



College of St Hild  
and St Bede  
Durham University

**Including:**

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# Hild Bede Alumni Association Magazine



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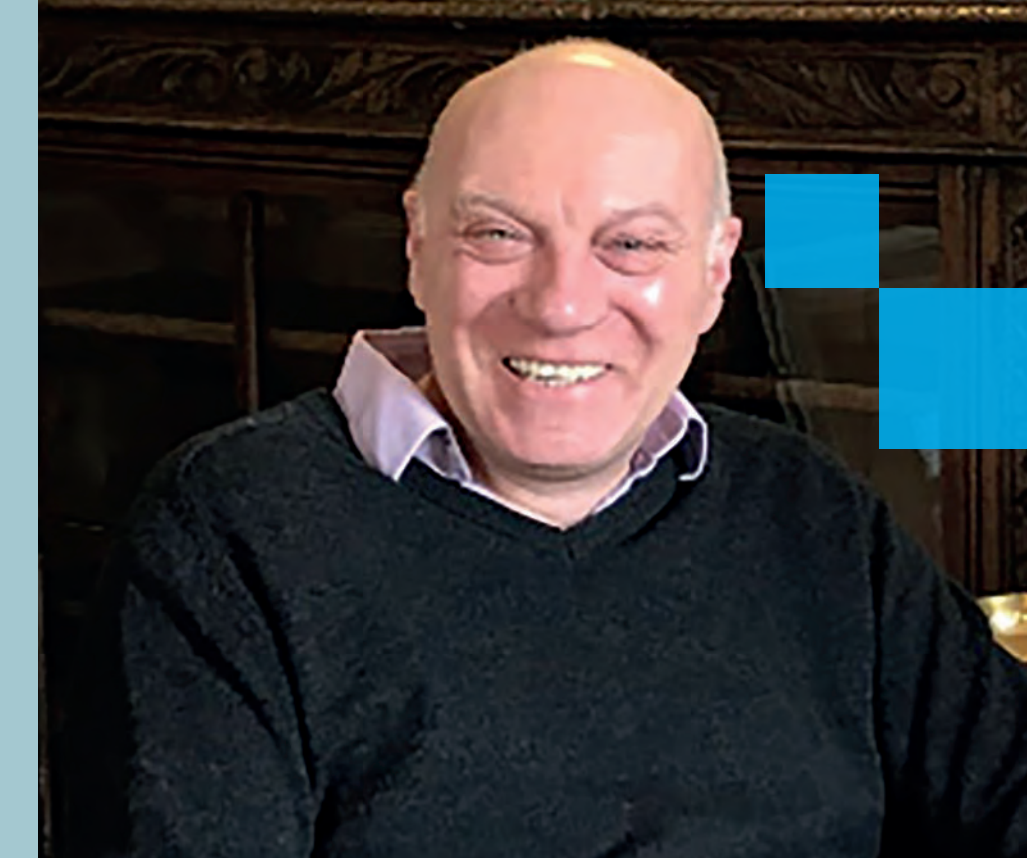
# Principal's Letter

## One hundred remarkable days

It has been said that the 'first 100 days' are critical for anyone coming into a leadership role. The time when one makes one's mark. As a new College Principal, I would suggest that it not so much the mark that I have made on our College, Hild Bede, that is striking but the mark that it has made on me.

I want to share with you a number of ways in this has been the case, and consequently, that I have enjoyed the most wonderful 100 days of my professional life. It's been about variety, breadth and depth of the things that go on in our College. It's been about the intense collegial spirit, pride and pleasure we have taken in each other's company, care and 'family'. And, it's been about the brilliance of my new student colleagues and the extraordinary things that they do to make the 'mighty Hild Bede' beat brightly on our hillside by the river.

In the three terms that I have served now as Principal, I have had the privilege of experiencing all the following: the weekly screenings of major cinema releases by Bede FilmSoc – the oldest cinema in Durham; two plays put on by the award-winning Hild Bede Theatre; weekly bar quizzes (in which we are proud to usually have the University's University Challenge team captain as a competitor); regular 'Open Mic' nights; the spectacularly talented Bede Chapel choir; competitive sports ranging from football to extreme frisbee and a very special taster of the Hild Bede 'Cheer' cheerleading team. We have hosted talks from two resident IAS Fellows – both of whom came



to some of our formal dining events and joined in with our programme of activities as well giving seminars in College. Our Ball Committee threw a fabulous Winter 'Nutcracker' Ball

**There have been clues to life as your College has already found ways and beaten new paths in the present. There was the splendid online 'final formal' this summer at which, I think 198 people joined us via 'zoom' for an evening of dining and speeches and celebration.**

with 'ABBA' as headliners and our LGBT and FemSocs have hosted events. Our Senior Common Room has hosted talks for members almost weekly and a stunning Burns Supper.

I have learnt something about our remarkable College 'family'. This comprises the catering

and housekeeping team, all my colleagues in student support and development and College administration, the porters and receptionists as well as our students and our community of around 17,000 alumni. It is truly a place where people look out for one another. The catering staff and porters who notice if someone seems a bit down, and those loyal alumni and College friends who steward and support the many trusts and funds that in turn support our students. Our College, by virtue in part of venerability, has managed sadness and loss as well as success and celebration with grace and care as befits a good family. We bade farewell to one of our previous Principals, Dr Vernon Armitage, with a gathering of current and past students that filled both the Chapel and the "Vern" our aptly eponymous bar. You can read some of the touching and inspiring stories of "Prin's" influence further into this magazine. We also mourned and celebrated the too early-ended life of one of our student colleagues, George Somerset. The rallying of students around his friends and family and their choice to allow us to share in memorialising George's life and contribution to College was a privilege.

As for the brilliance of Hild Bede students – it burns extraordinarily bright. I have enjoyed conversations about theoretical chemistry, ancient history and Extinction Rebellion, I had the pleasure of collaborating with our splendid SRC Exec as they make it a place of becoming and belonging. I have been thrown in the air, frozen beside the football pitch and been inspired by ingenuity, intelligence and service. You can read much more about that in my review of some of their successes later in the magazine.

The first 'covid lockdown' robbed us of College Day, our formals, Summer Ball and a proper graduation. It has stolen from me the pleasure of your company at reunions and events. It also forced some of our student colleagues to put down roots that they did not anticipate and some have been with us now since October 2019, unable to leave for wherever is home. We have been managing, alongside them, and now find ourselves trying to forge a path through the start of the new academic year in which we cannot bring all of College together and they have to live in 'households'. I assure you that your College is working nevertheless, 'freshers' and induction were superb, the FREPS were amazing and we pulled off a College matriculation in Chapel and a petting zoo, as it has become a tradition.

I am trying hard to look beyond covid19. There have been clues to life as your College has already found ways and beaten new paths in the present. There was the splendid online 'final formal' this summer at which, I think 198 people joined us via 'zoom' for an evening of dining and speeches and celebration. We managed to build, supported by the SRC and Tim Ferguson our Chaplin, a new web presence for the 'Sounding of the Retreat'. This has elicited contacts with friends previously unknown to us who predecessors were associated with or whose paths crossed with the 'Bede Men' whom we remember through this

event. Throughout the summer, the legendary 'Vern Quiz' night ran almost without a break.

Beyond that I am delighted that we have been driving a new programme to support students in leadership, and I have set myself objectives which align to a 10 year vision – assuming you'll allow me that long!

At the centre of this, I hope very much to bring you closely inside the conversation and to elicit your support. We have achieved control of the plans for (re)developmental of our College estate. This is now firmly focused on Hild Bede. We are aiming to 'get Bede back' and fully refurbish the two old buildings and turn them into high quality student accommodation. We also want to renew and enhance 'Caedmon' whether as a new build or refurbishment. Not two Colleges, not another College alongside us, but a mightier Hild Bede. It will mean work on bricks and mortar, but I want the buildings to go up or be refurbished around what we are, around what we want to achieve and to be. I would like us to have 500 beds, to be able to have more Postgraduate and 'returners' living in, to have the best possible facilities for a theatre and Filmsoc but also other activities, clubs and societies, and indeed to make our environment speak ever more loudly and usefully to our ambitions around engaging and supporting the local community. They need us like never before and that is not going away anytime soon. In addition, our ambition to reach more people of talent and potential, who may have not always seen themselves as 'Durham', warrants a place, which can be their home. This will take investment from us such that we can harness – in expertise and advice and likely financial – but the reward will be a College with greater authority and autonomy as part of the University, and it will make us still more distinctive. The vision here is to be a gateway to the University, to open up access by opening up accessibility. This not

about what we have but what we do with these things.

Your support in these '100 days' has been very important to me and College. Thank you for that which you already given - our newest gifts being a snooker table, a lego model of Hild and new scholarships, as well as very kind legacy. I am ensuring that the various funds, support for fellowships, scholarships we hold, which are supported by your generosity, are visible and accessible to students so that we can maximise our presence and purchase and support to students. I am boldly happy to make this money work for them, because that is what it is there for.

Even some of darker days have been important in my learning to be your Principal. They have revealed the indomitable spirit in our community, and where it has been tested and frayed, the love and support in others for those who have needed it. It's not a thing easily captured by any one event but many of the qualities were present on what was to be almost the last day we dined in College before the March lockdown. Many of the remaining students came in evening wear for dinner despite been forced to cancel the formal that night. I had eaten, alone and informally on High Table. When I went to clear my things, a voice rose asking College to stand for High Table. It was touching, graceful and funny, like a little farewell but only for a short time. I gave a terrible speech, left and had a little cry.

It has been a remarkable year. You will find in this magazine stories and accounts that show how to survive it and grow beyond it. You are an inspiration, our alumni. Because of that and a brilliant '100 days' I still feel as I did when I sought this role. I told my interviewers that I wanted a College to love, and I have found one. Hild Bede has won my heart and because of what a College is, does and makes possible, it will do so for all our students and friends who are yet to join us.





### Hello everyone,

I hope this finds you and your loved ones well. Every year, we get an opportunity to hear about what our alumni have been up to, to share their stories. Having had an early sneak-peak at the articles I can tell you each one gives a little bit of college life at a time when college isn't as close as any of us would like. My thanks to the contributors to the magazine for taking the time to be part of our community and to Steph, and the college, for keeping this lifeline open for us all to enjoy. I know we all keep looking around the corner to 2021. I, for one, am giving it a meaningful stare.

I never expected in its first full year to be quite so hamstrung in moving forward with our plan to reach out to you all and to build on the great work of the association. There have been many wonderful engagements that I have heard about, and haven't heard about, but it's a little like waiting for someone to fire the starting gun only to notice that the sole on your running shoe flaps and that is probably wasn't wise to have had quite so many chip salads, and cups of tea before the race. By now we should have had the Alumni event in London, alumni at College Day, a summer event and be tracking for our annual reunion. Instead I am regretting not buying shares in Zoom. However, every disappointment is an opportunity and we continue to plan for when this awful COVID business is under control and we all start reaching for a little more normality.

I don't believe there is anyone whose lives haven't been touched by COVID in some way. The touch might be a brush or a full tragic slap. I, for one, have lost friends both here and in the US, and sadly a few friends that continue to fight in hospital. In a year where social media feels like the only thing left to keep us all together it is a bittersweet knowledge that reaching for the phone to answer a 'messenger' ping won't be an answer to a message from one of those that has left us. And it's not

## The Chair's Letter

# Seas the Day

just COVID. This last year has taken many dear Alumni and college members off to the great Caedmon Hall in the sky. The Vern is a memory of a man now and no longer the man himself, there is a lovely tribute of him in this magazine. Anyway, this message is for all of those we have lost - this year, and before - as much as it is sent with love to all of you.

I've headlined this message as 'Seas the Day' which is either terribly clever or toe-curlingly obvious. My relationship with boats has always been somewhat fair-weather. What seems like a lifetime ago, I was taken out on a Laser in Cornwall and found myself in the sea more times than I was on the boat. Nor do I look particularly good in a wet suit - now or then. I've been lucky enough to have run up a mortgage travelling the world. Over the years this has meant that I could safely indulge a tourist catamaran/ yacht sunset sail whilst clinking what passes for champagne on the day (and that can be peach cider so don't mock).

As you do when you get older and you inevitably start to run out of things that interest you, I started to believe that I could skipper a boat, or at the very least, sail one.



**My relationship with boats has always been somewhat fair-weather. What seems like a lifetime ago, I was taken out on a Laser in Cornwall and found myself in the sea more times than I was on the boat.**

Once that Pandora's box opened it soon became clear I was no Ben Ainslie (perhaps more Ahab?). I needed to be taught - not with proper definitions - but by semaphore and red light/green light. Still, this year it became possible to have a share in a boat so it seemed like - with very few other things one could do safely after the initial lockdown - it was time for me to pull my finger out and get going on doing it all properly. Though, to be fair, some key messages seem to

be: keep watching the navigation system, don't drop below 3m, and avoid anything more than Beaufort 4 and all will be fine - even if sometimes you have to think REAL HARD about which rope is attached to which sail.

A friend of mine down here, called Jim, has been the most patient teacher. I think he's paying it forward as I can't think of any other reason he'd want to encourage me to skipper a boat, but folk are lovely like that aren't they? I mention all of this because I know that COVID has been, and still is, a terrible time, but I feel like I am one of many who've taken the opportunity to find something worthwhile to do - and I'm not the only one if this magazine is anything to go by. I like to think that if ever there was a Dunkirk style call to arms the sail would be up and I would be ready to go.

Sail is up and ready to go.... yes, I like that. That's where we are. Stay strong - be ready to 'seas the day'.

(I know, I know...).

Take care, stay safe, wherever you are, Darren



# SRC President 2020–2021

## Joseph Cheadle



### Hello everyone,

I'm Joseph Cheadle, the new SRC President as of August 2020. We've had an absolute rollercoaster of a year, and the next one is shaping up to be even more exciting!

We are indebted to Jack Rawden (Social Sec), Hugo Bush (Head of Quizzes) and the whole Ents team for broadcasting the Hild Bede Bar Quiz live on Youtube every Thursday during lockdown. Further to this we held virtual events for our College Day, Final Formal & Bedo's Bingo, which could not have happened without the tireless efforts of Kesia Schofield (SRC President 2019-2020) and Harvey Lamb (Social Sec & then-President-elect). The work of these, and countless other students, has been crucial for preserving the community spirit we cherish at Hild Bede.

Some of you may know George Somerset, and one of the first major activities we undertook as a college was the 24hr ergathon in his memory. This raised enough money for both a boat & bench dedicated to his memory, as well as over £2000 for the mental health charity Mind. More recently, we have also been publicising the campaign for funds for Tom Lazarides, a Hild Bede sportsman, who has suffered life-changing injuries. Team Durham is hosting a virtual running event on Strava, and Charlie Gregg (Publicity Officer) is also organising a team to represent Hild Bede. The goal is to raise money to feed and to provide much needed medical equipment & opportunities to underprivileged

children in Zambia. Sadly, the in-person Hild Bede/Cuths Varsity was cancelled due to COVID-19, but Daniel Joinson (Sports & Socs 2019-2020) and Jess Hall (Sports & Socs 2020-2021) organised multiple virtual events, including rowing races, FIFA tournaments, cheerleading stretches, and (free) poker matches! I'm proud to say we absolutely smashed them, winning 605 points to their 240, and can't wait to repeat those scores in person later this year. Despite disruption at the end of the season, the Hild Bede Men's Football 1st team has been promoted to the premier league, and we look forward to taking home the trophy when competitive play resumes!

The challenges ahead to student life are enormous. To this end Josh Harpin (Head Frep) and Sophia Pym (Deputy Head Frep) are planning like crazy to best utilise the amazing spaces we have, in a way which engages and integrates the next generation of students to experience our college. Some good news is that non-competitive sport will, in most cases, resume. This gives students an excellent way to get to know each other, learn new skills, and socialise outside of their prescribed accommodation bubbles. Over the course of this year I plan to hold referenda on employing a sabbatical Financial Officer and setting up Hild Bede SRC as an independent charity. These undertakings were a main part of my manifesto, and I believe they are key



I am optimistic about this year and what we can achieve. Especially close to my heart is the most recent group of alumni, who have yet to enjoy the opportunity to celebrate completion of their studies.



steps to widening the scope of what we as a student body can achieve. It may therefore be necessary at some stage for the SRC to acquire a Board of Trustees, for which alumni would be very strong candidates, but I shall keep you updated about that when there is more clarity. This is a plan that is being carried out at other Durham Colleges, and I hope to obtain the same autonomy and authority for the students of St Hild & St Bede SRC.

Overall, despite current circumstances, I am optimistic about this year and what we can achieve. Especially close to my heart is the most recent group of alumni, who have yet to enjoy the opportunity to celebrate completion of their studies. Pandemic permitting, the

events we run in third term (College Day, Summer Ball, etc) shall be an opportunity for people to come back, enjoy the company of the wider alumni community, staff and current students, the Hild Bede grounds, and relive as well as make some new memories. Even if this is not the case next year, we know that one day we will return, and until then – carry around that little piece of Hild Bede within us.

I've far exceeded my word limit so, until next time, stay safe.

All the Hild Bede love,  
Cheadle.





## From Hild Bede To High Sheriff — A Cumbrian Story

**Julie Barton (née Greenwood), Hild Bede 1985-1989, has been selected by the Queen to become the High Sheriff of Cumbria, in March 2020. As High Sheriff, Julie has selected the theme of 'tackling social isolation and loneliness' and she describes the challenges and successes she has faced in her first year in office.**

I arrived at Hild Bede from Cumbria in October 1985 in my parents' bashed up old Metro and parked in a sea of large, shiny vehicles. My parents, inexperienced about university and somewhat daunted by the car park, kissed me good luck and promptly left. I was given a room in error on a postgraduate corridor in Hild building. I never complained. I am glad my friendship group was a variety of freshers and postgraduates and after all, I had a fantastic view of the cathedral.

I have always enjoyed having a broad range of hobbies rather than specialising in one all-consuming interest. College life suited me well. The sports teams were more inclusive than at university level and I enjoyed playing hockey for Hild

Bede. I dabbled in college musicals; strictly chorus, and I took up rowing.

College meals were always a good way to meet friends and get to know others. I used to find great humour in the quirky rules of the dining room. At breakfast for instance you weren't allowed two servings of anything, but what qualified as a serving? One member of the staff seemed employed purely to snap Weetabix in half, as a portion was one and half Weetabix. I aspired to have three whole Weetabix. It never happened. My breakfasts were always snapped. Formal dinners however were something very special and I think only happened three times a term. We would take it in turns to queue at night to book a table of eight. I

remember the Vice Principal would always start each dinner by saying the same grace, "good food, good meat, good God let's eat." Summer balls were another highlight, even if ball gowns and bouncy castles were not a great mix.

Coming from a comprehensive school in a small town in Cumbria I remember being somewhat overawed by the confidence of other students in my history seminars. It took me a while to find my voice, but eventually I calmed down, listened, and realised I could contribute to arguments and timidly launched in with "actually..." I do not think I have lost my voice since. Durham gave me confidence, but it also instilled in me the need to support my arguments and focus my thinking.

Community has always been important to me and sometimes I felt as a student that university life was existing in a bubble, removed from the lives of locals. As a member of the Catholic Society I helped run social events for the elderly and socially isolated and I volunteered at the prison crèche at Frankland High Security Prison. On volunteer days I used to catch the free bus to the prison from Durham Station with the other prison visitors. The journey was never dull. Crèche work may have helped prepare me for some of the challenges of the classroom, but I do remember thoroughly enjoying my final teaching practice at St Joseph's, Coundon.

After graduating in 1989, I returned to Cumbria and married Peter Barton, my boyfriend from home. Together we set about converting a mill and I began my career teaching in Barrow-in-Furness, then Ulverston. Just as the house was finished and things seemed a little easier, we risked it all and set up Forge Europa in March 1993. We started the business in the spare room at home from a standing start with no customers, no suppliers, and no financial backers. Our sons, Joseph and John were born during the early years of Forge,

leading to a hectic but happy life work balance. Making the move from education to business was a big decision. In reality, the transition was easy. I enjoyed teaching but business is where I belong. Both involve enabling and inspiring people to achieve, so they are not as different as they might first appear.

Over the years Forge has grown into a multi-million-pound innovative lighting company with customers in over 20 countries. The skills in supporting arguments I learnt at Durham were instrumental in the company winning a Queen's Award for Outstanding Innovation in 2009. I continue to volunteer, and I am proud that Forge was the first electronics company in the country to be awarded a CommunityMark for its corporate social responsibility.

Fast forward to March 2020, my name had been picked by the Queen and I was to become High Sheriff of Cumbria, a voluntary, independent, non-political, unpaid Royal appointment with the noble duties of upholding the principal organs of our Constitution within my county. The role goes back over a thousand years, and historically High Sheriffs held extensive powers to judge cases in court, raise "the hue and cry" after criminals, command a posse, send two knights to Parliament, and collect taxes. It's an interesting job description! A sheriff's powers may have waned over the centuries, but I planned to play a modern, proactive, and positive role in today's Cumbria and to promote my county during my year. It was the first time ever that a High Sheriff of Cumbria had come from the Low Furness Peninsula. My installation with over two hundred invitees in Barrow-in-Furness Town Hall was imminent and my diary was full of exciting events to attend, but the pandemic scuppered everything. Instead, my installation took place on the patio at home, Peter stood in for the Lord-Lieutenant, our younger son John, who is now a student himself at Durham, stood in for the Undersheriff and most guests

attended via Skype.

When I chose my theme of 'tackling social isolation and loneliness' for my year in Office, I never realised how topical it would become. Many thousands of people of all ages across our counties live isolated lives, which detrimentally affects their health and wellbeing. I had planned to shine a spotlight on the organisations working in Cumbria to alleviate loneliness. Then, of course, came Covid-19 and

usual hazards of slow roads or sheep on the track. Contact with charities led me to places none of my predecessors had visited. Video meetings are held in the quietest corners of people's houses. I have sat 'virtually' under cabin beds, next to mop buckets and in spare bedrooms to discuss social challenges and innovative responses. I was able to join church services at the Cathedral in Carlisle and still dash virtually across 30 miles



▲ Hild Bede Hockey Tour of the Cambridge Colleges spring 1987. I am at the far right of the middle row directly in front of Steve Bell, our part time goalkeeper and minibus driver. In front row directly behind ball (blonde) was the captain Helen Wilson.

suddenly everyone was not only talking about social isolation but experiencing it for themselves due to the lockdown.

Since taking Office, I have been determined that restrictions would not reduce me to some sort of nightshift where little happens. Covid-19 is the biggest crisis of our generation but as there is no blueprint for a High Sheriff in lockdown, I was free to take a fresh approach to lending active support.

During spring, I "zoomed" around Cumbria, participating in resilience groups to ensure no one was left unsupported, and attending meetings with charities and organisations without the

to Workington in time for Mass, thanks to livestreaming services. After dinner speeches changed into saying a few words virtually after bringing my own nibbles and glass. Unable to visit in person, I set up a Facebook page and learned to make videos for the Police and various emergency services to show appreciation for their frontline efforts. I have enjoyed being a regular guest on local radio stations and deliberately included hospital radio, so I could thank NHS workers whilst acknowledging the important role of radio in bringing together patients and their loved ones during lockdown.

I have been greatly impressed





▲ Guys and Dolls Musical spring 1988. It was produced by Damon Kerr and Jill Priest had the lead as Adelaide. I am on the front row, strictly chorus, only to the left of Jill in a pale peach dress. I am between a red dress and a green dress.

with the creativity and can-do mentality with which so many groups are adapting their ways of operating. One of my favourite early events was attending Virtual Guide Camp, which brought together over 500 families from across Cumbria for a series of fun activities and campfire singing. For this I was asked to make a video, which had me digging out my tin cup, welly sticks and old camp badges.

Not everyone, however, is an IT expert and I have been humbled by the appreciation shown by tiny organisations and individuals when I phone and write letters. The Office of High Sheriff makes a big difference at such times. I have also worked with organisations to support the digitally isolated, from delivering reminiscence boxes to dementia sufferers to supporting laptop donations to isolated young people.

To date, I am most proud of launching a High Sheriff of Cumbria Special Recognition Award Certificate to acknowledge and thank those volunteers, voluntary organisations and individuals who have been outstanding in their support of others during the Covid-19 crisis. I was inundated with

amazing stories of generosity and kindness shown often to complete strangers and it was a privilege to select and send out certificates and personal letters to recipients. Judging from the reply letters I received, I have also made a lot of people cry .... but in a good way. I have worked with and been inspired by the proactivity of my



▲ At work at Forge Europa

local community foundation in responding to emerging needs. For one of the least populated counties, Cumbria's foundation has impressively raised nearly two million pounds. Cumbria is often associated with The Lake District but there is so much more to the county. It is a place of great natural



▲ Hild Bede Ball with Peter Barton, my now husband, summer 1988

beauty and cutting-edge industry, but it also an area of contrasts with high deprivation rates, and significant challenges. It has therefore been a pleasure to be associated with the grant making, which has distributed much of the money raised to date to support the most vulnerable and isolated.

Summer has enabled me to get out and meet people. From launching a walk with 'Happy to Chat' benches in Kirkby Stephen, climbing mountains for charity and visiting natural flood defences on the Eden River to visiting mental health, farm-based charities, sitting on the bench in Carlisle Crown Court and celebrating VJ Day with care home residents in Whitehaven, I have met some amazing people.

As to my theme of tackling social isolation, with crisis comes opportunity. Covid-19 has identified so many more people leading lonely lives but with it has come neighbourliness and connection with the local community. If I can help community groups to harness some of the goodwill created by the army of new volunteers and if I can help build on the collaboration within communities established during lockdown, then I'm optimistic that

▼ Virtual guide camp



fewer people will be or feel lonely in the future.

Looking ahead and new risks keep emerging in our strange new world. Cumbria has been inundated with more visitors than ever before and this has brought huge challenges to safety and social distancing within our communities as well as increased threats to our environment and our emergency services, including our mountain rescue teams. I aim to remain sensitive to emerging needs and flexible in my approach. I am grateful for my time at Durham, not only for the lifelong friendships I made there, but also for helping me to find my voice which has assisted me in taking on the Office of High Sheriff. I will continue to put a spotlight on and lend support to Cumbria, the county I am honoured and delighted to serve. I now have so many new plans and ideas in the diary for what has developed into a very different kind of year in Office.

**Hild Bede alumni are very welcome to follow my progress at**  
[www.facebook.com/hscumbria2020](http://www.facebook.com/hscumbria2020)  
 and [www.highsheriffofcumbria.co.uk](http://www.highsheriffofcumbria.co.uk)  
 and if you feel inspired to donate to [www.cumbriafoundation.org](http://www.cumbriafoundation.org) be assured your money will help make a life-changing difference to others.

## Summer has enabled me to get out and meet people. From launching a walk with 'Happy to Chat' benches in Kirkby Stephen, climbing mountains for charity and visiting natural flood defences on the Eden River...



▼ Delivering Powsowdie Reminiscence Boxes in support of dementia sufferers and those who are isolated during lockdown



# Eadem Mutata Resurgo — I Rise Again, Changed, But The Same

**James McCann, Hild Bede 2007-2011, recounts his time at Hild Bede as well as a member of the rugby team for the university and how his experience shaped him to pass on his skills to his pupils at Whitgift school.**

“Pick a city 100 miles from home and select the universities in that radius” – this was how my 6th form teacher proposed I decided on universities back in 2007 when studying at The John Fisher School, Purley. His rationale - pick a university as far away from home, this would throw you in the deep end learning how to fend and study for yourself.

Fast forward a few months and I was commencing my journey at Hild Bede and Durham with pre-season rugby training run by the stalwart of DURFC, Ted Wood

and the late Fergus King MBE. Both had a profound impact on my way of coaching, teaching, thinking and being. They epitomised and demonstrated the values of rugby, and importantly what selflessness looked like. It was here that I would be catapulted into a new environment and learning experience (and not alone!). I met Chris Hitchcock for pre-season on day one, who was also studying BA Sport and starting in Hild Bede, and has been a close friend ever since. The two weeks of pre-season were physically, mentally, and emotionally

taxing to say the least - the trips to Edinburgh, the final night hurrah in Newcastle and the social with DUNC, I was certainly ready and looking forward to moving into Hild Bede.

With the excitement of freshers complete, over the next three years it was in Bede that I met friends for life in the form of Chris Hitchcock, Oliver Lowe, Dom Ketteringham, Max Brueggar, Robert Elliot and many more across Durham. These friends have been a continued and important part of my adult life and I have had the privilege

of being part of theirs - attending weddings, christenings and birthday celebrations to this day.

Like all young freshers, the first term was a blur but filled with exciting firsts. The first time experiencing the cold “north”, the first time being exposed to “Northern” vocabulary, (I thought it was Geordie at first), of BNOC (big name on campus), Schweff and other terms that were completely oblivious to me! Or having to negotiate travelling home for the Christmas break when I had run out of money following one last

night out in Klute (the finest club in Europe). The endless nights in Bede and the sorry sights at breakfast the next day (if you made it). If you weren't woken up by the porter, cleaner or friend in your time at Durham, you certainly were lucky.

I would sum up my time at Hild Bede as lucky - it helped shape who I am today professionally and personally. If it were not for my school teacher telling me to draw a radius of 100 miles before looking at universities, I would not have applied outside of London. If it were not for a history teacher who mentioned

Hild Bede was best for sport and a place he had fierce rivalry with, I would have not applied to Hild Bede. If I had not been invited to pre-season, I may not have made the friends I have along the way. If I had not been placed in Bede, I would not have the fond memories that I still have today. It was also the time in my life where my passion for teaching and coaching developed - being part of the University Rugby Club for three years, and in my final year helping to coach The Bailey Women to a fantastic win over The Hill Women's team. Some of my fondest memories have certainly involved sport, whether that was watching friends, celebrating in the success of Bede RFC winning the Floodlight cup, the numerous bus journeys, being involved in all the Colleges, Universities clubs and societies, or simply running down the tow path to Maiden Castle. These moments will stick with me for the rest of my life and form a big part of my approach to coaching to date.

▼ James is third from right, playing in the Town and Gown.



Following my graduation in 2011, a moment that will forever feel bittersweet, a combination of goodbyes and nervousness for the next step, I jumped out of my Durham comfort zone and into the workplace. But I was definitely ready and well-armed to start a new journey. I departed Durham with all my belongings and the fond memories of the Vernon Arms, Bede, arduous treks up Gilesgate





late at night, the morning run from the Viaduct to Bede at 6am during finals and all the amazing people I met. I started as a Graduate Sport Assistant, before undertaking my PGCE in PE at Exeter University in 2012, along with Chris Hitchcock (it seemed three years studying together at Durham was not enough). Having qualified as a PE teacher, I secured a job at an inner London state school in Streatham and cut my teeth working with amazing students and colleagues. Fast forward seven years, I am fortunate enough to serve as Head of Physical Education at Whitgift School, London. The connections to Hild Bede even followed me here, re-visiting my freshers' photo, I came across a young James Piggott, who teaches Theology and Philosophy at Whitgift and was also a rep during my time there.

My current role involves the development of the physical and overall well-being of over 1500 students, ranging from 6 to 18-year olds. I lead eleven PE staff out of a department of thirty full time games and PE members of staff. I mentor trainee teachers through

their teacher training, coach rugby, hockey and cricket in school, and up until this academic year was a resident boarding tutor with a hundred boys in our boarding house. My role is certainly varied and has undoubtedly included some weird and wonderful stories, not too dissimilar to my time at Durham. I have had some amazing opportunities, from organising cricket tours to Spain and Barbados (with 70, 11-13 year olds) to using my knowledge of the local area in Durham to assist our Hockey Squads for a chilly pre-season tour!

Within my line of work, I am a big advocate of changing the narrative, experience and curriculum of Physical Education away from a Games based model to a Movement based model. A model that develops students' movement skills, athletic ability and gives students the physical skills to be able to succeed technically in their chosen sport, or the basic movement skills to partake in good lifelong physical activity. Having worked and experienced this Games-based model in six schools we are now entering a different challenge that will hit our



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younger generations in years to come – there is an insurmountable number of health-related illnesses that occur through sedentary lifestyles, inactivity and poor education around nutrition and well-being. Every child has the right to be educated in movement, rather than a skill/Games-based model of Physical Education and we need to ensure all students can move correctly first, before adding the pressure of sport to them. A Movement-based curriculum allows

us to develop the physical qualities of all our students and I am a firm believer that everyone is an athlete, and that everyone should be training and keeping healthy throughout life.

My current work was inspired by what I experienced growing up being active at school and at Durham. It focuses on bringing positive learning experiences, sound pedagogy, a structured curriculum and an assessment model that is based on movement competency rather than sporting aptitude. Our model will and does influence all the children that walk through our gates at Whitgift. With the lockdown occurring two weeks before Easter, it galvanised a lot of people to act as a community, come together and to support each other. Since this moment, the department and I have collated a series of remote learning activities, paired with a shift to online learning and the delivery of GCSE and A-level PE lessons which still had to take place. There was inspirational support by staff members who worked with our key workers children each week, ensuring their physical and mental needs were met. This was also crucial in helping with some form of routine and normality for those students. Activities ranged from "Daily Challenges" that could be done in small spaces and minimal equipment. Weekly fitness challenges for the students and staff, and the weekly remote PE lessons that could be completed and accessed online. Lastly, while students were on screens for long periods of time, we saw it as an opportunity to offer small educational videos with familiar staff faces to educate the students on the "why" of "what" they were doing. Our games department certainly had their hands full and with the cricket season decimated, I feel for the teachers across the country, delivering fantastic things to keep our students occupied with small drills/skills and challenges too. The youth of the day will certainly grow up with a new found resilience and community spirit. I think about our

DT department and various other colleagues making masks, raising money and doing food drops for the local community. During the lockdown, it certainly highlighted to me how our communities came together to support each other and ensured all of our students' physical and mental health needs were met. I cannot thank them enough for how much they did to maintain spirit, connectedness, and morale throughout all of this.

The next academic year and the future will undoubtedly look and feel different. Professionally, our curriculum will need to adapt to a more "long-term athletic development" model - focusing on the physical qualities and fundamental movement skills, and one that works in line with National Governing Bodies who are still easing the restrictions on certain activities. Therefore, a move away from a Games-based model is welcome.

Personally, I hope to finish my MA in Education from Bath University next year, enjoy another graduation ten years later; continue to have a positive influence on those I teach and shape the curious minds of the young. The connections to my time in Durham have also continued to run through my personal life too, I met my fiancée at Chris Hitchcock's wedding (they are cousins) and we currently reside in West Hampstead and hope to stay put for a couple of years. While she didn't attend Durham, her brother Paddy McDuell did, graduating from the college that cannot be named (Hatfield) in 2019.

Seeing everyone in different communities come together certainly highlights the importance of a community and Hild Bede epitomised that. We are all entering a slightly unknown world, and this will be heightened for those who have recently graduated or commencing their time at Durham. We have a duty to ensure we keep supporting the communities around us and be resilient - as the Hild Bede Motto states, 'Eadem mutata resurgo', or 'I rise again,



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changed, but the same'. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the world around us personally and professionally, but the motto and core values of Hild Bede should resonate more than ever before, for me they certainly do.



**If any recent graduates or alumni want to get in touch,** I'd love to connect - my email is [jrm@whitgift.co.uk](mailto:jrm@whitgift.co.uk) or alternatively, you'll find me on LinkedIn.



# Living a nomadic life

**Esther Dingley, Hild Bede 2007-2009, describes to us how an unexpected event forced both her and her partner Dan to carve out a different way of living. Esther here writes that after a busy 5 weeks return visit to the UK, as they started their next chapter of their journey on the Via Alpina. The route took them through Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Lichtenstein, Slovenia and they were carrying everything that they needed with them. They posted updates and pictures on Facebook and Instagram feeds @estheranddan.**

*This inspiring article by Esther Dingley, in which she describes building a new way of life with her partner Daniel following serious illnesses, was written before we received news that Esther's current whereabouts are unknown. Esther's words, speaking of finding a way when facing difficulty and uncertainty, are particularly in our minds as we all share concerns about her whereabouts which has been unknown since just before Christmas. Our thoughts are with Esther, family and friends.*

Currently the world is in the middle of a huge upheaval with many people facing great uncertainty and significant challenges in their daily lives. In 2014, a near-death experience catalysed me and my fiancé to leave our lives in Durham and travel Europe in a camper van. Travel has opened us up to new ways of looking at life, at people and at the world. There are so many 'facts' we used to take for granted that no longer seem obvious. Nomadic living has made us learn to face our fears, overcome challenges and accept that uncertainty is an inevitable part of life. Times in which it was very difficult to see how there would ever be a silver lining to the dark clouds all around, but there were. This has turned out to be an incredible opportunity to take a pause and start to learn what it really meant to look after ourselves and to live our own dreams. Dan's near-death episode, just like this pandemic, showed us that it's OK to have plans and dreams but we just need to not be overly attached to specific outcomes. Those times when we thought things were

going 'wrong' or we were 'failing', in fact we've ended up somewhere so much better, beyond what we thought or imagined possible and learnt something new about ourselves or discovered skills and talents we didn't know that we had.

Every morning since then, we wake up and say "What adventures shall we have today?" It might just be litter picking on a beach, or writing a blog post for a charity we support, but mindfulness and gratitude has become an increasing part of our life experience. Grateful to be alive, to start a new day and to have our health. We know now that wherever we end up and whatever we find ourselves involved in that day, that life is the adventure. We're no masters at it but we are now more practised at embracing uncertainty and instead of letting it paralyse us, allowing ourselves to wonder where it might lead.

Having left school in 2001, my path started by collecting a list of academic and also sporting achievements. On the outside looking in, I was having a very successful life with Oxford, Durham and Cambridge University all on my CV as well as gold medals in National Rowing and University Cycling Championships. At Durham University, and as part of Hild Bede College, I completed a Masters in Research Methodology, worked briefly as a postgraduate researcher in the Education department and was successful in securing PhD funding. However, during this time I had also started an online postgraduate community, winning several Enterprise awards, including Durham's Blueprint, for the idea and I decided to pursue business, which had attracted venture capitalist backing. At one point we had 6 members of staff as well as a sideline of private consultancy but sadly this business didn't survive recessionary pressures. We started and juggled several other projects and formal employment roles. I had my own home and a long-term relationship with my partner, Dan, who I'd met in my first year at University. We were



**We're no masters at it but we are now more practised at embracing uncertainty and instead of letting it paralyse us, allowing ourselves to wonder where it might lead.**



even volunteering at animal rescue centres in our spare time. All was going well, but I was still pushing myself very hard, too hard at times, overstretching myself, becoming sleep deprived and becoming over-reliant on sugar stimulants - "the pizza, fudge and cheesecake diet" I would joke. Burning the candle at both ends so to speak.

After a series of viral infections from which I didn't allow myself to fully recover, in 2013 I broke down, physically and mentally. After a number of tests, I was diagnosed with M.E. I struggled to even get out of bed or wash my hair, let alone do anything I loved. From being an international athlete and flying high in my career, suddenly being left so physically debilitated is something very difficult to describe in words. I was no use to anyone. Around the same time, and during planning our wedding, my partner,

who was himself having several operations, contracted a serious post-operative infection. At 3 am, as he was wheeled into surgery, we were told to 'say a proper goodbye, just in case'. Thankfully he survived that night and recovered slowly over the next few months. The wedding had to be cancelled but we decided to extend our 'career break honeymoon' plans. In May 2014, we set off to tour Europe in a motorhome, taking a year off to both recover mentally, emotionally and physically.

Almost 6 years on, we have had many adventures across cities and countries of Europe. We've volunteered on organic farms as we were starting to learn about nutrition and sustainable farming; we've been house-sitters, volunteered and got involved in local communities and also taken a trip outside of Europe to visit all the





temples and ancient sites of Egypt that so captivated us in history lessons as children! But mostly both Dan and I have realised a passion for exploring high mountains, whether by bicycle - completing almost all the Tour de France mountains passes and many more in other alpine countries - or by foot. Summiting many alpine peaks (up to 3600m in altitude), crossing glaciers and accessing places by scaling 50m vertical ladders and we've completed several multi-day thru-hiking tours which we wrote books about. "Turn Left at Mont Blanc" captures our adventures during the month trek along the GR5 and the world-famous Tour de Mont Blanc. "Just Around the Matterhorn" and "Walking Through Paradise - Exploring Western Europe's largest Nature Reserve" cover a period of 7 weeks exploring the Swiss, Italian and French Alps on foot with just a small tent.

But there has been another aspect to our adventures. When we set out and said it wasn't really about where specifically we travelled to but about a feeling we were looking for. As we were both still recovering, physically and mentally, the first couple of years we spent a lot of time learning about the importance of self-care and what it meant to really look after the body. We used our research skills to learn about nutrition and wellness. We established new more balanced and healthful routines trying to avoid the boom and bust cycle of taking things to the extreme. We introduced mindfulness into our lives, yoga, relaxation techniques and changed the way we fuelled our body. Without this re-education my physical adventures in the mountains would not be possible. We've heard it many times now, from many different people who've reminded us... "look after your body, it's the only true 'home' you'll ever own!", something which we had taken for granted for too long.

Over the years, we've kept a blog about our travels. It started as a

way of keeping in touch with friends and family but as we continued to travel and continued to keep having such incredible experiences and encounters with so many other inspirational people as well as learn so many new things and expand our perspectives, we developed an equally strong passion to share back what we were learning. We are so grateful for all the opportunities and people who've helped and encouraged us, that we too want to share back some of our experiences, stories and insights. Yes, we've gone from Graduates to Nomads but both parts of our life have been very important to us. Our earlier academic and sporting paths and all the people who helped us to gain these achievements shaped us just as much as those we've met since travelling. These few decades taught us how to approach life with an open mind, learn to spot opportunities and be comfortable taking some risks in life so that when we faced true adversity, the challenge of Dan's life-threatening situation, we were able to not only get through it but turn the situation 180 degrees around. It's been a slow gradual process but each day we now wake up with a deep sense of gratitude and also wonder and curiosity as to what the day might bring. At points not knowing where we were going or where we'd sleep that night used to scare me immensely but now, I trust whatever happens, each day is an adventure, another opportunity to learn more about myself and to contribute to the world.

There have been a few times when we have of course slipped back and started to take things for granted but each time, we get another reminder that life is uncertain. Dan's surgeries have left him with significant scarring and from time to time those present their own health challenges so we've several times we've also had unexpected visits to hospitals of Europe! Although these episodes were not quite as dramatic and

**There have been a few times when we have of course slipped back and started to take things for granted but each time, we get another reminder that life is uncertain.**



**I suppose the biggest challenges have been emotional. Removing many of the conventional life stresses allowed a lot of suppressed issues to creep up over time. It's been a very cathartic experience at times; very necessary for our personal development and especially important when sharing and living full-time in a tiny living space with a long-term life partner!**

short lived there were still times at which the balance could have tipped the wrong way again, allowing us to see that we were starting to plan too far in advance, trying to control things and were getting too attached to our expectations. So yes, of course, there have still been challenges. Lots of them, or very few depending on how you look at it. We know we are "living the dream" as many people would see it, and we are. But as we've learned, travelling doesn't really solve any problems, it just changes them. Practical challenges aside, such as breakdowns etc., I suppose the biggest challenges have been emotional. Removing many of the conventional life stresses allowed a lot of suppressed issues to creep up over time. It's been a very cathartic experience at times; very necessary for our personal development and especially important when sharing and living full-time in a tiny living space with a long-term life partner! In any case it prepared us well for lockdown!

But for the past 3 and a half years, Dan's not the only one I've been sharing our small rolling

home with! In 2017, our lives and adventures took a sudden turn in a different direction which has had a lasting impact on us. Touring the beaches of Spain over winter in our motorhome, a friend found a stray dog, of which there are devastatingly many. After a long search for her owner, we decided to take the little ginger dog, who we named 'Leela' on board. Except she came with her own surprise and within 2 weeks we found ourselves novice parents raising 6 pups - bottle feeding, toilet training and eventually taking puppy training classes with these tiny helpful balls of fur. Now I'm in no way comparing dogs to children when I say this but I now have an immense respect for parents and for teachers. Not having had children, this surprise furry family gave us a tiny glimpse of the commitment made by parents. It definitely deepened my appreciation towards my parents and all those who'd been involved in my childhood.

For one reason and then another, 4 pups remained with us for almost 3 years. George, Pati, Rose and Bella joined us and Leela. The 7 of us touring Europe and having





adventures together. This was definitely very challenging at times, making sure we were able to meet everyone's needs. Yes, at times we had coloured charts with training and walk rotas! But it has brought us an immense amount of joy, laughter and of course a lot of fluff! More than this it's taught us a whole heap of vital life lessons, given us the opportunity to up level our personal growth by having to focus on the needs of those dependent on us as there was a risk of us becoming a little too inwardly focused travelling around in our little bubble. They've also spread a lot of smiles and been the reason that we have met some incredible people and opened up some amazing opportunities. Actually, it so happened that I

wasn't completely alone on my first solo trek of the Pyrenees in 2019, as Bella and Rose came with me. It was a huge responsibility but they were true stars - over 26 days we walked over 370km and ascended/descended over 20,000 vertical meters together! In addition to the hiking adventure books, 'Love, Fluff and Chasing Butterflies' tells the story of Leela and the pups arrival in a series of poems and pictures. This fluffy chapter of our adventures is coming to an end. It isn't so much goodbye as some of the dogs are going to live with family and very close friends so we will all still be very much an extended furry family.

I love life in a motorhome. Yes, it's a small simple space which moves. We've been very fortunate

to be able to call some incredible places our home; from the highest alpine passes to deserted beaches. The simplicity brings me so much joy as I have so much more time now for creative and active pursuits and to help others. We now travel with all we own as we kept only things that would get regular use plus a few items which inspired. And yes, whilst a motorhome isn't as fuel efficient as other vehicles, we don't tend to travel huge distances, preferring to use the motorhome as our base and really explore the areas we visit on the bikes or on foot. I love the environmentally friendly aspect of our travelling lifestyle, the fact our electricity is from solar, that we take very short showers, very rarely use any heating etc.



## Travelling and/or a nomadic lifestyle isn't for everyone but it was a dream I'd had for a long, long, time, I was just too afraid to act.

Life since leaving Hild Bede hasn't been as conventional or anything like what I expected. It might have started out in that direction but due to unexpected events, my life has taken a sharp turn and now we don't know where the adventures will take us each day. But I'm still very grateful for my time at Durham, all the staff, other students, alumni, guest speakers who shaped and inspired me. I don't think I fully appreciated it at the time but I see now what an incredible environment was provided to encourage and allow me to explore whether academically, in the sports or arts. There's a near infinite array of pathways my life could have taken, but an ability and willingness to recognise and act on opportunities was the key ingredient in each case.

Travelling and/or a nomadic lifestyle isn't for everyone but it was a dream I'd had for a long, long, time, I was just too afraid to act. Afraid I didn't have enough money, afraid it wouldn't be safe, afraid of the impact on my career prospects, afraid I wouldn't be contributing to society but none of that has been true. Life circumstances gave us the push but six years on, and although I try not to have any regrets, if I do it's that I listened to my fears, worries and anxiety and let them hold me back, let them stop me from taking the plunge of pursuing my dreams sooner. If I had any advice to offer, it would be whatever your dreams are, whether travelling or not, don't hold back. They might seem strange or maybe even really far away but

I've learnt and believe that we are capable of so much more than we think we are when we follow our passions. Whatever it is that fills me with joy, I know I try each day to work towards creating a life where more of that is possible! For I've found it's at the times when I have the courage to follow my passions, fuelling myself with joy, I'm then more able to help and be of service to others. And I've also learnt from countless experiences I don't need to know the 'how' in advance. If I just trust and keep stepping in the direction of whatever it might be that is calling to me at the time, then one after the one pieces of the puzzle do fall into place. The opportunities and people who want to help are there, if I'm open to seeing them instead of allowing my judgement to be clouded by my worries or need for control and to know in advance. It's been very much an adventure of 3 steps forward and 2 back but I've come to appreciate that it's the challenging situations that ultimately taught me the most about myself and made me stronger.

**To follow us on our travels, or to ask questions of your own, you can find us online at [www.estheranddan.com](http://www.estheranddan.com), or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/EstherandDan](https://www.facebook.com/EstherandDan)**

Our latest books are available on Amazon or via our blog.





◀ Out of retirement for Online teaching!"  
David Miller and Jean Miller née Cairns.

# Even The Bad Times Are Good.

**Jean Miller (née Cairns), St. Hild's College 1971 – 1974, describes the effects that Covid-19 had not only herself but also on her family and how she turned a negative situation into a positive, needless to say, she didn't have to look very far.**

***There are times in this life of mine  
I think that the sun forgot how to shine  
But as long as you're always there  
It don't bother me 'cos why should I care  
When all I've gotta do  
Is run to you  
Even the bad times are good  
Soon as I get to you baby...***

Covid 19. The implications of this have been truly life changing. Life changing in every single way. My family are no different to any other. We have faced separation, dilemmas, loneliness and sadness. How could I help my family who are based in New York, living in fear and uncertainty?

How could I help my family who live over 200 miles away, in Bedfordshire?

How could I try to lighten the burden of this terrible time? How could I help them especially when my daughter contracted Covid and I was unable to go to her? How could I raise my own spirits? How could I stop this feeling of helplessness and sadness?

The answer to these questions, the answer to how I could help, help them and help myself came quite unexpectedly .... Online Teaching!! Online teaching via FaceTime!

I'm going to back track nearly fifty years, to my time at St. Hild's College, to my teacher training. Online teaching, FaceTime, Zoom. Goodness me this was certainly uncharted ground when I was a student at Hild's. Computers were not in use, in fact I don't think computers existed! Everything was hand written, resources were found in the libraries, Howarth and Caedmon. Dissertations were

handwritten then typed, if you were lucky to possess a typewriter! If not, it was a matter of trying to borrow one from somewhere. So very time consuming.

Lesson plans and preparation for teaching practices were resourced from books, no Google in those days!

The Teaching Practice Tutor and the school that you were assigned to checked the meticulous lesson planning. Appointments with your tutor to discuss and evaluate your day's teaching. School visits by your tutor to "watch" your lessons. Heaven forbid if you hadn't prepared carefully!

I specialised in the Secondary age group. However, this did not mean I only taught my specialised subject, Drama. I had to demonstrate proficiency in teaching a variety of subjects, namely English, R.E., Maths and P.E.. These subjects were taught as College Courses and were part of the teacher training curriculum. Now, why did I have to teach these subjects? I was not going to specialise in Maths teaching. Well, we were taught that you were a teacher of children not a specific subject and not a specific age group. This is so true and, in my opinion, still applies. This came back to me years later when I did some supply teaching in secondary



▲ Newly qualified teachers. David Miller, Bede College 1971 to 1974. Jean Cairns, St. Hild's College 1971 to 1974.

schools. Teaching subjects ranging from Music to Science. As long as you are well prepared and can adapt and have a "presence" you can manage and I did!

The other compulsory subjects in College were Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy. Two of these subjects, of the student's choice, were subject to a written examination in the final year.

As a student teacher, I had to undertake three teaching practices. One in a primary school and two in secondary schools. I must admit I did not enjoy the primary school practice, 35 children aged



8 to 9 years. I knew this age group was not for me. Two secondary school practices followed which I thoroughly enjoyed. The preparation was hard but the classroom teaching was wonderful. I knew I had made the right decision in my chosen age group. My teaching practice tutors were fantastic, in fact I still possess a book that I was given by my tutor after my final practice.

Once qualified, I undertook my probationary year in a very large comprehensive school. It was a ruling that all newly qualified teachers had to complete a probationary period of one year and be inspected on this. Inspected by the school's Headteacher.

After teaching English and Drama, I then went on to teach children with Special Educational needs within mainstream schooling. I loved this challenge. Teaching children with special needs was so rewarding. Very challenging behaviour and challenging needs fulfilled my ambition in not only teaching the children but helping them and preparing them for their future.

So, nearly fifty years later, along comes online teaching, FaceTime, Zoom! The answer to helping not only my family but me.

On March 20th, 2020, schools were closed due to Covid. My Daughter and son-in-law were then tasked with home schooling my grandchildren. I received a call asking for my help and that of my husband, David Miller (Bede College 1971 to 1974), asking if we were prepared to help, to "come out of retirement" and to teach again albeit via FaceTime or Zoom. Of course, we agreed.

We absolutely relished this task. To get up on a morning

knowing you had something very positive to do was so uplifting. To know that the children were seeing different faces and talking to us on a daily basis was so wonderful. To prepare lessons again and to think positively. Evenings spent researching information for the next day Receiving their work by email for us to mark. Daily reports were sent by email to their parents. Ordering through Amazon any necessary materials, for delivery to their address of course.

Happy times amongst all the negativity surrounding the Covid situation. I taught English Literature, English Language and History and Dave taught Geography and Science.

I have never taught a six year old child before but I have never forgotten that I was a teacher of children, regardless of age or subject.

I introduced Emilia to poetry. I encouraged Thomas to read more books and to discuss them. We wrote formal and informal letters, we wrote creative and factual essays. They read to me. We talked. We laughed.

Dave's lessons were factual and very creative. It was fun. Fun for the children and certainly fun for us. A very happy time forgetting about what was going on around us. They say, once a teacher, always a teacher. That is so true.

Dave and I have never forgotten the training we had received at Hild and Bede, the training that formed our careers and stayed with us.

The children are in Year 1 and Year 6 so were able to return to school on June 1st, 2020. All safety measures had been put in place, detailed letters were sent to parents outlining procedures, guidelines and

how the schools would operate.

My grandchildren, therefore, went back to their schools. They have learnt to adapt to the new guidelines. In fact, I think they know more about "social bubbles" than I do! That along with social distancing, washing hands very regularly and wearing masks has become the norm for them.

That time of online teaching was just what we all needed. To feel positive and happy and useful. To have fun!

For Dave and me to also receive wonderful acknowledgements from the children's schools made it so worthwhile. We must have been doing something right.

Last weekend they finally visited us and went on a long walk exploring Durham and looking at the things that Dave had taught them about the City.

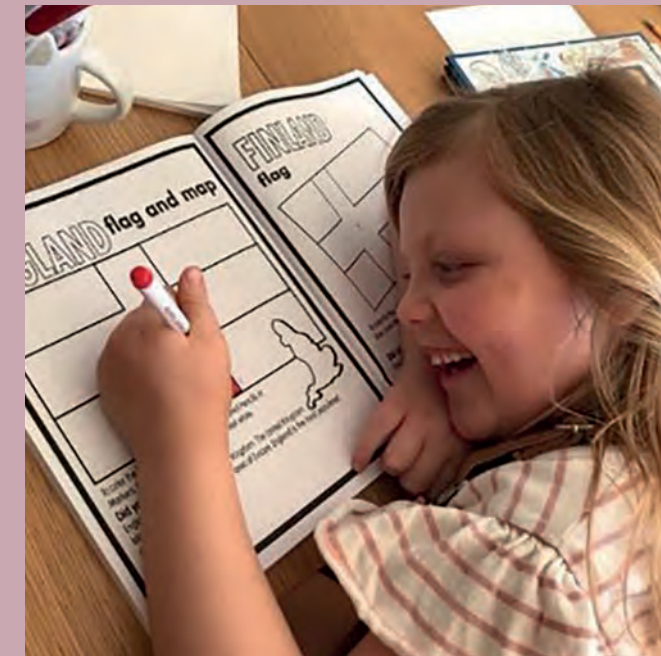
My daughter showed me a video she had sent Emilia's teacher in the early days of home schooling. Emilia is reciting, with facial and vocal expression, a poem she had read with me.

The children's opinions about our Online Teaching. "It was really good and it was so nice to see Granny and for her to help me with my English." Thomas, aged 11. "I enjoyed Granny reading stories to me and I enjoyed reading to her". Emilia, aged 6.



**I enjoyed Granny reading stories to me and I enjoyed reading to her.**

Emilia, aged 6.



**It was really good and it was so nice to see Granny and for her to help me with my English.**

Thomas, aged 11.





# College Rags

◀ Allan and Elaine (née Ashmore) Johnson in Durham 2012.

**Allan Johnson, Bede 1969-1972; 1972-1973; 1973-1975, writes about a Hild Bede reunion he had attended at college. A shortened form of this article originally appeared in the Lifestyle section of the Yorkshire Post on the 17th Oct 2007.**



**As our destination approached, I decided to refuel at a favourite watering hole at Scotch Corner, an old staging post previously boasting four stars and posh biscuits.**

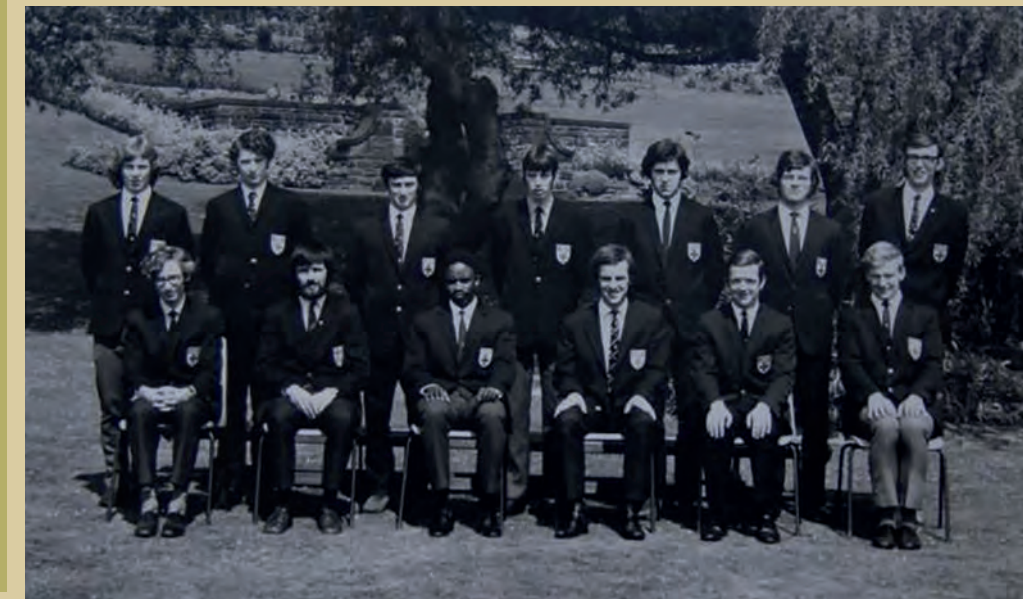
▶ Bede College Cross Country Club 1970-1971, Allan is fourth in the front row.

▶ St Hild's College rowing team 1974-1975, Elaine (née Ashmore) is seventh in the front row.

Feeling like a gap year, but not able to afford one, we decided to splash out recently on a Bede/Hild's College Reunion instead. An overnight stop in beautiful surroundings, with a celebratory meal in the company of old friends. What could be better? With memories of our student days rising quickly to the surface, off we set in eager anticipation of a richly nostalgic weekend. Making contact with former acquaintances had been a frustrating business - until Elaine produced a comprehensive Christmas card list.

As our destination approached, I decided to refuel at a favourite watering hole at Scotch Corner, an old staging post previously boasting four stars and posh biscuits. However, times had changed. The cappuccino with tiny wrapped wafer was served in starkly modern surroundings resembling an airport lounge. Was worse to follow?

Undeterred, we parked in the familiar surroundings of the car park at St Hild's only to be interrogated by a security guard who clearly did not recognise us as former



students. At reception, we signed for our room keys - at which point the porter lowered his shutters and disappeared. At the third attempt and with the help of reading glasses, we cracked the security code for the inner sanctum and went in search of our budget accommodation.

There were no such security arrangements in our day. Despite being nominally single sex institutions, the traffic between Bede and Hild's was clearly visible at all hours long before the union was cemented in 1975. One memorable incident I recall was creeping down the back stairs of East Bailey only to bump into the College Nurse who looked resplendent in her

dressing gown. I kept my head down and wished her goodnight before making good my escape. We never met again.

The rooms in the older part of the college were very familiar although the plumbing had thankfully improved and there were phone sockets all over the place. I don't remember phoning home very often and there was always the pay-phone at the end of the corridor.

We were meeting up with Bev Dobson, née Zinn (1972-1975), who was the last Senior Woman elected at St Hild's before the Colleges merged, and Alan Dobson (University College and Grad Soc). The plan was to meander



nostalgically round the campus before gathering at noon in the tastefully refurbished surroundings of Caedmon bar. We were not disappointed. Staff and students past and present were there to greet us as returning alumni and there was an embracing warmth generated by loyalties kindled many years ago.

Lunch was a well-lubricated affair with speeches and presentations for the most loyal members of the College Alumni. We still had some way to go before receiving the coveted potted plant, but it was inspirational to see so many former colleagues enjoying themselves as they rolled back the years with a little help from their friends.

After lunch we walked rather slowly down Bede Bank along the tow path towards the city. Much of the route was familiar but I do remember the traffic congestion on Silver Street back in 1969 as buses squeezed their way up past the traffic lights towards the market place only to be met by a very stern duty policeman in his box. Bringing a car in to Durham in those days was ill advised. It was quicker and cheaper to walk everywhere.

Chatting to Alan Pearson, Principal of the College 2000-8, I recalled the daily trek to the Science Site undertaken by undergraduates. "What if it rains?" Alan had been asked by one concerned parent. "They'll get wet" came his swift reply.

Dr Pearson was my academic tutor within the Botany Department from around 1970 and was well respected as an enthusiastic and supportive teacher. Along with the other tutors including the late David Bellamy, he helped elevate Botany from a biological discipline to an academic passion, which inspired us to share knowledge generously and incidentally, attend all his lectures. I can honestly remember missing only one lecture in the whole three years - due to a sports fixture. Oh yes, we had Saturday morning lectures!

Durham City was largely devoid

of students, so we had the space and time to explore familiar haunts and work up an appetite for the evening meal at the Three Tuns on New Elvet, a restaurant we rarely frequented as undergraduates. Come the evening, the venue was idyllic, surrounded by old friends and so much to talk about. As we settled down to inspect the menu, the proximity of an outside drain made itself known through the ageing floorboards and the conversation faltered. The headwaiter did his best to manoeuvre us en bloc to a new table, complete with water jug and candle. Our flower arrangement had already wilted, but the bread buns made it intact.

We were now the centre of everybody's gaze as the meal was re-ordered, but now there was a different sensory assault - the chef's selection of piped music, orchestral in flavour, but rather too generous. Communication round the table ground to a halt a second time as sign language was used to summon the waiter again. With good humour, a swift compromise was negotiated and we set about enjoying our long-awaited celebratory meal, laughing at the way the best-laid plans frequently go awry.

On reflection, we were a lucky generation, with no tuition fees or student loans to burden us through our university careers and we even found jobs. Modern students choose from a broader range of disciplines and there are new ways to learn, with lectures on-line competing with books on shelves, but finding permanent employment can be a much steeper learning curve.

It was an uphill struggle back to College that night, but then it usually was.

Over a leisurely breakfast in Caedmon dining room with stunning views over the city, we agreed to return, not for the potted plant, but to savour the joy of friendships, which, unlike the flowers the night before, had not wilted with the passage of time.

▶ Allan and Elaine visiting Tasmania in 2019.



**On reflection, we were a lucky generation, with no tuition fees or student loans to burden us through our university careers and we even found jobs.**



# Jennifer Charles

## MBE, JP, BA



▲ Jennifer Charles on graduation day from St Hild's.

**Jennifer Charles (née Davies), St. Hild's College 1965 – 1968, writes about her time at St Hild's, her experience being part of the magistracy working in criminal and family courts and being awarded an MBE.**

I have always been most grateful to both St. Hild's College and Durham University for my three very formative and happy years in the North East. I would particularly like to mention Miss Nina Joachim, the former Principal of St. Hild's, as she was such an encouraging and influential role model both to me and to many of her students. I feel immensely proud that our College has such a long and proud history, providing education for women to become teachers, especially in the North of England. It played a most important part in the suffrage movement and St. Hild's was the first College to provide women students for Durham University degrees. It was such a struggle for those courageous ladies but what an influence they continue to be for our former and present students.

I was originally appointed to the Alton Bench in 1981, which gradually amalgamated with Petersfield, Aldershot and then with Basingstoke and Andover to become the North Hampshire Bench. It was a great privilege to be a part of the magistracy for over 36 years and although there were many changes in the administration the core work remains exactly the same. The magistracy is there to serve the community and retain its trust, as it represents a public face of justice. I was blessed with many really excellent colleagues and legal advisors, particularly enjoying learning from them and for the invaluable training received over the years.

My work covered both the criminal and family courts and

included ten years on the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. This role allowed me to interview prospective magistrates, as part of the local sub-committee, for the counties and occasionally in Wiltshire.

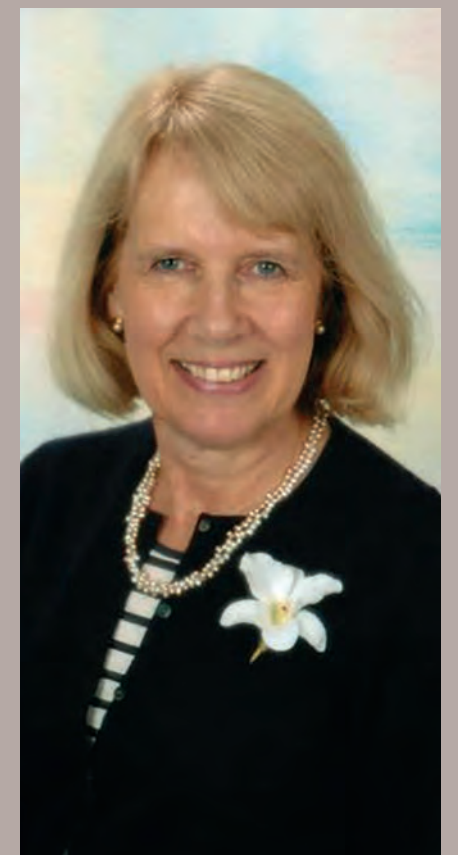
It was a big surprise and I felt very honoured to receive an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2019 for services to criminal justice and to the community in Hampshire. I was then awarded my medal at Buckingham Palace from Prince William in late November last year. My MBE is for all my colleagues in the magistracy.

As well as this voluntary role I worked as the Law teacher at Alton School (formerly Alton Convent School). I ran the Careers Department for many years and was a member of their Senior Management Team when I held a great variety of interesting roles. I am very proud that a number of my former students decided to share my passion for law and became fully involved as barristers, solicitors, judges, probation officers and the police.

Lastly can I thank the Alumni office and the College for its annual magazine and many emails that keep us in touch with St. Hild and St. Bede affairs. I particularly appreciate knowing what present students are doing and how they are using the university as an invaluable launch pad for their future careers, just as we did. I send everyone involved with the College in any way my warmest good wishes for the future, especially at these most challenging times.



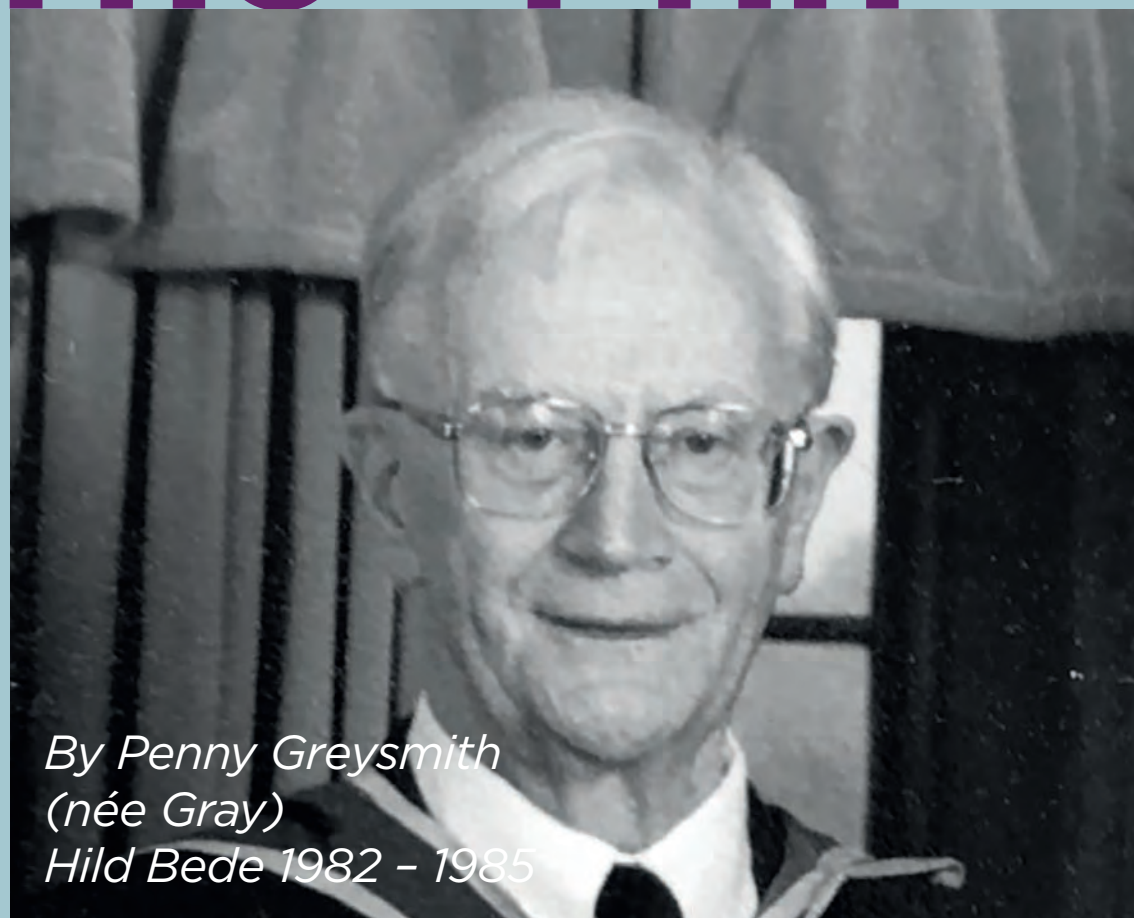
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▲ Jennifer Charles



# The “Prin”



By Penny Greysmith  
(née Gray)  
Hild Bede 1982 – 1985

**It was early evening in mid-May in the mid-1980s. There was anticipation in the air. The Chapel Choir always enjoyed a rousing anthem. Vernon and Sarah Armitage were seated in the stalls as they were faithfully each Sunday morning and at many a weekly choral evensong.**

The organ began softly, the music echoing around the soaring white walls. The choir sang out ‘Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon King’. Eyes sparkled with delight as the sound built and then, for those with ears to hear, came the affectionate tribute to our Principal for his birthday, ‘God save the Prin. Long live the Prin. May the Prin live for ever.’

What was it about Vernon that was so inspiring? A quiet academic with that distinctive blink behind his spectacles and his broad smile: a person who fostered great community spirit in the College. His quiet strength and determination shaped a large and diverse community which had room for and celebrated all manner of characters. Although a shy man, his door was always open to students for advice and he loved

encouraging our aspirations. He listened to us and offered wise counsel.

He shared himself too. We knew he loved railways and longed to live in the Railway Children’s cottage. We knew he was an avid cricket fan and delighted in the fact that Nasser Hussain and John Stephenson from Bede were selected to play for England. Forty years on, I cannot eat a garibaldi biscuit without thinking of him sitting in my room in Gables drinking tea and eating biscuits whilst discussing the resurrection or Winnie-the-Pooh or how mathematics is beautiful.

A lasting memory is of the Prin reading from Bede in the chapel at the end of College Day Evensong of Abbot Ceolfrith’s final farewell to his community on the seashore. Farewell dear Vernon. Your beloved College community sends you on your way with thanks and with countless memories of you, some of them relayed here for all to savour.

‘God save the Prin. May the Prin live for ever’ we sang. He will, in the grateful lives of those of us he shaped and in what we pass on of his wisdom and spirit.

Rob Corney  
Hild Bede 1996-1999

**I was lucky enough to have known Vernon for many years: to have worked with him as SRC President back in 2000 and to have known him long before that, from the days when my brother Nick Taylor was also President some years earlier, in the previous millennium! We worked on a number of things together, as you would imagine with Vernon, all of them for the benefit of the College and her students and I was always struck by the great enigma of the man: To be able to speak to a person two, sometimes three generations his junior; from a different social background, different gender, maybe a different geography and yet to have an instant engagement with them and to be able to bring immediate comfort, confidence and relief from their concerns takes a truly special person.**

It was always fitting that a man of such great influence on the lives of so many, but one who was forever downplaying his positive impact on others, travelled under the simple soubriquet ‘Prin’. But that word encapsulated everything about him. Accessible, approachable, quite literally the heart of the college and the man who forged the future for two previously individual entities under one identity, Hild and Bede. It was Prin who made Hild Bede the best college in Durham; he to whom its students would turn for advice and direction; and Prin from whom the sense of openness, fun and limitless opportunity arose which would drive Hild Bede and her students, giving them the chance to grow, to change but to rise again the same.

Prin was an enormous man, dressed in a slight frame, who could fill a room with enthusiasm despite his quiet and self-reflective manner. A selfless man who, upon receiving praise, would immediately pass it along to the people around him as if his unerring guidance had simply enabled others to act on his behalf when, in reality, Vernon was the driving force from whom great things would emanate. Great people would gravitate towards him and he built a team around him both formidable in its abilities, and yet an instant and loving family-away-from-home for all his students. So many people owe Prin a debt of gratitude for the difference he made to their lives – through opportunities they would otherwise have not recognised; through the chance to grow as individuals which he quietly passed their way; but most of all through the sheer privilege of having known him.

Throughout his long career in education, Prin’s unceasing dedication to others made him a firm

favourite with everyone. Few people possess that ability to walk into a room and to be loved universally, but Vernon had that quality in abundance. There was no indiscretion, misdemeanour or, on occasion, frankly extraordinary situation into which a student could place themselves which would remotely faze the man. Whether it was the rugby club nailing bed slats to the bottom of their boots as makeshift skis for Bede Lawn or students determined to keep tarantulas as pets in their college bedroom, after a brief nervous chuckle and a quick adjustment of the glasses, he could make the insurmountable seem paltry and the extraordinary commonplace. Only Vernon could have made a late-night trip to investigate an incident of rowdy corridor cricket before going on to bowl the winning over!

He provided a moral compass to many, not only in his ability to unfailingly make good judgements but in the pleasure he would take in passing on the tools required to enable others to choose wisely too – there are few difficult decisions in my own life for which I am not incredibly grateful for having learned from one of the best and I know so many of his students who will always feel that way too.

Generations of students from The College of St Hild & St Bede are rich for simply having known the man and the world has been a stronger and wiser place because of him. Many will remember that Salad Days was one of his favourite stage plays and in it, the protagonists say they will never look back. But as Vernon always pointed out, you only need to look at a rowing crew to know that you get nowhere without looking back and he is at the heart of so many fond memories for his thousands of wards which will invest their future with greater pleasure and opportunity for their remembrance. Perhaps that is why he’s the only staff member I’m aware of being made a permanent member of the DSU and why he so comfortably trod the challenging path of maintaining harmony between university, students and housekeeping.

If a fair measure of the achievement in a man’s life can be that they left this world a stronger place for having been here and a poorer one for his parting, Vernon must surely have achieved more than the vast majority of people to have walked this earth. No matter our age and no matter which mountains or valleys we cross through our lives, we will always be Hild Beders and we will always be his students. Thank you Prin, as Hild Bede men and women, we will never forget where we’re coming from.





02



01

*By Christopher Armstrong  
Venerable Bede 1966-1969  
Chaplain of Hild Bede  
1979-1985*

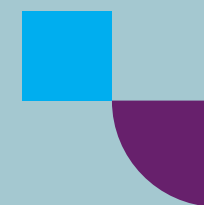
**Vernon's Army**

Vernon Armitage had a tough job to merge two colleges and take them into the University of Durham as the newest and largest college in 1989. Inevitably, some blood had been spilt over the last few years during the mergers. Vernon took this very personally but nevertheless set his face to build something new. I think I was the first of the new staff to be appointed in 1979 as Chaplain. For Vernon with his solid faith, this was a critical appointment and he took a risk, appointing an ex-Bede student. The removals

waggon arrived at the front door of Old Belvedere to be greeted by the Bursar, Geoffrey Sharland with instructions and Sarah Armitage - with a cake!

At the first Formal Dinner - and after a humorous Grace which earned a standing ovation - Vernon introduced me as "a rugged prayer and a rugby player". It caught the mood of the occasion precisely and the partnership went from strength to strength. Vernon knew that the college's greatest assets were the students and he did all he could for them individually and corporately. There were bleak times in the Governing Body, resisting ever-more university centralization whilst trying to preserve the best of the new college features, including staff, gardens and chaplaincy.

Early on in my time as Chaplain (1979 - 85) the annual Rugby Club Revue was ailing. The slot was taken over by the Chaplaincy, much to Vernon's secret delight as it moved the influence of the Chaplaincy to centre-



03

stage - just as the wider church was haemorrhaging influence (photo 1).

I can't remember that the students actually got Vernon onto the stage but it received his full support, even the risqué bits. He played mixed netball - during which he claimed he broke his toe - and was invariably in his stall for Morning Prayer - a practice carried-over from the training college days. He and Sarah were generous in their hospitality at the Principal's House (photo 2), the effects of which buoyed him up for more serious college business up the hill or over the river.

Vernon was a man of great integrity. He was one that you could put your trust in without reservation. He could be tough when necessary but his overflowing sense of humour and delight when mixing with students far outweighed his self-doubt caused by the merger battles. He had an unconscious sense of how the community worked and which members of it needed TLC at any

particular moment. Our jobs over-lapped: I knew that I was the invariably the assistant.

As Principal, Vernon had an ex-officio seat on the Chaplaincy Committee and invariably attended, often sitting on the floor and graciously forgiving the juvenile humour which so often lubricated our deliberations. (photo 3).

To be Chaplain in The College of St. Hild and St. Bede was a dream job, working with students who were intelligent, enquiring, imaginative, passionate (about each other and God!) and staff who were forgiving, encouraging and frequently challenging. Behind it all stood Vernon, looking for any opportunity for support and generosity. I think I only let him down once - at a rowdy Formal Dinner when an unusual case of bun-throwing broke out. Vernon asked me to quell it. I told him it was not in my job-description. He accepted that, forgave me and the bun-throwing subsided without formal intervention.



## Memories



### George McNeilly Hild Bede 2012 - 2016

Despite being only 3 years old when Dr Armitage retired, I was astounded that during my time as a student and SRC President I saw so much of him. College Days, Formals, Two's Up and Odinian Dinners, whenever I saw Dr Armitage, he would always ask about the students first - it was always the forefront of his mind.

My personal memories of Dr. Armitage include him asking me regularly about the boat club and its current state of affairs. I remember his quote about rowers that: 'you have to look backward to know where you're going'. It was actually a quite profound quote for me personally - and I used it to finish my Going Down speech as President in 2016. Subsequently, myself and HBBC are founding an Alumni Boat Club named in his memory as a fitting tribute to the great man.

The picture is from a leaving party on my last day as SRC President which was a great moment to share with Dr Armitage as such a big part of our College's history.

### Mark Scholey Hild Bede 1996 - 2000

He was a fabulous Principal, imbued with kindness, and always intellectually stimulating to talk to. But perhaps I will remember him most for a wonderful sense of, and appreciation for, mischief, an ensuing smile never seemingly far from his face. In that regard, he always reminded me of my grandfather who passed away whilst I was at Hild Bede, and I can bestow no higher praise. The College is fortunate to have benefitted from his leadership..

### Damian Scott Hild Bede 1988 - 1991

One's thirty year old Durham memories may be shrouded by the mists of time, but Dr Armitage's role as Principal of our wonderful college shines though - welcoming on arrival, supportive throughout and a constant background presence available for guidance when needed.

Whether on the touchline, in the academic sphere or on pastoral matters, Dr Armitage's loyalty and commitment to his students was constant.

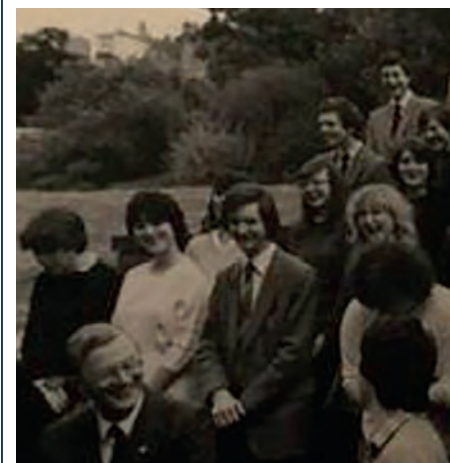
Utterly modest in his own bearing yet a towering presence within the University, his warm twinkling good humour and wisdom embodied the spirit of St Hild & St Bede during our time there.

How lucky we were to have known him.

### Katy Penn (née Dean) Hild Bede 1981 - 1985

The Prin was a very special man - kind, caring, wise, a good listener,

interested in others, with a gentle sense of humour and always a twinkle in his eye. Thinking about him brings a smile to my face. His voice is the one I hear reading the start of John's gospel in every Carol Service I attend. He was respected and loved by students, he was passionate about the College and he and Sarah were generous in the hospitality they provided to students in their lovely home.



### Dr Liz Cole (née Lakin) Hild Bede 1976 - 1979

My earliest memory of Doctor Vernon Armitage was towards the end of my first year at the College of St. Hild and St. Bede in 1976-77. Dr Armitage had assumed the Principal's role of the newly formed joint college, from N. Joachim [St. Hild] and K.G. Collier [St. Bede] in 1975. I was secretary to the Gerald Collier Society [after its namesake and now a student scholarship fund]

and I recall a post-event dinner in the Principal's rooms attended by Dr Armitage, the chair and secretary of the Society and Gerald Collier - speaker for the evening. As a 'fresher' I was awe-struck by this other side to university-life and I've never looked back! Many years later, at a reunion I recalled the occasion to Dr Armitage who remembered it well with a degree of amusement.

### Dr William McVicker Organ Scholar 1981 - 1986

Director of Music and Caedmon Fellow in Music 1986 - 1987

Vernon was a great supporter of the arts. In particular, he was very enthusiastic about music in the college chapel. When I was organ scholar the choir was unauditioned; at one point the membership almost reached 100. Vernon loved this and actively supported our choral and



musical endeavours.

A spin-off was The Organ Bolus. These were informal concerts at which anybody who wanted to perform anything could do so. They became the focus of performances of the works of Sven Bølus Bølusson, a Swedish composer about whom hardly anything was known. One of his early works was discovered - for large percussion ensemble - featuring the amazing Cath Potter. The work was curiously entitled 'Pottering Around'.

The highlight was a lecture by Dr Mike Smith (a PGCE student) who had researched Sven's hilarious life, recounting how in later years he lived on a secluded island surrounded by three distant lighthouses. The random relationship between the light signals gave Sven the inspiration to write a deeply serial, intellectual composition for three instruments, reflecting the points in time at which each lighthouse signal reached his secluded island. This work was duly performed by Mike and colleagues. Vernon sat in the Principal's seat in Chapel and literally cried with laughter during the performance. Afterwards he discussed with us at length the life and times of this fictitious Sven (about whom Vernon seemed to know a good deal). I do not remember seeing Vernon so happy. He radiated enthusiasm for us and our activities and encouraged us to ever greater heights.

### Helen Goatley (née Channing) Hild Bede 1984 - 1987

I was incredibly fond of him and owe him a great deal. He was a complete gentleman, someone you wanted to please. Always generous with his time, always capable of making every student he spoke to feel very special. A dear man who I kept in touch with right up until the end.

The photo of him and Sarah

(with Duncan (also 1984 - 1987) was taken at a Chaplaincy dinner.

The other photo was of him and Helen Wilson (same year) and is evidence of the enjoyment he showed at being with the college undergraduates.

I am in the graduation photo.





## Helen Swinson (née Blackey)

*Hild Bede*  
1993 – 1996

I have so many amazing memories of my time at Durham and, in particular, Hild Bede College. There was a huge sense of community spirit within the college and you felt as though you were part of a wider family, students were proud to say that they were from Hild Bede. The role that Dr. Armitage played, with his team, in developing and nurturing this community spirit cannot be underestimated.

'Prin' loved spending time with his Hild Bede family, students were always greeted with a smile and an interest in their wellbeing. His warmth, humour and care for students meant that we all loved spending time with him and his involvement with college events always enhanced them, whether that be after dinner speeches, time spent in the college bar or attending clubs and societies events.

'Legend' and 'Top Man' are a couple of the phrases I've frequently heard being used to describe him, which reflects the high regard and affection so many students had for him.

I have remained in contact with Dr. Armitage and Sarah after leaving Durham and the warmth and kindness shown by them to me during my time at Durham has continued. Prin and Sarah have spent time with me and my family and have been so generous with our two young boys. I know that they have remained in contact with many of the Hild Bede Alumni too. Their care and love for the students extends well beyond the college years which are wonderful and unique qualities of a college Principal and his family.

## Revd Canon Joanna Udal

*Hild Bede*  
1983 – 1987

A gifted mathematician known for factorising the hymn numbers in chapel, the Prin was a very shy man but also loved talking to and getting to know his students. He was particularly encouraging to the maths students in college, whether brilliant or not. In our second year, the small group of us decided to organise a mathematicians' tea party in my college room in Bede. We plucked up the courage to invite him and he was delighted to accept. The only hitch came on the day when we remembered the recent edict from the bursar that kettles were not to be used in college rooms. We decided to go ahead nevertheless and found the Prin a charming example of courtesy and discretion, avoiding notice and sanction of the kettle, and appreciating afternoon tea to the full!

## Revd Canon Michael Manley

*Vice-Dean Carlisle*  
*Cathedral*  
*Hild Bede*  
1979 – 1982

As a leader of the Christian Union and regular Chapel attender, it was always encouraging to see Dr and Mrs Armitage, without fail, supporting in their stalls. The 'Prin' somehow wonderfully combined a quiet authority and wisdom with a warm smile and accessibility and humour.

I remember once having a bit of fun (having had permission to change my bed for another one). Instead of simply swapping it, I took it to one of our resident nuns,

claiming there had been a flood in Hild Gym, and asking if she would mind sharing for a night or two. Of course, she said 'yes'. I then called out to an imaginary person 'Frank, you're in here' to the nun's utter protestation and eventual laughter. The next day, I was in Hild, and saw Dr Armitage passing below, and called out 'Good Morning'. He looked up, smiled and replied 'Hello Mike,' then to my horror added: 'how are the floods doing in Hild's gym?' 'I was flabbergasted: not only that he knew my name but that he obviously knew everything that was going on in the college.

## Helen Beetham (née Robinson)

*Hild Bede*  
1993 – 1997

Dr Armitage greeted me with the warmest of smiles when I attended my interview to study education at Hb in 1993. That smile would be a constant during my 4 years at college - supporting me through exam stress, thanking me for roles in college plays I directed and replacing a look of utter shock when we surprised him with a 'this is your life' retirement party!

We exchanged many letters in the years that followed and the 'prin' always ended his with the same quote from his most beloved musical 'Salad Days'

"It's true I've been led an amazing dance but why would I ever complain? If I could be given a second chance I'd live it all over again..."



▲ Helen, prin, Sarah (retirement party 97)



▲ Helen B, prin, Sarah, Helen blackey (This is Your Life), 1997

## Tom Bell

*Hild Bede*  
1981 – 1984

Although Dr. Armitage's care for his students was very much in evidence during my time at Hild Bede, I was personally touched by his concern and thoughtfulness after I left the college. Wandering around, wondering what to do after three unmatchable blissfully happy years, I eventually found a happy career in music education. Through this rather difficult time Vernon provided guidance, support and several letters of recommendation, for which I will always be most grateful.

Such care for students after they have left college is remarkable and a testimony to a wonderful man.

## Dr Sally McVicker (née Sherren)

*Hild Bede*  
1983 – 1987

I had the privilege of joining St Hilde and St Bede in 1984, in the second year of my doctoral research. Vernon was an immense support and help with some complex mathematical models I needed to work on in Biological Anthropology. With genuine kind good humour, he facilitated progress, so too for my husband with his thesis on the calculation of the progressions of organ-pipe diameters. One of my abiding memories was of standing at the window in Vernon's office

and saying that I hadn't a clue what I would do next. He gently looked up into the sky and pointed at an aeroplane and suggested that I could be a pilot if I wanted! Not quite the answer I was looking for, but certainly one that still makes me smile. He taught me that I could be anything I wanted to be.

## Dr Alison Nordon

*Hild Bede*  
1989 – 1994;  
1994 – 1998

I first met Dr Armitage in October 1991 when I returned to Durham to restart my 2nd year after experiencing some health issues during the previous year. Dr Armitage cared about students and together with Carol Carr, he fostered an environment that enabled generations of Hild/Bede students to achieve so much. It is fair to say that I would never have completed my degree if I had not been a student at Hild/Bede.

After my first degree, I stayed at Durham to do a PhD. I completed my thesis at about the same time as Dr Armitage retired as Principal; Dr Armitage always said that he couldn't retire until I had finished! My PhD graduation ceremony in July 1998 was on the same day as that of Dr Armitage's son Mark. Dr and Mrs Armitage invited me and my family, and Carol and Mike to their house for a joint celebration, which typifies the kindness and generosity of the Armitage family.

## Chris Stephenson

*Hild and Bede*  
1995 – 1998  
*Senior Man*  
1998 – 1999

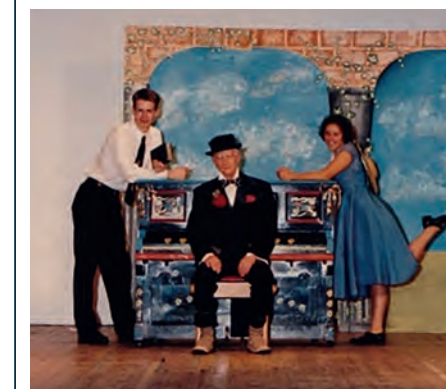
Of all the cherished memories of my time at Hild Bede - and there are many, and they are cherished - its Prin's turn in Salad Days that is perhaps my fondest. A character

with something of the unknowable about them, bestows the gift of a piano, with its joy and love and pure exuberance at the very idea of life to be lived ... to people with lives stretching before them like an eternity. Prin gave so much, so many gifts, to so many people. I truly hope that in all our many and different ways we have cherished those gifts, that we have made the very most of the amazing dances on which we have been led; and I trust that given the chance, every single one of us would live it all over again. Thank you for everything Prin. Thank you for the time of our lives.

## Tom Arundel

*Hild Bede*  
1996 – 2000

Vernon was Prin in my first year. I only really got to know him through Salad Days, his favourite musical, which the college put on in his honour in his favourite year. Truth be told it was a twee little musical from the 50s that few of us had heard of (despite the fact that up until Cats it had had the longest run of any musical in the West End) but one that all of us in the cast came to love and hummed for years to come. Watching Vern skip around the stage with an energy that outstripped the teenagers around him was wonderful to watch. From a purely personal perspective it cemented life-long friendships. I am fortunate to have photos of Salad Days and of Prin which I have scanned. Should anyone want a copy please find me on Facebook.





# Alumni News

**Alumnus, Jock Wishart, is well-known for breaking records; including the “Round the World Powered Record” and “Rowing to the North Pole”.**

Last year, he was the Captain of the Scottish Yachting team that won the Commodores Cup, which is the most prestigious team event in international yachting.

Jock has been busy this past year with his “rowing records”. He added “Having 13 opinionated oarsmen to control proved very time consuming”.

He has been waiting for this opportunity for a number of years and had to complete the task this year, before “Anno Domini” caught up!

**Last May, he brought in from Spain, a 14-man rowing boat called a trainera. He was able to beat all the Classic British Long-distance rowing records such as:**

- Loch Ness
- English Channel

*In each race he managed to set a Guinness World Record.*

In September 2019, Jock took part in the Great River Race Record, from Greenwich to Kew, where they overtook 300 boats.

You can learn more about Jock’s race on YouTube  
 - A monster row beats Loch Ness record on Positively Media.

# VENERABLES



## London Drinks Reception

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, we had to postpone the tour around the stables in Central London, where some of the most prestigious carriages can be viewed as well as the Drink’s Reception held at the Trading House, in London until further notice. With over 170 of you booked in, we do hope to reschedule it as soon as it is safe for us to do so. We are all very excited to see you, to share news of the College, to hear your news and especially any thoughts on better furthering alumni relations.

## Wining and dining

Helen Lidington née Parry is married to David Lidington MP, who has been given a knighthood in Teresa May’s honours list. Post investiture, Helen will be Lady Helen Lidington. Well done to both of them. Helen and a group of Hild Bede Alumni & partners meet at different

UK locations every year for a weekend of activities, plus wining & dining. The rest of us are: Martin Wadsworth, Sue Beck née Winter, Martyn Brereton, David Samson, David Hood, Jeremy Gladwin, Helen Lidington née Parry. If anyone would like to join us in future, please contact martin46@supanet.com

## David Miller 50yr Reunion 1971-75 Reunion Weekends

50 Years in Durham – Legacy of Bede College

In September 1971 I arrived in Durham, a fresh faced 18 year old about to embark on the best 3yrs of my life and started my training as a teacher, my profession for 35 yrs. To celebrate 50 yrs since we started at The College of the Venerable Bede we will be celebrating that milestone by some reunion celebrations back in Durham. On September 11th 2021 I am

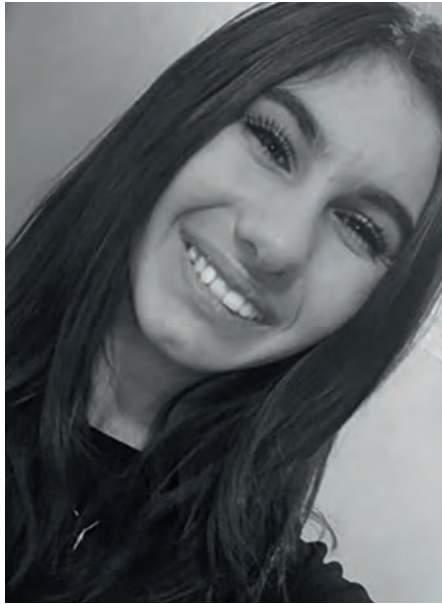
organising a reunion weekend in Durham City and Hild Bede College for all Old Bede Men, and their partners and especially those who went to St Hilds College and Neville’s Cross College. Hopefully food, drink and music in College. A second reunion event is planned by Steve Taylor and the ‘Ganges Club’ for just Old Bede Men (no partners) for the 12-14 November 2021. Venues could be ‘The Cow’ and DCRC.

Our dates at College were 1971-75. If you would like more information or to be added to the email list for one or both these events please contact: Dave Miller, millerhock@btinternet.com , 07703564360.





# Michael Bruce Award



**Olivia Campbell**

I am a second-year student at St Hild and St Bede studying English Literature. I applied to the competition because I wanted to encourage pupils from my secondary schools, and schools like it, to apply and attend Durham University. Durham will give you opportunities to pursue things that you do not even know about yet while feeling sully supported throughout them. I would encourage anyone thinking about Durham and worrying that they are not the right 'fit' to apply because I assure you, you are.

## **What Durham means to me.**

I am not from the type of background which people may associate with Durham students. I am the first student from Ken Stimpson Community School to get into Durham and the first person in my family to go to University. I am from a low social-economic background and before this year I had always taken every opportunity in front of me, but I never had the chance to travel much or experience many hobbies or activities I had always wanted to do. I didn't have any professional contacts or any work experience in a profession before coming to University. Durham has given me opportunities, incredible friends and tutors, and a network that I couldn't have imagined. Durham represents not who I was or am, or where I come from, but what I can be and where I can go. Durham to me stands for diversity, inclusion, support, and opportunity. Durham is not just a University; it is what the University stands for and the opportunities here that make the experience second to none. The portfolio of experience I have built over this year has been incredible. As a member of Durham's Women in Business Society, I was matched up with my mentor and Durham alumna Clare Hunter who works at Coltraco Ultrasonic in Marketing. Clare has given me invaluable advice, become a professional contact, and a supportive friend. Through Clare's encouragement and support I became equipped to apply for multiple internships and experiences. For example, I have been a member of UpReach and attended webinars

with top law firms like Slaughter and May and have recently applied for work experience in September with them. I also secured two internships with Bright Network. The first working with companies such as Google, P&G, GSK and Enterprise-Rent-A-Car in solving problems with feasible solutions, such as advising Enterprise on the best location for opening their next business and advising their long term strategy in adapting their business model and becoming a multinational and first-mover through expansion into LEDC's and emerging economies as a significant untapped market for their product. My second internship takes place later over this summer and will be with top law firms such as Clyde and Co, Herbert Smith Freehills, and Allen and Ovary - all industry-leading firms which I never thought I would have the chance to engage with. I also have an internship in Estee Lauder's head office in London in August and will be working in Marketing and Strategic planning for the launch of a new product in the UK beauty market.

Durham has also offered me continuous support and challenge. There are events and experiences in every department imaginable from dedicated coaches at Maiden Castle sports facility to an Entrepreneurial support team and careers development center. For example, In February I took part in the Game Changer Challenge. The challenge was an entrepreneurial challenge focused on innovative solutions to contribute to one of the UN Sustainability Development Goals. Our challenge was to ask ourselves

'How do we prevent infection during an epidemic?'. My team and I came up with a feasible solution, 1st in the competition and the support from the Enterprise department to further our idea if we choose to. Over the coming year I will participate in Durham's Leadership Academy and further my progress in achieving Durham's Inspired Award.

Since being in Durham I have also helped found Scoop Durham, a non for profit that sells environmentally-conscious and zero plastic alternatives of food products such as pasta at a competitive price with market leader Tesco. Starting in October we have secured a permanent unit in Freemans Quay that will become the main sales site and storage facility.

The collegiate system at Durham is more than just a collection of people. It quickly becomes a home and a support network, a familiar friendly face if you ever feel upset and there is always, always, someone to talk. At the beginning of the year, I suffered from imposter syndrome, but by the second term through my friends and the community support network Durham became a source of motivation and comfort. Durham itself is also unbelievably beautiful with its hills and Hild Bede's acres of gorgeous grounds, river views, and historic buildings. But as big as the campus may be, it is never not full of life and possibility whether there is a ball going on or an ultimate frisbee game, a bar crawl in the college bar, or just a group of your friends sitting around the grounds.

There are always events running on Campus from coffees

with successful entrepreneurs or companies like J.P Morgan networking with students, or formals and society events. Durham has also been so much more than advancing my skills. I have tried hobbies I never had the chance to do before but have always wanted to like gymnastics and there is everything available you could imagine from Dance and aerial arts to Cheese and Chess or rock climbing.

Whatever I choose to do in the future, it is closer to being in my grasp than ever, and I sincerely believe that if I hadn't chosen Durham I wouldn't have had the experiences, the memories, the friendships or the opportunities that have only just begun to change my life. Durham has shown me it doesn't matter where I came from, it is about what I am capable of and what I can do, and it is here that I have the resources and support to do it. Durham is academic excellence, but it is also a family, a community, a network, and the platform which can change your life. So, simply put Durham to me is opportunity. The opportunity to do things I haven't had the chance to do before, the opportunity to do things that I never knew were possible, and the opportunity to be supported throughout them. The opportunity to make my family proud and be a role model for my little sister, and the opportunity to achieve my potential and do whatever I choose to do in my life.

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# Student Awards

## 2020: Hild Bede Shines Across the Board

by Principal, Prof Simon Forrest

There is no greater pleasure in my working week than the moment when I sit down to write notes of thanks and congratulations to staff, students and alumni with whom I can share my pleasure and express my appreciation for their success, recognition and contribution. This year, and especially in this toughest of summers, recognition and awards have come to very many and across all aspects of community life, participation and engagement. I hope you will enjoy a few highlights.

Many of our student colleagues have been recognised through University Palatinate awards.

Helena Trebichavska received a Lifetime Achievement Award for her contribution to University and College Theatre. Frankie Haydon-White secured a nomination for her work on creating the first ever Durham Student Theatre Fashion Show.

We also congratulate Ho Chi Wong who won the greatest contribution to College Sport for her enduring contribution across her time at Durham, and Tilly Shires who was named Best Sportswoman of the year for Lacrosse and awarded a Full Palatinate.

Congratulations also to

Katherine Carter, Jack Filer, Joshua Ryde, Elizabeth Shelmerdine, Madeleine Wright and again to Ho Chi Wong for Half Palatinates.

Hild Bede students managed a remarkable clean sweep of first, second and third places in the Game Changer Sprint, a competition in the Enterprise Programme Awards. This was a 2 day challenge designed to put students at the forefront of innovation and champion sustainability around the world. It offered a unique opportunity to explore the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and use Design Thinking methods to find innovative solutions. In teams students had to explore the UN Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, define a challenge, and come up with new and viable solutions. Congratulations go to Olivia Campbell for securing 1st Place with her team who designed an air purifying system for public transport. Olivia also won the Spotlight Prize for best team member. Maciej Smolko and his team achieved 2nd place with their Covid-19 related health app. Third place went to Fern Russell and her team for the solution to the face mask shortage.

Both Mohammad Ibrahim Mizi and William McNeilly won grant funding in the 'Start Up Fund' competition which provides early stage awards to help explore new business ideas for any Durham University student or recent graduate working with our business coaches. Joshua Cash scooped £875 from the Social Impact Fund to support enterprising projects that aim to have positive social impact.

The summer's 'Festival of Sport' took an unusual form comprising both personal challenges for College members and also a special edition of 'Question of Sport' compered by Steve Cram. Whilst Hild Bede was pipped in the quiz on a tie-breaker, College still went on to win the overall competition helped especially by the efforts of Jade Bacon and Ho Chi Wong



Question of Sport		
		Pts
Winner	Stephenson	24
Runner Up	Hild Bede	18
Semi-finalist	Grey	12
Semi-finalist	Collingwood	12
First Round	Hatfield	6
First Round	St Aidan's	6
First Round	St Mary's	6

We are hugely grateful for the hours of entertainment as well as stellar production and acting and performance that secured for a quite incredible twelfth consecutive year the 'Best College Musical' for Hild Bede. That comes amongst a clutch of three awards in total. Best Musical for 'We'll have Nun of It' written by alumna Finola Southgate, and also the award for best new writing and 'Best ensemble' for HBT's 'Disco Inferno'.



Hild Bede success also extends to Mahek Vara who secured the 'Best Educational Volunteering' award for her brilliant work on 'Code Camp' supporting 9-16 year olds with digital skills for programming. Mahek's charity has already reached more than 70,000 young people in developing country contexts.

Laura Erel who won the 'Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition' staged by the Durham Centre for Academic Development. Laura won with a presentation entitled, 'Can we hear musical syntax?'. Laura tells me that we can. And many more people will now find that out as she goes to represent Durham in the regional competition which is a virtual live event hosted by the University of Sunderland and Laura will be put forward as our entrant to the national Vitae competition.

Finally, we recognise the achievement and contribution of Josh Hart, the 2019-2020 SRC Vice-President. Josh made a special contribution to our experience of 'Hild Bede'. He had an elected role as Vice-President of our SRC (Student Representative Council) - an already significant addition to his studies as a fourth year Engineer - and above that also was employed as a Team Leader for our bar staff in the 'Vern' bar and social area. Leading a bar team, especially as a student, is no mean feat. We traded between £2k and £9k a month, hosted entertainment most nights of the week, and also catered for drinks before and after the 6 'formals' that we ran last year. That's a footfall which I estimated at around 15,000 people per year, and on the busiest nights upwards of 500 customers. As we have not had a full-time paid bar manager since 2019, Josh had to support his staff, taking in deliveries, bottling up and, alongside it all, supporting the 'ents' in the venue. Like all good leaders Josh was always ready to turn his hand the other jobs that make the 'Vern' work so well. He has

helped with light repairs and planned redecoration and renovation. It would be no understatement to say that the 'Vern' would not have run without Josh. We would not attract such excellent other staff from the student community, we would not be so spectacularly successful, attractive or somewhere students from other Colleges want to come. Josh not only won University Student employee of the year but also the Regional award and is awaiting finding out where he is placed in the national awards.



## Obituaries



### Linda Margaret Dew (née Carr) St Hild's 1947

Linda Margaret Carr was born in Old Cornforth, Co Durham in an old stone house on the village green. Her father Rob Carr was a mining engineer and her mother Susie Bird was a milliner. At the age of 5, her father set off from Darlington Station to Rhodesia, now Zambia, to start a job in the Roan Antelope Copper mines, Broken Hill. When he was established, his family moved from Old Cornforth to be with him in a town called Luanshya. Linda and her three brothers Roy, Dennis and Ted grew up there with their parents Rob and Susie Carr.



When Linda was 18 she came back to her birthplace to begin her college life at St Hild's in Durham City. I believe her time at College were some of the happiest memories of her life. Linda kept a diary in 1947 and it lists a very detailed account of her life at that time, friends, trips, parties, college balls and projects she worked on.

When her college life came to an end, she had to return to Zambia. She boarded the ramp up the gangway of the ship home from Southampton and her beloved Aunt was waving her off. With tears in her eyes, Linda kept smiling and did not let on just how broken-hearted she was to leave this life in England behind.



Linda was a real trouper with a strong moral code, a lifelong member of the girl guides and the most stoic person I have ever known. Within weeks of returning to Africa, Linda had secured a teaching post at a little school in Broken Hill, a copper mine settlement town. After she had met my father, who was stationed in Rhodesia and had become the Police Commissioner of the town, she kept teaching and travelled the



world on vacations. After five years of marriage, Linda had two children, me and my brother Michael and when Zambia gained independence, when I was seven years old, we all returned to the U.K. As a family we settled not far from Durham, in Newton Aycliffe. Linda continued to teach at the Avenue comprehensive and also at St Marys.

We visited Durham often and walked the banks of the river near the college, she would point out the dormitory room she had and how she won her colours blazer for swimming at the pool, now in the process of being demolished for a new build.

Linda had a much travelled, varied and happy life. She was a strong and wonderful lady and this was evident in all she stood for and achieved. She had a deep love for her family and was there for them her whole life.

She had two children, four grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. Linda passed away last year aged 90, after a brief but difficult time with Parkinson's disease but not once did her beautiful strong spirit desert her.



We, myself and family, are immensely proud of her. Whenever I visit Durham, I am aware we walk the same streets, when visiting Durham Cathedral, a place she adored, we always used to light a candle for my eldest daughter, who died tragically at the age of 19, a few months after she began her University in Newcastle, of an immune disorder. Now, I always light two candles.

Linda loved Durham and her time and St Hild's and I am so glad the things she kept could possibly be kept in your Alumni archives.

Linda would have liked that they ended up back in the place they began, as she did herself and is buried in Old Cornforth only metres away from the house where she was born. Life truly did come full circle.

Yours faithfully,  
Shane Susan Dew



▲ Roy Welch and Sylvia Welch (nee Ayers) outside Hild & Bede

### Roy Welch Venerable Bede 1953

My father, Roy Welch, came up to Durham from York in 1953 to read French and History at Bede. A former chorister at York Minster, he had previously attended the Minster school and St Peters, York. He was an enthusiastic squash and fives participant forming part of the college although his main passion was music and it was through this that he met my mother, the late



▲ Squash photo, Roy Welch centre, back row.

Sylvia Welch (nee Ayers) who was reading teaching and art at Hild. After college, and brief further studies in Paris, he settled into a teaching career in Carlisle, keeping in close contact with Jos Carr and the late Brian Reddy whom he had known at Bede along with Bob Dickinson. He is survived by two children Anna and Robin.





## Colin Wedd

Colin Wedd, who has died at 82 in Doncaster was a former leader of Doncaster Borough Council, a prominent councillor on the old South Yorkshire County Council and a past chairman of Doncaster Racecourse.

A key figure in local Labour politics, he was also a schoolteacher, patron of the arts and a chairman of the board at the Northern Racing College at Rossington.

Born in Cambridge in 1937, the youngest of three brothers, he won a scholarship to Cambridgeshire High School for boys before going on to read modern languages at Durham University. Colin attended Durham University, in particular Bede College. He held several positions during his student days, contributing greatly to his fellow students' lives and rising to the position of Senior Man (now titled President).

His studies were interrupted by National Service. He initially volunteered for the Intelligence Corps, in part because he wanted to learn Russian, but was disappointed

to find the Army at that time was interested only in recruits who were prepared to learn Arabic. Instead, he found himself in the Royal Artillery, where he rode horses for the first time. It began a lifelong love affair with everything equine – from recreational riding to the training of apprentice jockeys and riding with the Badsworth Hunt.

After Durham, he was offered a position teaching modern languages at Don Valley High School. He told the interviewing committee that he was likely to stay for three years at the most, but he became a fixture for the next 25 years, retiring as head of the sixth form and then returning to serve as chair of the governors in the 1990s.

It was at Don Valley that I found myself under his wing, in his role as 6th form tutor, in 1966. He encouraged all his students to see their full potential, and offered sound advice to all. It was part of his love for Durham, I suspect, to organise a visit to the city and to Bede College in particular in 1967. His enthusiasm passed on to several students from the school, who enrolled as trainee teachers in September 1968. On completion of the 3-year course, we all embarked on successful teaching careers. I returned to my Yorkshire roots, teaching for over 35 years in Primary Education in Doncaster. Without Mr Wedd, this would not have happened.

With an urbane charm that appeared more Home Counties than Northern, Colin Wedd never came across as an archetypal Yorkshireman, but he nevertheless put down his roots in the county, becoming president of the Doncaster branch of the teachers' union and then chairman of the district Labour Party. Towards the end of his life, the party awarded him its Order of Merit.

In 1981, he won a seat from the Conservatives on the South Yorkshire County Council, and soon made his mark amongst the

stalwarts of the “socialist republic” that had become a thorn in Margaret Thatcher’s side. The following year, he was made secretary of the Labour Group, an influential position within the ruling policy committee. These were turbulent times in South Yorkshire with the county council under sentence of death by Mrs Thatcher, the miners on strike and large numbers of people unemployed across the county. Among the initiatives set up by the county council was an apprentice racing training school – a project led by Mr Wedd. After the abolition of the metropolitan counties in 1986, he continued as chair of the new school and saw it grow into the Northern Racing College and forge links with training schools in Italy, Ireland, France and Germany. He was elected to Doncaster Borough Council in 1992, taking over the leadership in 1998 for three years. At the same time, he founded a small art gallery in the centre of Doncaster, whose success led him to mount exhibitions of local artists’ work at Cusworth Hall and at The Point arts centre.

I attended his funeral at Doncaster Crematorium, on January 24th 2020 along with over 100 family members and friends, former colleagues and students, and local politicians including Ed Miliband. It was obvious from the many tributes and well-wishers that Colin was a well-respected and loved kind and gentle human being.

He is survived by Stancee, his wife of two decades.

With acknowledgements to the Yorkshire Post Newspaper  
Tony Smith  
Treasurer of the Hild Bede Alumni Association



