

Dear

The new academic year is about to begin. As the many trees which form part of the glory of Durham are starting to turn, we welcome returning students who already contribute so much to Cuth’s, and a new cohort who will, we are sure, become just as passionate about the College as their predecessors. At the recent annual alumni weekend, I hosted Cuth’s veterans including some Refounders who were here in the 1950s; we hope that our current students will also make enduring friendships, and will return frequently to the College to remember and celebrate their formative years here.

I am a new girl in Cuth’s, and feel very honoured to be joining a College with such an interesting and rich history. Since my field is medieval literature and culture, it seems very appropriate to be in a college named for one of the most important British saints. In fact, it was on St Cuthbert’s Day that I got the telephone call offering me the position of Principal, a most auspicious coincidence! I studied Classics, and then Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, at Cambridge in Newnham College, and later lived in a residential college at Yale for five years while doing my PhD in Medieval Studies there. Last year I had the good fortune to spend a term in Durham as a Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies, working on my current project on baths and bathing in the Middle Ages, and was given a flat in Trevelyan. This reminded me how wonderful the collegiate system is, and inspired me to apply for the position of Principal of Cuth’s.

Colleges flourish because of the commitment and energy of their staff and students. Although I have only been in Cuth’s for a few weeks, it is very clear to me what a remarkable and devoted community it is. But colleges also need to maintain and expand their facilities. Cuth’s is now the largest of the Durham colleges, with over 1300 students (undergraduate and postgraduate), divided between two sites, the Bailey and Parson’s Field. We are desperately short of space for student activities, and so we are drawing up a bold plan for a new building across the Bailey in the ‘Wendy House Garden’. This building, currently known as the Community Hub, would provide much needed multi-functional rooms available for meetings and for activities such as performances, film nights and exhibitions, plus a new gym, a TV and games room, and accommodation for visiting fellows or other visitors. It is not an exaggeration to say that this new building will transform life at Cuth’s (not least for disabled students, for whom the Bailey buildings are challenging); it is an ambitious and expensive project, and we need your assistance to realise it.

Any form of gift to the College would be very welcome, so would you please consider supporting this initiative? A gift of £10, £50 or even £100 would have a real impact.

St. Cuthbert’s Society

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www.durham.ac.uk/st-cuthberts.society/

Setting up your gift as a Direct Debit, monthly or annual, would be an enormous help in planning for the years ahead.

In 2013 we shall be celebrating the 125th anniversary of the founding of St Cuthbert’s Society. I am very excited that the Cuthbert Gospel buried with the saint, and recently acquired by the British Library, will be on display in Durham next year together with the magnificent Lindisfarne Gospels. Perhaps you will be able to come and see this thrilling exhibition. We certainly hope that you will be able to participate in some of the celebratory activities we are planning, both in Durham and in London, and to meet past and present students and staff.

Higher education has changed enormously in the last five years, let alone the last fifty. A reading of Henry Tudor’s splendid history of the Society suggests that the spirit of Cuth’s has remained constant, but there are many challenges undreamed of by the early members, in particular financial ones. I hope that you regard your years at Cuth’s as very important for your social and professional development. Please help us to ensure that this remains true for current and future students.

With best wishes,



Professor Elizabeth Archibald

Principal

PS You can give online at [*www.dunelm.org.uk/annualfund*](http://www.dunelm.org.uk/annualfund)

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