

A Short History of the Buildings of St Cuthbert's Society



Crest and motto

Formerly the official emblem of the Society, this crest incorporates the shield which is today our official mark. Designed for the Society in 1957, it depicts an eider duck (known in Northumberland as a Cuddy's duck) which is often linked to St Cuthbert due to his affinity with nature. The phrase '*gratia gratiam parit*' is written beneath. This phrase is found in Erasmus, *Adages* (*Adagia* I.i.34), as well as in the anonymous Greek play, *Hymenaeus*, and is most simply translated as 'Favour begets favour', however it might be considered more eloquent in its original Latin. The sense of the motto concerns, of course, the fecundity of generosity, the belief that generosity is never unrewarded.

12 South Bailey

12 South Bailey, the nucleus of St Cuthbert's Society, was taken over by the Society in 1951. During that year it contained the Principal's Office, a small dining hall, the first ever SCR and was also home to six students of the Society. At this time, most of the students lived in residential houses outside of Cuth's. Today, the building still retains the SCR and offices of the College Officers, but has been extended to include more rooms for students, a college bar, JCR area and a larger dining hall.

Prior to the move to 12 South Bailey, Principal C Leech had been forced to operate the Society's office from his own flat on Saddler Street, meaning that he was unable to achieve much academic work because of the continual ebb and flow of Society members through his door.

In February of 1951 Professor Leech's prayers were answered when the council finally offered the Society a spacious town house situated on 12 South Bailey, however many members of the society were uneasy about this change, as for them it brought the Society closer to the status of a college - something which many members were firmly against.



13 South Bailey

13 South Bailey was acquired in the summer of 1952 from St Mary's College and welcomed its first residents that October as the demand for Society rooms grew greater. The building is still home to our first year students.

In the garden behind House 13 you can find The Wendy House, a detached four bedroom house that is also used for first year accommodation. The garden is a favourite amongst students - so much so that it is now included in Cuth's Day celebrations, acting as a more relaxing area, contrasting from the highly energetic gardens across the road.



8 South Bailey

8 South Bailey was bought in 1964 as the Society continued to grow. Its large rooms and spacious gardens mean that it is still an attractive prospect for students wanting to live in the heart of Durham. It now also includes the college library, gym and extra workspaces.

The President of the JCR is given accommodation in House 8, as well as the JCR Treasurer and the Librarian, who are the only returners permitted to live on the Bailey. The JCR deems this necessary due to the huge responsibility of the roles and the important part these individuals have in the Cuth's community.



27 North Bailey

27 North Bailey was allocated to the Society in 1984 to become home to yet more students as the University expanded and St Cuthbert's Society became even more popular. It is used for exactly the same purpose today.

The house is slightly separated from the rest of the Cuthbert's Bailey buildings by St John's College, which occupies most of the space in-between. The house faces the gateway arch to the Cathedral priory, which marks the divide between North and South Bailey. The oldest

buildings on the North Bailey are believed to be from the seventeenth century, but the majority are younger.

The Union Society

Before the Society had been allocated rooms, its members would meet frequently in the writing room of the Union building and 'monopolise the chairs to sit by the fire' (as reported in 1909).

It was clear to all that the Cuthbert's students ought to be given more space of their own, yet this was still many years away. In 1947 Mr Kennedy, a student of St Cuthbert's, was elected as the Union Society President for the Michaelmas term, but by this time the University had allocated the Society rooms on Owengate and Church Street (7 & 10) and so whilst they were now more welcome, the Cuthbert's students no longer had to flock to the Union fire for warmth. The impressive building now in this spot is The Pemberton Building, designed by W. D Caroe in the Tudor style and built in 1929. On the first floor is the debating chamber of the Union Society, which has hosted many famous speakers in its time, including David Miliband, Nick Clegg, Boris Johnson, Michael Palin, Sir Ian Blair and Imelda Staunton.

Cosin's Hall

In 1892 the St Cuthbert's Men were having difficulty finding a place to hold their meetings. After a collective letter to the Journal outlining their grievances, they were granted access to St Cuthbert's Room in what was then titled University House, and is now Cosin's Hall. It became home to the Society for over fifty years.



The building is an early example of Georgian architecture, and is now home to Durham University's Institute of Advanced Study, an ideas-based institute which brings together some of the world's finest researchers from every discipline to examine themes of major intellectual, scientific, political and practical significance.

Owengate and 30 Church Street

In 1947 the Society was allocated a room on Owengate along with 30 Church Street to offer its members more space, but with over 200 students as part of the Society it was still impossible to accommodate everyone in the new premises.

It was in the same year that the University decided that the currently non-collegiate body should be officially known as St Cuthbert's Society, and were keen that it think of itself as part of the University, rather than unattached.

Also in the same year, the Society held its first dance in the hall of Hatfield College, the success of which prompted the President to propose a more regular and varied programme of social

events. It was decided at the next meeting that at the end of Michaelmas term the Society would hold a Christmas Dinner and a carol service, with another dance in Epiphany term, and that the Society should work towards organising formal debates.

Cuth's Boathouse

In Epiphany term of 1894 Cuth's Boat Club performed unusually well in the Senate Challenge Cup and so was permitted to build its own boathouse during the summer of the same year, completed in 1895. The Boat Club has grown in strength ever since and remains one of the most popular sports undertaken by members of the Society, and very much a force to be reckoned with on the water.

The year after its founding the Club won its first trophy, the Challenge Pairs, at Durham Regatta, and in its early years was most successful in sculling, with H.S.S. Jackson, E.C. Summers, H. de l'Isle Booth and T.M. Falconer enjoying success.

The Club made their first visit to the Tideway in 1966 for the Head of the River Race. The Boat Club's highest finishes on the Tideway are 137th at HERR (1993) and 102nd in WeHERR (1994). Another notable success came in the mid to late 1980s, when the men's crew (Henry Blackshaw, Daniel Tomlinson, Chris Lawrence and Tim Pitt coxed by Patrick Hurley) made the leap from Novices to Elite status in only one year.



Meanwhile, in the same year the women's crew (consisting of Elaine Hamilton, Vicky Foulsham, Elspeth Lindsley and Dawn Cox, coxed by Patrick Hurley) almost repeated the great feat and qualified to race at Women's Henley.

The Three Tuns

The Three Tuns Hotel played host to the first ever Society Christmas Dinner in the winter of 1948, which was reported as a highly successful event. The tradition continues today in our own dining hall at 12 South Bailey, where the Society holds Christmas Formal Dinners for students at the end of Michaelmas Term.

Our Christmas Formal Dinners are so intensely popular that we have to hold three in order to satisfy the demand for a place. The delicious festive food is traditionally followed by a rendition of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', where the diners are separated into groups and each asked to sing a certain line of the song, which is always done with great gusto!

Parsons Field

Parson's Field: Unlike in its former years, St Cuthbert's Society now promises to house all of its first year students, so the Society has had to expand even further. Parsons Field offers accommodation to Freshers as well as returning Cuth's students and is happily nestled on the outskirts of the Maiden Castle Wood. It includes a second bar, gym and JCR space for use by all members of the Society.



The site is home to Parsons Field Court, Fonteyn Court, Refounders House and Brooks House, the latter of which is named after one of St. Cuthbert's longest serving principals: Professor Leslie Brooks, Principal of the Society from 1963 to 1985. The name 'Refounders' reflects the Society's history of having been restarted after disruption caused by World War One.

Compiled from Henry Tudor's, *A History of St Cuthbert's Society*, which is available to purchase from reception.