, in Worthing, Sussex, Anthony Salvin was the youngest son of General Anthony Salvin and Elizabeth Mills. Though his family was of modest means, they were well connected, with ties to the landed gentry. Salvin’s upbringing in the English countryside, surrounded by history and architecture, no doubt played a role in shaping his passion for medieval structures.

Salvin’s formal architectural training began under the mentorship of John Paterson, a London architect. During this time, Salvin developed a keen interest in Gothic Revival architecture, which was rapidly gaining popularity as a stylistic response to industrialization and a nostalgic yearning for medieval craftsmanship. Salvin’s early work was marked by a meticulous attention to detail and a respect for historical authenticity, traits that would define his career.

The Restorer of Castles

Durham Castle: Balancing Restoration and Renewal



Scotney Manor House, Kent

Durham Castle is one of the most iconic landmarks in northern England, dating back to the Norman Conquest. By the time Salvin undertook its restoration in the 1840s, the castle was in a state of disrepair, yet it still carried the weight of centuries of history. Originally built as a fortress and later transformed into a residence for the Prince Bishops of Durham, the castle demanded a delicate touch to preserve its layered identity.

Salvin's work on Durham Castle exemplifies his philosophy of blending functionality with historical reverence. The castle had been repurposed as a college under the newly established University of Durham, so Salvin's task was to adapt the structure for modern use without compromising its medieval character. One of his most notable contributions was the reconstruction of the great hall, which had fallen into ruin. Salvin used locally sourced stone and meticulously recreated the hall's timber roof, balancing authenticity with practical updates.

Salvin's work on Durham Castle was met with acclaim, as he managed to enhance its usability while preserving its Gothic soul. His sensitive restoration ensured that the castle remained a living, breathing part of Durham's cultural fabric, rather than a mere relic.

Scotney Castle: A Picturesque Dream

Scotney Castle, nestled in the Kent countryside, is arguably Salvin's most romantic project. The medieval manor house, surrounded by a moat, was already a picturesque ruin when Salvin was commissioned by Edward Hussey III to create a new residence on the estate in 1837. Hussey envisioned a house that would harmonize with the existing ruins and the surrounding landscape.

Salvin's design for the new Scotney Castle was a masterclass in Gothic Revival architecture. The house featured crenellations, pointed arches, and mullioned windows, all nodding to medieval styles while incorporating the comforts of a Victorian home. Salvin carefully positioned the new house to offer stunning views of the old castle ruins, ensuring the two structures complemented rather than competed with each other.

Beyond the architecture itself, Salvin's work at Scotney Castle extended to the landscaping of the estate. He collaborated with Hussey to create a series of gardens and terraces that seamlessly integrated the natural beauty of the site with its built environment. Today, Scotney Castle is celebrated not only as an architectural gem but also as a testament to Salvin's ability to craft spaces that are both functional and enchanting.

Collaboration with His Son and Family Dynamics

Salvin's architectural legacy did not end with his own work; it was carried forward through his collaborations with his son, Anthony Salvin Jr. While Salvin Sr. is best known for his work on castles and country houses, his son followed in his footsteps as an architect, albeit with a focus on ecclesiastical buildings.

The father-son duo worked together on several projects, sharing a commitment to craftsmanship and historical sensitivity. Salvin Sr.'s mentorship undoubtedly shaped his son's approach, but their collaboration was more than hierarchical; it was a partnership rooted in mutual respect. Salvin Jr.'s contributions often brought a fresh perspective to his father's work, blending tradition with innovation.

Despite their professional camaraderie, the Salvins' personal lives were not without challenges. Anthony Salvin Sr. was known for his exacting standards and could be a demanding figure, both in his work and at home. However, his family's shared passion for architecture and design helped them navigate these tensions, resulting in a body of work that reflects their collective dedication.

Later Commissions and Legacy

Windsor Castle and Other Royal Projects

One of Salvin's most prestigious commissions came in the form of Windsor Castle. In 1829, early in his career, Salvin was appointed to work on the castle's restoration. Though his role was relatively minor compared to the larger projects undertaken by Sir Jeffrey Wyattville, Salvin's contributions

laid the groundwork for his reputation as a restorer of national landmarks. His work at Windsor showcased his ability to respect the grandeur of royal architecture while introducing subtle improvements.

Alnwick Castle: A Medieval Fantasy

Salvin's work on Alnwick Castle in Northumberland further cemented his reputation as a master of castle restoration. Commissioned by the Duke of Northumberland in the mid-19th century, Salvin was tasked with transforming the fortress into a romanticized vision of medieval chivalry. His additions included new battlements, towers, and a grand entrance, all designed to evoke the atmosphere of a medieval stronghold. Alnwick Castle remains one of England's most iconic castles, thanks in no small part to Salvin's contributions.

Country Houses and Churches

In addition to his castle restorations, Salvin designed numerous country houses and churches throughout his career. His work often reflected a deep understanding of his clients' needs, blending practicality with aesthetic appeal. From the stately elegance of Harlaxton Manor to the quaint charm of smaller parish churches, Salvin's versatility as an architect was evident in every project.

Final Years and Enduring Influence

Anthony Salvin continued to work well into his later years, maintaining a prolific output until his retirement in 1868. He spent his final years at Hawksfold, his home in Surrey, where he could reflect on a career that had spanned five decades. Salvin passed away on December 17, 1881, leaving behind a legacy that would influence generations of architects and preservationists.

Salvin's work has endured not only because of its aesthetic appeal but also because of its philosophical underpinnings. His approach to restoration was ahead of its time, emphasizing the importance of preserving



Scotney Castle, Kent

historical integrity while adapting structures for modern use. This balance of conservation and innovation remains a cornerstone of architectural restoration today.

Conclusion

Anthony Salvin was more than an architect; he was a storyteller, using stone and timber to bridge the gap between history and the present. Whether restoring the grandeur of Durham Castle, crafting the idyllic charm of Scotney Castle, or collaborating with his son to push the boundaries of Gothic Revival design, Salvin approached every project with a sense of purpose and reverence.

His work invites us to consider the ways in which architecture shapes our understanding of history. Salvin's castles and country houses are not

just buildings; they are living testaments to the power of preservation and the enduring appeal of the past. As we walk through the halls of Durham or gaze upon the ruins of Scotney, we are reminded of Salvin's vision: a world where the beauty of history and the promise of the present coexist in perfect harmony.

Chat GPT

Castle Keep by Anthony Salvin



LOWE LIBRARY REPORT

My name is Yuetong and I work as the Student Librarian at the Lowe Memorial Library, and this is my third year working here. In the past two years, I have been mainly responsible for the work of assistant librarians, and I have accumulated a wealth of experience and gained a deeper understanding of the operation of the library.

The Lowe Memorial Library has a team of enthusiastic, motivated and creative librarians. I have met many lovely, kind and passionate colleagues here and we work together for the development of the library. This year, we have introduced several innovations to create a comfortable, welcoming and fun learning environment for our students.

Firstly, we have set up priority seating, which is exclusively open to all students with visible and invisible disabilities, to provide them with a more convenient and comfortable reading space.

Secondly, we organised a series of diverse activities, such as book recommendations for Holocaust Remembrance Day and Pride Month activities (including book recommendations, book clubs and movie nights), which not only enriched the students' extracurricular life but also broadened their horizons. Meanwhile, we have opened a book suggestion board

where all Castle students are welcome to suggest books that are not yet in the library's collection to help us expand it. In addition, we have an online suggestion box to collect students' opinions and suggestions at any time so that we can better improve our services.

To further enrich the library's resources and activities, we will also continue to work with influential communities, such as the Castle's Feminist Society and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Durham, to create a more diverse experience at the Lowe Library.

We sincerely thank our alumni for their continued support and donations. This year, we are giving back some of the books donated by our alumni to Castle students in the hope that these books will become their 'soul mates' and accompany them on their journey through the world of knowledge.

Whether you are a current Castle student or a graduated alumnus, you are always welcome in the Lowe Memorial Library. We hope you will find your peace and happiness in the library.

Thank you again for your support and love!
Yuetong

BOWES TALK

On Tuesday 22nd of October the Senior Common Room hosted an open lecture; where they welcomed Dr. Hannah Fox the Director of the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle, County Durham.

The title of Hannah's lecture was "Creating the conditions, museums with impact!"

Hannah's lecture was well attended and we had an almost full house in the Bishop's Dining Room. She gave us all a challenging presentation on the role of museums in the 21st Century and the need to continually engage with local communities to ensure that they remain not only relevant, but a focus for communities and their aspirations. She explained how the Bowes Museum has worked hard to promote itself with engagement with young

people in the Community as well as developing an award-winning café.

The Bowes' recent exhibition of LS Lowry and Norman Cornish was an example of an exhibition which brought in an audience who knew Lowry but were sometimes unaware of Norman Cornish, explaining how good curation could introduce artists to a new audience. (This was supported by an excellent lecture series put on at the Bowes).

Hannah explained that the Bowes, while a fantastic institution like so many other arts establishments, suffered from ongoing financial challenges and how this affected the local community. The Bowes is one of the major employers in the Barnard Castle area but struggles to pay more than minimum wage to most its staff.

The lecture provoked a lively debate amongst both SCR members, other invited Durham University Academics, and students alike. After the lecture Hannah was given a private tour of the recently restored Norman Chapel.

Subsequently discussions have taken place with the Hannah and representatives of the College and University about future collaboration;

Hopefully our SCR event has acted as the catalyst for collaboration between the two institutions.

David Landes

Advanced Notice

"LETTERS TO A SOLDIER"

Wednesday 12th March Bishops' Dining Room Castle

6:30 Refreshments 7:00 Start, *all welcome no booking required.*

In late 2021 some renovation work was taking place at Brancepeth Castle. A trap door was exposed and underneath was found an archivist's treasure trove. Going back to the time when the castle was the regimental headquarters of the Durham Light Infantry here were such things as instruction booklets, posters and magazines along with cups, bottles and other artefacts. However, of most interest were the twenty or so letters which had been written to soldiers based in the Castellum.

STOCKTON & DARLINGTON RAILWAY BICENTENARY FESTIVAL 2025

Celebrating 200 years of the journey that changed the world

The Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) opened on 27th September 1825, connecting places, people, communities and ideas, and its impact transformed the world. To mark the 200th anniversary of the event which began a global economic boom, three councils, Durham, Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees, with the Tees Valley Authority, have joined together with a range of local, national and international partners to deliver a year-long programme of celebration in 2025.

Railways have become part of popular culture and day-to-day life for many people across the world.

They have inspired famous works of literature, film and art. Most of us have a treasured memory or story that involves a rail journey – either real or fictional. For students arriving at Durham from the south by train, there remains the indelible silhouette of the Castle and Cathedral. The recollections are especially strong for members of University College with their love and devotion for Durham Castle.

As part of Railway 200, there will be a nine month international festival across County Durham and Tees Valley from March to November 2025. Proclaimed as “a once-in-a-generation opportunity to celebrate the railways far reaching impact on how we live our lives and how they are shaping a more sustainable future”. We can look forward to a touring exhibition train, named ‘Inspiration’ which will criss-cross Britain, creating a buzz at mainline stations, heritage railways and rail freight depots.

Close to Durham, there will be a summer festival at the Locomotion Museum in Shildon on the route of the original S&DR, and a commemorative event at Stephenson College to honour rail pioneer George Stephenson.

To keep on track with the latest news and find out how you can get involved sign up to the e-newsletter by emailing info@sdr200.co.uk or contact the author at andrew.hemmings47@gmail.com.

Andrew Hemmings



Panelists at the Slater fellowship event

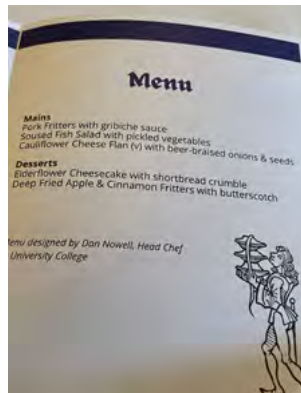
FROM THE 2024 SLATER FELLOW

University College partners with the Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies (IMEMS) to offer the Slater Fellowship: a three-month visiting fellowship for a senior academic working in a related field. Here, we hear from Professor Sheila Cavanaugh, who joined us for Easter Term 2024.

I am extremely grateful to IMEMS and University College, Durham, for awarding me the 2024 Slater Fellowship. I was in residence for a very productive time from the end of April until the end of June. Elizabeth Alpass and Ita Mac-Carthy (from IMEMS), Wendy Powers, and Ellen Crabtree (from Castle), in addition to the housekeeping and catering staff, and the porters, were all welcoming and helpful without exception. Being in Castle was a wonderful experience.

Durham is well-situated as an important site for research on the Medieval and Early Modern sections of my book in progress: *“Cooking Across the Canon: Money, Labor, and Trade in Literary Cuisine.”* Due to my involvement in the Durham IMEMS/Blackfriars (in Newcastle) Eat Medieval collaboration, I knew that Durham offered excellent resources in culinary history, from Professor Giles E.M. Gasper, the library and beyond. Given the centrality of Eat Medieval in my research, Durham’s possession of an important copy of *The Medieval Forme of Cury* cookbook, and the enthusiastic support of Ellen Crabtree and Dan Nowell (then Head Chef at Castle), my scheduled Slater Lecture on 11 June transformed into a collaborative series of short talks by members of the Eat Medieval community accompanied by a series of tastings. Illness and other obstacles precluded the presence of some scheduled participants, but the presentations included the works of Professor Gasper and Andy Hook, owner of Blackfriars; Durham doctoral students Florence Swan and Toby Doneghan-Cross; medieval food researcher Jennie Hood; and myself. The evening appeared to be a great success.

In addition to a productive period of scholarship, I enjoyed visiting several local historical sites with SCR Fellow David Landes, meeting with many doctoral and undergraduate students, enjoying coffee hours and other IMEMS events, attending numerous student theatrical and musical



performances, and meeting new colleagues, such as Matthew Daniel Eddy, Sukanya Miles-Watson, Rosi Song, Daniel Newman, Corinne Saunders, David Fuller, Axel Trujillo and Emily Rohrbach, in adjacent fields and beyond. Given the upheaval occurring at many universities connected with current events in the Middle East (my own university included), I was also grateful to witness Durham’s calm and measured response to the encampment erected very close to my lodging.

I will be very pleased to acknowledge Durham’s role in the publications and talks that will result from the Fellowship and look forward to continuing many of these new collaborations well into the future. The Eat Medieval Summer School, for example, always visits Durham University as part of its curriculum. Future treks here will be particularly welcome and poignant, given the many happy associations I will always have for the people and texts I encountered during this Slater Fellowship period.

Sheila T. Cavanagh
Professor of English
Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia US



COMMUNITY LIAISON AT NEW KEPIER COURT

New Kepier Court (NKC) has for a number of years been an integral part of college accommodation at University College. Located at the top of Claypath, NKC houses all our postgraduates who live in and a growing number of undergraduates who prefer self-catered accommodation. 2024-25 is our second academic year of having two paid student community liaison roles in NKC who work to build connections amongst student residents. Shipali and Raminthon are both international Castle postgraduates who have been working in 2024-25 to create a sense of community through hosting a range of events at NKC. They reach out to residents regularly via emails and social media and are visible points of liaison and support.

They started the year with a secret social in September 2024 to welcome all new residents. Residents gathered for an evening of fun, games, and bonding. It was the perfect icebreaker, packed with interactive games, bracelet-making, and an overload of snacks. New friendships were formed, and the event set the tone for a vibrant and inclusive community at NKC. This was followed by a Halloween arts & crafts event in October where residents unleashed their creativity in a Halloween-themed craft session, designing eerie decorations and festive creations. All materials were provided, making it an easy and enjoyable way to get into the spooky spirit. There was also a Pumpkin painting session which allowed residents to decorate their own pumpkins, bringing out their artistic side with a mix of spooky and stylish designs. It was a fun and relaxed evening filled with creativity and laughter. To wrap up Autumn,, residents voted for their favourite Halloween classic and then gathered in the cinema room for a cozy movie night with popcorn, drinks, and plenty of snacks. Costumes were optional, but the fun was guaranteed.

December saw the community come alive with holiday cheer as residents participated in a Secret Santa gift exchange and a Christmas crafting session.

Participants signed up in advance to exchange thoughtful surprises and crafted handmade festive ornaments, making it a truly joyful and creative way to celebrate the season.

In 2025, to welcome the Lunar and Chinese New Year, residents came together for a vibrant celebration, sharing a variety of traditional dishes and embracing cultural traditions. The event was a fantastic opportunity to connect, enjoy delicious food, and learn more about the significance of the festival. February saw residents gathering for a heartwarming Valentine's Day craft evening, where creativity took centre stage. Attendees designed personalised cards, crafted sweet treat bags, and enjoyed an evening of artistic expression and connection. Whether celebrating with friends or simply embracing the festive spirit, the event provided a cozy and welcoming atmosphere for all. Shipali and Mim have been creative with their limited budget as they have created opportunities for new Kepier residents to connect and form friendships over crafts, boardgames, films and laughter. They hope to host further events such as language evenings and guided walks around Durham as the weather improves.

Sukanya Miles-Watson
Assistant Principal

NEWS FROM THE CURATOR

Since the beginning of the Michaelmas Term, my office has been a hub of activity! Curatorial Intern Ariel has continued her brilliant work assisting me with collections management and display, and placement student Toby has completed valuable collections research. Nat joined University College in September studying Archaeology and is working on a momentous archive digitisation project.

Maintenance and repair work continues around Castle, creating both challenges and opportunities for collections care and research.

Harrison & Harrison Organ Builders have been caring for the Tunstall Chapel organ since it was first installed in the Castle in 1880, and they recently carried out extensive repairs to a damaged 17th Century decorative pipe. We are now developing a conservation plan for the decorative pipes to ensure their preservation for the next 400 years.

Professor Giles Gasper, Professor of High Medieval History in the Department of History, was successful in obtaining funding for a series of three workshops on the Norman Chapel. Gathering experts from around the world, the events have whetted appetites to uncover a more detailed history of the chapel than has been previously assumed.

The necessary repairs to the ceiling of the Senior Common Room resulted in the need for redecoration and the replacement of the 1950s wood paneling. It was perhaps opportune that the stonework was revealed during the second workshop on the Norman Chapel! Academics from the Department of History were intrigued to discover that the stone matches that of the chapel below and that we may be looking at a two-tiered chapel or even a medieval tower, hypotheses that have long been discussed but never proved. Further investigation is now being planned, along with the establishment of a Durham Castle Research Group.

Detailed preparation for the repair of the floor of the Norman Gallery is underway, and restoration of the Bishop's Suite ceiling will follow. Our precious Flemish tapestries were taken down in both the SCR and the Bishop's Suite and transported to Glasgow Museums Conservation Department for deep freeze treatment of clothes moth, before moving to a specialist art store in Leeds. A project to raise funds for their conservation, restoration and redisplay is in development. If you would like to find out more, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Julia Bonner at julia.bonner@durham.ac.uk.

I am looking forward to a busy year with lots of progress to report in 2026.

Gill Rennie

CASTLE LONDON GATHERING AT LEIGHTON HOUSE 2024

Seventy Castle alumni enjoyed a very pleasant evening of drinks and canapés on 11 September 2024 at the remarkable Leighton House in Holland Park. Those present were able to savour the spectacular and unique interior of the former studio-home of leading Victorian artist Lord Frederic Leighton, built between 1866 and 1895, including its iconic Arab Hall with golden dome and fountain. Fine paintings and statues abound amongst the grandeur of the pillars and walls lined with Syrian tiles in a building described as “the product of an aesthetic imagination run wild”.

A fine evening also enabled those present to explore the garden and terrace, where a group photograph was taken. Unfortunately, Wendy Powers was unable to travel to London as intended due to her accident earlier in the summer, but Julia Bonner (Alumni and Development Manager) provided a warm welcome to the assembled company in the imposing central hall before Kevin Hawes said a few words on behalf of the Durham Castle Society. Alumni from different generations, from 1959 to 2023, including Maurice Tucker (Master 1998-2011), were able to mix together and compare experiences in this highly convivial atmosphere.

The Leighton House gathering proved a worthy sequel to the 2023 London Gathering at the Royal Automobile Club on Pall Mall, and the 2025 version will doubtless also be held at a suitably impressive venue. Keep an eye on the Castle Society Events page for details as they become available!

The College and Society are always on the lookout for volunteers to help organise alumni events in London and other locations; so if you would like to help, please contact: castle.alumni@durham.ac.uk.

Oliver Lendrum
1995-99



CASTLE REUNION

A PERSONAL VIEW

The 75th Castle Society Reunion was held on the weekend of 12-14 April 2024 and, if numbers were anything to go by, was a **resounding success** with **200 alumni** packing out the Great Hall for the centrepiece reunion dinner on the Saturday night.

For those who don't know, the reunion is spread over three days. The festivities began on the Friday afternoon as the first arrivals checked in and were provided with a buffet dinner in the Great Hall followed, for those who chose to attend, by a fairly generous wine tasting in the West Courtyard while the drinks flowed in the Undie. Saturday began with a hearty breakfast, with so much more choice than was ever the case in years gone by, and options to suit all dietary requirements; also with the option of an early morning service in the Tunstall Chapel. The traditional blank seating plan for dinner made an early appearance on the noticeboard in the Screens Passage outside the Great Hall, leading to a flurry of activity as names were rapidly added. The Castle Society AGM followed in the Undie, where fortunately on this occasion the ghastly prospect of dinner potentially being moved to *cough* Hatfield College due to a failure in the Castle's water supply was not mentioned (unlike in 2022 when fortunately disaster was ultimately averted!). After lunch, alumni variously spent time exploring the Castle, visiting old haunts (the Shakey was busy anyway...), trying a Castle pub quiz in the Undie, and marvelling at how many of our number seem so fundamentally unchanged despite the passage of the years!

Dinner was served in the Great Hall at 7pm sharp. Familiar faces stared down from the walls as the College Grace echoed timelessly around: *Domine omnipotens, aeterne Deus...* There was fortunately no need for the scolding of any miscreants, and – despite the retirement of John Atkin – service was swift and an excellent meal of butternut squash and sweet potato soup, rump (or cauliflower) steak, and cheese and biscuits was (hopefully!)

enjoyed by all. There were informative and entertaining speeches by Professor Powers and Dr Natalie Starkey (2001-05). Toasts to The King, the Society, absent friends and the College, not to mention a powerful rendition of Gentlemen of Castle, were followed by many adjourning once more downstairs to continue festivities in the Undie until midnight (and later in some rooms). The beer, wine, and “Durham Castle Gin” flowed as the years were rolled back, until the last stragglers finally retreated to their rooms (or sought further entertainment in town!) and silence descended over a moonlit Castle courtyard.

Breakfast in the Great Hall on Sunday morning was, as ever, a more sparsely attended occasion. For some, the signs of a good night the night before might have been evident, while others will doubtless have decided to make an early getaway on the sometimes long journey home. For me, there is always certainly a feeling of slight sadness that a weekend looked forward to for so long is over so quickly (as well as the quiet dread of a hungover sprint up to the railway station); but also the reassuring knowledge that in a turbulent world much at Castle remains the same as always, and that the time until the next reunion will come and go remarkably quickly!

At the time of printing, there is still limited availability for the 76th Castle Society Reunion on 11-13 April 2025¹. The 77th Castle Society Reunion will be held on 17-19 July 2026 – booking details will follow on the Castle Society Events page in due course. I first experienced the reunion (the Undie bit anyway) as a second year undergraduate in 1997, and have slightly lost count of the number I've been to since. I'd heartily recommend it, and if you've never been before, do get a group together and come up for a future one!!

Oliver Lendrum
1995-99

¹ <https://pay.durham.ac.uk/colleges-and-common-rooms/UNIC/university-college-reunion-weekend-11-13-april-2025>



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 univcoll.accommodation@durham.ac.uk
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Alumni castle.alumni@durham.ac.uk
New Keeper Court
 keeper.community@durham.ac.uk
Chapel
 sam.hole@durham.ac.uk
 castlechapel@durham.ac.uk

College Mealtimes
 Breakfast 8-10am Lunch 12-2pm
 Dinner 5-7pm
 Brunch (weekends) 11:30am-2pm

During Term, Castle Tours are usually:
 1.15pm, 2.15pm, 3.15pm, 4.15pm

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Keep in touch

UniversityCollegeDurham

University College, Durham University

Key
 Formal dinner
 Chapel service
 College Office
 Funding deadline
 Talk / workshop
 Graduation
 Music concert
 Meeting / Committee
 Castle Crier

	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY
S					
S	1				
M	2 Choir at St Paul's				
T	3				
W	4				
T	5 Choir at Vatican				
F	6				
S	7				
S	8 Heritage Open Day				
M	9				
T	10				
W	11 Alumni Drinks				
T	12				
F	13 SCR Social				
S	14				
S	15 Mawlid al-Nabi Heritage Open Day				
M	16				
T	17				
W	18				
T	19				
F	20 Open Day				
S	21 Open Day				
S	22				
M	23				
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W	25				
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F	27				
S	28				
S	29				
M	30 Welcome Dinner				
T					
W					
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S					

#WeAreCastle

	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY
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Castle Gatehouse
 All the info you need about University College
 durhamuniversity.sharepoint.com/teams/UniversityCollege

All dates are accurate at time of printing.



University College Calendar 2024-2025

DAVID MAC DOWALL**Master 1973 – 1978****2 April 1930 – 8 August 2024**

David Mac Dowall came as Master in 1973, from the University Grants Committee, where he had been concerned with the planning and programming of university development. Before that he had worked at the British Museum in the Department of Coins and Medals, and had been involved in the creation of the British Institute of Afghan Studies: numismatics, and especially the coins of the Roman east, and the Indian sub-continent and Afghanistan in general being his academic interest - he did teach in the Department of Oriental Studies while in Durham.

At that time the Castle was running at a loss year on year, and inflation was running high. The new Master had to take actions to remedy this situation. What could be done was to a large extent in the hands of the university and the University Grants Committee but the Master was there to be blamed for anything that changed the experience of students in Castle! So reduction in the work of bedders, and the ending of cooked breakfasts were among the changes that didn't bring him popularity with the student body. He was keen to see that meals for the SCR were fully charged - even to the laundry of napkins - though not including 'the amortisation of napkin rings', a phrase that has stayed in my memory for all the years since (though in fact napkin rings did disappear at quite a rate. It was probably an error for them to have 'UNIVERSITY COLLEGE' engraved on them). The development of Moatside had been planned already but it was in David Mac Dowall's time that it was built and then inhabited. The rooms were very small in comparison with others and that was a cause of complaint. The addition of those rooms and some other alterations meant that there were now too many students

for all to be eating in Hall together, a significant change in College life. But developing the cafeteria made a lot of difference and worked well. The ending of the system whereby Judges of Assize stayed in the Castle made it possible to have more vacation use of the college for visitors in the summer as well as conferences, and this developed considerably, so that for many reasons the college was soon making a surplus.

One significant issue was that the JCR bar had never had a licence. There had been an assumption that for some reason it didn't need one, but investigation and consultation with the licensing authorities soon showed that it did, and this had to be rectified, which did happen, though with problems for some time.

After a year or two the JCR and the Master were often fighting together against the University and this worked well. Castellum reports a meeting where one of the university officers threatened to punch the Master on the nose! Early on in his time in Castle there was a College Dinner (an occasion when students and dons mingled, and there were no tablecloths) when a call for 'Speech, Speech' went up. The response was of 2 words: 'More Vino'. My recollection is that he had an empty bread basket on his head at the time!

David's wife, Mione, was a violinist, and led the orchestra in a memorable performance of Orff's Carmina Burana in the Sports Hall. They had two daughters, Sophie and Tara. For some periods they were in Berkhamsted, where they had the family home, while David was in Durham. One result of this was that in vacations the provision of meals for the SCR was much improved, and much appreciated.

In 1979 David Mac Dowall took up the post of Assistant Director of the Polytechnic of North London, soon promoted to Director.

He took early retirement in 1985, and was able to devote more time to his numismatic interests. He published extensively and took on several posts, including becoming a Governor of SOAS, Vice-President of the British Archaeological Association and President of the Royal Asiatic Society.

Mione died in 2020. In response to my letter of sympathy David said 'Mione and I often talked about our happy years in Durham. It was

such a friendly place'. David died on 8th August 2024, and there was an obituary in the Daily Telegraph on 30th (which barely mentioned his time in Durham). His funeral was on 6th of September. It was held at Sunnyside Church in Berkhamsted, where he and Mione had married in 1962 and where she was buried. It was taken by his daughter Tara, a Church of England vicar. I was very glad that we had kept up, and was pleased to be able to represent the Castle, in whose history he has played a significant part, at the funeral.

John Lumsden

DAVID BRICE

Castle 1954 – 1958

1934 – 2025

David Brice was born on 12th of July 1934, the first son of Dr. Edgar and Mrs. Amy Brice, housemaster and matron respectively of Otway House, Brentwood School where his father was also Director of Music. David was educated first at Brentwood and later at Aldenham School, a boarding school in Hertfordshire. There then followed National Service mainly at Barnard Castle where he valued the experience and life skills he acquired.

He came to University College in 1954, spending the first year in digs close to the railway viaduct, the second year at Lumley Castle and his last two years in College. David thoroughly enjoyed the social life and sport (rowing) during his stay in Durham probably to the detriment of academic progress and success but still managed to achieve a degree in Classics followed by a Dip. Ed.. He was elected President of the S.R.C. in his last year. The assumption was he would follow his father into teaching.



David however had other ideas - teaching Latin grammar to reluctant pupils in a cold, draughty classroom in Bishop Auckland was never his ambition.

David from his early childhood had developed a fascination for railways and steam engines. So at the end of 1958 he applied for and won a Traffic Apprenticeship with British Rail which gave him extensive training in such exotic locations as Southend Central Station and Temple Mills marshalling yard in Stratford. After his apprenticeship he specialised in working in the freight division which involved travelling extensively all over the country working on route planning, track layouts and timetabling. Over his lifetime he gained an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of railways in the British Isles.

Whilst all the above had been happening David had married Christine, a violin teacher at Brentwood School and together they raised a family of four. Family life involved exploring the countryside and going on walking holidays in the U.K. and abroad. On his father's death David took over the leadership of the wider family which was scattered around the country and maintained contact with them all.

David retired in 1993 but in no way was he ready to end his career in railways. So armed with his extensive knowledge and expertise he

turned himself into an international rail consultant and soon started winning contracts which took him abroad, particularly into Eastern Europe and Asia. Unfazed by working with different cultures he relished the challenges of advising on such problems as different gauges, route planning, line capacities and even awkward politicians. On two occasions he narrowly escaped being blown up in Afghanistan but this did not deter him from continuing his travels.



When he wasn't at home or working on contracts his life was as busy. He took his community responsibilities very seriously combining them with his love of music and singing-visiting and singing in hospitals, clearing snow for elderly neighbours and holding garden fetes to raise money for church repairs. David took over the leadership of his father's choral society but also sang in the Westminster Glee Club, the London Transport choir and his local church choir. When I took over the conductorship of my choir in Durham he could not resist the opportunity every year to come and sing in the Cathedral under my baton. Over the years he attended as many college reunions as he could, the last one being in 2022.

This almost frenetic life continued well into his 80s and his energy levels seemed to know no bounds. However in the last two years his sight began to fail accompanied by other major health issues. Last year the extended family were able to join him to celebrate his 90th birthday at which he gave what was to be his last speech. David was still with us to welcome in the New Year and his passing three days later was in the company of all his family exactly as he had wished.

From Richard Brice (Bede College 1962 - 1965)

CHRIS BURDETT

Castle 1973 – 1976

12th February 1954 to 22nd January 2025

Chris was born in Meriden, Warwickshire and moved with his parents to Chester in 1964, where he attended Chester City Grammar School. Chris arrived at Castle in October 1973 to read Modern History and quickly became part of a wide group of friends that was centred around A Block, Bailey Court.

A gentle and delightful fellow student; a kindly soul, Chris will be remembered for his gleeful laugh when he had spotted the absurdity of someone's youthful pontification, which he would then demolish in a non-confrontational aside. He was especially active in Castle Boat Club with Richard Pryce, Roy Horsley and Rob White, who by their own admission, showed far more enthusiasm than prowess. Their moment of glory came in a first-round heat in the 1975 Durham Regatta when their coxed four beat a crew from Berwick Amateur Rowing Club or was it the Whitby Friendship Dockers? Fifty years seems to have dimmed the memory (see Richard Pryce obituary).

The extraordinary long hot Summer of 1976, after graduation but before the world of work began with the rain in September, saw Chris come up with the challenging idea of a pony trekking holiday for him and his Castle friends on Dartmoor and then a month interrailing around Europe. Finally, he organised a holiday in the Pyrenees with a driver in David Goody, a French speaker in Mike Williams and several others.

Chris graduated with a good 2.1 reflecting his diligent study and after graduation, passed the Civil Service exam and joined the then senior tier, the Administrative Branch, of the Civil Service in the Welsh Office at Cardiff, embarking on a career that would see him make very significant contributions to the people of Wales. He was initially a Parliamentary Private Secretary and loved the Parliamentary lifestyle that included lots of gin and tonics and takeaway foods over ministerial pow-wows.

He then took up various posts within the Welsh Office which became the Welsh Assembly Government following devolution in 1999.

In 2001, as head of his division, he established the Children's Commissioner in Wales working closely with Jane Hutt, the Minister for Children, Young People and Families. The remit had been to draw together all the services that impacted on a child's life outside the classroom and with a shift in emphasis to prevention and early intervention especially for the more vulnerable. This model was later followed by the establishment of Children's Commissioners in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland (which had all been following its successful implementation).

During the period 2003 - 7, as Head of the Children and Families Division and Head of Children's Strategy Division, he and his colleagues devised a model protocol framework within which the CPS, police, local authority social services and education departments can cooperate and share information in child protection cases for the purposes of criminal prosecutions. At the same time, Chris also worked on the implementation of the Foundation Phase, a new approach to learning for 3-7-year-olds, based upon educational ideologies from Finland. He worked with Jane Davidson, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, to implement Flying Start, an initiative which provided early years and pre-school health and education in areas of social and economic deprivation.

When leading on the Welsh Government's strategy for children and young people Chris was responsible for developing the child-centred approach inherent in the Seven Core Aims for Children and Young People and their basis on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. From this legacy came the Rights Respecting Schools, widely in place in schools across Wales today. He also oversaw the establishment of Breast Test Wales on Cathedral Road in Cardiff. Towards the end of his working career with the Welsh Government, he worked on the introduction of the Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice which aims to promote inclusion, reduce disadvantage and tackle poverty of educational opportunity for those with Additional Learning Needs.

After retiring in 2012, Chris now had the opportunity to take up more

of his various hobbies – cycling, reading, photography, model making and travel. He was appointed to the post of Clerk to Lisvane Community Council. Almost immediately he was involved in arranging the centenary event for the Old School in October 2013. The job quickly became heavily focused on how the Old School could be redeveloped into a much bigger and better community centre and how such an ambitious project could be funded. He set up a registered charity to take over the responsibilities of the Management Committee; put a formal lease in place; acquired many grants to secure the funding of the project and found a way to reclaim the VAT payment. This led the way for some £260k to be reclaimed during the building work. The project would simply not have gone ahead if that £260k could not have been reclaimed...and whilst all this was happening, Chris still managed to organise the annual Remembrance Sunday events often having to persuade a reluctant Cardiff Council to close the road and waive their fee for doing so! Lisvane library occupied a portacabin on the Old School site. When it was installed at the site it was second hand and already well past its sell-by date, but Chris kept it going despite horrendous leaks, frozen pipes and faulty electrics. In short, few people realised the size or complexity of the challenges due to the effortless way that Chris sorted things out.

And then Parkinson's struck.

In 1984 Chris married Jane and together they had two daughters, Sarah and Lucie. After the marriage ended, he married Joanna in 2010, gaining two step children, William and Hannah. Chris attended our 40th anniversary reunion and the Society Reunion in 2013, supported Richard Pryce at the 2018 Society Reunion, and finally attended our 50th anniversary reunion and the Society Reunion in April 2024. Chris was intelligent, sensitive, kind, loyal and taken from us far too soon. He died peacefully in his sleep after his battle with Parkinson's. To quote one of our group, we need more Chris Burdett's in today's confrontational world.

Joanna Burdett, Douglas Denham St Pinnock

STEPHEN DENYER

Castle 1974 – 1977

27 December 1955 – 14 January 2024

Stephen Denyer was a loyal and much valued friend to those of us who moved in his circle during his time in Castle from 1974 to 1977. His early death in January 2024 was deeply saddening. Here below are some of the recollections of three of his close friends during his time at Durham, John Jenkins, Michael Hodges, and Howard Short, together with a summary of the distinguished legal career that followed.

Howard recalls: I first met Stephen at the regulation Freshers' Week drinks 'do' at which we were introduced to our moral tutor, each other and a number of other undergraduates. It took place in the rooms at the end of the Norman Gallery in Castle, in October 1974.

We were all gathered, full of anticipation for the studies and experiences which lay ahead in the pursuit of our chosen degree subjects which, in Stephen's case, was Law. We quickly became friends and thereafter spent much time musing over life, the universe and everything (or so it seemed!).

We set up mutual friendships with many people, as most students do. Chief among them were Michael Hodges and John Jenkins, both Castlemen and both music students. They also remained close to Stephen over the passing years.



Durham was just an unbelievable joy and privilege; both the place, the institution and the opportunities it provided for new experiences. While I tended to be rather more hedonistic than academic, it was clear that Stephen was single-minded and diligent but enormously self-effacing, and great fun. He was a supportive and enthusiastic member of our unofficial group, coming to events, concerts and organised functions with us, but his focus on the business of Law was unwavering.

After the routine day, whatever that may have included, I would wander over to the undercroft bar to meet up with Michael and John for a nightcap. Stephen would arrive in the late evening to join us, collect a bottle of Newcastle Brown and settle in to chat about the day; for him, the weekdays tended to be dominated by lectures, seminars, and then the library - in fact, stack C was the place you'd invariably find him if needed! His focus paid off in spades in the years to come. There were however, opportunities for extra curricular activities which provide some amusement on reflection.

John Jenkins recalls: Stephen and I ventured to Italy in August 1975, together with fellow Castleman geographer David Price. Having only a smattering of Italian between us, this led to more than one incident of considerable confusion. One night, having appropriated and bedded down in a railway carriage for an evening journey to Florence, it transpired that the train was actually parked in a siding and going nowhere. Catching a later train, and arriving in Florence at 2am, we knocked on the door of our pensione, to be told by an exceedingly irate landlady from her balcony to 'clear off' until a more reasonable hour - at least that what we assumed she said! Fortunately it was a warm night for our repose under the arches of the Uffizi Gallery before a sheepish return to our lodgings the following morning.

Stephen was a modest man, never given to showing off in any way, and his fearless head for heights came as a terrifying revelation to his companions as he wandered calmly around the rooftops of Sienna Cathedral casually leaning over to enjoy the view of the city some 70 metres below.

Michael recalls: as chapel choir master and organist, I remember Stephen was a committed chapel-goer and always supported the services and notable ecclesiastical events in the chapel calendar, together with musical concerts throughout the year. Before formal dinners, we used to meet in one of our rooms, and generally our 'hors-d'oeuvres' consisted of pre-dinner sherry and chocolate biscuits....all very civilised! All of this, only after the conclusion of the day's episode of The Archers to which Stephen was addicted – he was very much a man who loved the countryside, perhaps echoing his early life and school days in Dorset.

At this point it must be said that on leaving Durham with a top class Law degree, he achieved the almost impossible by becoming the first law student intake at Allen and Overy in London with a beard. The careers adviser at Durham had previously told him that "he wouldn't get a job with a City law firm sporting a beard" – yet, it transpired that he was to become the first ever graduate lawyer recruited into the firm bedecked with his magnificent beard; it seemed to us that it was always very much his hallmark, and it was typical of his determination to achieve and excel that something such as wearing a beard should not be allowed to preclude him from his chosen path.

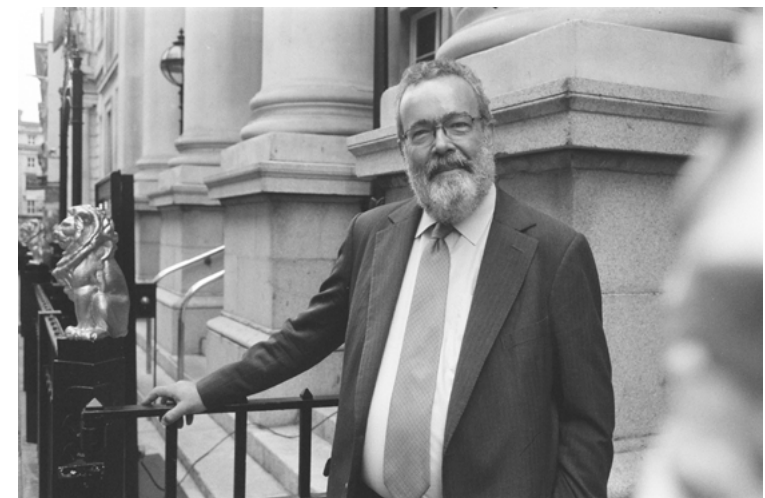
Much has rightly been written about Stephen's career in the Law and accolades literally from across the world evidence the impact that he made and the regard and love in which he was held.

Stephen started his professional life at Allen & Overy, a magic circle law firm in London. He was admitted to the roll of solicitors in 1980 and remained at the firm for 36 years, serving in various roles. Initially, Stephen worked as a lawyer in the corporate department but eventually his interest shifted to law firm management, recruitment, and mentoring. He played a key role in establishing, expanding or managing eleven of the firm's international offices, initially taking advantage of the momentum in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall. During the 90s he became increasingly involved in the work of the International Bar Association and later the American Bar Association. As co-chair of the IBA Rule of Law Forum he was an eloquent defender of the rule of law,

warning early on of the consequences of political attacks on lawyers for doing their job.

In 2014, Stephen retired from Allen & Overy and joined the Law Society of England and Wales as their Director of Strategic Relationships. In that role he was responsible for the Law Society's strategic relationship with law firms, local law societies, governments, universities and law schools in the UK and internationally. Throughout his legal career Stephen was at the forefront of the globalisation of legal services. He played an instrumental role in the internationalisation of both Allen & Overy and of the legal practice in England and Wales. Key to this was his ability and reputation in the profession for connecting and mentoring legal professionals across the globe from different jurisdictions and cultures. Stephen married Monika in 1988 and they have four adult children. They lived in the UK and for twelve years in Germany. Outside the legal world Stephen was very much a family man, enjoying travels around the world with the family and hiking in the UK and Germany. Stephen and his family lived in the Surrey Hills, where he enjoyed gardening in the wild acre surrounding their house.

**John Jenkins, Michael Hodges,
Howard Short, Helen Denyer and family**



PROFESSOR WILLIAM FORSTER MA OBE

Castle 1953 – 1963

1934 – 2024

“A thoroughly kind and decent man”

William Forster (best known as Bill) was born in Sheffield, but at heart he was from the north-east of England where his forebears originated. Growing up during the Second World War, and with memories of bombs, bomb shelters and rationing, he left school at 16 to work on North Sea fishing trawlers. Quickly realising his mistake, he returned to Firth Park Grammar School and continued in education to study English Language and Literature at University College, Durham, graduating in 1956.

After service in the RAF (1956-1963), and marriage to Sheila in 1957 (whom he met as a student sorting Christmas mail in Sheffield), he worked as a lecturer at the University of Liverpool before moving to Rutland in 1969 and a job at the University of Leicester, which appointed him Vaughan Professor of Education and Director of Adult Education in 1980.

In his professional years, Bill taught with a passion, organised and attended conferences - often abroad - examined, broadcast, conducted research and published, wholeheartedly committed to life-long education and particularly the needs of the marginalised and disadvantaged, including those in prison in the UK and internationally. His skills, standing and enthusiasm saw him serve on University Senate Boards, the Universities Council for Adult and Continuing Education, the Arts Council of Great Britain, NACRO and at St George's House, Windsor. Few words sum up Bill's public life better than the objective of St George's House: 'Effecting change for the better by nurturing wisdom through dialogue'; and formal recognition of his public service came in 1990 when he was appointed an OBE.

It goes without saying that Bill was modest about these achievements. However, if asked what he was most pleased by, he might have mentioned

his role in establishing the Richard Attenborough Centre for Arts and Disability (now the Attenborough Arts Centre), opened in Leicester in 1997 by Diana, Princess of Wales, and his position as the University of Leicester's official orator (1991-1999). The latter allowed him to meet and tell funny stories in public about celebrities as diverse as Patrick Moore, the astronomer; Evelyn Glennie, the deaf percussionist; and Gary Lineker, the broadcaster and footballer, during honorary degree award ceremonies.

But these professional achievements do not fully represent Bill: his wit, his wisdom, his humility, and his kindness. He had many interests and passions: reading and writing - particularly poetry - as well as cricket and crosswords. His garden and his vegetable patch - which extended to an allotment for a period - gave him great joy, as did music and conversational companionship. Publicly, however, Bill was most engaged with sculpture, working ('collaborating' as he would put it) mainly with wood, exhibiting when pressed, and curating outdoor exhibitions, often on a large scale, such as at Leicester's Harold Martin Botanic Garden in the early 2000s.

Doubtlessly, the last year or two were difficult, with legs and lungs struggling, and then his sight failing, but Bill remained resolute and cheerful, always ready to converse, contribute, chuckle and explore. As Sheila recalls: 'While we waited for the ambulance, we finished the crossword'. He will be particularly missed by Sheila, his three children - Paul, Helen and Andrew - as well as their partners and their offspring.

Paul Forster

NEIL HASSALL

Castle 1958 – 1961

1940 – 2024

Neil came up to Castle in 1958 from the tiny Alford Grammar School in Lincolnshire. Although an outstanding footballer and a good athlete, Neil had to represent his school in every sporting activity and competition, which he did proudly and enthusiastically.

He was actually born in Rossington, Yorkshire where his father was a coal miner and where Neil's political instincts were inherited. He spent his boyhood in Mablethorpe where he won a scholarship to Alford G.S. and subsequently admission to Castle where he successfully completed a General Arts Degree in History and French. He represented Castle and Colleges throughout his time in Durham as a talented



right fullback. He was a fearsome tackler in defence and a fleet footed overlapping wing back in attack.

Contemporary undergraduates will remember him as an affable, jovial and winning personality with a wonderful sense of humour and a gargantuan appetite. Stories abound to the latter. On one occasion, having eaten a three course lunch in a Durham café, he claimed he was still hungry and could eat as much again. His four companions, disbelieving the assertion, agreed to finance an attempt. Lunch was ordered once more and successfully consumed much to the astonishment of an open mouthed waitress.

Graduating in 1961, Neil remained in Durham to do a Dip Ed. He had decided some time before that he wanted a career in teaching, a profession to which he was ideally suited given his enthusiasm for History

and French and a caring and supportive relationship with young people. His parents having emigrated to Australia in the Autumn of 1961, Neil returned to Durham for the following Spring Term married to Pat whom he had known since their Junior School days together. They rented rooms in an attractive property on the banks of the Wear just out of Spennymoor. Pat found a teaching post in a local Junior School, Neil completed his Dip Ed. and found time to indulge in his passion for fishing.

He began teaching at Shepshed in Leicestershire and two years later moved to one of Cambridgeshire's Community Village Colleges at Soham where he subsidised his income by continuing his footballing career as a semi-professional. By this time Neil and Pat had both a son Robert [Bob] and a daughter Diane [Di]. Visitors to Soham were always welcomed and Neil ensured that a soccer match was woven into the weekend itinerary. On one occasion it was a trip to Wembley to see the World Champions – England - take on Scotland.

In 1970 Neil returned to the East Midlands to take up a Deputy Headship post at the Friesland Comprehensive School in Sandiacre, the youngest Deputy Head in the county. So successfully did he fill this post that when the Headship of the school became vacant he was appointed Head, the first of his three career Headships. He was a talented and effective Head, popular with staff and pupils alike, able to combine the management of the school with a presence in the classroom. His boundless energy and enthusiasm meant he was a leader in a number of the school's extra-curricular activities.

After living in Kegworth and Long Eaton, in 1976 he and Pat bought a magnificent house on the banks of the river Trent. The 'Three Cranes' at Cavendish Bridge was a former Coaching Inn with eight bedrooms and an extensive garden which the Trent flooded every winter. Although the water never entered the house it was necessary to have a small rowing boat moored immediately outside the front door to enable the occupants to reach dry land outside the garden gate and the pub conveniently situated there.

He and Pat then devoted as much energy and enthusiasm for the

newly acquired property as they did for the schools in which they worked. 'Three Cranes' enabled Neil to develop his recreational interest in gardening and his passion for the cultivation of dahlias as well as a collector of bottles, evidence of the house's former incarnation. The Trent meant he was able to indulge in his longstanding love of fishing and his membership of the Foremark Flyfishing Association. It was at this point he launched the All England Schools' Angling Competition.

Castlemen were warmly welcomed to the 'Three Cranes' and every visit included a stroll along the banks of the Trent or the locks at neighbouring Shardlow. A host of National Trust properties were available to visit and Nottingham Forest and Derby County provided fixtures to attend. Months may have elapsed between visits but such was the nature of the friendship with the Hassall family that it always felt as though you were engaged in a continuous next door neighbour relationship.

Remaining at Cavendish Bridge, in 1980 Neil moved on to his second Headship at the Hatton School just outside Derby. Here he continued in the same energetic vein and parents spoke of him as a liberal and progressive Head, widely revered, loved by students and staff alike who regarded him as firm and fair. They judged he was perceptive and hence someone for whom it was easy to have respect.

Unfortunately in 1988 the student population in the catchment area began to decline and the Local Authority deemed that it would have to close the school, transfer students elsewhere and redeploy the staff including the Head. Neil was invited to apply for a Headship in Buxton in a school currently in the process of reorganisation and amalgamation with two others. Thus he became the Head of a large comprehensive school, his third Headship.

As the reorganisation was still in its infancy, Neil was faced with the challenge of managing substantial change in a sometimes hostile environment and which he had to conduct from the offices of the LEA. Buxton was several miles north of Cavendish Bridge and he found himself in the quandary of whether to commute daily, lodge in the town throughout the week and commute at weekends or move permanently

north. Selling the 'Three Cranes' was a huge sacrifice but eventually he decided that he had to do so. His life was in further turmoil when in 1992 Pat became ill and her relatively early death was a severe blow to the family.

His decision to sell was overtaken by events. He became seriously ill, probably the result of so much stress, and when he recovered he was advised on medical grounds to abandon the reorganisation work in Buxton and retire or pursue some less stressful employment. He resigned his post.

Supported by his family and friends Neil began another chapter in his life. From his home at the 'Three Cranes' he began to work in Higher Education for Lancaster University based at the former Charlotte Mason College of Education. Ever the Francophile he relished the opportunity to work at developing a unified English and French teaching course which involved extensive travelling to France and the French Embassy in London.

Subsequently he was asked to deliver training courses for Secondary School Deputy Heads and newly appointed Headteachers. His wide ranging experience in the profession enabled him deliver effective support so much so that he became much sought after by schools and LEA's alike.

Eventually he met and married Margaret whose tenuous link to Castle arose from the fact that in her first teaching appointment she worked for a while alongside Margaret Forster, wife of Hunter Davies [1954-58]. Bob and Di, Neil's son and daughter had made their way in the world successfully. Bob became the Managing Director of Equability where he worked as a Septicity Prevention Consultant and Di set up in business as a designer and manufacturer of wedding shoes. Looking online one is able to see the intricate work this entailed and the beauty of the finished article.

Through marriage to Margaret, Neil inherited an additional family so much so that he became the grandfather of eleven grandchildren and subsequently the great grandfather of five. In his retirement he thoroughly enjoyed the company of his family and played with and

entertained them in the vast open spaces of the 'Three Cranes'. The property required continuous maintenance and Neil was an active 'Do it Yourself' man despite the accidents [falling off ladders] that ensued. He arrived at the Castle Reunion on one occasion on crutches, his leg in plaster.

Of course, he pursued the two great passions of his life in his retirement. Fishing in river, loch or reservoir and the cultivation of dahlias in his large garden filled many happy hours of peace and contentment. Neil was active in the local community and in particular with the twinning arrangements of Long Eaton and Romorantin. Eventually 'Three Cranes' became too large a residence as Neil and Margaret approached their eighties and reluctantly they began to search for a smaller home. Two or three miles away in the village of Diesworth they bought 32, Clements Gate, a fine house still on three floors but with only six bedrooms. It faced south and had a lovely sloping garden, ideal for growing dahlias.

Here they lived for five years before, sadly, Neil suddenly died aged eighty four, a great shock for family and friends who had seen him fit and well days before. His funeral was a fitting tribute for a remarkable man. Di and Bob, having inherited their father's great sense of humour ensured the large congregation, who had travelled from far and wide, were treated to splendid eulogies. When the hearse arrived at the crematorium, as it turned, the floral arrangement in the rear window could be seen to read 'Gone Fishing' and the members of the Foremark Flyfishing Association complete with rod and line formed a guard of honour through which the cortege passed. In addition to the usual Order of Service an additional loose leaf page was enclosed entitled the 'Dahlia Mail' with news of Neil's passing.

So a remarkable and eventful life came to an end leaving so many family members and friends with a gap in their lives which it seems impossible to fill.

May he rest in peace.

Roy Todd

RICHARD PRYCE

Castle 1973 – 1976

24th February 1955 to 30th July 2023

Richard was born in Cheltenham and moved with his parents and older sister, Vicki, to Stonehouse in 1961 where he followed his Father and Uncle to Wycliffe College. Richard was awarded both an academic and a music scholarship, playing the cello in the school orchestra and representing the school at Athletics. Taking A Levels in Maths, Physics and Chemistry a year early, Richard earned his place in Castle, arriving in A Block Bailey Court in October 1973 to study Maths. Quickly making friends with an eclectic group of Freshers, Richard could sometimes be somewhat solitary, but also rather dapper with his purple sports jacket and tie. He did not enjoy parties, discos or the music of the era, instead reading and brewing beer in a large black Woolworths dustbin in his room much to the chagrin of Chris, our bedder, who nevertheless became reconciled to this modest eccentricity. An Undercroft stalwart just before formal dinner and again just before last orders at 10.30pm.

As at school, Richard was selective in his studies, tending to ignore things that did not interest him, but applying himself diligently to things that were both a challenge and a source of enjoyment. He was an enthusiastic member of the Castle Boat Club and was in the crew that beat the Whitby Friendship Dockers at the Durham Regatta in 1975. Richard's possession of that most valuable commodity, a car – in his case an ancient Morris Minor, made him much in demand and he was known for his trips up into Weardale and over the moors to Blanchland for refreshments at The Lord Crewe Arms.

After graduation Richard was an early entrant into the world of computer programming, passing his training course top of class. Always a freelance, Richard worked for numerous large firms including IBM in New York. For many years Richard worked at Oxford University Press helping to create the first digital Oxford English Dictionary. Declining a permanent position at Oxford University Press he returned to Stonehouse

where he continued to work on multiple programming projects. Durham friends visiting Richard will remember The Woolpack Inn as his favourite haunt, where he ran the quiz team, capitalising on his broad sweep of knowledge. He also enjoyed being part of the Wycliffe Choral Society where one of his great achievements was performing in the Berlioz Requiem with the London Symphonia in Gloucester Cathedral.

The last ten years of Richard's life were blighted by health problems, including increasingly poor mobility. He did attend the 40th anniversary of our cohort's arrival in Durham, in Castle in 2013 and attended the Society reunion once again in 2018, assisted nobly by Chris Burdett. Richard was always slightly unique and unpredictable; intelligent, talented, amusing and extremely knowledgeable. Richard passed away peacefully at home in Stonehouse, a Gloucestershire man from beginning to end. A solitary life is not always a lonely life and Richard loved his great nieces and nephews and they loved him. He is much missed by all his family and friends.

Vicki Walker

Douglas Denham St Pinnock

BRIAN SCRIVENER

Castle 1944, 1950 – 53

Senior Man

1952 – 1953

13th October 1926 – 26th September 2024

I didn't really get to know Brian well until the end of his second year, and my third, when he was elected as Senior Man and I as Secretary of the JCR, by which time he was already something of a celebrity. In addition

to his engaging and effervescent personality, it was generally known that in the three years before coming to Durham, he had served in the RAF and won his wings and was currently continuing to fly with the University Air Squadron. Not only that, but during Castle Day that previous summer of 1952, we had all watched with delight and admiration as he capped the celebrations with an exciting display of aerial aerobatics above and beyond the castle itself.



As a result of our elections to such privileged positions, we were assigned in the following year to two rooms next to each other on the Norman Gallery where our friendship quickly developed, not least because we discovered that we were both in close relationships with girls at St Aidan's whom we were later to marry. So, with one thing and another, that was a special year in both our lives, although perhaps one in which we spent more time enjoying ourselves than studying: I remember once going into Brian's room to find him earnestly surveying several large sheets of paper covering the whole floor which he explained to me contained a very elaborate and comprehensive research into all the questions which had turned up in the Geology finals over the last ten years in an effort to decide which of them were likely to confront him the following week. I regret to say that he later admitted that this meticulous study of question papers, rather than presumably rocks, volcanoes and the like, had unfortunately not paid the dividends he felt were his due. But then, genuinely

interested as he was in his subject, his overriding passion was for flying to which he was determined to return once his university course had ended.

It was in fact this passion which first brought him to Durham. He was born and brought up in Ringstead, Northamptonshire and his father and relations all worked in the boot-making factories, the traditional industry of the area. He attended a Central School (equivalent to a Technical College) and didn't have a school certificate which at that time was a requirement for further education. So, after leaving school at sixteen and losing the toss with a good friend for a factory job, he worked for a couple of years in a science laboratory conducting research for the boot-making industry, which nurtured his love of science.

His break came when he joined the Air Training Corps and they offered him the opportunity to further his education by applying for one of a very few places available at a university short course in science being sponsored by the RAF. Despite the fierce competition, he won a place on a such a course, in his case Durham. While he was there, in 1944 RAF Cranwell re-opened to train pilots. Hundreds of hopefuls from the top universities applied, Brian amongst them, and again he was successful. He remembered so vividly the pride he felt standing on parade when his name was read out with only a handful of others from the hundred attending his course. And so, in August 1945, aged seventeen, he began his training on Tiger Moths at Cranwell, made his first solo flight in the following month and was subsequently commissioned. He was one of only five people in the entire country to go to RAF Cranwell without a School Certificate.

To give you some idea of the measure of this achievement and the extent to which it reflected the determination, enthusiasm and wholehearted commitment he displayed in everything he did, however great the challenge, his training group at Cranwell included the son of an Air Vice Marshall, the son of a Scottish Laird and the son of the Vice Speaker of the House of Commons! Being very conscious of the need for a long-term career, when the war ended, he chose to join Air Transport Command, which gave him considerable flying hours and experience.

After three eventful years in the RAF which included service in India at the time of the partition (he was organising air lifts on his 21st birthday) and then the Berlin Airlift in 1948- 1949, he decided to return to Castle to read Geology. Thus, it was, he left University College for a second time in 1953, this time with an Honours Degree and immediately joined BOAC. In the following year, he married Shirley, the girl from St Aidan's, (nee Hazelhurst) and love of his life. Shirley also came from a working-class background and through her natural intelligence and some good fortune too, got a place to read Biology. Shirley chose a geology module in her second year and so fate saw them meet and fall in love by the banks of the River Wear during a local field trip. Durham was such a special place of opportunity for them both and they were active supporters and alumni of the University all their lives, attending many events and reunions.

Brian's career with what eventually became British Airways lasted almost thirty years and was punctuated not only by a series of promotions by which he reached that of Captain in 1969, but by a number of memorable occasions in which he was involved, such as: the first Atlantic crossing in a Stratocruiser, a much enjoyed posting with his family to Hawaii, flying the Britannia to San Francisco and Tokyo at the start of BOAC's world service in 1959, and the captaincy of one of BOAC's first Boeing 707's.

One result of his repeated flights to cities in America and Asia was that his genial and sociable disposition won him some interesting, and often lifelong, friendships across the world, noticeably with Dick and Grace Berg, the Americans he first met during his posting to Honolulu and with the Hashimoto family in Tokyo. Mr Hashimoto was an Abbot in the Narita Temple who made it his aim to create friendships and understanding between people of different personalities, cultures and beliefs and in the pursuit of that aim, he and his wife would regularly invite the aircrew of different airlines flying into Tokyo to their home. In 1973, Brian became one of these and he and Mr Hashimoto and their families soon developed close ties which continued well beyond Brian's



retirement in 1981 and saw them each visiting each other in their homes, on a number of occasions.

Another friendship which also lasted long into his life originated when his first officer, Piers du Pré, the brother-in-law of Jacqueline du Pré (a cellist of world-wide fame), started telling Brian about this ruin in France which his other sister Hilary and her husband, Kiffer Finzi owned. They became friends and frequently stayed at this wonderfully ancient magnanerie (a silkworm rearing facility with arches dating to the Roman period) in the remote Hérault region of Southern France.

Much of it was in ruins. Access involved a 10 mins walk up a rock face, there was no running water, electricity, toilet or phone - but other than that it just about habitable! Here Brian, his family, and happily friends such as myself spent some marvellous holidays. He enjoyed the contrast of this basic living and being close to nature, compared to the impersonal hotels where he had spent much of his flying career and was able to help with the restoration.

It was Brian and Shirley too of course, who were largely responsible for prolonging and fostering those other friendships which we had first made at Castle, by so often and so generously, hosting our reunions at their home in Beaconsfield: these included friends such as Harry Evans, with whom he would sometimes go skiing, Derek Holbrook who was

for several years editor of Castellum, and Roy Arnold whom he first encountered out at Lumley (in the days when it accommodated students from University College) and with whom he had preserved close ties after Roy took up journalism in New York.

No tribute to Brian would be complete without mention of his extraordinary skills as a largely self-taught craftsman. Amazingly the design and to a very large extent the construction of the beautiful house he almost single-handedly built for his family in Burgess Wood Grove, Beaconsfield are testament to those skills as well as to his vision and sheer determination to build as much of it as possible himself. If there was anything he didn't know how to do, he would go to great lengths to find the answer rather than get someone else to do it. He had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge more generally and an incessant urge more specifically to keep himself well informed about advances in science and technology. Nevertheless, I suspect that most of those who made his acquaintance remembered him above all as just being fun to be with, which he was.

Shirley died in 2020 and Brian valiantly continued in his home he had purposely built for later living supported by his three daughters, five grandchildren, family and friends. And sadly, Brian died after a short illness aged 97 on 24 August 2024.

To me he was a dear friend, who over many years constantly enriched my life and I miss him terribly.

Keith Nodding and Lucy Arterton

NORMAN THOMPSON

Castle 1959 – 1963

28 August 1937 – 19 February 2024

Norman and I came to Durham in 1959 to read for a four-year course in honours Geology. Both of us had served in the forces before coming up which made us slightly older than the rest of the undergraduate body but not necessarily more mature. After spending our first year in Durham, our second year was spent in residence at Lumley Castle, outside Chester-le-Street. It was a close knit community of around 100 students loosely over-seen by the benign Vice-Master, Dr Prowse. Central to Lumley's fame was the fact that it was the starting point of the 'Lumley Run'. To complete this one had to drink a pint of beer in the dozen or so pubs between Chester-le-Street and Durham. Norman, I believe, qualified without a problem. For our third year Norman returned to Durham and was quartered on the Norman Gallery as JCR Secretary, a role he completed with distinction and popularity. We graduated in 1963.

In his first year Norman thought that he would enjoy rowing and was a member of a fine four which managed to go over the weir adjacent to the Castle boathouse, when the river was in full flood. Mercifully all the occupants of the boat survived, unlike those of a boat belonging to another college a year or so earlier. Undeterred Norman continued rowing but as a member of Castle's strictly non-competitive four.

Norman was a hugely popular member of the JCR and had in addition many friends outside college. He was easy to get along with, one might almost describe him as 'laid back' but well respected. He will be sorely missed by his many Durham friends."

Donald Payne

Norman graduated in 1963 and from then on worked in Construction Management both within the industry and later as a lecturer. Whilst

teaching at Oxford Polytechnic (now Oxford Brookes University) he took a year's sabbatical to read for a further degree at Aston (Birmingham) University. By then we were married with two children and living in Warwickshire.

He was a keen member of Stratford upon Avon Cricket Club, popular both as a player, sometime team captain and committee member. In 1985/6 he was one of a team of three members who oversaw the construction of a fine new sports pavilion to cater for the increasing membership of Stratford Sports Club-no longer just for cricket but for a multitude of sports.

In 1993 we emigrated to south west France and have lived here ever since and where he died after suffering from a cancer.

Having always enjoyed being involved with the organisation of clubs and associations it was no surprise that he quickly became a committee member of the clubs to which we belonged. He was elected president of the Cahors branch of the Association France/Grande Bretagne for six years after which he he was appointed Consular Correspondent for the Lot department. This voluntary post ended when the Consulate in Bordeaux was downgraded. We made a lot of friends through membership of these associations.

Norman loved living in the tiny hamlet where we had been made so welcome when we first came here 30 years ago. Over the years we have entertained family and friends for holidays here where they enjoyed the French way of life including markets, fetes, the annual truffle market and restaurants. Our local friends have been so supportive and he is missed by them and of course by our family.

Sue Thompson

DAVID CHARLES TWINN

Castle 1965 – 1968

1946 – 2021



A personal tribute.

David was at Durham from 1965 to 1968, first at Lumley Castle and later in the Keep. He met his lifelong friend at Lumley, Rod Stickland with whom he shared a room. He studied Classics and Romano-British Archaeology. It was in his final year that he met his future wife Nina who was a trainee teacher at nearby Darlington. I have many happy memories of us running to catch the last train back to Darlington! David always said he got a poor degree but he did gain a wife!

So graduating in 1965 with a 3rd, he decided to become an accountant as he was always good with numbers. He moved to London and trained with a small firm in the City called Longcrofts. In 1970 David and I were married in his home town of Cambridge and lived in Wanstead. He moved to Peak Marwick and Mitchell to broaden his experience and became a Senior Auditor.

However by that time we decided we both wanted to move abroad and learn languages after going to the Olympics in Munich in 1972. Hence the move to Hamburg where he worked for Price Waterhouse as a Senior Auditor and I taught at the International School. We made many friends and David played squash and football with colleagues. We also learnt German taught by an amazingly strict teacher called Frau Von Keller.

Having decided we wanted even more experience abroad with Price Waterhouse who had Offices in Morocco. So to Thomas Cook in London where we asked for "two tickets to Casablanca". Much to the astonishment of the ticket person.

We took our time and travelled by train all the way going through Spain when Franco was in power. Upon our arrival at the offices we were met by a power cut but eventually found our hotel. The office did enquire if David had an aversion to flying!

David was appointed Audit Manager for Francophone Africa and spent time in Gabon where he was almost assaulted by a man in a lift bearing a machete but luckily wasn't hurt. I became pregnant with our first child but not trusting the system there I chose to go back to the UK bringing our baby back after two months.

In 1978 David was offered a secondment to the Ivory Coast, Abidjan, to establish an internal audit department. Upon completing the assignment we returned to the UK in 1979.

Back in the UK we had our second child and lived in South Woodford. David decided he wanted a complete change and joined CBS Inc. in London and became an Assistant Director. He said he found the music industry a much more exciting environment.

However in 1981 we decided on another move this time to Paris where he worked for CBS Records International. There he became Director of Internal Controls European Operations. We had our third child in Paris. My birthday present that year was to be taken to a concert in a Marquee where Meatloaf were playing and I had to stand at six months pregnant. But yet another Language learnt.

In 1984 a chance came to move to Spain to Madrid, where David became Director of Finance for Discos CBS. We had four wonderful years in Madrid, made more good friends bought some land in the country side and had a little house built in a tiny village where nobody speaks English. We lived not far from the Real Madrid football stadium where we attended matches. Spanish was learnt and the only way is to immerse yourself as I had found out. Families to consider and schooling and back to the UK in 1988 where CBS became Sony Music and David eventually became Senior Vice President.

He decided enough was enough and left Sony and had his own consultancy firm which continued for a few years. He still enjoyed languages

and became Chairman of our Twinning Association. We had many a holiday walking amongst Roman ruins and he even walked the length of Hadrian's Wall on his 60th Birthday with myself as backup in the car. Our first date which I have never forgotten is traipsing over ruins at Corbridge. I should have known then what was in store.

David sadly died of cancer in 2021. Yes he did smoke but then so did everyone else in the music industry. We had wonderful tributes paid to him from former colleagues, "always the gentleman, providing wisdom, insight and friendship".

I owe Durham a great deal.

Nina Twinn

If you would like to pay tribute to a fellow Castle graduate in a future publication of Castellum please email our editor

Alex Nelson at
alexnelson@dunelm.org.uk

DURHAM CASTLE SOCIETY ACCOUNTS

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST JULY, 2024

	31.07.2024	31.07.2023
	£	£
INCOME		
Subscriptions – Current Year	13,785.72	15,456.22
Donation	180.00	-
Interest Received	353.73	115.47
	14,319.45	15,571.69
EXPENDITURE		
Castellum	4,536.60	4,242.00
Postage & Distribution	7,120.00	5,900.00
Society Website	638.40	638.40
Reunion Expenses	522.00	417.60
Miscellaneous	214.99	214.99
	13,031.99	11,412.99
	1,287.46	4,158.70
JCR First Generation \Society	300.00	300.00
JCR Frisbee	100.00	260.00
JCR Rugby FC	100.00	250.00
JCR Castle Choir and Orchestra	200.00	66.00
JCR Netball Club	200.00	54.00
JCR Badminton	100.00	50.00
JCR Mixed Lacrosse	100.00	40.00
JCR UC Boat Club	250.00	-
JCR Castle Running Society	50.00	-
JCR Castle Toastie Bar Committee	100.00	-
JCR Castle x Bede Cheerleading Club	200.00	-
JCR Women's Football	200.00	-
JCR Football	100.00	-
JCR Castle Feminist Society	200.00	-
JCR International Society	-	500.00
JCR Castle Theatre	-	365.00
JCR Cricket (Outdoor)	-	300.00
MCR Thorp-Powers Society	-	77.64
	2,200.00	2,262.64
	(912.54)	1,896.06
Community Action Fund	1,500.00	1,500.00
Alumni Events Fund	500.00	500.00
Military Scholarship Fund	1,000.00	1,000.00
	3,000.00	3,000.00
Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year	£ (3,912.54)	£ (1,103.94)

TREASURER'S NOTES

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST JULY 2024

	31.07.2024 £	31.07.2023 £
CURRENT ASSETS		
Business Base Rate Tracker A/c	20,978.77	27,625.04
Business Community Account	9,807.16	8,923.43
	30,785.93	36,548.47
	30,785.93	36,548.4
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Subscriptions in Advance	4,985.00	8,835.00
	4,985.00	8,835.00
	£ 25,800.93	£ 27,713.47
Represented By:-		
ACCUMULATED FUND		
Opening Balance	5,213.47	6,317.41
Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year	(3,912.54)	(1,103.94)
	1,300.93	5,213.47
COMMUNITY ACTION FUND		
Opening Balance	1,500.00	1,500.00
Transfer	1,500.00	1,500.00
Expenditure	(-)	1,500.00
	3,000.00	1,500.00
LOWE LIBRARY FUND		
Opening Balance	4,000.00	4,000.00
Expenditure	(-)	(-)
	4,000.00	4,000.00
EVA SCHUMACHER-REID HARDSHIP FUND		
Opening Balance	2,500.00	4,000.00
Expenditure	(1,000.00)	(1,500.00)
	1,500.00	2,500.00
ALUMNI EVENTS FUND		
Opening Balance	3,500.00	3,000.00
Transfer	500.00	500.00
	4,000.00	3,500.00
MILITARY SCHOLARSHIP FUND		
Opening Balance	11,000.00	10,000.00
Transfer	1,000.00	1,000.00
	12,000.00	11,000.00
	£ 25,800.93	£ 27,713.47

Martin E. Gunson, PgDip (Dunelm), BFP, FCA, FRSA, FISM, FCMI, FFA, FIPA, FFTA, FIAB
29th January, 2025
Honorary Treasurer

Note:- Earlier years' authorised unspent expenditure of around £22,500.00 at the Balance Sheet date has either been funded from other sources, or is now largely unlikely to be required.

The grant expenditure for the JCR agreed at the 2019 AGM of £5,891.69 was not paid over following the arrival of Professor Graham Towl as Acting Master and his cancellation of the JCR and Society joint event, and then subsequently the effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Given College support to the Lowe Library, it may be appropriate to write back some or all of the current fund of £4,000.00.

The Life Membership paid by Freshers on arrival has fallen very considerably in recent years as students have been badly affected by the Coronavirus Pandemic and the Government's failure to deal with the challenges presented in the education sector for all age groups. It is hard to see when the tide might turn.

No Freshers Subscriptions were received from the College in the years to 31st July, 2023 and 2024.

DEGREE RESULTS 2024

Study Programme Level	Qualification Award	2023-24
Undergraduate	First	124
	2:1	189
	2:2	26
	Third	*
	Ordinary	*
	Certificate of Higher Education	*
	Diploma of Higher Education	*
	Other	0
	Pass	0
	No Award	25
Postgraduate Taught	Distinction	50
	Merit	163
	Pass	57
	No Award	*
Postgraduate Research	Pass	33
	No Award	*
Total		700

* Numbers in these fields were too low to report on and were thus removed in order not to reveal the identity of individuals

COMMITTEE

DURHAM CASTLE SOCIETY

(as at March 2025)

Chair: Kevin Hawes (Kevin@Nightingale.Farm.co.uk)
President: Prof. Wendy Powers (wendy.powers@durham.ac.uk)

Ex-Officio Members

Senior Student in Residence (Voting Member): Shoaib Islam
 (castle.seniorstudent@durham.ac.uk)
President of the Middle Common Room (VM): Rhianna-May Duffy
 (president.castlemcr@durham.ac.uk)
President of the Senior Common Room (VM): Vacant
Alumni and Development Manager: Julia Bonner
 (Julia.bonner@durham.ac.uk)

Elected Members: (VM) Four Officers (elected annually)

Secretary (VM): Mr Charlie McKeever (Co-opted)
 (charliemckeever@outlook.com)
Treasurer (VM): Mr. Martin E. Gunson, FCA, FRSA
 (accountant@martingunson.co.uk)
Editor of Castellum (VM): Mr. Alex J. Nelson, FCILT, FRGS.
 (alexnelson@dunelm.org.uk)

Six Members elected for three years (VM)

Five vacancies arise at the 2024 AGM
 2024 Clare Saunders (2021–2024)
 2024 Jessica Oglivy-Stewart (2021–2024) (jessica@verdantfoundation.com)
 2025 Richard Ellery (2016–2019) (rjcellery@hotmail.com)
 2025 Christopher W. Silberberg (2018–2019)
 (silberscw@hotmail.co.uk)

The following were co-opted in 2024

Alec Blissett (2001); Denis Antor (2023); Isabella Hanger (2023 MCR); Piers Baker (2017); Paul Everson (1988); Mark Pinner (1998); Chiara Di Battista (2023), Nick Butt (1981).

Society Representative on College Advisory Board and Society Representative on the University College Durham Trust

Mr. Alex J. Nelson, FCILT, FRGS (alexnelson@dunelm.org.uk)

Front cover credit: Castle Spaceflight Society



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