

Castellum

JCR Sports and
Societies Special



No.76
2023/24

THE MAGAZINE OF THE DURHAM CASTLE SOCIETY

COMMITTEE

DURHAM CASTLE SOCIETY

(as at March 2024)

Chair: Kevin Hawes (Kevin@Nightingale.Farm.co.uk)

President: Prof. Wendy Powers (wendy.powers@durham.ac.uk)

Ex-Officio Members

Senior Student in Residence (VM): Ananya Nair

(castle.seniorstudent@durham.ac.uk)

President of the Middle Common Room (VM): George Vranceanu

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President of the Senior Common Room (VM):

Dr Alasdair Anderson (dralasdairanderson@gmail.com)

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

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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)

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: Graeme Peacock

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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



It was a casual conversation with Robert Almqvist, Vice Senior Student, after the laying of the Remembrance Sunday wreaths, that has led to the weighty tome you hold in your hands (or on your screen, somewhat less heavy). I was representing the SCR, and Robert the JCR and we were discussing the contributions from the various clubs and societies. That conversation, and a meeting in the Lower Tunstall Gallery in early January, led to 55 pages of reports, the most ever, appearing in the green-edged pages. I hope it gives the impression of a student body involved in all sorts of activities, and it is certainly the case that the College as a whole is firing on all cylinders. Castellum 76 weighs in at 132 pages, or 61.7MB.

In the early years of my editorship, I had to write or even ghost-write some of the pages myself. For the first time, it's only the Jottings which I have to write personally, and the job is more about editing the writing of others. I have been greatly helped this year by the willingness of Oliver Lendrum helping to read and mark up the text for the "Editorial Conference" on 29th February when he and I, together with Kathrine Bertram, our Alumni Officer, see the pages on a large screen at Curious12 in Bishop Auckland and amend the copy where appropriate. Much of our debate revolves around apostrophes and capitalisation, where we try to be consistent in the treatment of multiple writers.

Oliver has also conducted an interview with Lynne Robinson, former housekeeper, and is even offering to do more. I suspect next year's subject will, by popular acclaim, be John Atkin, a.k.a. John the Maid, who has been recovering in hospital and a care home in Chester-le-Street from a nasty leg ulcer. I visited him in January, but I hope Oliver will be able to interview him properly for Castellum.

I am looking forward to working with Charlie McKeever, locally resident in the north east, as he has volunteered to take over from Tim Bratton as Secretary. Tim has reluctantly resigned owing to pressure of work, and Charlie, who completed many more years in the Castle than is normal, has been co-opted as Secretary. We also have plenty of new blood applying to join the Committee at the April reunion which is all to the good.

I can now take a few days breather whilst the magazine is away for printing, before Christopher Silberberg and I put our minds to setting the quiz for the reunion. There are over 175 registered for the Reunion Dinner on Saturday 13th April. In fact, accommodation was so much over-subscribed that the Chairman, Kevin Hawes, is staying in the Hotel Indigo, and I am in the City Hotel! Reminder to self to book early next year – the date is clearly shown on this page.

Alex Nelson
March 2024

2025 Reunion Dinner

Durham Saturday 12th April 2025

Alongside Durham Castle Society Reunion
11th to 13th April 2025

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

The Editor acknowledges that his former email address, buropfield@yahoo.co.uk, was quite convenient when he lived in Burnopfield, less so now he lives in Chester-le-Street. He has therefore obtained a new dunelm.org.uk address from the University Alumni Office, which is available to all members of the Society

Contributions for Castellum 77 please by January 31st, 2025

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME



For those of us who regularly attend Castle Society reunions, September 2023 came and went without our annual pilgrimage back to Durham. Major building work to protect the Norman Chapel and to restore the North Terrace meant that the college could not accommodate us. Rather than wait until September 2024 we are experimenting with a return to a reunion during the Easter break, in April.

We look forward to seeing these projects completed and the additional space able to be used.

It was good to have a substantial gathering of Castle alumni in June at an event hosted at the Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall. This was the first Castle get together for some of the attendees, and I hope it will encourage them to keep in contact with the college and their peers and to take part in future events. If you have a potential venue for a regional event, please let us know.

The Castle Theatre Company took *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on a tour of the UK and the USA, and I was impressed to see their lively and entertaining performance on a summer's evening as part of the Tunbridge Wells Fringe Festival.

During my time in Durham, the numbers studying postgraduate or masters courses was tiny, but as numbers have increased, the Middle Common Room has gone from strength to strength, using the Maurice Tucker room as their base. Several active members of the MCR have resurrected the Thorp Club as a means of maintaining their links with Castle, with

their own communications and events under the overall umbrella of the Castle Society. The Society is keen to support any initiative that enables alumni to keep in contact, in addition to the annual reunion.

For some years the Trust has funded the employment of an Alumni Development Manager to work as part of the management team at college. Julia Bonner is currently on maternity leave after the birth of her daughter – many congratulations Julia and Danny. Katie Bertram has been doing an excellent job of holding the fort in Julia's absence, and has taken the lead on organising the reunion.

Members of the Castle Society Committee have had several discussions recently about how we engage with those currently studying at Castle, how we build communities and provide support networks as people leave and move into the world of work or academic careers, how we communicate with our members, how we fund ourselves, and how we provide financial support to the JCR, the MCR and work with our charity, the University College Durham Trust. We are aware that despite the number of alumni increasing each year, only a small percentage attend our reunions and other events. At our AGM this year we hope to gather ideas and suggestions, to see if there are additional things we should be trying to do. Anyone who prefers to make written suggestions can send them to Katie at Castle.Alumni@durham.ac.uk.

We will be trying once again to run our AGM as a hybrid meeting, so that anyone unable to attend in person can dial in and participate. Please email Katie for a link.

Although I am still working I've



been reading recently about the concept of a “glidepath to retirement”. This prompted a bit of thinking about the things I still want to achieve while I am able to. So this summer I am spending a month driving a classic car across Africa with my daughter as a team in The Africa Rally. You



can follow our progress on Facebook by searching for “Amazon Across Africa”. I also decided that the time was right to make a donation to the Trust, particularly to support the hardship funds provided to today’s students who, unlike my generation, don’t enjoy the luxury of a full grant, and may have to take on a demand-

ing part time job alongside their academic work to make ends meet. If you feel that you might be able to make a donation to support a capital project, a scholarship, or support the college in other ways, you don’t have to wait until you are dead! A donation through the Trust enables Gift Aid to be reclaimed if you are a tax payer.

I’d like to close with a special “thank you” to all those who get involved on a voluntary basis to support the Society, the Trust and the College. As well as those who have been involved for many years, we have had many new people come forward, and it’s clear that there’s a wealth of talent we can draw on.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the forthcoming reunion.

Floreat Castellum!

Kevin Hawes

(University College 1977–1980)

There are no Minutes of the AGM as this was last held on 10th September 2022 and reported in Castellum 75.

PRINCIPAL’S LETTER



Greetings Castle alumni

It’s been another whirlwind year here in Durham for University College. Our student leaders and their peers have been busily planning and facilitating events for the community, our office staff have remained focused on student enrichment and wellbeing, and our operations teams have supported all of us by ensuring things run smoothly and to plan

(most of the time). Throughout this edition of the Castellum you’ll read about the myriad ways today’s students engage in our learning community - some familiar and some new. I imagine you’ll feel as proud to learn about their creativity, service to others, and commitment to Castle traditions.

Among the many points of pride, I hope you’ll notice the impressive community development offer by the MCR executive team. The postgraduate population here at Castle is now 1/3 of our college, and the student leaders of the last several years have worked diligently to ensure a robust and engaging programme of social, wellbeing, and academic activities for their peers. I’m also pleased to report that our JCR and MCR student leaders have partnered well on several events and our Castle Alumni Society has made a specific commitment to better including postgraduate alumni in their offer as well. While today’s college community may be quite different than in your day, I’m sure we can agree all of us with the Castle experience have a special connection.

Perhaps less apparent in this publication is that we're navigating numerous facilities and infrastructure challenges these days. Our beloved college home is feeling its age and we have a number of spaces closed or seriously impaired. Examples include: the SCR is closed due to structural changes in the ceiling, the Norman Gallery is closed due to structural shifting in the floor, and the Tunstall Chapel organ loft movement has necessitated 16 steel Acrow Props cutting the MCR below in half as they hold the organ loft in place. And, let's not forget we're in the second year of our Norman Chapel conservation project.

I'm delighted to share these and other challenges are being met with patience and grace by our students and staff. Additionally, the University's Estates and Facilities department is partnering well with us to identify, plan and facilitate repairs and preventative maintenance. We're also in the midst of a full condition survey and the development of a Heritage Management Plan, which will help us better care for the Castle and continue to provide a transformational co-curricular student experience. Not to worry, our alumni-sponsored Fellows' Garden project is a vital aspect of the plan for Durham Castle. This exciting student enrichment and well-being space will enhance the student experience at University College for generations to come.

Most importantly, please know how appreciative we are for the countless ways Castle alumni stay connected with and involved in the life of the College. Whether as a mentor, a Castle to Careers guest speaker, a donor or simply following us on social media, your engagement truly makes a difference. We look forward to seeing those of you who will be attending the upcoming Reunion and wish all Castle alumni a wonderful year ahead.

Floreat Castellum!

Professor Wendy Powers, PhD

Principal & Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor

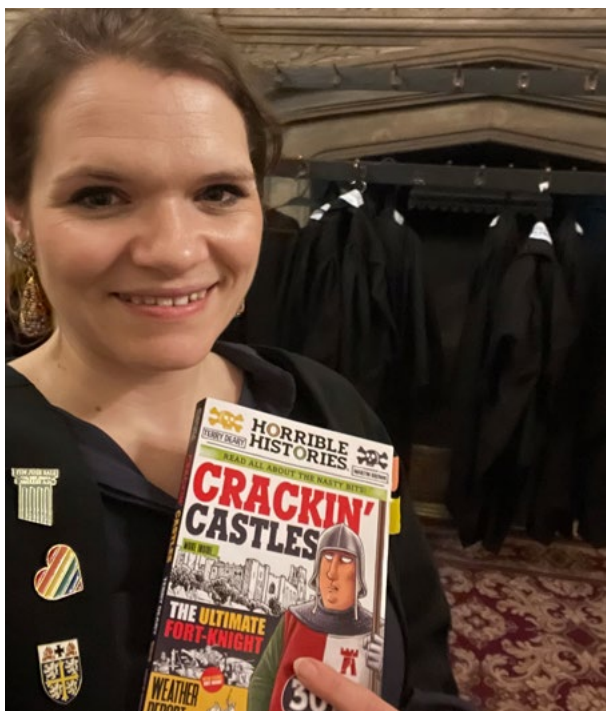
wendy.powers@durham.ac.uk



Refreshers' breakfast with Wendy

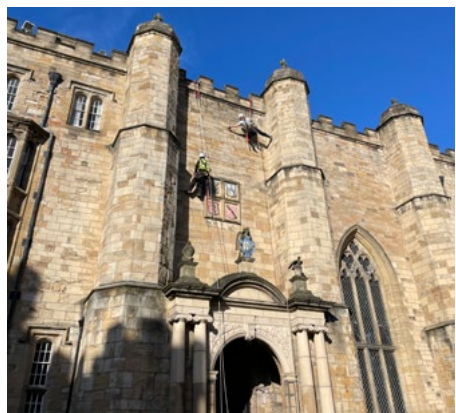
NOTES FROM THE VICE-PRINCIPAL

It has been a year filled with events, opportunities and ways to connect across our community. We've even featured on the latest Horrible Histories instalment, 'Crackin' Castles'. Here's a few snippets from behind the scenes at Castle:



Abseiling with a view:

Work continues to care for our heritage site with stonemasons deshaling the courtyard walls to remove loose or friable stone which was in danger of falling away from the structure. There were multiple volunteers for having a go at this abseiling experience but we left the works to the experts.



Open days:

We continue to be a popular destination on the University's many open days. At each one – in March, June, September and February in the last 12 months – we welcome many hundreds of applicants, offer-holders and their supporters through the gates of Castle. Our student representatives do a magnificent job to give an insight into student life at University College.



Celebrating our staff teams:

Our staff teams across the Castle work tirelessly to support students, events and the wider Castle community. It means a lot when staff are recognised for this, such as our College Operations Team Leader Dan, who was highly commended at the Operations Staff Awards for work behind the scenes.





Matriculation:

Officially joining the University is an event to remember and this year was no exception. Here's a shot from behind the scenes, as Wendy and common room leaders from the JCR and MCR welcomed our new Castle undergraduates and postgraduates.

Our Chapel community:

Our Chaplain and Solway Fellow, Rev'd Dr Stephanie Burette, has done so much publicly and behind the scenes to support and encourage our chapel community especially during and after the pandemic. We wish her all the best as she moves on to a new role. We will welcome Rev'd Dr Sam Hole to Castle in Easter term 2024.

Dr Ellen Crabtree
Vice-Principal



FROM THE CHAPLAIN

As I am writing this, I just locked the door (temporary due to the ongoing works) of the Tunstall Chapel for the last time.

The Chapel Card is printed. The full schedule is on the board in the ante-chapel. Candle sticks have been cleaned, the Vestry all reorganised.

We are still in December. The Castle is closed.

I leave with a sense of peace, knowing that everything is in good hands and that the robust and dedicated team of eight students who will be coordinating activities in the Chapel until the new Chaplain arrives is simply brilliant, reliable, highly skilled, and loves the Chapel.

Soon the new Chaplain will be announced and a sense of joyous anticipation will grow, before a new chapter begins.

It has been an immense privilege and an honour to serve the University College community as their Chaplain and Solway Fellow for three years. Time has flown by. Yet, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it feels like it was many more years ago that I joined the community.

I still remember the first day I stepped in the Tunstall Chapel: I discovered a place abandoned in haste after everyone had been asked to stay at home – the first lockdown. Music was piled up at the back of the Chapel. The list of services from March 2020 was still hanging on the board. And a note: ‘We regret that the Chapel is now closed until further notice’. There was sadness in the air. Loneliness. Emptiness. It was cold. And dark. It was overwhelming and my first thought was: where do I start to take care of this place and bring life back into it?

Three years later, I am immensely grateful and thrilled to see such a vibrant community of students participating so regularly, and hear such an impressive quality of music performed by our Chapel choir under the very fine direction of Thomas (Tom) Parker.

This Chapel is now full of fabulous memories for me, at which I will look back very fondly. I have memories of Peter J. Rhodes welcoming me at the beginning of my ministry in College and being such an extraordinarily supportive presence. To lose him to greater life was one of the saddest moments in my time in College.

I have also memories of the finest music performed by our choir: from the well-known settings of the Canticles by Herbert Howells of course, but also the music so beautifully and thoughtfully selected by Tom for our services of Lessons and Carols. Oh, and one service that will stay with me for a long time, in our beloved Norman Chapel: the exceptional All Souls service in 2022 for which the choir sung the Officium Defunctorum by Tomás Luis de Victoria, during which the Chapel truly became a thin place – God’s presence being palpable.

Over the course of the last three years, we have developed a more diverse music library, have affirmed an inclusive community in which several students either returned to faith or embraced it for the first time. I cannot find words to express the joy it gave me to hear some say that they felt truly safe, supported, and inspired in this place. And I am very grateful to all colleagues who came to preach, engaging the hearts and intellects of all those present.

I am excited of course to begin a new ministry at Oxford, continuing as College Chaplain, a role I see as absolutely crucial for our students and staff, though in a very different context. But I also carry with me fond memories of Castle, of events co-curated with our extraordinarily talented students, of countless conversations with them, about faith or not, who never failed to amaze me, to give me hope for our future, and are undoubtedly going to bring lots of surprises.

Long live the Castle. *Floreat Castellum!*

The Rev’d Dr Stephanie Burette
former Chaplain and Solway Fellow



Hello to everyone and I hope you're enjoying the latest issue of Castellum. As SCR president, I have been working with the committee to plan SCR activities and represent the view of members to college. We have an active SCR committee consisting of me, Francis Pritchard as Secretary and Alex Nelson as alumni representative. Recently we have recruited two new members, Dr David Landes who is helping to plan academic events as academic officer and Simon Stevenson who will work on communications with members.

Many members will already have met me and I have been talking to a number of you at events. It is always encouraging to meet new people who are keen to be part of college and SCR activities and catch up with those I know already. In light of the ongoing renovations, college have made the Octagon Room available for members to use during the daytime and for mentor meetings; we hope to return to full SCR facilities in due course. I am a college mentor myself and I know that college are often keen to hear from members of the who are SCR interested in becoming mentors.

We are planning a number of events over the coming year including formal events in college and informal events including wine and cheese, tastings, informal dinners and lunches which it is hoped will encourage new members and those existing members who prefer engaging outside college. There will be a balance of social and academic events. In early 2024 we have hosted seminars from the department of Theology and Religion on 'Muslim belonging in sport' and a panel discussion on 'Making Music' as part of Durhams Global Week.

We regularly offer opportunities for volunteers to join the SCR committee and are keen to hear from those members who may be able to offer their skills as part of the committee. Any SCR members who are interested in this or who would like to get in touch can contact me via castle.scrpresident@durham.ac.uk.



This year, the MCR has embarked on a transformative journey unlike any before. Spearheaded by a dynamic executive team predominantly composed of Master's students from diverse universities and backgrounds, we've injected an alternative perspective into the MCR. The predominance of Master's students in the executive mirror our membership more closely than ever.

Our tenure as the newly elected executive committee has been distinct and unprecedented. The executive committee, myself included, was elected in October, drawing a high voter turnout. Yet, our journey has been fraught with challenges: a difficult transition from the previous executive committee as most concluded their studies in Durham, severe IT issues with the e-commerce, bank system, email address access, and a void in planning for the Michaelmas term.

Emboldened by the opportunity to foster a transformative era for the MCR, I was eager to steer the executive committee towards a culture of collaboration over hierarchy. Our mission was clear: to overturn the tradition of inconsistent engagement that has shadowed the MCR by reimagining the MCR's event landscape. This has resulted in crafting the most comprehensive events calendar in the history of the MCR within a single term. We aimed to ensure that there was something on offer for every member, spanning the spectrum from academic events and welfare to social gatherings, with enough frequency and variety to ensure everyone could benefit. This strategic overhaul has rejuvenated our community spirit and marked a significant milestone in making the MCR a more inclusive, engaging, and dynamic space for all our members.

Diwali Bollywood Night

Rohit Dharmapuri (International Officer) organised a Bollywood theme party in the Great Hall to celebrate the Diwali festival for the inter-MCR community. Celebrating the festival of lights, the night brought together nearly 120 members. Guests were immersed in the rich cultural tapestry of India, enjoying traditional music, dance, and an array of delightful festivities. This event was a celebration of unity, diversity, and the joyous spirit of Diwali.



Therapy Dogs Event

In a much-appreciated break from academic pressures, Kari Walker, our Welfare Officer, hosted a puppy therapy session in the Undercroft, offering a unique opportunity for members to unwind. The event attracted nearly 50 MCR and JCR members. The positive reception and requests for similar future events underscore the significant impact of this relaxing and joyful experience on our community's well-being.

Port and Cheese Night

Alicia Twisselmann, the Social Chair, re-introduced wine and cheese events post-formal dinners, facilitating a relaxed setting for members to continue socialising. These gatherings, well-received by attendees, have seamlessly integrated into our event line-up, indicating a positive engagement and establishing themselves as a regular feature following formal occasions.



Lunar New Year Party

With this year being the year of the Dragon, Rohit Dharmapuri (International Officer) and I organised a large-scale event which included a DJ to celebrate the spirit of the Lunar Year in the Great Hall. The event was one of the largest events of this term with a footfall of 170 students.

Dragon Park Clean-Up and Environmental Drive

The Dragon Park Clean-Up and Environmental Drive, led by Wade Bittleston, our Environment and Charities Officer, represents a cornerstone MCR legacy project. This project was initially launched in previous years, and its success is a testament to the solid environmental & charitable foundation we have inherited from previous executive leaders, allowing us to



build upon their remarkable efforts and achievements. This initiative has mobilised the MCR community towards the preservation and enhancement of Dragon Park and its vicinity. Collaborative efforts with the park's owners and the JCR have not only boosted volunteer engagement but also facilitated fundraising for park

projects, marking a significant contribution to our environmental stewardship endeavours.

Steward's Brunch/Feast/Dinner

This year, we've refreshed the Stewards Brunch (Feast) with an exciting and enhanced approach. The recent gathering saw an impressive turnout of 40 members, marking it as one of the most popular Stewards' events yet. This update highlights our dedication to enriching our community's cherished traditions.

90s Rave

Wade Bittleston, our Environment and Charities Officer, has organised an event designed to support charitable causes with part of the proceeds going to Rainforest Trust. With strong initial sign-ups and interest, we anticipate a turnout of 200 participants. This intercollege gathering further aims to broaden social networks and foster new friendships among members.

Holi Hai!

Rohit Dharmapuri, the International Officer, has organised a Holi celebration event featuring an Indian-themed brunch and a traditional colour throw in the Fellows Garden. Anticipated to attract 45 attendees based on initial interest, this event aims to honour the vibrant Hindu festival of colours.

Yoga Session

Kari Walker, our Welfare Officer, has organised a yoga session aimed at promoting well-being among members as we near the conclusion of the Epiphany Term and gear up for the demanding academic examination and dissertation period. This thoughtful initiative offers a much-needed opportunity for members to focus on their mental and physical health. Further sessions will be occurring next term during the Exam period.

The Masquerade Carnival

For the upcoming Easter term, we're excited to unveil plans for an unprecedented addition to our event calendar: the Masquerade Carnival. This initiative represents a bold step forward in our mission to enrich the Castle MCR experience with innovative and captivating events. Unlike anything we've hosted before, this yearly-themed charitable carnival is set to become an exclusive and cherished tradition, offering a grand and memorable experience far beyond the scope of traditional ball events. Our vision for the Masquerade Carnival is to create an immersive celebration that will captivate the MCR community, setting a new standard for excellence and enjoyment.

JCR-MCR Relationship

The relationship between the JCR and MCR is experiencing an unprecedented zenith, which has paved the way for a new era of unity and collaboration within our Castle community. A significant milestone on the horizon is the imminent agreement on the fusion of sports and societies, a visionary initiative that promises to integrate MCR's offerings with those of the JCR. This fusion not only stands as a monumental achievement of my tenure but also sets the stage for encouraging increased participation from next year's cohort in Castle's vibrant sporting and societal activities.

My tenure as President has been marked by a strategic focus on strengthening ties with the JCR, particularly through my professional relationship with the Senior Student of the JCR. This has ushered in a new level of cooperation between the JCR and MCR, transforming our interactions into more collegial and supportive engagements. We've moved beyond the counterproductive competitiveness that once marred the MCR-JCR relationship, fostering a culture of mutual respect and shared goals. A tangible outcome of this enhanced relationship is the establishment of the MCR-JCR-CO Executive Meeting, which convenes once a term to facilitate dialogue and collaborative planning.

Moreover, our collaborative efforts have extended into various domains, notably in welfare and environmental initiatives. By co-organising events and aligning our policies, such as our green policy, we've demonstrated a unified front in promoting well-being and sustainability within our community. High-capacity events like the Wild West and Culture Week, organised by the JCR, and the MCR's contributions with Bollywood Night and the 90s Rave, are prime examples of our successful collaborative efforts, inviting wide participation and fostering a sense of community across both JCR and MCR members.

Newsletter

In our quest to elevate the MCR experience, Chloe Donnelly (Vice-President)

meticulously redesigned our newsletter to captivate and inform, transforming it into a visually pleasing and engaging publication. This strategic overhaul aims not only to enrich our current members' engagement but also to showcase the vibrant and diverse array of events the MCR offers to potential members beyond our immediate community.

Implementing a targeted approach, we introduced a postgraduate-focused newsletter, distributed once per month. This initiative has proven to be a resounding success for multiple reasons. Most notably, it has bolstered our membership numbers since the Michaelmas term and significantly increased participation and awareness.

What Lies Ahead...

Looking ahead to the forthcoming term, we are excited to announce plans for an even more ambitious and comprehensive events calendar. Our vision includes the introduction of new traditions and experiences, such as the Masquerade Carnival, alongside a series of welfare events designed to support our community, especially during the exam period. These will include additional puppy therapy sessions and yoga classes, aimed at providing much-needed relief and promoting mental well-being among our members.

Furthermore, recognising the need for structural reform within the MCR, I am committed to addressing and rectifying the inconsistencies that currently mar our ageing framework. Recognising the previous leadership's success in growing and maturing the MCR community, my intention for the possible future framework is to mirror the needs of the common room's evolved character and enlarged Castle cohort, laying a solid updated foundation for the future generations to come.

Our goal therefore is to ensure that every member finds something in their time with us that resonates with them, thereby enhancing their experience and fostering a sense of belonging. The success of this term's events has underscored the importance of a rich and dynamic calendar in achieving our aspirations for inclusivity and diversity. As we move

forward, we are dedicated to not only maintaining this momentum but also building on it to create an even more vibrant and inclusive MCR. In doing so, we aim to cultivate a culture where inclusivity, diversity, and active participation are not just ideals, but realities that define the essence of our MCR.

Presidents' Remarks

As President, I have been honoured to lead this transformative era, guided by the principles of inclusivity, diversity, and active participation. Our journey thus far has laid a solid foundation for the future, one where every member is empowered to contribute, engage, and thrive. The path we continue to chart is one of continuous improvement, aiming to not only maintain the momentum we've built but to also scale new heights of achievement and community spirit.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to every executive officer of the MCR for their engagement, creativity, and support. Together, we've demonstrated the strength of our community and the boundless potential of what we can achieve when we unite in pursuit of common goals. As we look forward to the future, let us carry forward the lessons learned, the friendships forged, and the successes achieved, confident in the knowledge that the best is yet to come. Here's to continuing our journey with enthusiasm, ambition, and a shared vision for an even more vibrant and inclusive MCR.

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Wendy, Ellen, Jamie, and the entire College Staff for their unwavering support and dedication.

Floreat Castellum!

George-Eduard Vranceanu
President of the Middle Common Room 2023-2024



SENIOR STUDENT'S REPORT 2023–2024

JCR

Dear Castlemen,

If we haven't met yet, I'm Ananya, currently in my final year reading law.

I hope it will please you to learn that our college community remains bustling with Castle spirit and pride. I assumed my role at June Ball, which now feels like aeons ago. This year has been eventful, to say the least, with increased JCR subscriptions, all JCR meetings achieving quorum, and an exec restructuring motion!

Beginning with Michaelmas, Freshers Week was meticulously planned by the Development Officer, Hannah and Social Chair, Romy; with our Frep team and welfare officers doing an exceptional job welcoming new students. I also attended my first matriculation in the Cathedral this year because, in my first year, we were ushered to a big white tent on the racecourse instead. Post-COVID, our community is not just recovering, but thriving by blending tradition with progressiveness. Our community spirit flourishes from our commitment to upholding the values that make us Castlemen!

This year, we had various events for students from all backgrounds including multiple socials like Wine & Cheese night, a pumpkin carving competition, the Christmas Hound, and the (in)famous pantomime (perhaps the last?).

We still have our incredible formals, quite a lot of them being themed-like our incredible Christmas formals, superb Burns Night (followed by a Ceilidh), the Spring Festival, and Multicultural formal among so many others we are yet to see!

Our Services Manager, Ella has also done an incredible job in getting our JCR room up and running. We have pictures framed and displayed, and finally furniture in the back of the room. If you would like to send us some pictures for either the JCR room or our physical archive, run by

our Archivist, please do email me at castle.seniorstudent@durham.ac.uk

Our Outreach Officer, Olivia ran the Castle Community Action (CCA) Auction with Karis and made an astounding profit of around 5,000 pounds! We've also got our Charity Fashion Show, currently preparing for its performance in March!

Our Welfare Officer, Emmet, and Campaigns Officer, Elinam, and their teams have been incredible, as always, working behind the stage and dedicating so much of their time towards student well-being.

This year, my Vice Senior Student and Treasurer have worked very hard not only in their roles but also to ensure that various roles and committees are functioning smoothly. I believe we are nicknamed 'The Terrible Trio', which makes me chuckle quite a bit.

Zak has worked hard to bring back the Ball Fund again while keeping in mind the changes to the Durham Grant this year. Rob has also contributed tirelessly, focusing on alumni relations, his newsletter, and special projects for the college. I am grateful to have a team of people I can rely on, both of whom also ran for Senior Student the year before me!

Our Ball Chair, Sebastian, has gone above and beyond in creating and organising the best balls, if I may be partial, that this university has seen this year. He's also been a very reassuring figure on my Exec, and I cannot be more grateful for his guidance since Freshers' Week. I cannot wait to see what he and Ball Comm have planned for June Ball this year.

We started Epiphany with a vote by the Executive Committee to restructure the Exec and call for a referendum to remove two roles from the executive team. The first is that of the Development Officer and the second is that of the Union and Societies' Officer (USO). We believed that the removal of these roles would not only decentralise the Executive Committee, but also ensure that JCR resources were used wisely. The JCR voted for the removal of the Development Officer and chose to keep the role of USO. Democracy truly is a beautiful thing! While speaking of democracy, we are now in the midst of election season and also have a new JCR Chair. The JCR has taken restructuring to all-new heights!



June Ball Handover, 2023

The University is moving forward with the opening of two new colleges, while relocating the College of St. Hild and St. Bede to Rushford Court. The students have all finally received their marks from the UCU Strike action marking boycott last year, and all finalists have received their marks.

We have had complaints from students in college and all over the University about the catering system changes this year. The other presidents and I have been in conversation with the University to address this. From discussing composition fees to finding a viable way for college allocation for freshers, Prescom and Presforum have been engaged in many interesting conversations. The University's strategic direction can be somewhat frustrating, as it appears to prioritise profit over enhancing the student experience. As an international student, observing how we are perceived primarily as a means to increase revenue, rather than as individuals seeking to immerse ourselves in a new culture and pursue academic pursuits, is indeed disheartening. I hope we as a college hold our ground and protect our students from the impact of whatever may happen on a university level. All I can hope for as I am close to the end of my tenure is to hope and have faith.

Working alongside College Office with Wendy, Ellen, Sukanya, David to navigate the developments within the University has been invaluable. I'd like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude to them and their team for their unwavering support throughout this year. Their insights and support have been truly appreciated, and I am grateful for the perspective they bring to our discussions be it personal development, the JCR or the wider University.

Adding some levity to this solemn report, we have thrived this year in sports. I believe the Shakespeare is still very much frequented, as are a lot of sporting activities that may involve running and a bit of drinking. We are also still frequented by Charlie McKeever quite often, so perhaps Castle's memory is not of only three years, but however many years Charlie has been here.

I have become a woman of few words ever since I embarked on my

legal studies, which is why I must ask you to forgive me as I wrap this up.

When I initially ran for the position of Senior Student, I was often asked about the legacy I hoped to leave behind. Little did I know that crisis and people management would become integral parts of that legacy. Despite the challenges, developing these skills has been incredibly rewarding. When I answered this question, I simply wanted to make Castle better than I had found it.

Now, with a new Senior Student in place and the commencement of our extensive handover period, I'll gradually transition into retirement. This will afford me the opportunity to focus on my passion projects for this community, which has become my home since I first walked through its gates on September 14th, 2021. At this point in time, I am personally excited about launching a High-Altitude Balloon with the Castle Bear attached into space. If all goes well, we will be the first Durham college to reach near space!

My Vice Senior Student, a Mr. Robert Almqvist, wisely told me towards the end of the first term that if I were to go away for the weekend on holiday, there was a terribly low chance of the Castle burning. And even if it did, there are people to take care of it. To the next Senior Student, I hope you remember this, and I wish for you and Castle to keep thriving because, after all, Castle Boys are indeed very happy!

Ananya Nair (Prabhullan)



CASTLE BADMINTON



Castle Badminton 2022/23

Castle Badminton is one of the college's most successful sport societies. In the 2022/2023 academic year, both the Women's As team and the Mixed As team won the Premiership for their respective leagues, culminating in an amazing turn-out in the summer's Dinner of Champions. Moreover, the badminton teams put forward for Castle-Hatfield Day took an amazing win against Hatfield's near-unbeatable team, and we were then able to celebrate ours and Castle's overall win at a fabulous formal in Hatfield College. Our society's wins were recognised at the Colours Formal and some of our players even received Colours or other awards for their commitment to the club. Following on from last year's many successes, Castle Badminton has continued to put forward four strong teams, and the Women's As team is currently dominating the Women's Premiership League, with a good chance of another trophy in our future.



Castle Hatfield day trophy

Lucy Clennell

Women's Captain (2022-23 and 2023-24) and President (2023-24)

BALL COMMITTEE REPORT

This year, I've had the privilege of leading the University College Ball Committee in the organisation of Ladies' Night, with Halfway Hall and the June Ball coming up later this year. The Ball Committee comprises almost 50 people, who work on a variety of tasks, ranging from our creative department, to admin, publicity, and graphics. Our first ball, Ladies' Night, was held on the 24th of November with the theme "Atlantis". The Castle was transformed into the lost underwater city of Atlantis, and we provided a range of music, entertainment and food for our guests to enjoy.

The organisation of balls has become significantly more difficult over recent years, and especially this year. Due to renovation works beginning this year, areas familiar to many of you from past June Balls are now off limits - this includes the Senate suite and Norman Gallery. Due to college restrictions, we've been compelled to reduce our capacity to 500 guests, meaning that for the June Ball, it is no longer economical for guests to dine on Palace Green. New guidance from the University means that we are no longer allowed to have any noise 10db above the residual noise level after 11pm, necessitating the removal of our famous outdoor stage and a new approach to entertainment. The centralisation of university catering over the last few years has meant that we can be less flexible in the meal that we offer our dining guests - for example, all the desserts available in Castle are now provided by an external company and heated up, instead of being made in-house.

The cost-of-living crisis has also put increased pressure on balls as affordable entertainment for students. We've attempted this year to keep prices as low for students as possible, and absorb costs where possible. Part of our strategy this year has been to secure more sponsorship for balls, enabling us to offer better value for money for students. I've been keen to work with our alumni network on this to create a mutually beneficial partnership, which would offer significant marketing opportunities. Attempts to do this through College haven't been successful, so please do get in touch if this is something you'd be interested in.



With Halfway Hall and the June Ball still to come, we hope to have another successful year and provide amazing balls for the student body. Founded in 1889, the storied history of the June Ball continues, and we look forward to celebrating its 135th anniversary this year.

Sebastian Braw-Smith
University College JCR Ball Chair
thejuneball.co.uk

CASTLE CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA

Previously at Castle, the majority of our music stands were unfortunately either broken or foldable (which generally means 'floppy') which isn't ideal when working with lots of music. We had the foldable ones due to the lack of space, however, the Durham Castle Society grant has allowed the society to invest in reliable stands which are solid and can be taken apart. They also come with a bag so nothing is lost, ensuring easy storage.

Further, this storage is perfect for CCO's new ensembles The Castellum Quartet and The Floreat Flutes (our string and flute quartets). They are performing regularly this term including the History Ball, a Castle formal, Castle Charity Fashion Show, Hatfield's 'Lion in Winter' and more. These new stands (and stand lights) mean they can easily bring these along in a way that isn't damaging to the stands and is easy for them. We were able to buy 9 with the funds which has made a significant impact for CCO orchestra to use too. They also create a more uniform look when the orchestra is performing.

While the funds for stands and stand lights were intended for CCO, Castle music share equipment so it is equally helpful for The Fellows and Castle Big Band. This term we also have two new music societies so these will be very beneficial for these groups.

Bella Rosington



CASTLE'S NEWEST SOCIETY - CHESS CLUB

In the heart of University College Durham, a vibrant new society has emerged, capturing the enthusiasm of chess fans across all year groups, and even drawing players from different colleges. Castle Chess Club, founded last academic year, in 2023, has become a thriving hub for strategic minds and social camaraderie. The society currently consists of a president (Xander) and two other executive members consisting of a social secretary (Ellena Saini) and media manager (Shoaib Islam) to help communicate key event details and photo highlights from tournaments.

The club's journey began its official ratification in the summer term JCR meeting. Since then, Castle Chess Club has flourished, holding its sessions in the iconic Great Hall of the Castle every Wednesday from 4-5 pm. The love for the game often extends the scheduled time as players immerse themselves in thrilling battles of wit and strategy.

What sets Castle Chess Club apart is its inclusivity, welcoming players of all experience levels. Whether you're a seasoned master of the





game or just learning the basics, there's a place for everyone at the chessboard. This diversity fosters a supportive and collaborative environment, where members learn from each other and forge lasting friendships.

The initial spark for Castle Chess Club came from a generous £100 funding from the JCR, enabling the acquisition of ten chess boards. However, the growing popularity of the club suggests a need for more resources.

The society is working in partnership with CCFS this year to help fundraise for the CCFS charity Olivia Inspires. This innovative collaboration not only showcases the diversity of student interests but also reinforces the importance of community support within the university.

Beyond the chessboard, Castle Chess Club is not just about moves and strategies; it's about creating memorable experiences. The club's socials, held once a term, add a touch of excitement to campus life. The most recent gathering, themed "Pawn Star," was a testament to the club's creative spirit and ability to infuse fun into their activities.

Looking towards the future, Castle Chess Club has ambitious plans. The collaboration with CCFS is just the beginning. The club is gearing up for a sporting event that promises to be legendary—the Castle Hatfield rivalry in the summer term with this year being the first-time chess has been added. This anticipated clash between colleges is expected to draw attention not only from chess enthusiasts but the entire student body. We also have plans to introduce our second annual social: "The kings and queens social".

Castle Chess Club is not merely a place to play chess; it's a community that celebrates diversity, camaraderie, and the love for the game. With its roots firmly planted in the Castle's Great Hall, this society is destined to become an integral part of university life, fostering strategic thinking, meaningful connections, and a shared passion for chess.

Xander Spencer-Jones

COLLEGE DRESSES SCHEME



I take immense pride in running the Castle Dresses scheme in 2023/24. This year we have gathered an impressive collection of over 200 dresses, ranging from sizes 4-24 and featuring a diverse array of styles and colours. I consider myself very lucky to be a part of a JCR that values and encourages such initiatives. We have a dedicated committee of wonderful girls who always make everyone feel incredible when trying on our dresses, creating a warm and supportive environment. The core values of sustainability and body positivity run clearly through this scheme and are at the heart of what we do. In our ongoing commitment to inclusivity, we are excited to announce plans to expand to other colleges this year. It is completely free of charge for JCR members to take out a dress and this is a key part of making balls and formals a bit more accessible. Our goal is to ensure that as many people as possible can benefit from the positive and empowering experience that the Castle Dresses scheme has to offer.

You can find our website and check out the dresses we have here: <https://www.castledresses.com/>

**Castle Dresses President,
Mopsy Peel**

CASTLE X HATFIELD DAY 2023

What do we think of Hatfield???

As you have likely discovered by now, the Castle sports, music and societies scene came back with a vengeance following the gloomy Covid pandemic days where most athletes and musicians had forgotten how it felt to win and perform again. But the last academic year, 2022-23, saw a truly remarkable performance by all! It was my pleasure to oversee so many talented athletes, musicians and society members performing in existing and new sports and societies.



With various successes across the season, Castle Sports were approaching Castle x Hatfield Day stronger than ever. The Women's & Mixed Badminton as well as the Men's Squash First Teams were at the top of their Premier Leagues; UCRFC had battled and succeeded against their Premier League relegation, the Women's Football Team had completed their first ever Premier



The trophy returns to the Undie!



Robert Jansen-Spence, Saffron Hancock, Matthias Mühlenbrock and Ananya Nair holding the Trophy at the Castle Hatfield Day Formal held at Hatfield.

League season and the Castle Men's Netball team had played their first friendly against Mary's!

Castle's music scene saw no different. Romy Barrett the Music Rep had formed a new House Band, 'The Fellows', that had revived the renowned 'Mundie in the Undie', University College Big Band had returned their 'Christmas Carnage' concert and Castle Choir and Orchestra put on a stellar concert to commemorate 950 years of Castle...and what better way to bring these all together than the prospect of beating Hatfield!!



Senior Student celebrating with UCWAFB

As the first weekend back after the Easter holidays approached, Hatfield's Kinky Jeff and the Swingers joined with University College Big Band and The Fellows in the Great Hall, accompanying the writing of dissertations by many stressed finalists up on Minstrels. Suddenly the Castle x Hatfield Day Opening Ceremony was set. The Keep was lit up Red and Blue and students were repping Team Castle bracelets and t-shirts – reports inform that even a Kinky Jeff musician was spotted wearing some...



Castle Freshers at the Opening Ceremony



Romy Barratt (Castle Music Rep) and Robbie Jansen (President of Kinky Jeff and the Swingers) at the Castle Hatfield Day Opening Ceremony.



UCBC Novice Boat claiming victory for Castle.

The varsity day saw a tussle between the two rival colleges. Setting us off with a fantastic 9am start was the Castle Badminton teams taking a clean sheet across all categories alongside the convincing wins from Castle Volleyball, Women's Football as well as Men's & Women's Squash. The Hatfield women's netball team held a strong performance taking a point from us, but the Castle Mixed Netball team retaliated with vigor with a point back to Castle. With only 3 games forfeited throughout the day, Castle x Hatfield Day 2023 saw the largest turn-out of the last three years. The morning saw a consistent and strong performance by Castle, but the afternoon saw a plethora of points awarded to Hatfield specifically for Men's Basketball, Women's & Mixed Tennis Double's, making it only a tight 8-7 to Castle. However, this didn't stop our Castle Tennis Men's Double who refused to give up theirs, allowing Castle to widen the gap at 9-7.

To finish the day were the three boat races - a short stretch between the UCBC boathouse and the SU bridge. With two solid performances by Hatfield's Men and Women's boats, suddenly Castle's hopes of claiming victory crumbled down like the Norman Gallery walls, losing our two-point lead and drawing 9-all. All was down to the Novice Boats, our boat being all beginners and predominantly Freshers! With support from spectators on the SU bridge and encouragement by our Novice Captains, Isabella Harris and Aidan Hague, our Novice Boat fiercely strutted down the River Wear in the style, ahead of Hatfield, that could only rival a beautiful Durham Swan followed by one of its Three Cygnets...and before we knew it, the Keep was lit Red as we claimed victory over the notorious Hatfield once more!

**Saffron Hancock,
JCR Union and Societies Officer 2022-23.**

CASTLE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Greetings readers of Castellum!

Did you know that Castle's first Master, Charles Thorp, was not only an abolitionist, educational reformer, and philanthropist, but also a pioneering environmentalist?

Thorp's acquisition of the tenancy of the Farne Islands in the 1840s, with the primary purpose of protecting sea bird populations, was an enlightened act of wildlife conservation. It is even more remarkable considering that such ideas were yet to have been established within the society of the day.

We, as the Castle Environment Committee, are the legacy of these actions, and proudly continue Thorp's established traditions of positive environmental action. This especially pertinent in the face of global threats which Thorp could never have foreseen in the 1840s.

A relatively new Outreach Committee, hampered by the impacts of COVID-19, the Environment Committee is still finding its feet as a force for



change; but this year we have already made great strides, taking actions which will make Castle sustainable for generations of students to come.

So far this year we have run several large events, both within college and with other societies across the University. This has included the Wilder Britain forum, a series of talks from expert speakers which focused on threats to biodiversity, as well as potential solutions to the ecological crises that we are now facing globally. We also took part in a joint social event with all of the other colleges' environment committees back in Michaelmas, which was a fantastic opportunity to make connections with a large group of like-minded students. As well as this, we recently helped organise and run a University-wide Sustainable Societies Fair alongside Climate Society and Durham University Greenspace, which was very well attended.

In addition to this, we have begun working with both the MCR and local community groups in order to integrate our actions on a larger scale into the wider Durham community. One of these initiatives has been volunteering efforts to regenerate the Dragon Park community green space alongside Castle MCR's Charity and Environment Officer, which will hopefully continue as a long-term joint project. We have also supported local community groups at several events that they have held this year, such as the Climate Forum led by Durham County Council in November.

On top of events and volunteering, we have some longer term projects. At the start of the year we decided to regenerate Castle's allotment, which had been suffering from neglect for several years. Situated just beyond Fellows' Garden, behind the Palace Green Library, we have several raised beds from which we will soon be taking our first harvest of spring crops. It has been wonderful to see the enthusiasm from a dedicated group of individuals who, come rain or shine, have been there to help us with this project. We have been trialling a 'no dig' policy on one of our beds as part of an experiment with more sustainable methods of agriculture. In the future we'd love to develop this further, with more ambitious planting and fully functioning composting facilities.



Another ongoing project is the Environment and Sustainability Policy. This is a document which we have drawn-up in order to ensure the long term sustainability of Castle JCR going forwards. It covers everything from the role of the Environment Officer within college, to commitments from the JCR towards reducing waste from events and balls. We hope that this document will lay a solid foundation for future Committees to build upon, whilst encouraging positive changes in the JCR's environmental impact.

Coming up we have the COP28 Debrief, where we will hear from the University's observers at the recent Conference Of the Parties in Dubai. Over 200 places have already been reserved for this event, making it our largest of the year so far. This will be held in the Great Hall in February, and will likely prove to be an enlightening evening. There is also the cross-college Earth Day Festival taking place in March at Hild-Bede College, which we have been helping to organise with several different societies and Durham University Greenspace. This should be a fun packed day of talks, volunteering activities, market stalls, and quizzes, and a great celebration of all the work everyone has put in to making Durham University more sustainable. Our final big event of the year will be Green Week, taking place in Easter Term and consisting of another series of talks at Castle followed by our themed Green Formal. This will be a great way to end the year, and a chance to thank everyone at Castle and beyond for all the help and support they have given us across 2023-24.



The Environment Committee is always looking for new ideas and ways to advance sustainable goals at Castle. Our hope is to not only place University College on a firm environmental footing, but also to arm the next generation of graduates with the necessary tools to face an uncertain future. We would gladly welcome any input from past Castle men and women; whether that's advice on policy writing and implementation, or their participation as a speaker at a future event, everyone is welcome!

Across this year, the Environment Committee has gone from strength to strength. This has been mirrored by the growth of a large scale

environment movement across the University, a movement of which we are proud to play a part. We have an ambitious view for what a more sustainable future could look like, but the only way we can achieve this is by working together. We hope that many of you will support us in these aims. Our actions now will decide the fate of generations of Castle students to come, beyond the confines of University life. As our motto says: *Non Nobis Solum*. Not for ourselves alone.

Henry Morris and Alex Martin

Castle Environment and Sustainability Officer and Deputy

THE FELLOWS (CASTLE HOUSE BAND)

The Fellows is a new music society on the scene of the Castle JCR. It was created last academic year by myself to widen the opportunities available to musicians at castle. A house band is a small group of people (about 6-8) who represent the college by playing at various events and functions around the university. In its first year, the line up consisted of 2 vocalists (George Cass and Jasmine Lee), 2 saxophonists (Romy Barratt and Thomas Hughes), guitar (Joshua Southworth), bass (Athena Odysseos-Suther), keys (Isabella Rossington) and drums (Oscar Gray). We had a very successful first year winning Castle Society of the Year for 2022-3! We had the opportunity to play at events across the university including but not limited to: Maths Society Christmas Dinner; Aidan's Bar Festival; Castle Day; Stephenson College Day; Jazz Society Charity Ball; Engineering Society Ball; Music Durham's Garden Party; Trevelyan College Day; and perhaps our favourite, Hatfield's Lion in Winter. In Castle we had the opportunity to create a new longstanding tradition of a Castle X Hatfield opening ceremony with our good friends University College Big Band and Hatfield's Kinky Jeff and the Swingers. This momentous ceremony saw each band perform a 30 min set followed by

a mass band of over 40 players (including three bassists, three pianists and three drummers!). One of The Fellows' favourite places to perform is in the Undercroft bar where we perform every Monday at the infamous 'Mundie in the Undie'. On occasion, we have a themed Mundie to celebrate events such as Halloween, Christmas and International Women's Week.

This year our line up is made up of two vocalists (Zack Clemitson and Amelia Doherty), tenor saxophone (Romy Barratt), trumpet (Sam Armstrong), guitar (Jakub Pickering), bass (Athena Odysseos-Suther), keys (Isabella Rossington) and drums (Archie Wright). The decision was made to reaudition the band every year to make the opportunity of being in The Fellows as accessible as possible. After a successful run of Mundies in the Undie, The Fellows are looking forwards to a very busy second term. We are once again are performing at Hatfield's Lion in Winter as well as contributing to the fundraising efforts for Durham University Pink Week through performances across the week.

One aspect that makes The Fellows so special is the feeling of family and unity across the band. Through regular performances, rehearsals and socials, the band has really clicked year on year. When setting the music, our Musical Director (Athena) takes into account the preferences of each band member meaning that we have performed a wide variety of styles and genres across the two years. Through our shared love of music and learning new pieces we have now achieved a repertoire of over 100 songs (not including Christmas music!). If we had to pick a favourite song, for 2022/3 it would have to be Johnny B Goode and this year it would be a hard choice between Pink by Lizzo and Treasure by Bruno Mars! I hope that The Fellows will continue to perform at events across the university and grow stronger year upon year, fostering an environment of musicians who perform for the love of music. Each band member has left a profound legacy on The Fellows and not only shapes its repertoire, but the loving, passionate and talented community that it is.

Romy Barratt

ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL CLUB

In honour of his performances for Castle D team this year, we have written a few words about our midfield maestro Hey.

Michael Hey, a determined and talented central midfielder, began his football journey with Castle AFC, a small local club with big dreams. From a young age, Michael exhibited an exceptional understanding of the game, blending finesse and grit on the field. His dedication to football was unwavering, but Michael also harboured a passion for mathematics.

Balancing his love for the beautiful game and his academic pursuits proved to be a challenge, yet Michael embraced it with enthusiasm. While other players might have struggled, Michael thrived on the dual commitment. On weekdays, he would immerse himself in complex mathematical equations, attending lectures and diligently working through problem sets. Come weekends, he would transform into the dynamic midfielder, orchestrating plays on the football pitch for Castle AFC.

Despite the demands on his time, Michael's commitment paid off. His skills on the field caught the attention of talent scouts, and soon he found himself signing a contract with a professional football club. However, as he climbed the ranks of the footballing world, a mysterious figure lurked in the shadows, disrupting the harmony of Castle AFC.

The club's executives found themselves entangled with financial troubles, as payments mysteriously went missing. Rumours circulated about a shadowy individual who had strong ties to the Conservative Party, and Michael couldn't help but wonder about the connection between politics and football.

As Michael continued to excel in both his football career and his studies, he couldn't turn a blind eye to the plight of his first club. With a growing sense of responsibility, he decided to investigate the mysterious figure withholding payments from Castle AFC. Delving into the intricate web of football politics, Michael soon discovered the murky connections between the figure and some influential members of the Conservative Party.

Undeterred, Michael used his intelligence and influence to shine a light on the corruption plaguing his former club. Through interviews, evidence gathering, and a meticulous understanding of the system, he exposed the nefarious activities that had gripped Castle AFC. His efforts not only helped the club regain financial stability but also brought about changes in the football governance system, ensuring transparency and accountability.

In the end, Michael Hey became not just a celebrated central midfielder but also a symbol of integrity in the footballing world. As he continued to excel on the pitch and pursue his mathematics degree, he never forgot the lessons he learned about the intersection of politics and sports. Michael Hey's journey from Castle AFC to the upper echelons of football not only showcased his exceptional talent but also his unwavering commitment to justice in the beautiful game.

It has been another successful year for Castle AFC, with the club still flourishing. We have negotiated our first kit sponsorship in recent memory with nkd bird chicken, and fresher intake remains strong. The year has not been without its challenges, including having all our balls swiped from the Moatside sports cupboard at the beginning of the year, and subsequently being embroiled in a dispute with Castle WAFC, resulting in Rob conducting a 'fact-finding mission.' Nonetheless that has been resolved, and the social side of the club is thriving; we go on tour to Prague in March and Bucky was once more a resounding success, that was to an extent incident free. Below are some mid-season updates for each team as written up by each of the respective captains.

Castle As:

Castle As have seen a mixed bag of results so far this season; some great performances have seen us defeat Trevelyan, Hild and Bede, and Collingwood E. However, after a series of defeats, we find ourselves 4 points from the relegation zone. A strategic early cup exit has allowed us to prioritize all our resources on the league as we now enter the dog days of this relegation battle.

Castle Bs:

The season for the Bs started strongly, improving on the disarray from last season picking up 7 points from our first 5 games. Built on a strong defence and reliable nature of scoring worldies, the B team were in with a chance of promotion; however this form could not be sustained and in the latter half of the season we have picked up just one win from 5. 10 games played, 14 pts, 17 goals scored and 16 conceded.

Castle Cs:**'Ordinary'**

Brexit played as brexit would,
 shoulder to shoulder the Nation stood.
 it's the Lytle things to be brave about,
 on the pitch Speed is of no doubt.
 yet on the side, some weeds to be unDoug,
 oh, Triprod's massive plug!
 'qui Ludo vincit', fighting for the crown,
 yet at the end it all Burns down.
 unSullied soldiers never slow,
 now back home for a cup of Joe.

K.J Maguire

Castle Ds:

2023/24 has been an extraordinary year for the runts of Castle's footballing talent. A year which has seen the Ds win 6 of their 7 games, with the only defeat coming against our bitter top table rivals International Study Centre A. The Ds have really built a strong culture in the club on and off the pitch with some truly spectacular football being played - the highlight of which was midfield stalwart Michael Heys 20 yard screamer of a goal. This has been a really positive year for the Ds getting over 30 players onto the pitch for game time and I hope this will be the season where the Ds realise their promotion dreams.

Tom Locke

UCW AFC - UNIVERSITY COLLEGE WOMEN'S ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB

Once again, UCW AFC has had another successful year. Following last year's Colours Formal, in which UCW AFC won 'Club of the Year', the team has continued to grow. The club is progressively becoming a central part of college life, with membership increasing each year, both for active players and social members. I hope to see women's football continue to flourish, and I am so grateful for the part every member of UCW AFC plays in this.

Our start to the league has been exemplary, remaining unbeaten and having yet to concede a goal! This success is in part, no doubt, due to the generosity of the Durham Castle Society in providing us with funding to improve the quality of the kit we have available. Each member has access to shin pads and socks, as well as the club now owning higher-quality footballs and training equipment. I hope to continue this success as we take on our closest league rivals, Grey, in what promises to be an exciting match that will eventually decide the league.

As a result of our recent successes and growing membership, UCW AFC has decided to start an alumni page, Floreat Castellum Women's Alumni Football Club (FCW AFC). With plans for a reunion at 'Old



Previous UCW AFC kits: one from 2013/14 season (red), then one each from the 2012/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 seasons (in order).



Colours Formal last year when UCWAFc won 'Club of the Year'



7-0 win against St. Chad's and St. John's College

Girls Weekend' already underway, I would like to strongly encourage any UCWAFc alumni to reconnect with the current members. This can be done by joining the FCWAFc Facebook page, or by emailing me at: iona.dixon@durham.ac.uk. I hope to hear from many of you in the future!

For now, I would like to reiterate my gratitude for the generosity of the Durham Castle Society in their support of the club. I do not doubt that UCWAFc will go from strength to strength and remain an integral part of college life, and I look forward to seeing how the club will progress next.

Iona Dixon,
UCWAFc Captain 2023-24

CASTLE MIXED ULTIMATE (FRISBEE)

Last year, the fate of Castle's historically successful Ultimate Frisbee team hung in the balance. The 2022/23 season was one that could generally be considered as a success, only losing one match on field to the eventual winners, Mary's. However, the lofty heights of the previous 4ish years of complete Castle dominance, in which the team did not lose a single match, were not reached. The cracks had started to show, we struggled to field sufficient players for effective training sessions, several matches were played (and won) with only five or six of the required seven players. Furthermore, we were forced to concede a walkover in one match having too few players available.

I should note, of course, that none of this perceived decline was down to our fabulous captain, Darshan Patel, or any of the other exec members. Instead, it is the nature of all remarkable things to have risen and then fall. The British Empire, the Romans, and hula-hooping are excellent examples that anything that is substantial inexorably comes to an end. The point being, to say we have fallen requires us to acknowledge that we have once been great and substantial, and for that I am immensely proud.

Two players remained to see the start of the 2023/24 season. With Bethan Metcalfe continuing Castle Frisbee's proud tradition of being on the DU Frisbee exec (Women's captain), I was happy to take the captaincy. This lack of players represented a substantial challenge, the Freshers' Fair which took place at 9am on the Saturday of Freshers' Week resulted in a predictable low turn-out, giving us a little opportunity to talk and explain the game. Something that is essential for a sport that few have a perception of, and, if they do, the perception tends to be negative or confused.

In fact, our lack of players was such an issue that there were talks of the creation of a new team, "Chatfield" or "Hastle," which would have been a combination of the Castle and Hatfield teams, both struggling



for players. As a second generation Castleman this felt very wrong and short-termist. Despite it going as far as “*Chatfield*” being included in the initial schedule for college games, I appealed this decision and Castle Mixed Ultimate remains its own entity.

Despite this we have cultivated a small yet dedicated group of freshers and some returners to the tune of around thirteen people. This includes an American postgraduate from Ustinov College who plays for the University’s first team. He was enticed to play for Castle after playing a frisbee tournament with Bethan and me last year and discovering the unbeatable Castle spirit. Our ability to train has been much hampered by a new policy by Team Durham to keep the grass pitches in good condition, which has resulted in training sessions being cancelled by what might constitute decent weather here in Durham. Team Durham only allowed us to conduct four from thirteen potential sessions.

As of now we have played and lost three matches with somewhat uneven scorelines. It is true that we will likely be demoted from the premiership this year. However, division one is a great place for Castle to continue its rise as a new generation of players joins the fray. There are plenty of keen freshers that will be vying for Exec positions next year and I believe that the club will healthily continue for years.

Our socials have unfortunately continued in lacklustre form.

The joint table tennis, frisbee, and volleyball social ended up with a fresher attendance of one. With a failure by the Club’s captain to successfully drink a pint out of a (clean) frisbee, and an unplanned absence of our social sec, perhaps it was one to miss. In future it might be a clever idea for me to plan a social on a day that is not Monday!

In the future we look forward to playing Hatfield in Hatfield-Castle Day, the competition invigorated by the annoyance of the Hatfielders’ who were jilted with my reconsideration of the “*Chatfield*” idea and as a result have spent this season mostly unable to put up full teams in matches. Furthermore, we look again to reunite current and former Castlemen by partaking in the “*Jestival*” tournament this summer, using our generous Castle Society funding to front the majority of the entry costs.

Castle Mixed Ultimate has and will continue to be an open and friendly Club. As one of the few sports which allows men and women to play alongside each other, it holds a special place in the hearts of many. It has been a pleasure to have captained the Club over this tumultuous period, and I am confident the future is bright. *Floreat Castellum.*

George Smith
Castle Mixed Ultimate Captain

CASTLE COMMUNITY ACTION HOMELESSNESS DIVISION

Volunteering in the Homelessness Division has been a huge success throughout the Michaelmas term! Our dedicated volunteers have been putting in two-hour shifts at Sanctuary 21 each week, serving food and drinks to vulnerable guests and paying customers, while ensuring they’re friendly faces in a safe space. The division played a pivotal role during the busy weekends of Lumiere and Durham’s Christmas markets, helping Sanctuary 21 raise an impressive £2500 over the two weekends.



Lumiere volunteering 2023



Xmas markets 2023

One of the division's major achievements this term was the execution of the annual shelter pack initiative. Despite multiple failed delivery attempts as apparently the Castle is really difficult to find, our team finally delivered twenty sleeping bags, rucksacks and an assortment of warm clothes to Sanctuary 21. This donation is a real help in protecting the most vulnerable individuals during the cold winter months. It wouldn't have been possible without the generous budget from outreach, as well as the dedication of our newly formed committee, including heads of fundraising, and social media. We saw the introduction of 'cake for clothes', allowing students exchange clothes for baked goods and raffle tickets, resulting in an additional £150 raised for the purchase of hats and gloves.

Looking ahead, we're looking forward to bringing back the annual sponsored sleep out in Fellows' Garden during the warmer months that has been absent since pre-COVID, as well as teaming up with Castle's Environment Committee to rejuvenate the garden at Sanctuary 21. Furthermore, plans are underway to reinstate Saturday night meals, fostering stronger connections within the division while coming together each week to prepare a three-course meal for a group of regular customers.

Eleanor Corbett
Head of Homelessness 2023-24

THE KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS SOCIETY (KCSOC)

The Krishna Consciousness Society (KCSoc) is a platform for spiritual seekers and deep thinkers, focusing on the mind, body, and soul. We adhere to the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, a swami and saint well-versed in the Vedic Scriptures, which are universal sacred texts. KCSoc facilitates connections among students at a higher level of consciousness through activities that help us to understand how to maintain a steady state of mind and ultimately find true happiness. The society is open to all JCR and MCR members.

Exploring the meaning of the word "Krishna", it is a Sanskrit term that means all-attractive. At some point in their lives, people are attracted to wealth, strength, beauty, fame, knowledge, renunciation, and other opulences, seeking happiness. In this way, everyone is already connected with Krishna. When we become interested in understanding our connection with Krishna, the purpose of life, and how to attain lasting happiness beyond momentary material pleasures, we are called Krishna conscious.



KCSoc commenced in August 2023 with informal catch-ups, where we shared experiences about spirituality and life, discovering how Vedic scriptures explain every aspect of our daily lives. This knowledge helps us improve our lives, fostering happiness, success, and overall well-being, an excellent way to nourish our souls.

In association with the MCR and with the support of Chaplain Stephanie Burette, we conducted our first meditation session in the Norman



Chapel. Subsequently, we've had more meditation sessions, aiding us in learning how to control our minds through various stages of meditation, culminating in the highest form, mantra meditation. This involves the powerful Maha Mantra: "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare".

As part of the national KC UK society, we have the opportunity to access materials focused on students' lives and learn how to address issues such as social and academic stress, relationships, loneliness, etc. Additionally, we have access to retreats organized in England and trips around Europe. In October 2023, two members participated in a retreat

at Bhaktivedanta Manor in Watford, a famous ISKCON (International Society of Krishna Consciousness) temple donated by George Harrison (The Beatles). The retreat was wonderful and blissful, featuring mantra chanting, insightful workshops on success in student life, a Q&A with Keshava Swami; and we enjoyed tasty meals, a yoga session, engaging games, visited the Gosala (a cow sanctuary), and concluded the day with a delightful kirtan (mantra meditation with music) rave.



Cooking and sharing vegetarian food play an important role in our society, aiding in improving our body's health. During catch-ups, members enjoy cooking vegetarian recipes and sharing a higher state of consciousness through the food with other students.

Additionally, on multiple Sundays, we have visited the ISKCON Newcastle Temple. We have built a strong association with temple members who actually supported us with kirtan for two Diwali events, one in the Great Hall in the Castle organised by the MCR and another in the Oriental Museum organised by the Hindu Society.

Inspired by these kirtans, we initiated our own kirtans around Durham city centre this January, sharing the power and serenity of the Maha Mantra through music, making them like a small party in the streets, bringing joy to everyone.

We aim to continue growing as a society, hosting more events this term, connecting with more people at this higher level of consciousness, learning, and having fun.

Edwin A. Herrera-Chacon

MIXED LACROSSE

It has been a fantastic start to the 2023/24 lacrosse season. We have been extremely fortunate with a large fresher intake this year for UCML. We recruited a mix of both experienced players as well as keen first time players who have a strong background in other sports with transferable skills. The club has enjoyed a great first term of laxing and we currently sit 4th in the league with three more games in hand to play. The club has had a significant expansion building off a successful 2022/23 season to regularly having 25 people at weekly training as well as being able to field a competitive first team for our Sunday matches.

In true Castle fashion, the social side of the club has a much larger membership. Our Social Secs, Daisy Rex and Eve Messervy, organised a first social so well attended and had so much quote on quote, “college bants”, that it caused Palatinate to fabricate a completely false (but rather amusing) article in their satire section. I would politely direct alumni to our Instagram page, @castlemixedlax, to find our match reports which go into further detail on the club’s activity and progress (as well as our social antics).



The A Team fresh after our 15-1 win against Josephine Butler College.

In keeping with tradition, [insert colloquially known term for our rivals down below us at the bottom of the hill leading up to Palace Green, begins with a T, ends in watfield] are too scared to face us on the lacrosse pitch.

Our first match of the season against Collingwood College led to a narrow 6-5 defeat however after many formative training sessions (tactical discussions in the Swan), we built on our previous loss to come back for a convincing 15-1 win against Josephine Butler. Sadly, there are no current plans to hold a Floodlit Cup however the UCML exec have floated the idea of holding an intercollegiate summer tournament – the initial motivation for organising such an event was the prospect of drinking Pimms (the college culture is still very much alive and well) however it would also give our A (+Pimms drinking members of the club) Team another chance to enjoy playing one of the most relaxed and inclusive college sports in the sun (Durham weather dependent, it is still very hit or miss – current Swan trips to training session ratio this term is 4:1 due to rain and snow).

The current exec have also thoroughly enjoyed meeting UCML alumni over the past year. The exec from 2013; David Knowles (Lacrosse Captain), Conall Bailie (Social Sec) and A Team player, Georgia Gloria made the trip to Durham for a careers event that the college was hosting. As all Castlemen naturally do, they ended up in The Undie where we had the absolute pleasure of meeting them and having the most intellectual of conversations over a pint of the finest Carling before having a slightly less intellectual conversation over a glass or two (or five) of Château Woodgate. Conversation in Paddy’s afterwards was indeterminate, I might have remembered by the 2025 Castellum issue. Additionally, Lucas McCollum, Social Sec from 2019, continued the trend of holding alumni meetings in Jimmy Allens (like I said, the college culture is still very much alive and well). In comparing his time at DU Lacrosse to Castle Lax, we both agreed that UCML takes it in terms of raw talent - I would however like to clarify that this occurred post woodgate/s4 (shock) and so I might have (highly likely) misheard him.

Please do contact the exec if you have any amusing or enjoyable memories of your time in UCML that you would like to share – I would take great pleasure in compiling a collection of stories from the club’s fine history as inspiration for both current and future members. Additionally, if any alumni fancy visiting lax pitch 1, we play at 2pm on a Sunday and the team (exec especially) would be more than happy to celebrate the inevitable win with a post-match woodgate (this piece was not sponsored by Jimmy Allens).

Julius Caesar, author of the ‘The Gal-Lax Wars’ and part-time Roman JCR Senior Student equivalent, famously said, “I came, I saw, I lived, loved and laxed.”

Oscar Gray
Lacrosse Captain 2023/24

1987’S CLUB (FORMERLY LADIES BAILEY RUN CLUB)

Female empowerment in College knows no bounds.

Once again, the most adventurous and spirited women in College took to the streets of Durham to compete in the most competitive and challenging race in College. Commencing their athletic endeavours outside of the College of St. Hild and St. Bede, our competitors gave a hearty rendition of Gentlewomen of Castle before indulging in Aldi’s finest hop-based beverage. They then started their pilgrimage to St. Mary’s College, before climbing the peak that is St. Aidan’s stairs. Following the eternal wisdom stated in Newton’s 2nd Law, ‘what goes up must come down’, our ladies then descended the hill in search of a refreshment at St. Cuthbert’s Society. Their thirsts still yet to be quenched, they then tackled the hill once more, taking in the sights of Trevelyan, Van Mildert, Collingwood and Grey. Having enjoyed this rather thorough liquid tour, our runners then started to make their way home, being sure to visit

St. John’s, St. Chad’s and Hatfield on the way. This investigation into physical fitness and personal skill finished on the hallowed turf that is Moatside courtyard, welcomed by a spirited and enthusiastic crowd.

We would like to extend our warmest congratulations to the ladies who chose to demonstrate their athletic ability in such a manner, ensuring that the entrance of women into University College is never forgotten. We look forward to welcoming our newest batch of athletes in Easter term, where we will once again see 12 of Castle’s finest ladies hydrate themselves accordingly at each of the aforementioned colleges, in the order they accepted women before Castle.

Wear your necklace with pride, ladies.

Iona Dixon and Amika McAvoy,
1987’s Club Captains 2023-24

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE NETBALL CLUB

With over 50 members, UCNC is thriving, with our A and B teams both in Division 1, and our As currently taking on the Netball Trophy matches (knock-out tournament) by storm, having won their first match against St. Mary’s, 43-10. Our C team remain unbeaten, holding the top position in Division 4, with the prospects of moving up a division very much in sight! Our mixed team has just begun playing their first matches of the season and we look forward to what’s in store for them.

As well as developing our teamwork and skills on the court in regular matches on the weekend and training on Wednesdays, UCNC has been enjoying strengthening the ties within the club socially too.

An event of note was the match against Castle Men’s Football, with the loser agreeing to cheerlead at the other’s Floodlit Cup match. With an advantage to UCNC initially while the boys were called up on endless

footwork, AFC quickly caught up as they caught onto the rules, leading to a draw. Extra time meant that they won by one point, and as promised, UCNC delivered an excellent and well-executed routine at half-time at their Floodlit match, which even included some lifts. A rematch may be imminent...

As we look onwards this term, the Trophy matches continue, and the highly anticipated Castle-Hatfield Day is coming up, with preparations well under way.

Saffron Gill and Susie Norrish (Co-Presidents)

UCBC INTRODUCTION

Over the last year, UCBC has continued to grow and has once again cemented its position as the largest and most successful sports club in Castle. I would be confident in declaring that the club has now fully recovered from COVID. This has happened because of the groundwork that the Execs of the last 2 years, which has seen the return of huge squad numbers and an effective flow of novices being introduced to the sport, being passed up to the senior squad and even exec positions.



In action at a Trophy match against St. Marys.



UCNC at a Barbie and Ken themed social



UCNC A Team



UCNC B Team



UCNC vs. Castle AFC, 08/11/23

The increased squad numbers have enabled the club to foster a strong culture on and off the water which has seen an increase in high quality and frequent training led by our two captains, Georgina and Charles. I will let them tell you more about the club on the water.

Off the water, our socials continue to be very well attended and a highlight for many in College. Last Summer, we hosted a Ball at the

Durham Masonic Hall which welcomed 100 people from the UCBC and wider Durham Rowing community. With UCBC turning 190 this year, organising the ball last year always had this in mind. We will be looking to mark the occasion at what we are hoping is now an annual ball. UCBC and wider Castle alumni are always invited to our events, and if you find yourself visiting Durham we would be delighted to meet you.

UCBC's success on the water and post COVID recovery can be attributed greatly to our generous alumni support. Floreat Castellum Boat Club (FCBC) is the alumni arm of the boat club run by David Shaw and Robert Brownell. By connecting UCBC and Castle alumni, they have enabled UCBC to invest in top new boats, most recently 'First Ladies' giving UCBC one of the strongest fleets amongst Durham colleges. As President, FCBC have enabled me to continually update members about the progress as a club, and David and Robert have been the most valuable source of advice and guidance which has really spurred the club on. For anyone interested in staying up to date with UCBC and meeting former and current rowers at fantastic FCBC events, I would encourage you to get in contact with Robert and David at FCBC by emailing robert.brownell@ucbc.co.uk where you will be able to join FCBC. Further details can also be found on UCBC's newly updated website (ucbc.co.uk) along with race reports published after each race.

Below, you will see updates from the Men's squad, Women's Squad, Novice Programme and our social offering. I am delighted that UCBC are in a strong position and reaping the benefits of a strong cohesive culture with some fast ergs chucked in there too. I am excited to see what the squads can achieve at the Head of the River Race (HORR) and the Women's Eights Head of the River Race (WEHORR) and the regatta season that follows. Thank you very much for your support and I hope to see many of you at events soon.

Aidan Dike-Lawlor,
President 2023/24

THE MEN'S SQUAD

The Men's Squad has had a promising start to the year, with a strong performance at York Head from our 1st IV and Durham Autumn Small Boats Head. Training this year has faced significant challenges primarily from the weather, with frequent storms limiting our ability to conduct regular water sessions. This was made evident by the unfortunate circumstances at Rutherford Head, that meant we were unable to race the two VIIIs and IV that we had entered.

This year, with a relatively large squad of 26 active members, we have embraced a new training program, a significant shift from previous years. It includes two UT2 sessions, two water sessions and two S&C sessions, on top of a weekly senior squad UT1 erg at Maiden Castle. This new approach has partly been in response to the limited availability and relatively poor condition of our own ergs in Bailey Court.

Looking ahead in the short term we are excited to field four 4+'s and a 1x at Durham Small Boats Head - representing our 3 VIIIs on the 3rd of February. As we progress into the term, our sights are set on York Head on the 2nd March and potentially Derwentwater Head before the end of term.

This year we are pleased to say we have rented two boats for the HORR on the Thames in London, for both our 1st and 2nd Eights. Crew selection is underway on the back of a 30' r20 test, with seat racing scheduled for mid-February. The boat rental will allow our 1st VIII to boat from Putney Embankment for



The weekly erg at Maiden Castle



Men's VIII at Hexham Regatta



Men's 1st IV after York Autumn Small Boats Head

the first time in many years and we are looking forward to the results as we attempt to win the Small Academic Pennant.

Charles Bird,
Men's Captain 2023/24

WOMEN'S SQUAD

The Women's squad are doing wonderfully and have bounced back well from the Covid days. We entered this year in high spirits having had a fabulous summer season, with both our first IV and VIII winning at Hexham Regatta in June, and the first IV winning at Durham Regatta.

Turning into the head races of Michaelmas term 2023, the VIII came third in our categories at both York Autumn Head and Rutherford Head in December, where we were the fastest Durham college in our category despite the heavy snow and icy boating conditions.

From our racing success so far, we look forward to the upcoming races this term. We have entered two IV's at Durham Small Boats Head on the 3rd February, one VIII at Tyne Head on the 17th February and one VIII at York Head on the 2nd March. After five years of absence, the Women's squad are making their return to the Tideway at WEHARR

on the 9th March!

Off the water, the girls are working hard to implement a new land training programme. We run a weekly strength & conditioning gym session, UT2 erg and a UT1 erg every Sunday with the Men's squad at the Maiden Castle erg room facilities. These are going well, with fitness improvements across the squad and a collective community of friendship!



Women's VIII after winning at Hexham Regatta

Our fantastic IVs, "The First Ladies" and "FCBC" and our beloved VIII, "Eva Schumacher-Reid" are carrying us to success. We are very grateful for the continued funding and support from the JCR and the alumni to allow us all to continue with our favourite sport.

I have had the upmost pleasure in leading the girls so far and I could not have asked for a more hard working or friendlier bunch of ladies to share the cold winter mornings. I am so excited to see how we can do in the upcoming head and later regatta season. I have every faith that the prevalence and enjoyment of Women's rowing in Castle will grow for years to come.

Georgina Worton-Boughen,
Women's Captain 2023/24

NOVICE SQUAD

The Novice Programme has been as successful as ever so far this year. Starting the year with over 100 novices, choosing crews for Novice Cup was particularly difficult, especially as the November erg test didn't seem to scare many freshers off!

The Men's 1st IV won (for the first time since 2009!), and the Women's 1st IV came a close second out of over 20 crews, which is mightily impressive. Rosie and I decided to base our training programme on sessions in the Maiden Castle indoor rowing tank, erg room, the Swan, and occasionally a quick paddle on the river when the boathouse wasn't flooded! Tank sessions were our secret weapon for preparing the Novs' technique without actual water sessions, meaning they were speeding ahead in the side-by-side races at Novice Cup against some other crews that had barely touched a blade! It was a proud day for the Novice Programme, UCBC and Castle as a whole. The win was celebrated, as is traditional, with plenty of wine in our newly acquired vessel, the actual Novice Cup, at our annual Christmas Dinner.

As we set our sights towards Novice Head, we are continuing the momentum of Michaelmas Term by kicking off the new year with the ultimate test to see whether the turkey induced gains really translate into free speed, in the form of their first ever 2k test. With a set of truly impressive results, we anticipate another term of immense success for the program, with 2 Open and 2 Women's crews expected to enter Novice Head. Despite storm after storm being thrown at us by the rowing gods, the enthusiasm and commitment to training continues, with a relocation from the Wear to the Moatside kitchens for some integral winter indoor training courtesy of our social secretary. The final hurdle for our novices is Castle X Hatfield Day. After the victory of last year we hope to triumph once again, and look forward to a successful integration of the Novices into our senior crews, which promises a bright future for the next generation of UCBC.



The Women's Novice Squad before Novice Cup



The Men's 1st Novice IV after winning Novice Cup

**Constance Pollard and Rosie Mason,
Novice Captains 2023/24**

SOCIAL REPORT

Of course, no rowing club is complete without a few 'organised' drinking events, not that I've ever been in a rowing club or a boat for that matter. In fact, there is no such concept back home of 'rowing' as a sport as it's increasingly hard to find an Irish person to lay off the pints in favour of a 2km erg. Which, subsequently, puts me in an extremely interesting position trying to both organise socials for people who routinely drink less than the Government's 14 unit a week bar. Many of the club would describe ourselves as a rowing club with a drinking problem, however, we are painfully average at both. So, to give you the impression we are not an extremely boring club, I'll give you an overview of the socials so far...

First, an annual classic of the club, The Bailey Boatrace. For those of

you who either remember a time when the club was successful at rowing or just need your memory jogged on the idea of the social, I will briefly explain. The Bailey Boatrace is a tradition as old as when I did it last year as a fresher so let's hope it's a long-standing event of the club. It involves traversing the Bailey bars in an orderly fashion (which deteriorates very quickly) involving challenges and exploits along the way, many freshers chop the first pints of their college careers and usually some of the first disimbibements of their time in the club after discovering the concept of stomach capacity. Over 100 people marched the Bailey bars for UCBC on this great evening in which multiple college dart boards went mysteriously missing too, which accounts for two of the three bar bans I have tallied this year. Always lovely to wake up to a message from a bailey bar chair threatening to ban me from all bars, thankfully this threat carried little weight as the bloke was from John's. Overall, a great night thanks to Chad's lack of CCTV and the effects of the booze inflicted dance moves gracing the Durham nightlife.

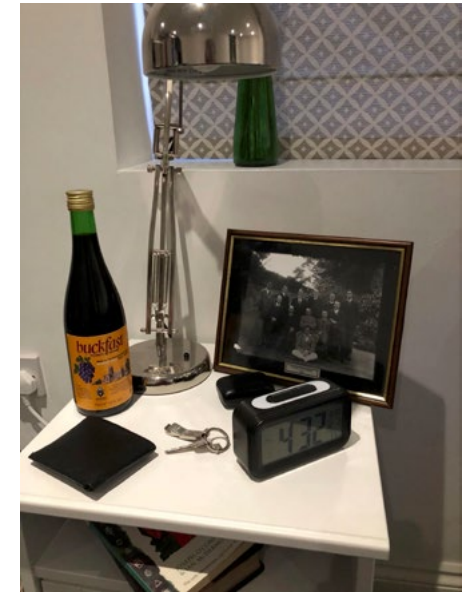
Next up on the social calendar was our first exec social, it is often said three is a crowd and fourteen is a UCBC exec committee which despite being an incredibly sized group of responsible people it makes for quite an intimate session at Spags, Durham's finest Italian cuisine and incredibly overpriced wine, many challenges were dished out including the treasurer convincing the president (who has more UCRFC appearances than times in a boat in the past year) we were in a serious tussle with the JCR bailiffs (treasurer and VSS) over a little mismanaged financial situation last year (this challenge did not age well). Unfortunately, the less said about this social, the better as a college disciplinary followed as a result of a botched-art heist which involved myself and one of our great Novice captains Rosie Mason stealing the oldest Exec photo the Durham Union have (image attached of my bedside table), causing slight damage to the wall which college office did not approve of which is the cause of the 3rd bar ban.

To end our year, it would only be correct to do so in such a formal way; a dodgy Lebaneat chicken shawarma and a bottle of Tesco's finest

fruity red in our annual Christmas meal. Donning our black tie and famous rowing blazers (which are extreme wine magnets) we enjoyed great company and dodgy chat in celebration of the successes of the year; our flourishing novice program, UCBC Ball, and the Women's squad picking up silverware only to then lose to a bunch of schoolgirls. Chads was next on the itinerary after the meal was lumped onto the JCR card (Thanks Zak), somehow a cricket bat was 'procured' along with many a disco water. Despite the women's squad, I'm sure, asking Santa for an improved drinking ability they yet again proved they are allergic to didge displaying some VK straws on the level of 1km ergs times. Christmas carols were sung, Jimmy's was visited, and thankfully we, as a club, resisted the urge to bash up the JCR, which UCRFC so enjoys these days.

Of course, many more socials are on the way and although unfortunately this is all I have to report on for now, I hope many of you will make an appearance later in the year for the Alumni BBQ to raise a glass (plastic cup) to the club and its future.

Benjamin Teggart,
Social Secretary 2023/24



The 1919 Union Society

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

The 2023/24 season for University College Rugby Football Club has been so far a tumultuous one, with some ecstatic highs and some devastating lows. It has felt like the beginning of a new era for the club, with the passing of the torch to an executive committee of Benedict Pymont and Benjamin Barnes as team captains, Elliot Jackson as Club Captain, and Dirk Pitblado as Social Secretary.

Old traditions were upheld as the season began with a jubilant Welcome Drinks, epitomised by some excellent vegetable selection and a bouncing atmosphere in the Dun Cow. Songs and pints of Castle Eden were a-plenty at the hands of returners and new members alike. As for the pitch, a typically 'village' preseason friendly was played against Hild-Bede, giving everyone a chance to get back to match fitness, which wooed the spectators with a scintillating 5-5 scoreline.

As the end of October rolled around, it was finally time for the start of the league season. UCRFC were in the top division of college rugby, the Premiership, after a hard fought survival campaign the previous season. The league had been newly restructured, with only five teams in the league. We knew we'd have our work cut out, with Castle competing against the 'Big Four' of Collingwood, Hatfield, Van Mildert and Grey College. Our match against Collingwood post CCA auction ended in a crushing 66-10 defeat. Another match against Grey post Ladies Night also ended in a heavy 86-7 defeat. It was a stark reminder of the gulf in standard between Castle and the rest of the league.

It was not all doom and gloom however, as club members young and old bonded over the infamous Pimps and Hoes social and some excellent comradery was captured by the Babylon dancefloor photographer. An emphatic 35-14 win over Trevelyan in the first round of the Floodlit Cup reminded us why we love rugby, with some fantastic tries from Barnsey, Toby Peters, fly-half Alex Maciver-Redwood and even Dirk Pitblado, securing himself a victory in a wine-based wager with Kedem Morgan.



UCRFC looked the business in our new match shirts, funded partially by an extremely generous Castle Alumni donation.

Unfortunately however we were knocked out by a strong and structured Van Mildert team in the following round after being struck by a rife injury and illness crisis. We also decided to take a mid-season relegation in favour of competitiveness, and at the time of writing we still have some big games against the likes of St Aidan's, Collingwood and John Snow, and we are excited for the return of some familiar faces as Old Boys' Weekend approaches.

Participation has seemed at an all time low this season and the club has struggled in an unprecedented manner compared to my previous two years with UCRFC. We have struggled to field a squad of 23 rugby players in a college of 1635 full time student members. Perhaps this is reflective of the current state of English rugby, as we see new alarming concussion data and Premiership Clubs like Wasps, London Irish and Worcester Warriors going into administration. One also theorises how

participation will continue to change as Durham University targets increased internationalism, with plans to reach an intake of 39% international students by the 2026/27 academic year (Palatinat 2022). With Castle continuing to be in the top two most subscribed colleges, boasting its UNESCO World Heritage Site location, it has a strong international community and provides a draw unlike any other college.

Participation from Castle's international community in rugby remains low, with no international players this season, and this is something that must be changed. Sporting endeavours shape many university experiences and participation must be upheld to ensure we compete with the 'Big Four' as we have done previously. It would be a great shame to see Castle slip into rugby irrelevance and every effort must be made to ensure that as many people as possible can enjoy the benefits of our great game.

Elliot Jackson

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE RUNNING SOCIETY

University College Running Society is a relatively new club for Castle. As captain, I am proud to say it has gone from strength to strength this academic year. We have had new members, a complete rebrand, stash, and an increased involvement in college sport. This season, the team has held onto a respectable 6th place in the inter-collegiate sport rankings, taking part in relays and other fixtures. Our most recent results saw Castle As place 3rd and Castle Bs place 4th in round 3 of the mixed relays.

After being restarted in COVID, the team took a while to get off the ground. Through the work of committed members, UCRS continues to improve. Our training is very inclusive, tailoring to casual runners as well as seasoned, competitive runners looking to incorporate sport with socialising. We do around 2 runs per week, focusing on social, "easy"

runs of around 5km and some harder sessions, particularly in the lead up to college races. Occasionally, you will find us all trying to find our way through the woods near the racecourse, entirely in the dark, all in the name of winter training.

Currently, our aim as a club is to enter more races locally and create a team kit. This goes hand in hand with our projections to encourage more people to take part in our inter-collegiate events. This, of course, cannot be done without funding, and we look forward to the opportunity to purchase these essentials for our team. This academic year, we will be taking part in the Olivia Inspires x DU Sailing x Castle collaboration for the Gateshead Half Marathon and some of our members will also be running the Newcastle 5k and 10k. For college centred events, we are set to make our debut in competing in Castle-Hatfield Day and, with hopes of moving into the top 5 and even podium aspirations, complete the rest of our inter-college fixtures.

Olivia Grace Smith
UCRS Club Captain and President



CASTLE TABLE TENNIS

The University College Table Tennis Club was founded in 2021. In that academic year, Castle played just one, thrilling match, narrowly losing to famous duck-keepers Van Mildert. The following year, after some badgering from Castle Ping Pong fans, and a lack of alternative candidates, I took over the reins of the Club. The 22/23 season was another rather quiet one for the club although we held weekly training sessions in the JCR, mostly counting on the ever-loyal attendance of my college son to populate the sessions. The tardiness of my acceptance of the captaincy also meant that I failed to enter a team into any inter-collegiate matches, despite this – the club was growing steadily.

In 2022 tragedy struck, as one of the two tables which had a net had unfortunately been left outside over summer after being moved for June Ball. The exposure to the elements was the final nail in the coffin for a table that, having sat by the Undie for a year, had been used and abused by Hatfielders and the like during drunken nights out. When moving the table inside, wood chips splintered off all around, and the table now failed spectacularly to perform its primary function. With this disappointment the table was retired.

As a result, several sessions were conducted with the other table now using books and paper to fashion a jaunty net-like structure. This was inexorably dull, so I soon bought a net and regular training resumed. The club had survived this crisis.

This brings me to the 2023/2024 academic year. After a lack of suitable candidates for exec roles last year (no one applied), I held the captaincy for another year. After handing out exec roles to members of the club (that they did not know they were in the running for), Castle Ping Pong looked forward to its best year yet.

Having only one table, and with the possibility of having around 8 people coming to training sessions I took to the r/tabletennis forum on Reddit to ask about various training I could actually implement without it being dull for the players. Here are some of the responses:

“One table and 8 players sounds terrible. I’d figure out some way to get more space and another table ASAP.”

“I could write pages for how to run group clinics for beginners, however this time I only need to say one thing; you /must/ get more tables first before running group.”

“There’s not really any solution, you have to get more tables for 8 players whether via a change in venue or actually having more tables.”

Other comments suggested putting the toastie bar tables together and getting another game going or getting people to play against walls or the floor. The result of this forum post was a terrible disappointment, yet the sheer indefatigability of the Club’s spirit did not falter. Only one commenter did not tell me to just get more tables and had some interesting ideas for games to play, which have worked well.

Deciding that more tables was not really an option and taking on the advice from some of the r/tabletennis comments, Castle Table Tennis started 2023 strong. A bumper crop of keen freshers joined the ranks, a mixture of around 8 men and women coming to each weekly session.

This year we have also started to have matches. Our first, against Collingwood As did not go to plan, losing 8-1. An attempt at a speech of encouragement after that first crushing loss somehow warranted a vivacious applause from the freshers. A further well-articulated message from our Vice Captain starting, *“Remember lads, Rome wasn’t built in a day...”*, encouraged the players further. A few months later we had our chance at revenge.

We were playing the Collingwood B team, the loss to the A team fresh in our players’ minds. After several hard-fought games, we were drawing 4-4. The final game, a doubles battle between both our 1st and 2nd seeded players was going down to the wire. In a formidable match up, that was livestreamed out to all the Castle Table Tennis enjoyers at

home, we narrowly clinched victory and enacted our much-anticipated revenge against Collingwood. Honestly, a great moment with rapturous applause from all the Castle players and several spectators that had made the long trip up the Hill just to watch us play. The moment of victory encapsulated the spirit, hard work, and familial aspect of not just Castle Table Tennis, but of Castle as a whole.

Other notable matches include a 6-3 drubbing of the ill-prepared Van Mildert C team in our very own JCR, as well as a heroic effort in a narrow loss 4-5 loss to Grey As. Currently we are trying to get Hatfield to put up a team for Castle-Hatfield Day, although it's looking like they are too scared to play us.

Castle Table Tennis has gone from strength to strength, and we might even be looking at promotion to the higher division this year. Although, some might say that this is more down to us having better organisation than other colleges and managing to play more games. It genuinely has been an honour to be captain over the past two years. I sincerely hope that I will be able to hand over the baton to one of the freshers next year and that the club will stay healthy and continue to be a bastion of Castle spirit. *Floreat Castellum.*

George Smith
Castle Table Tennis captain

VOLLEYBALL (MIXED)

UCVC, would like to thank the Durham Castle Society for all the funding it has received in the past and present which has been put to good use in buying much needed equipment. UCVC is proud to be one of the most vibrant and welcoming societies in the Castle community. In recent years thanks to the hard work of various exec committees we have gone from playing without kit to fielding both an A and B team in the college leagues and obtaining a sponsorship from local estate agents Urban Base. This year we are aiming to go one step further and win the inter-college premiership. So far we have hit the ground running with only one loss this season, punching above our weight and competing with the Hill colleges. We are also looking to complete a historic treble by also winning Castle Hatfield Day and the festival of sport, something that hasn't been done before in our history. Off the pitch UCVC has also been flourishing especially in regards to charity work. For the past two years we have held a charity tournament called 'Burning Balls' inviting all different players regardless of ability to compete in the name of charity. All proceeds are donated to Olivia Inspires, a cause close to the community's heart.

Matthew Kavanagh
Captain of UCVC





WARM HEARTS

Warm Hearts is a charity project that I established as a fresher in November 2022, which endeavours to support the NHS. I am originally from Blaenau Gwent, South Wales, where the founder of the NHS, Aneurin Bevan, was born, therefore, the importance and significance of the NHS has always been a prevalent aspect of my life. My own NHS journey began when I was fifteen years old, as a MELO panel volunteer and as a befriending volunteer on my local hospital wards. This then progressed to paid employment as a mental health support worker at a children's psychiatric hospital and now my current position as an A&E healthcare assistant, which I do alongside my studies. Needless to say, I have a fair understanding of the new-found pressures and challenges the NHS is facing.

Warm Hearts endeavours to support the NHS by spreading kindness, positivity, and compassion to local NHS hospitals and services via an array of projects. Thanks to the generosity of the University College Outreach Funding Committee, I was granted funding to establish Warm Hearts and complete our first project, which was creating care packages for geriatric and palliative care patients to provide compassion, comfort,

and kindness during difficult times. It was just wonderful during the summer when we hosted card-making picnics for our care packages in the beautiful Castle courtyard! During Michaelmas this year, we created Christmas care packages for children residing in hospital over the Christmas period, our Warm Hearts elves were absolutely fantastic! When visiting the hospital, we were informed that our services would be helpful in providing donations for the older young people on the ward, therefore, our Epiphany Term project is to create "Sunshine Boxes" full of activities and crafts suited for an older age range to provide positivity and kindness and aid those young people in their recovery. We are able to do this thanks to the generosity of the "We are Castle" initiative, and we very much look forward to welcoming new faces to our Castle community via Warm Hearts.

What makes Warm Hearts so special is the compassion, kindness and connection that extends through our projects to our volunteers. Each and every volunteer is cherished, and we ensure that every event and opportunity is accessible and welcoming. Warm Hearts facilitates volunteers to make genuine friendships and connections with one another, and supports and welcomes every student of every identity and background. When I say that kindness, friendship and compassion is at the heart of everything we do, I mean it truly. As the charities officer, and head of elderly care this year, I cannot be more thankful to see how Warm Hearts has been embraced by the wider CCA and the Castle community as a whole. I could not be more grateful for the kindness and support that every member of our Castle community and Warm Hearts family has given me to establish and to continue the work we do as Warm Hearts.

Eleanor James
Founder





THE J.C.R. ARCHIVE IN 2023/24

Readers of past editions of *Castellum* may well have noted that recollections and memories of various points in Castle's past are a usual and most enjoyable section. Members and former members of the J.C.R. may not be aware, however, that the effort to preserve our shared history has never been so energised with the official creation of J.C.R. Archive in the last academic year.

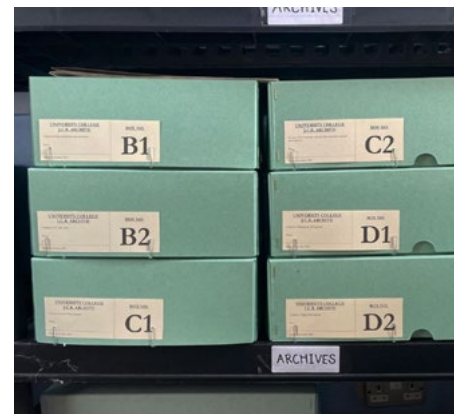
The project was begun by my estimable predecessor in the role of J.C.R. Archivist, Mr Patrick Hayes, who created the bedrock of the archive which we are now growing and utilizing to engage with the student body. Since the initial body of the archive was created by the first J.C.R. Archivist, I believe the primary responsibility of the second should be to ensure that it expands and is as active as possible within our community. It is vital to get the word out that the archive exists, and I believe that this



Patrick, Will (Archives Assistant), myself and Molly (Archives Assistant) at the Freshers' Fair

will encourage more members to donate material or give interviews so that we can protect the broadest possible range of experiences and information.

To that end, I was delighted to host a stall at the Freshers' Fair at the start of the academic year and to see a great deal of engagement from the newest J.C.R. members. We found about 100 or so prints of Edward Bradley's 1840s 'ye freshmonne' cartoon in the J.C.R. store-room at the top of the Black Stairs which we gave out as posters for students' new rooms and almost every single one was taken!



These are the green boxes we use to keep our physical archive in J.C.R. storage within the castle.

Equally, we have been continuing with our weekly Instagram posts (@castle.jcrarchives) highlighting an interesting photo or document that we've come across. A particularly poignant occasion was on Remembrance Sunday when we followed the story of Captain Vivian Hastings Clay, an active Castleman and athlete who was killed on the Somme in 1916 on his 24th birthday – only a little older than I will be when I leave college.

Every reader of this magazine will be aware of the extraordinary vibrancy to be found in college life. Being only in my second year and not yet half-way through my time here (just!) I have been completely immersed in the bewildering display of activity (usually entirely uncivilised but very, very amusing) and the strong sense of community that I find it hard to believe is fostered in quite the same way at any other college.

I passionately believe that every facet of J.C.R. life, from Lowe to Lumley, Badminton to Badger Watching, is worthy of record and we welcome contributions from anyone who has anything they wish to share. It is also vital that we engage with our history and see how things have changed or, sometimes more importantly, haven't changed over the years. It helps, of course, that we have such a rich history to draw upon and I very much hope that the J.C.R. Archive will continue for many decades as a way to codify, preserve, record and breathe life into everything that makes Castle the extraordinary community it is.

Richard (Dickie) Griffiths
J.C.R. Archivist
castle.jcrarchivist@durham.ac.uk

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN GOODALL



Last year, my father and I saw eminent historian and architectural editor of 'Country Life,' Mr. John Goodall, speak on the subject of the English castle in London. After he shared some of the fascinating insights found in his books 'The English Castle' and 'The Castle: A History,' and shed brilliant light on the rich history of these enduring landmarks, one sagacious scholar in the audience asked the perennial and penetrating question: "what's your favourite castle?"

I was delighted to hear Mr. Goodall reply "Durham Castle, of course," because, he con-

tinued, of his time as an undergraduate student at University College. Speaking to Mr. Goodall after the talk, he was very pleased to hear that the J.C.R. is still going strong and shared some of his fond memories of his time here. I got in touch with him a few days ago to see why, in the opinion of a genuine expert on castles, ours is quite so special.

What do you consider to be special about Durham Castle?

It's a place where history lives: nearly a millennium after its first foundation in 1072 this is still home to a community of people. I love the fact that the full depth of its history is still visible, from the Norman Chapel begun before the present cathedral church in 1093 to Salvin's recasting of the keep in 1839 (and less immediately visible, but very important, restoration work in the 20th century). The full extent of what survives is not necessarily obvious even when you live in Castle. How many students, for example,

have explored the full extent of Bishop Fox's kitchens and services (which still produce food every day)? The setting is hard to beat as well, facing one of the great churches of western Europe, with the city at your doorstep and the encircling loop of the River Wear to enjoy.

Why did you choose to apply to Castle / how did you end up studying here?

I wanted to go to university in the North, which is home for me. I liked the idea of studying in a such a beautiful city and I wanted to be in a collegiate university. It felt a real achievement to be offered a place to read history at Castle. I think there were about 300 people in college when I arrived and women had just been admitted the previous year. When I visited for my interview it felt characterful and fresh. It also seemed grand; I have yet to enjoy any address that sounds quite so magnificent as 'The Castle, Durham'. Of course, I actually spent my first year in a room in Moatside.

What were your first impressions of Castle?

Arriving at Castle is special: walking towards the gatehouse across the worn paving stones of the barbican and ducking through the postern door is an experience that sticks in the mind. It was immediately a friendly place. My family was living abroad when I came to Durham and had sent a trunk of possessions ahead. When I arrived it was nowhere to be found and the porter, Mike, searched patiently until he discovered some of its contents in a locked room with a note from the delivery company apologising that it had been damaged—in fact destroyed—in transit. The porters and kitchen and serving staff loomed large in life and were forceful, full of repartee and invariably kind.

Did your interest in the English castle begin while you were a student here / how has your time at Castle inspired and influenced your later studies?

As an undergraduate, I was fascinated by the Castle but I never imagined that I would end up studying or writing about architecture. When I did start working on castles many years later, however, I suddenly recognised what an outstandingly important building it was. Also, that I knew it through and through by virtue of having spent so much time in it. The

same experience also made me aware that living buildings are often overlooked in surveys of castle architecture. That's partly because people reflexively think of castles as ruined buildings. It's also because ruins are also usually easier to access and analyse, the fabric having been stripped to the bone. But surprising numbers of castles in Britain are still occupied; history touches the present in so many unexpected ways.

What are your fondest memories of your time at Castle?

Being in such close proximity to so many friends was a huge privilege. Also the opportunity to enjoy the Castle and its immediate surrounds as a place to live and work. One episode that took advantage of these things was a college production of *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay. I'm not sure it was particularly brilliant but it was huge fun working with the cast and musicians.

Interview by Richard Griffiths,

**John Goodall is an historian,
Author and Architectural Editor of Country Life Magazine.**

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In the ongoing effort to grow our archive collection and create material with which to engage the Castle community I am looking to create a series of recordings. The idea is to bring together a current Castle J.C.R. member and an ex-Castle student who have something in common and host a conversation to discuss their shared experiences. For example, we could have two people who are the first generation of their family to go to university, two sports captains, two members of the exec. etc.

Interviews could be done online or in-person, so please do get in touch if this sounds like something you'd like to be a part of. Equally, we would be more than happy to do some stand-alone interviews if you have an

interesting experience which you feel would go well in our archive. There really is no criteria – if it's a J.C.R. member's story, we're interested!

Either way, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me at castle.jcrarchivist@durham.ac.uk

Richard (Dickie) Griffiths

CASTLE SPACEFLIGHT: FIRST STEP IN THE COLLEGE SPACE RACE

Castle Spaceflight is determined to provide irrefutable evidence of a fact, commonly known within the Castle JCR, but not across the wider campus: that University College is the best college. They aim to help Castle reach space, the final frontier, to prove this.

After an initial ice-breaker session (featuring water rockets) on Castle Day 2023, the society looks forward to its most ambitious challenge yet: sending the College Teddy Bear to 40km!

The current plan, streamlined over the last year, involves attaching the bear, camera, and GPS to a high-altitude weather balloon, launching from Durham. The balloon should rise to ~40km, filming all the way up. At its apex, the pressure from the helium inside will be too much for the balloon's latex causing it to pop. A parachute will slowly descend the payload to land not too far from its start point...hopefully. It will then be retrieved via its onboard GPS, returning the Castle Bear to its home.

The launch should be all go come late Easter Term, making for an extremely exciting time to be part of Castle Spaceflight and University College.

Benjamin Kolicic

See photo at the end of the Senior Student's Report.

THE ARMILLARY IN THE FELLOWS' GARDEN

University College Durham

The scale of the conservation work now being carried out on our treasured College buildings is heartening but it's encouraging that such necessity hasn't eclipsed a willingness to see how, in doing so, our heritage might sensitively be adapted. I speak of course of the plans afoot for the development of the Fellows' Garden with a view of creating an area for outdoor performance of music, theatre and so on. This is part of a wider project which also includes enhancement of the North Terrace.

The Fellows' Garden in pre-college days served as the Bishop's Garden and was broadly unavailable for use by undergraduates of my era save during the June Ball. It has now become better known and more widely used by members of College, especially during the Easter Term. The present imaginative proposals will continue that progress.

Readers of *Castellum* may recall that about four years ago there appeared a report of my involvement in the restoration of the Courtyard Clock to which I added a little of its history. The Cumbria Clock Company which carried out that restoration subsequently achieved national prominence when it was revealed as the business which, in and from its workshops in the Lake District village where I live, had completed the restoration of the Great Clock alias Big Ben. The same business has been in local headlines more recently for its repair and conservation of the Silver Swan in the Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle.

With further encouragement, my attentions subsequently fell upon other timepieces in College in need of restoration and that work has since been completed. Unwilling to let the theme lapse, I saw an opportunity to combine and represent both the past span of the many centuries of the life of our buildings, on the one hand, and a means of showing the present hour, on the other.

In 2022, that span measured 950 years from the 1072 dating of the Norman Chapel. I arrived in Castle to become an undergraduate just one year after the 900 year celebrations and thus in 2023 I had the sobering thought of my own half-century since matriculation. Based on my previous horological interventions in College, I put forward the suggestion both to the College and to the University College Durham Trust that there be within the curtilage of the Castle an armillary sphere or sundial as part of the 950th anniversary developments. I was delighted that my rather unusual idea met with much more than mere indulgence. The Trust became the medium for payment and there was great encouragement from all in College.

For reasons which in our northern hemisphere cannot be avoided, the North Terrace wouldn't prove to be the right location so the choice fell upon the Fellows' Garden, the layout and formality of which would be the natural home for an armillary. Thus the College would have a celestial timepiece to record time by the diurnal passage of the sun each day towards our own millennium in 2072 and beyond.

The ready acceptance of the proposal led to commission, construction and delivery. Such an instrument is always bespoke as any armillary or sundial must have its gnomon set according to the latitude of its location. Installation soon followed about a year ago, placed on a short pedestal together with small flanking benches. All can be found in Fellows' Garden on the western side of the quadrangle. My thanks are due in particular to Julia Bonner who so enthusiastically undertook the duties of managing the project to its completion.

Engraving on the armillary is deliberately sparse. The traditional details of latitude and longitude are included together with our span of years recorded as:

DURHAM CASTLE: Fortress Palace College 1072 – 2022

words many will recognise as the title of Richard Brickstock's splendid book.

My thanks are due to this our wonderful College and to the Trust for accepting this somewhat unusual proposal and then encouraging it to fruition.

Timothy Sykes
JCR 1973-1976
SCR 2008-Present



THE STORY OF FREDERICK COPEMAN

Every student who joins University College hears the tale of Frederick Copeman. According to the story Frederick was a student at Castle in the early years of the University, perhaps in the 1830s. In those days, the story tells us, the results of degrees were published on a board on

Palace Green with the names of those who had failed omitted. Supposedly Frederick was an able student and had received first class honours. However, his name had been covered by another sheet when the sheet it was on slipped. On being unable to find his name Frederick went back to his room near the Black Stairs believing he had failed his degree. He left his room and ran to the cathedral and threw himself to his death from the cathedral tower.

The story is popular as part of ghost tours in Durham and it is often provided as an explanation as to why climbing the Cathedral tower before graduation is viewed as bad luck. However, late last year I wondered if there was any truth to the story.

I looked in nineteenth century newspapers and found a Frederick Copeman. Frederick was not a student. Instead of matching the popular story Reverend Frederick John Copeman MA was born in 1841 and by 1880 he was an academic in the Classics Department at the University. He had previously been at Oxford University. In May 1880 he was found dead at the foot of the Black Stairs at Durham Castle.¹ The press noted that it was unknown whether he committed suicide as he had 'been somewhat irregular of late'.² I have not looked further into Frederick's life and his sad death but perhaps now that the true story is known students may not feel so apprehensive climbing the tower at Durham Cathedral.

William Blackett

¹ Sad Death of a University Professor; Liverpool Echo, 31 May 1880, p. 4; Sad Death of a Durham-Lecturer; Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette, 01 June 1880, p. 3.

² Mysterious Death of a Classical Tutor; Manchester Evening News, 31 May 1880, p. 3.

IN CONVERSATION WITH... LYNNE ROBINSON

Oliver Lendrum recently caught up with Lynne Robinson, who will be well known to generations of Castle alumni, to talk about her experiences working at Castle for an incredible 33 years.

When did you come to work at Castle?

I started at Castle as a bedder in November 1988. My cousin already worked there. I wasn't really interviewed for the job, which is very different to now, and started off in R Block before moving around most of the college over the years. I finally retired as a housekeeping team leader in April 2021.



You must have seen a lot of change at Castle as a place to work over the years?

It was quite a different place when I started, maybe a little old fashioned and more formal. Ted Salthouse was Master and Albert Cartmell the Bursar. Cicely Shaw was still running the Gatehouse. There were no ensuite facilities and the students didn't bring things like duvets; rather they were provided with different coloured candlewick bedspreads depending which building they were in. My first housekeeper, Mrs Vine, called all the staff by their surnames (Mrs Robinson and so on) and played quite a lot of golf!

Change was gradual. Maurice Tucker took over as Master and Alan Gibson became bursar in the late 1990s. I liked the way Alan told the staff what was going on about the running of the College and involved us

more in discussions about things like budgets. However, I also remember when a company was brought in to time all the jobs we did to work out how long it should take to clean a room, both for students and then for bed and breakfast customers, and to set standard timings for doing so. A particular problem though was that all the rooms in the Castle itself are different sizes so aside from anything else it's actually hard to measure!

When I started students had their rooms cleaned three times a week, but they were able to put their bin outside to indicate when they did not want to be disturbed. Neither is now the case. Sometimes if they forgot to put the bin out, a bedder would come in to find students in compromising situations to the embarrassment of all concerned! Smoking was also allowed everywhere: there were so many ashtrays – horrible!

Did you ever see any ghosts?

I never saw anything despite wanting to! But I know that one room in the Keep was exorcised during my time because people reckoned it to be haunted and found its atmosphere so oppressive.

What about the food?

Golden potato balls of joy! I didn't generally get meals as part of my job, but potato balls were legendary at one time! The food has definitely become healthier, and with a lot more choice.

Did you ever meet any Royalty?

I remember visits by the late Queen and Prince Philip, and also the then Prince Charles. We were lined up on the stairs to meet them, and both Prince Philip and Prince Charles knew exactly what a bedder was!

The preparations for such visits were immense. Everything got a lick of paint. Sniffer dogs and armed police patrolling the Castle. The Queen was allocated the Chaplain's Suite on one occasion to get changed in, and we bought a new mahogany toilet seat from Archibald's just for her!



Do you have any other amusing memories?

Quite a few! I remember once when a room at the top of the Keep was invaded by bats... not just a few but about 30 or 40 of them. Someone left the door open rather than the window so they escaped into the stairwell; they were hanging on the doors and flying around everywhere, and we had to put the terrified B&B guest who encountered them up in the Royal

County! Another time, I ended up sewing a panicking bride getting married at Castle into her wedding dress when the zip broke as she tried to do it up... luckily it held through her special day!

There was also an ongoing fight for several years in Owengate over an outdoor pool on the patio behind the main house, below the Keep mound. A new one, always slightly bigger than the last, appeared every summer. Unfortunately, the end of the pool came when it ended up flooding Owengate, with water dripping through the ceilings and electrics. When it was finally emptied there was water flowing all down the street outside over the cobbles!

I think you also help run the “I’ve lived in Durham Castle” Facebook page?

I’ve been one of the admins for it for about eight years now. For anyone who hasn’t joined it, it was set up in 2007 and now has over 1,000 members, which is pretty good going! A lot of the posts are fascinating, and it would be great to see more people share memories and photos of their time at Castle on it!

I’d encourage people to do that too, Lynne! Perhaps to finish you could tell me about your favourite parts of Castle?

I love the Norman Gallery, its architecture and particularly the arches. It’s a great space for students and visitors alike, and looks really beautiful when set up for weddings. The Norman Chapel is so atmospheric, has such a distinctive smell, and also wonderful acoustics; and the views from the flagpole tower on top of the Keep are spectacular too (Editor: access is normally strictly forbidden!). Durham Castle is just a wonderful place.

Thank you, Lynne, for your time.

If readers would like to suggest other former or current staff or students for interviews in future editions, please contact the Editor.

Oliver Lendrum

EARLY CAREER RESEARCH FELLOWS AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

We are delighted to introduce our four Early Career Research (ECR) Fellows, who will support with fostering intellectual curiosity within our learning community and lead targeted initiatives to support and encourage our growing Castle research postgraduate (PGR) community.

Our Fellows are from each Faculty at Durham and will lead an event or initiative this academic year to connect and inspire our PGR students.

Who	What	When
Dr Anthony Kyiu, Finance	Public speaking workshop in conjunction with the Elvet Speakers	Epiphany Term 2024
Dr Jess Doppel, Physics	Mental Health in Academia workshop	Epiphany Term 2024
Dr Rachel White, English	Podcast mini-series which explores the highs and lows of PGR life	Throughout the year
Dr Janina Pescinski, School of Government and International Affairs	Hosting a Discover Policy Workshop	Easter Term 2024

Ellen Crabtree

HELLO FROM THE ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

Since joining the College Office team in August, I have had the wonderful opportunity to meet many of Castle's brilliant alumni. As a University College PhD student, I know what a unique experience and privilege it is to call Castle home and it has been deeply moving to see how this feeling of belonging can continue far beyond graduation.



Castle to Careersevent

One of my favourite parts of this role has been facilitating alumni visits to Castle. These visits have allowed me to learn so much about the ways Castle has changed and even more about how its community and traditions have carried on. It has been a true pleasure to see the many different ways that the Castle community comes together with alumni freely giving their time, energy and expertise to help current and future students.

I have also particularly enjoyed working on our "our Castle to Careers series" which asks the question: Where will a Castle Degree take you? Across a range of formats, Castle Alumni return to college to share their stories, answer questions, and inspire the next generation of Castle students as they chart their journeys beyond the castle walls. This year has featured events focusing on women in business, social entrepreneurship, and careers in the media. Would you like to take part? This is an ongoing series, and we would love to hear from you!

I look forward to meeting many more of you throughout the coming months, including at our upcoming Castle reunion in April.

Katie Bertram

University College Alumni Engagement Coordinator

castle.alumni@durham.ac.uk

MAKING MUSIC

Connecting Communities: welcoming activist and musician Ezé to Castle

It's always a special moment to see new a first in Castle, a space that bears witness to a range of history and cultures during its 952 years. In October we had a new first at formal dinner, as our musician and activist Ezé performed a traditional thank you song from his native Burkina Faso from high table to kick off his residency in Durham. It was a spine-tingling moment and can be seen on our @universitycollegedurham Instagram to share the joy.

Making Music is an exciting collaborative project between Castle and Modern Languages and Cultures to bring the talented musician and social and cultural ambassador Ezé to Durham. His subsequent three-week residency in October-November 2023 was a multifaceted cultural programme to explore communication beyond borders, bring diverse communities together and explore different ways of working together.

Alongside public community events in Chester-le-Street and Gilesgate, Ezé taught in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures where his German-language workshops centred around music, movement, and multilingualism; his song *Germ-Afro-Trap*; being Black in Germany, Racism, Migration, and Images of Africa in Germany.

At the in Conversation event (Castle), Ezé talked about his background and projects in Burkina Faso and Germany. Final-year student Mithara de-Alwis engaged him and the audience in a thought-provoking conversation about experiences with racism in Germany, and his research about images of Africa on German TikTok. Anita Lu and Lois Sourbutts, also final year students, supported them through interpreting (German-English).

During his stay, Ezé rehearsed with DUPO (Durham University Palatine Orchestra) and worked closely with Aysha Kojima, a dedicated and passionate music student, who arranged two of Ezé's songs 'Abendland' and 'Die Leiden des Schwarzen W.' for DUPO. Both songs premiered at



Composer Aysha, Ezé and DUPO conductor Michael



Ezé in concert



Ezé, Wendy, Aysha and the film team after the concert

the concert in the Great Hall and were recorded at Collingwood Music Studios, leading towards a public release. To understand and engage with the songs, both were translated into English by final year student Lewis England.

The next stage of this project is the release of the student-filmed and produced documentary; we'll host a screening and round table discussion at Castle at the end of February.

In the words of Ezé, "My head is filled with emotions, many thanks to all involved. The journey will surely continue!" Find out more: www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/modern-languages-cultures/making-music-connecting-communities/

Ellen Crabtree and Gina Wrobel

Gina is DAAD-lecturer (German Academic Exchange Service) in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures

CASTLEMEN PAST AND PRESENT COMPETE IN THE 2024 ORIGINAL MOUNTAIN MARATHON

Old Castlemen reading this will appreciate my pride and delight when my son was offered a place at Castle. Doubtless they will also appreciate my envy when he immediately got a room on Hall Stairs, a "slippers to breakfast" achievement that took me until my final year. Given that he seemed to be taking advantage of the sporting opportunities at college to offset the impact of the Undercroft, and wanting to prove that I hadn't gone completely to seed, I thought it may be "fun" to enter a family sporting event. I saw that the Original Mountain Marathon ("OMM") allowed family teams which sounded "fun". With me being 58 and him 20, this was our one and only chance to enter the family race as one generation had to be under 21.

Having chosen the team name "Castellum Horns" (the second word referring to 'The Hornets', the football club we both support) we decided to enter the "Medium Score" competition, which turned out to be an unusual choice for first timers. The OMM has been held at the end of October every year since 1968 and is a two-day, unsupported race in a different user-unfriendly location every year. This year, the event was held in EryiSnowdonia, conveniently located for both Durham and London.

We were sent a location and start time, and were only given a map once we had crossed the start line. We then had 6 hours to visit as many checkpoints as possible, carrying all we needed for two days and the overnight camp. Each checkpoint, and we could visit as many as we could and in whatever order we felt made sense, was worth a number of points (between 10 and 50). Every minute late to the overnight stop would see 2 points deducted.

Setting off in eerily sunny weather, we soon realised that the checkpoints were positioned by someone with an evil sense of humour. No "trig point

on top of mountain” stuff here: more like “NE corner of ruined sheep-pen”. In other words, the NE corner of a pile of rocks in a field of rocks on the side of a mountain covered in rocks. Not having practiced much navigation since leaving the army 25 years ago, and with what navigation I had done being in places where “church with spire” and “PH” were on the map rather than just contour lines, there was a risk of early sense of humour failure. However, Smith junior immediately rallied to the idea that we could make up for navigational inexperience by applying an excess of enthusiastic energy and we pushed on with appropriate brio.

Naturally, being Wales, the clag soon closed in. The “follow a bearing until we hit that clearly marked track” plan led to predictable excursions to less visited parts of the mountainside. We eventually arrived at the campsite having completely recalibrated our view of the speed we could achieve over the ground, none of which seemed flat, dry, or lacking in boulders.

Once we had put up our tiny tent, the heavens opened and we had about



15 hours to kill until breakfast time. In retrospect, we should have had Formal Dinner given we had so much time and nothing to do, but we made do with re-hydrated curry eaten from a bag, followed by chocolate.

On the second day, the organisers helpfully arranged for bagpipes to awaken the c.1,500 competitors at 0630 and we then set off for more of the same, this time however using our new-found experience to arrive 40 seconds before the deadline (5 hours this time), in time for tea and medals.

The Castle beanie proved its weight in gold for Smith junior. Previous military experience proved less useful than expected for Smith senior. However: we finished our first OMM, we didn’t have to camp out on the mountains alone like some teams did, and we were back in our own beds injury-free by Sunday night. Definitely Type 2 fun, definitely chastening. Recommended.

Geoffrey Smith (University College 1984-87)

George Smith (University College 2021-24)

CHRISTMAS INTERNATIONALS LUNCH

Since 2011, the University has been proudly hosting a Christmas Day lunch at Durham Castle, creating a unique experience and unforgettable memories for our student community. However, in response to the challenges posed by Covid-19, we adapted the format and location in 2020 to St. Mary’s College. Additionally, recognising the hard work of our catering staff, we made the decision to suspend the event in 2021, ensuring they had a well-deserved break over the festive season.

This event has become a much-loved tradition, especially among our international residential students, consistently selling out year after year. For Christmas Day 2023 the host was Prof. Glenn McGregor, Principal of Ustinov College and a climatologist in the Department of Geography.

Our primary aim with this event is to provide a truly unforgettable Christmas experience to students remaining on campus during the holiday period, offering them a taste of Durham’s unique festive spirit within the historic Durham Castle. It’s a wonderful opportunity for our community to come together and celebrate the joy of Christmas.

We strive to strike the perfect balance between sophistication and enjoyment, offering a drinks reception and menu; last year's menu featured hand-carved butter roast turkey, accompanied by a tasty selection of sides including duck fat potatoes, thyme and honey glazed carrots, and a cauliflower gratin. A team of Santa Clauses then stomped into the Great Hall, to a group cheer, to serve Christmas pudding cheesecake with caramelised oranges and brandy cream. The festivities concluded with a fun game of pass the parcel, producing joyful laughter and excitement from all.

Organised by the Operations Directorate, this event is made possible by the dedication of catering staff volunteers from across the colleges, with a Head of College hosting the proceedings. It truly embodies the spirit of community and togetherness that defines Durham University.

Ricky Cohen

COLLEGE MENTORING AND SUPPORT

The University College Mentoring Programme is a valued and integral part of our college support and enrichment offer. Our mentors are valued members of our SCR who provide essential support with orientation when students start their journey with us at Castle; signposting students to appropriate support services, encouraging personal growth and fostering a sense of community and belonging. We currently have a group of engaged academics, professional support staff and community members who have been volunteering their time as mentors for our first year undergraduate cohort. This academic year started with a successful 'Mentor Reveal Evening' in the Undercroft bar during Induction Week where mentees met with their mentors for the first time. This was followed up by a popular 'Mentor and Mentee Quiz' hosted by college (see photo attached). We have a College Mentor Dinner planned for Epiphany term

and our mentors have various other exciting events planned for the rest of the year to connect with their mentees. Do get in touch with me if you are interested in joining this wonderful team that contribute to college life in so many ways.

The student support team have been hard at work, helping our students not only navigate daily challenges, but sometimes more complex issues which range from mental health, disability, confidential disclosures, financial difficulties and accommodation issues to name a few. We regularly meet students, both living in and out of college and across the academic years, and work with them to come up with a support plan which is tailored to their needs. We have led the way in piloting the University's new information management system for student support and wellbeing with Sukanya being a part of the Student Support Project team.

As student support professionals, we also work proactively to help Castle students succeed by hosting events like the dissertation evening recently led by David Myers through to other successful collaborations with our Common Room welfare teams who organise yearly campaigns and events related to support and wellbeing.

If you have any memories on what helped during a challenging time at University College then do write in and let us know!

David Myers, Sukanya Miles-Watson



The Gatehouse has all the info you need about Castle

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

Key Contacts
Porters' Lodge 0191 334 3800
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Keep in touch
 @UniversityCollegeDurham
 durhamcastle
 University College, Durham University

Key
 Formal dinner
 Chapel service
 College Office
 Funding deadline
 Graduation
 Music concert
 Mundle in the Undie
 Castle Crier

	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY
F 1				1 Castle to Careers	
S 2	2 Thorp MCR Mixer			2 Wine & Cheese (JCR)	
S 3		1 Sukkot			
M 4	2 Michaelmas Term			4 Carols and Mince Pies	1 New Year's Day Bank Holiday
T 5	3			5 Christmas	2
W 6	4 Money Advice		1 November starts	6 JCR Panto	3
T 7	5			7 Christmas Hanukkah starts	4
F 8	6			8 SCR Christmas End of term	5 Gury Gobind Singh Birthday
S 9	7 Shemini Atzeret			9 CCA Community Day	6 Theophany
S 10	10 Heritage Day	8 Simchat Torah		10 Castle Christmas Tours	7
M 11	9			11	8 Epiphany Term
T 12	10	10 GP Health RS World Mental Health Day	7 Mentor Network	12	9
W 13	11		8 Castle to Careers	13	10
T 14	12		9	14	11
F 15	15 Open Day	13	10	15	12
S 16	16 Open Day	14	11 Remembrance	16	13
S 17	17	15 Mentor Quiz	12 Diwali Bandi Chor Divas	17	14
M 18	18	16	13 Alcohol/Drugs RS SCR Art Talk	18	15
T 19	19	17	14	19	16
W 20	20 Welcome SCR Summer Social	18	15 Sexual Health RS	20	17 Refreshers' Lecture
T 21	21 International Day	19	16	21	18
F 22	22	20	17	22	19
S 23	23 Arrivals weekend	21	18	23	20
S 24	24	22	19 JCR Meeting	24 Christmas Eve	21
M 25	25 Welcome Dinner	23	20 Trans Day of Remembrance	25 Christmas Bank Holiday	22
T 26	26 Welcome Dinner	24 Frep thanks meal	21	26 Boxing Day Bank Holiday	23
W 27	27 Mawlid al-Nabi	25 IAS Lecture	22	27	24
T 28	28 Matriculation	26	23	28	25
F 29	29 Welcome Dinner	27	24 Ladies Night	29	26
S 30	30 Freshers' Fair Freshfival (JCR) Sukkot	28	25	30	27 Holocaust Memorial Day
S 31	31 Halloween Castle Tours	26	26	31 New Year's Eve	28
M 30	30 SCR Lunch	27	27 College talk Gury Nanak Dev Ji Birthday	29	29
T 31	31 Halloween	28	28	30	30
W 29	29	29	29	31	31

#WeAreCastle

	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY
1	1 St David's Day					
2	2 Castle Charity Fashion Show				1 MCR Ball	
3	3				2 Boat Party (JCR)	
4			1 Bank Holiday			
5			2			
6			3		5 Castle Day	
7			4		6 Colours	
8			5			
9	3 Wild West (JCR)	9	6			
10	4	10 JCR Meeting	7			
11	5	11 Ramadan JCR Interviews	8			
12	6 Mentor Network	12 College Feast	9			
13	7 JCR Hustings	13	10 Eid-ul-Fitr			
14	8 Lunar New Year	14	11			
15	9	15 Term Ends	12			
16	10 Lunar New Year / Chinese New Year	16	13 Alumni Reunion	11 De-stress Dogs	15 Open Day	
17	11	17 St Patrick's Day	14		16	
18	12	18	15	13	17	
19	13 Shrove Tuesday (Pancakes)	19	16	14	18	
20	14 Ash Wednesday JCR Hustings	20 Open Day	17 Ram Navami	15	19	
21	15 Arts Week	21	18	16	20 JCR	
22	16	22	19	17	21 End of term	
23	17 CCA Community	23	20	18	22 Windrush Day	
24	18	24	21	19	23	
25	19	25 Holi	22 Easter Term Earth Day	20	24	
26	20 Mentors	26	23 St George's Day	21	25	
27	21 JCR Hustings	27	24	22	26	
28	22	28	25	23	27	
29	23 Halfway Hall	29 Good Friday Bank Holiday	26	24	28	
30	24	30	27	25	29	
31	25	31 Easter Sunday	28	26	30	
26	26		29	27	31	
27	27 Culture		30	28		
28	28 CCA Afternoon		31	29		
29	29 Leap Day			30		

All dates are accurate at time of printing (September 2023).



University College Calendar 2023-2024

ANDREW DIGWOOD

18 February 1976 – 6 November 2022

Andrew Digwood, who was at Castle from 1995 to 1998, died from cancer on 6 November 2022 at the age of 46. He was a Lancastrian by birth, coming to Durham to read law from his hometown of Accrington, having previously attended Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School in Blackburn.

At Durham, Andrew rapidly made a large number of friends. His rooms throughout his time at Castle, first in the Keep, then on Hallgarth Street, and finally Moatside's R Block were frequently busy with people calling in for a chat, cup of tea, or something a little stronger. He was instrumental in establishing the Cardinal Club, a group of friends who would club together to drink Oddbins' finest £4 wines at Formal under the glow of the club candelabra while dining on the best unibeast and potato balls the kitchen could muster. He could usually see the funny side of college life, and was often a source of humour himself, for example once sending a group of trick or treaters who banged on his door on Hallgarth Street fleeing into the darkness when he greeted them with an unsheathed antique sword rather than offering sweets. His fondness for Castle was long-lasting, becoming a regular attendee at the College Reunion after graduation, most recently in September 2022.

After leaving Durham, Andrew began his legal career first in Birmingham and then Leeds, before finally settling in York in 2004. York became his home and his contribution to it cannot be overestimated. He served as President of the York and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce in 2019-21, having previously been its vice president, and continued to serve as interim vice president until his passing. He was also invited to be Undersheriff of York for 2021-22, a role he was clearly honoured to have been invited to take up, and which he greatly enjoyed.

The high esteem in which Andrew was held by many was demonstrated by the many tributes paid after his death. His funeral was held at York Minster on 24 November 2022. As the congregation of several hundred family, friends (including a good number from Castle), and colleagues gathered on that cold November day, the flag over York Mansion House flew at half-mast as a mark of respect to Andrew, an honour normally reserved for serving councillors and aldermen.

Above all, however, Andrew was dedicated to his family. He married Helen, a fellow lawyer, in April 2010 in the Tunstall Chapel at Castle, with the reception held in the Great Hall. Living in Strensall, just outside York, they had two children, first George, born in 2011, who was then joined by Lucy in 2015. He is also survived by his parents, Pam and Barry, and his sister, Rachael.

Throughout Andrew's time at Castle, his kindness, good humour, common sense, and calmness shone through. These were traits which served him well throughout his life and were evidently much appreciated by others as the years passed. He was a true gentleman, and gentleman of Castle to boot.

Oliver Lendrum, 1995-99

ALAN NUGENT

8 February 1942 – 1 September 2023

We first encountered Alan when we came up to Castle in 1972, as he began six years as Chaplain of both Hatfield and Castle. We and many others quickly got to know both him and his family, Wendy his wife and Meredith and Rhidian, their children. We were among those who attended chapel regularly, joined his discussion groups, went on retreat

to the monastic community in Mirfield, and drank in the Undercroft bar. He was a conspicuous presence around the college, never seeking to ingratiate himself with those who wanted to keep a distance from organised religion, or from him, but warmly available in times of difficulty or challenge. Alan became to us, and countless others, a guide, a mentor, and a friend.

Alan had an extremely sharp and agile mind, a dry wit, fiercely loyal but not afraid to exercise his highly developed critical faculties if provoked. In Chapel he preached excellently, with some theatrical aplomb, balanced the sometimes competing priorities of traditionalists, enthusiasts and musicians, and led chapel officers' meetings with a firm hand. He inspired and encouraged not only a significant number of vocations to ordained ministry but also, and even more importantly for Alan, a plethora of committed faithful people entering other professions.

We both served successively as Chapel Clerks, with Andy – then and still to his surprise - unusually serving in his final undergraduate year. One Wednesday evening, early in the autumn term having just taken up the role, Andy recalls Alan leading a communion service in the Norman Chapel. At the appropriate moment, he turned to Andy and asked how many communicants were present so he could count out the correct number of communion wafers. Not realising at this early stage as Chapel Clerk that such hefty responsibilities were now squarely upon his shoulders, Andy replied that he hadn't a clue. Alan's immediate reply was simple and direct; "you're useless", and carried on with the service. 50 years later, this minor incident still makes us smile, not least as at that point for a new chapel clerk, he was correct.

Andy remained in Durham for postgraduate study while Chris also enjoyed a further year of college and chapel when he returned to Castle for a year's economics lecturing, so both of us maintained close contact with Alan, Wendy and the children. Andy had met Janet whilst in Durham. She was a member of St. Aidan's but attended Castle Chapel each Sunday. Alan married them, with Chris as best man, in the Tunstall Chapel in September 1978, just after Alan moved to be a parish priest

in Sunderland. Meeting with him to discuss the wedding service and the music. Alan immediately made it very clear that we would not be using the hymn 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind'. Still not having learned lessons, we asked why not? "Because we are not singing 'breathe through the heats of our desires' in the middle of your wedding". We chose another hymn.

Alan's links with Castle continued while in Sunderland and then when he combined responsibility for church schools, as diocesan director of education, with being rector of Brancepeth. After a spell as director of clergy and lay training in Lincoln diocese he became sub-Dean of Lincoln Cathedral. It was the most enjoyable and fulfilling work of his life, though for most of his ministry after Sunderland he had been in roles of leadership, responsibility and influence without the preferment some might have been anticipated. 30 years after Castle, Andy had the privilege of working closely with Alan for nearly a decade as Headteacher at Lincoln Christ's Hospital School, an 11-18 comprehensive school in uphill Lincoln. Alan was Chair of Governors and a huge support, a wise council, a guide, and a mentor and when required, the critical friend. Chris was summoned by Alan to preach in the cathedral when he marked forty years of ordained life, and again for his funeral. On each occasion the request (or was it a typically clear instruction?) was simply to preach the Gospel and delete any personal affection, praise or honouring.

So Alan would perhaps not entirely approve of this affectionate but deserved tribute for him as priest and person. Most of all, Alan was, for us when students and as a colleague, an inspiration, a friend, and a force of nature.

Andy Wright, 1972 -1978
Chris Foster, 1972-75, 76-77

PETER ATKINSON

1941 - 2022



A personal tribute.

Peter Atkinson was no more than a nodding acquaintance of mine during our two shared years at Castle but in later years we became firm friends as we were both over many years regular attenders at Reunions when we shared long conversations on our mutual enthusiasms for films, literature and aspects of history. Once we were both retired my wife and I met Peter and his wife Anne often for wonderfully extended lunches in Skipton or Ilkley. It was a great

shock to learn at one of these occasions that he had begun to suffer from Parkinson's disease. Later he developed gradual dementia and the enforced lack of contact with other people, always something so important to him, during the Covid pandemic hastened his decline. He died in April 2022.

Peter was brought up in Stanley, as his gentle Co. Durham accent showed. He was proud of his home town and the mixed grammar school which he attended. Over a period of years he used to go to, often organise, a get-together of his Stanley school contemporaries, conveniently during the Reunion weekend. Once he arranged a dinner for them in the Castle.

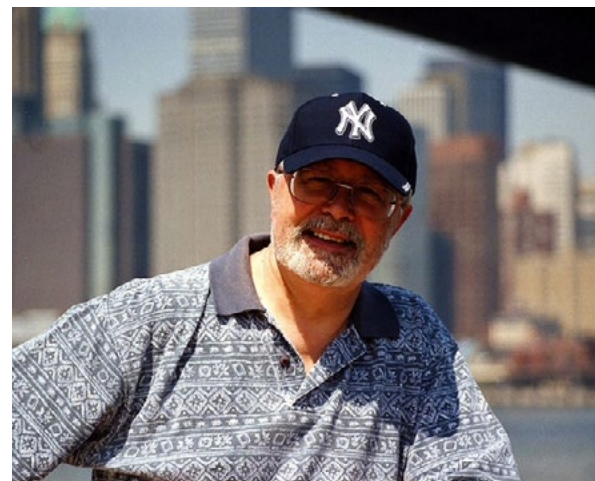
He came up to the Castle in 1959 to read for a History degree, intent on then entering the Anglican ministry. A naturally sociable person he made friends easily, always engaging with interest in what others thought and did. A little rowing in a Castle crew during his first two

years was his only sporting activity.

After graduating in 1962, before going to Lincoln Theological College, Peter worked in a Lay capacity, at the insistence of the Church, at a parish in Sunderland. During this time and previously while at school he enjoyed hospital-visiting, a thing he also did in Knaresborough after retirement, in particular getting patients to make their choices of music for the hospital radio station. A delight in music of many genres was one of his enthusiasms.

His two years at Lincoln, during which he met his wife Anne, completed, he became a deacon, then a priest at a church in Beckenham, Kent. In 1969 he was appointed to his own church, St, John's, Caversham, where he served until 1975 when a return to his beloved N.E. came, to a parish in Sunderland, where they lived in a large fine, Victorian, but very cold, vicarage. After 11 years there his work moved him, Anne and their two sons, Richard and Stephen, to Windsor for 7 years, then to Aylesbury for the final 12 years of his ministry. Anne and he retired to Knaresborough, N.Yorkshire in 2005.

Peter was a devoted family man, proud of the achievements of his sons. Anne and he travelled to Ghana to visit Richard when he worked there for charity after abandoning local government. Earlier Richard had organised for Peter and himself a trip to western USA to visit the



settings of some of the Western films which he enjoyed so much, as well as New York, Philadelphia and Lisbon. He gained enjoyment too and intellectual stimulation from the challenge of more cerebral cinema. When in Windsor he would frequently on a free

afternoon go into London and see two, occasionally three, films in the same day! He told me once how he had gone to a commemoration event for the great Russian director, Andrei Tarkovsky, having read that it was to take place, and ended up talking to the great man's widow.

As I write two memories emerge both emphasising Peter's outgoing and empathetic personality: first an impromptu short waltz with the proprietress of the French restaurant in Ilkley after a most enjoyable lunch there. Secondly a late Saturday morning visit I made with him, during a reunion, to a Sam Smith's pub in Framwellgate Moor to catch up with the couple running it, former parishioners of his Sunderland church. He was truly a 'People Person', able to connect easily and in relaxed manner with others.

For me and a once large, but now sadly diminishing, group of Reunion regulars, a Castle weekend without Peter will not be the same. Always a genial and companionable presence, whether lingering in the Hall after breakfast or lunch, deep in involved discussion or reminiscence or in the Undercroft after the Saturday Dinner debating gently yet combatatively on issues he felt strongly about, for several years he celebrated Holy Communion in the Tunstall chapel early on the Saturday morning of the Reunion, giving the Chaplain a well-deserved rest. He had to forego this self-assumed task – not that he saw it as such, rather as a privilege and duty which went with his calling – when his illness took hold. I have another lasting and happy memory of him officiating at the Wedding of Jonathan Pearson, son of his fellow historians, Alison (Aidan's 1959-62) and Neville Pearson, his Castle contemporary and friend, to Joanne in the Tunstall Chapel in 2001 - both of them Castle graduates. Jonathan told me how surprised he was then at how nervous Peter was, anxious to do a perfect job for the families, the college and his Castle friends, despite his many years of Church experience. This sums him up so well.

John McCormick Castle 1958 -61

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

An obituary writer is sought to remember:

Stephen Denyer (Law)

*Amongst those members who have died this year is John Charles Lowe
(Classics 1955–58 and Education 1958–59)*

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DURHAM TRUST

As with my previous reports UCDT has two main aims: to build reserves for the future and to spend funds now in a useful way that supports the College and student experience.

Since the founding of UCDT in 1990, donations kindly given to it by past and present students have been husbanded and accumulated through investment into net assets of £1.75m at 5 April 2023 (up from £1.55m in 2022). This includes a significant bequest from the estate of Dai Morgan. This has enabled UCDT to improve the experience of students at Castle through supporting 'added value' items.

In 2023, this has included:

- UCDT provided funding for a Museums and Artifacts Studies Scholar
- Funding the position of University College Development Officer, a pivotal link between the College and its alumni. UCDT is expecting this role to be self-funding with a resulting increase in future donations
- Continuing to provide annual grants directly to students to support them in respect of hardship and other, specific items.

Future support includes the renovations of the North Terrace and updating of the Fellows Garden.

The Trustees of UCDT would like to thank all of you that have supported and continue to support the work of UCDT through your donations. Remember that, as a registered charity, any donation you make will attract an additional 25% of its value through UCDT being able to claim Gift-Aid.

Please do have a look at the UCDT pages online at if you want any more information about the Trust: www.castlealumni.uk/about/college-trust

Matthew Maneely



Seen in a subway at York railway station, an LNER advert.

DURHAM CASTLE SOCIETY ACCOUNTS

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST JULY, 2023

	31-07-2023 £	31-07-2022 £
INCOME		
Subscriptions – Current Year	15,456.22	18,973.22
Interest Received	115.47	4.14
	15,571.69	18,977.36
EXPENDITURE		
Castellum	4,242.00	6,096.00
Postage & Distribution	5,900.00	3,721.35
Society Website	638.40	628.80
Spring Gathering	-	671.30
Reunion Expenses	417.60	348.00
Miscellaneous	214.99	214.99
	11,412.99	11,680.44
	4,158.70	7,296.92
JCR International Society	500.00	-
JCR Castle Theatre	365.00	500.00
JCR Cricket (Outdoor)	300.00	225.00
JCR First Generation \Society	300.00	-
JCR R Frisbee	260.00	300.00
JCR Rugby FC	250.00	225.00
JCR R Castle Chamber Choir	66.00	-
JCR UC Netball Club	54.00	-
JCR Badminton	50.00	-
JCR Mixed Lacrosse	40.00	250.00
JCR Hockey	-	450.00
JCR UC Boat Club	-	350.00
JCR Castle Pride	-	300.00
JCR Music	-	250.00
JCR Lawn Tennis	-	225.00
JCR Women's Football	-	200.00
JCR Football	-	150.00
MCR Thorp-Powers Society	77.64	500.00
MCR Academic Conference	-	1,000.00
MCR Matriculation Journal	-	100.00
	2,262.64	5,025.00
	1896.06	2,271.92
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	£ (1,103.94)	£ (728.08)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST JULY 2023

	31-07-2023 £	31-07-2022 £
CURRENT ASSETS		
Business Base Rate Tracker A/c	27,625.04	27,509.57
Business Community Account	8,923.43	15,202.84
	36,548.47	42,712.41
	36,548.27	42,712.41
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Subscriptions in Advance	8,835.00	13,895.00
	8,835.00	13,895.00
	£ 27,713.47	£ 28,817.41
Represented By:-		
ACCUMULATED FUND		
Opening Balance	6,317.41	7,045.49
Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year	(1,103.94)	(728.08)
	5,213.47	6,317.41
COMMUNITY ACTION FUND		
Opening Balance	1,500.00	1,500.00
Transfer	1,500.00	1,500.00
Expenditure	(1,500.00)	(1,500.00)
	1,500.00	1,500.00
LOWE LIBRARY FUND		
Opening Balance	4,000.00	5,000.00
Expenditure	(-)	(1,000.00)
	4,000.00	4,000.00
EVA SCHUMACHER-REID HARDSHIP FUND		
Opening Balance	4,000.00	5,500.00
Expenditure	(1,500.00)	(1,500.00)
	2,500.00	4,000.00
ALUMNI EVENTS FUND		
Opening Balance	3,000.00	2,500.00
Transfer	500.00	500.00
	3,500.00	3,000.00
MILITARY SCHOLARSHIP FUND		
Opening Balance	10,000.00	9,000.00
Transfer	1,000.00	1,000.00
	11,000.00	10,000.00
	£ 27,713.47	£ 28,817.41

Martin E. Gunson, PgDip (Dunelm), BFP, FCA, FRSA, FISM, FCMI, FFA, FIPA, FFTA, FIA8 8th. August, 2023 Honorary Treasurer

TREASURER'S NOTES

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.

The Life Membership paid by Freshers on arrival has fallen 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. Hopefully the tide has now turned.

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



DEGREE RESULTS 2023

Study Programme Level	Classification Awarded	2022-23
Undergraduate	First	119
	2-1	194
	2-2	31
	Third	*
	Ordinary	*
	Certificate of Higher Education	14
	Diploma of Higher Education	9
	Other	*
	Pass	*
	No Award	22
Postgraduate Taught	Distinction	39
	Merit	169
	Pass	64
	No Award	*
Postgraduate Research	Pass	46
	No Award	10
Distance Learners	Merit	*
Total		735

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

WHO'S WHO AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

PROFESSOR WENDY POWERS,
PRINCIPAL & ASSOCIATE PRO-VICE-
CHANCELLOR

DR ELLEN CRABTREE,
VICE-PRINCIPAL

SUKANYA MILES-WATSON,
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

REV'D DR SAM HOLE,
CHAPLAIN AND SOLWAY FELLOW (FROM
APRIL 2024)

JULIA BONNER,
ALUMNI & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

KATHRINE BERTRAM,
ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT CO-ORDINATOR
(2023-24)

DAVID MYERS,
ASSISTANT STUDENT SUPPORT OFFICER

**NICOLA DIXON &
TRACY DONNELLY,**
COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION CO-ORDINATOR
(JOB-SHARE)

JOANNE MOORHOUSE,
COLLEGE OPERATIONS MANAGER

DAN THOMPSON,
COLLEGE OPERATIONS TEAM LEADER

JAMIE SHORT,
FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICE MANAGER

DAN NOWELL,
HEAD CHEF

RAFFAELLA ALIPRANDI,
VISITOR SERVICES CO-ORDINATOR

SUSAN NOBLE,
COLLEGE ASSISTANT FINANCE MANAGER

ELAINE BEDFORD,
COLLEGE FINANCE ASSISTANT

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?



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.



durham.ac.uk

castlealumni.ac.uk