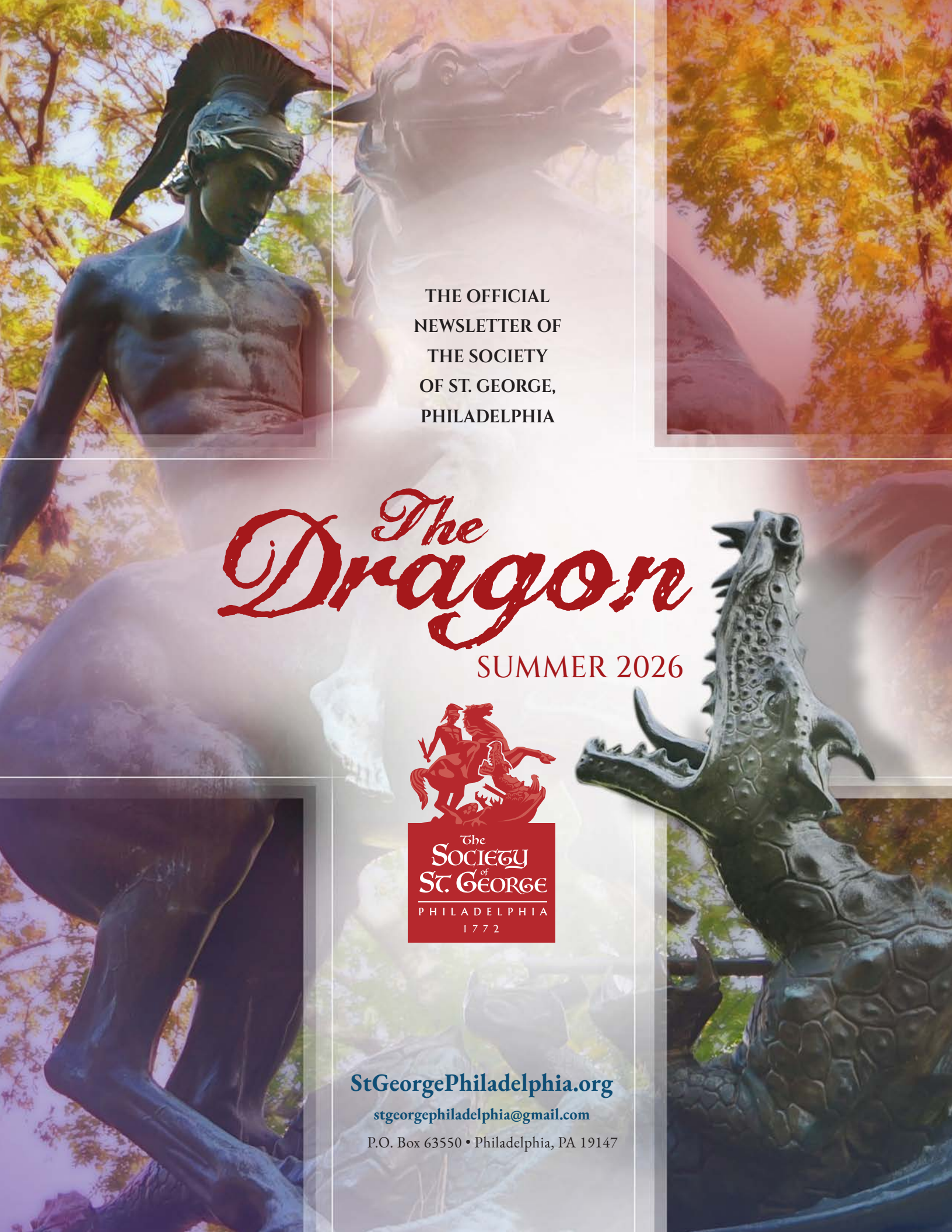




THE OFFICIAL  
NEWSLETTER OF  
THE SOCIETY  
OF ST. GEORGE,  
PHILADELPHIA

# *The Dragon*

SUMMER 2026



The  
SOCIETY  
of  
ST. GEORGE  
PHILADELPHIA  
1772

[StGeorgePhiladelphia.org](http://StGeorgePhiladelphia.org)

[stgeorgephiladelphia@gmail.com](mailto:stgeorgephiladelphia@gmail.com)

P.O. Box 63550 • Philadelphia, PA 19147

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT



Ladies and gentlemen of the Society of St. George Philadelphia,

I would like to extend my personal gratitude to Gregg Edwards, Evie Giegerich, Diane Canning, and their team of George Tyndall, Michael Poxon, Susan Gerrity, and Bill Wright for coordinating the remarkable America 250

event celebrated at Washington Memorial Chapel in Valley Forge.

In 2024, Gregg believed that the Society of St. George would be remiss not to hold some sort of celebration for the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, an idea he presented to then-President Rich Booker. As in many organizations, when it is your idea, you are summarily appointed chairman of the venture. So, Gregg ran with it. The committee convened its inaugural meeting on July 22, 2024, and resolved to host a celebratory, festive, and family-friendly event around July 4, 2026, inviting fellow societies to join as co-hosts.

Organizing and executing all the elements necessary for a successful event is a monumental task. This included securing a venue, arranging catering and beverages, fundraising, promotion, distributing invitations and collecting RSVPs, securing a band, coordinating auction baskets and entertainment, soliciting donations, praying for good weather, and so much more. Gregg, Evie, Diane, and their team exceeded expectations.

The event was not only a tremendous success for our organization but also provided an opportunity to strengthen our relationships with fellow organizations, including the Welsh Society, the Friendly Sons and Daughters of Saint Patrick, the English-Speaking Union, the Commonwealth Committee, and the British Officers Club. This momentous occasion honored our shared heritage, enduring friendships, and collective dedication to fellowship within our community.

The celebration was attended by 110 guests and eight children, and all had a grand time. Although our primary goal was to commemorate the document that established an independent nation, we also raised more than we spent and were able to provide a \$1,000 donation to Washington

Memorial Chapel in appreciation for the use of its facility.

I would like to offer a very special thank-you to our financial donors, for without their generous support, our celebration would have been significantly smaller. I apologize in advance if I have inadvertently overlooked anyone's donation.

Thank you to our **Founding Sponsor (\$1,000), Fisher Phillips**, which also supplied party favors.

Thank you to our **Liberty Sponsors (\$500) Chuck and Judy Barber, Gregg Edwards, Tench and Julia Forbes, Will Forbes, Matt and Jeanine Gilbert, David Hain, Jr., Theresa and Paul Murtagh, and Bill O'Donnell.**

Thank you to our **Patriot Sponsors (\$250) Tench Forbes, Susan Gerrity, Kate Heinig, Jim Hall, Bob Marvin, Michael Poxon, Tom Showler, Bill Thompson, George and Ronna Tyndall, and Debbie Webster.**

And thank you to everyone else who donated not only funds and items for the auction, but also their time to ensure a wonderful experience for all who attended.

As president, I was looking forward to opening the ceremonies with the Philadelphia Continental Chapter Color Guard, but unfortunately, I experienced a mishap requiring my presence at the hospital. I distinctly recall Father Tommy administering something like last rites as we awaited the arrival of emergency services. My only solace is that a horse doctor (with his pistol) did not arrive with the ambulance.

So, I missed the Kingsessing Morris Dancers; The Merzey Beat, a Beatles tribute band that I heard was outstanding; Fabulous Faces Entertainment and its face painting; Toast at the bar; and the wonderful meal provided by Wild Blue Creative Catering and Devour Desserts. I understand the auction baskets were spectacular as well, including baskets of cheer, gift cards, jewelry, patriotic baskets, and legal services for a will and power of attorney.

Finally, to all our members who joined us at this and so many other events throughout the year, thank you. It is your enthusiasm, generosity, and fellowship that give our society its strength and spirit. I am continually grateful for your support, and I look forward to celebrating our shared heritage together again soon.

Francis A. O'Donnell, Jr.  
*President*

# THE 254<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ST. GEORGE'S DAY DINNER

## *A Night at* THE HIGHLANDS

On Saturday, 25 April 2026, the Society of St. George Philadelphia gathered at the historic Highlands Mansion and Gardens in Fort Washington to mark the 254th St. George's Day Dinner and — more remarkably — the 804th St. George's Day itself.

A steady rain fell over the grounds that evening, but it did nothing to dampen the occasion. If anything, it provided the candlelit rooms of The Highlands an extra warmth. The 65 members, guests, and friends who filled The Highlands Mansion made for as elegant and spirited an evening as the society has held in recent memory.

As tradition requires, the evening began with the skirl of the pipes on the front steps, followed by cocktails and a processional through the main hall. The Mace Bearer led the President, Immediate Past President, and honored guests behind the flags of the United States, Union, St. George Society, and St. George Cross. The room rose together for the national anthem before Father Tim offered the invocation.

President Francis A. O'Donnell, Jr. then welcomed the assembled company with remarks tracing the society's long history, beginning with its founding in 1772 just four years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

He reflected on the enduring story of St. George himself: a Roman soldier of Christian faith, martyred for his beliefs

around the year 303 AD, whose legend of courage and honor has resonated across eight centuries.

"Good must be willing to stand against evil," Mr. O'Donnell reminded the room, "and faith gives strength to those who hold it."

Among the guests were our former Honorary British Consul Oliver Franklin and his wife Patricia Mikols, whose presence always serves

as a link between Philadelphia and the Crown. In Mr. Franklin's honor, the traditional toast to His Majesty The King was raised, followed by a rousing rendition of "God Save the King."





The society welcomed representatives from two organizations it supports through its charitable work, reminding us of the society's work beyond the event: Vice President of Operations at St. James School Kevin Todd along with Philadelphia Outward Bound's Director of Development Lori Salganicoff and Executive Director Justin Ennis.

The evening's guest list was further distinguished by representatives of our sister societies, whose histories together span nearly three centuries of Philadelphia's civic and cultural life:

David H. Leslie Hughes, President,  
The British Officers Club of Philadelphia (1925)

Danielle VanRuyckevelt, President,  
Daughters of the British Empire in PA (1920)

Deborah Smith Webster, President,  
The English-Speaking Union of the United States,  
Philadelphia (1920)

C. Michael Whelan, President,  
PA Society of the Sons of the Revolution (1888)

Anne Peckham, President, The Friendly Sons and  
Daughters of St. Patrick, Philadelphia (1771)

Hardy von Auenmueller, Past President, The German  
Society of Pennsylvania (1764)

Richard F. Pagano, President,  
The St. Andrew's Society of Philadelphia (1747)

Taylor Williams, President, The Welsh Guild,  
The Welsh Society of Philadelphia (1729)



Following the traditional toasts to the President of the United States, His Majesty The King, the Patron Saint, and the Founders — as well as a moment of remembrance for members lost during the past year — guests were seated for dinner. Port, tea, coffee, and a fine assortment of desserts followed, accompanied by the music of Jason Jeffries and the TallTrees.

The Society is deeply grateful to this year's Patrons and Royal Patrons, whose generosity made the evening possible. Our Royal Patrons were William B. Thompson and Fiduciary Trust International. Our Patrons included Mr. Tench Forbes, Ms. Susan Gerrity, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Joseph Myer II, Mr. and Mrs. Francis A. O'Donnell, Jr., Ms. Anne L. Peckham, and Mr. and Mrs. George I. Tyndall, Jr. Their extraordinary support, in the words of this year's program, "inspires and sustains the excellence of this occasion."

As the last notes of the TallTrees faded and the port made its rounds, it was clear that the 254th St. George's Day Dinner had done exactly what 253 dinners before it had done: brought together old friends and new, honored a tradition eight centuries in the making, and reaffirmed why this Society still gathers, year after year, in Philadelphia.

*We look forward to seeing you all again  
next April for the 255th!*

2026 Dinner Sponsor



Fiduciary Trust  
International

# ANNUAL MEETING

## FELLOWSHIP, GRATITUDE, AND NEW FACES AT CORINTHIAN YACHT CLUB

On February 26, 2026, 46 members and friends of the Society of St. George gathered at the Corinthian Yacht Club for the society's 254th Annual Meeting—a fitting reminder that, more than two and a half centuries on, our fellowship remains as vital as ever. President Frank O'Donnell welcomed the assembly, thanking the Club for its gracious hospitality and expressing his appreciation to the officers, trustees, and committee members whose work throughout the year keeps the society's mission moving forward.

Before turning to the evening's business, the society paused to remember two men whose devotion to the organization ran deep. David Coates, Treasurer of the Foundation of the Society of St. George, and David Prescott, Treasurer of the society itself, passed away within the same weekend. Both men were remembered not simply for the offices they held, but for the steady, dependable presence they brought to every gathering. Members were asked to keep both families in their thoughts, and Father Tommy offered a prayer on their behalf.



Kevin Lin, one of the Society's scholarship recipients



President Frank O'Donnell with new members Michael Whelan, Bill Collier, and Matthew McGovern, along with Membership Chair Anne Peckham

Some of the evening's warmest moments came from the society's charitable work and the young people it directly supports. Members heard from Lori Salganicoff, Director of Development at Philadelphia Outward Bound School, and were then introduced to Kevin Lin, one of the society's scholarship recipients. Kevin shared his experience rappelling down 2 Commerce Square in downtown Philadelphia as part of his Duke of Edinburgh International Award

Program. It was an undertaking the society was proud to sponsor—and one that, as President O'Donnell noted with a smile, most of the room would find far easier to fund than to attempt themselves.

The society also welcomed David Kasievich, President and Head of School at St. James School, another institution that benefits from the society's continued support. Hearing directly from the people and institutions the society champions is always among the evening's most meaningful moments, and this year was no exception.

The meeting also marked the formal welcome of twelve new members into the society, each approved by the board and affirmed by a vote of the assembled membership: Bill Collier, Lee Drew, Tyler William Forbes, Anne Vickers Greene Hain, David Lee Hain Jr., Kathleen O'Donnell Heinig, Guy Hodgson, Ashlee E. Klein, Matthew J. McGovern, William George O'Donnell, Neil Boyden Tanner, and C. Michael Whelan. Each was invited forward to receive the rosette, the society's distinguished emblem of membership.



George Tyndall, David Kasievich, and Frank O'Donnell



# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Wednesday, September 23**

**Becoming American: Philadelphia's Story**

Oliver Franklin will be live during ESU Happy Hour to discuss his new film. Free to join but you must register at [shorturl.at/gWL7B](https://shorturl.at/gWL7B).

**Friday, September 18**

**Spirits of Independence**

6:30 to 8pm Prof. David Hancock will talk Wister and the colonial wine trade with relevant tasting.

**Wednesday, October 7**

**Clive Aslet: King Charles III**

40 Years of Architecture • Carpenter's Hall

**Sunday, November 8**

**America 250 Muster of Patriots!**

Historic Waynesborough, sponsored by The Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks.  
Info: [semullen@philalandmarks.org](mailto:semullen@philalandmarks.org)

**Sunday, December 13**

**St. George Christmas Party**

Location TBD

**Thursday, February 25**

**St. George Annual Meeting**

Corinthian Yacht Club

**Saturday, April 24**

**St. George's Day Dinner**

The Philadelphia Club

## HONORARY CONSUL HOSTS THE KING IN NEW YORK

During the four-day state visit of King Charles III and Queen Camilla to the United States, Neil Boyden Tanner, His Majesty's Honorary Consul for the United Kingdom to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, hosted the King at a CEO roundtable at Rockefeller Center in New York.

The gathering, held 29 April 2026, included Sir Christian Turner KCMG, British Ambassador to the United States, and Yvette Cooper, Foreign Secretary.



Mr. Tanner chaired a table of energy sector chief executives, making introductions and steering the discussion toward sustainable market initiatives.

The occasion held personal significance for Mr. Tanner, who was presented to His Majesty by the British Ambassador, and the two recalled meeting more than 30 years earlier at the 300th anniversary of the College of William & Mary in 1993.

Two of the chief executives at Mr. Tanner's table used the gathering to announce the UK Infinity Fusion Consortium, which will pursue the first private sector-led fusion power plant in the United Kingdom. They also presented the King with a gift acknowledging that they had been brought together through his Sustainable Markets Initiative.

# ENGLISH ELMS

## LIVING LINKS TO PHILADELPHIA'S PAST

by Ken LeRoy, Arborist

The British aristocracy of the 18th and 19th centuries planted and artfully arranged trees on their estates collected from throughout the temperate world.

Oaks, maples, tulip poplars, sassafras, and dogwoods were among the American trees collected and shipped to England by Philadelphia nurseryman John Bartram, where they were planted as part of the English country landscape style.

Reciprocally, English immigrants planted English trees on their American estates, especially the iconic English elm. In 1784–85, William Penn's grandson John Penn planted English elms at his estate and country house "Solitude" on the west bank of the Schuylkill River a few miles northwest of Philadelphia.

In 1869, the city of Philadelphia purchased the property from the Penn family and leased it to the Zoological Society of Philadelphia in 1874, which developed America's first zoo on the site.

The house — a perfect 30' x 30' x 30' cube — still remains along with a magnificent remnant English elm approximately 93' tall with a 93' spread and an 80" diameter at breast height (251" circumference). It is listed as a champion tree, second only to one slightly larger specimen in the Pennsylvania Big Trees registry.

In England, the English elm is a revered tree, an integral component of the English countryside. Found in hedgerows, parks, and estates, it is admired for its rugged stature, burly bark, and finely foliated crown that turns golden in autumn.

Native to Spain and introduced into England as a particular clone of the variable species *Ulmus minor*, the English elm is genetically identical from tree to tree. As a clonal selection, it is self-sterile and does not set seed. Instead, it has been vegetatively propagated from cuttings for centuries.



In addition to the grand dame of English elms at the Philadelphia Zoo, examples can be found on other historic grounds throughout the region, including:

- English Village at Erdenheim Farms
- Laurel Hill Cemetery
- Penn's Kaskey Park
- Glenside train station (perhaps a remnant of an old estate)
- Moravian University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, home to the state's #1 champion English elm

The Woodlands, the former West Philadelphia estate of noted Anglophile William Hamilton (1745–1813), once had a spectacular old grove of massive English elms that succumbed to Dutch elm disease in 2017. We help protect the English elm at the Philadelphia Zoo from Dutch elm disease through macro-infusion of the systemic fungicide propiconazole.

I continue to discover other English elms on properties throughout the Philadelphia area. They always make me think about the original planter and their connection to England. What nursery propagated and sold the elm? Or was it grown from a cutting shared by a fellow Anglophile?

Written by Ken LeRoy in association with John B. Ward, Arborist. The society is grateful to John B. Ward for the ongoing trimming and care of the trees surrounding the St. George's Statue in Fairmount Park.

# AMERICA 250 CELEBRATION

## AN EVENT TWO YEARS IN THE MAKING

The grounds of Washington Memorial Chapel at Valley Forge became the setting for a memorable gathering as the Society of St. George joined with the English-Speaking Union, the Friendly Sons and Daughters of St. Patrick, the Welsh Society, the British Officers Club, and the Commonwealth Committee to mark America's 250th birthday in style.



On Saturday, June 27, over 100 guests gathered under rainy skies on 50 acres steeped in Revolutionary War history to celebrate together as sister societies.

The afternoon opened with the Philadelphia Continental Chapter Sons of the American Revolution Color Guard leading the procession, followed by an invocation from Father Tommy and a rousing Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem led by event Chair Gregg Edwards. Guests were honored to hear remarks from His Majesty's Honorary Consul to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Neil Boyden Tanner, whose presence underscored the transatlantic spirit at the heart of the day.

In his remarks, Mr. Edwards reflected on the two years of planning that brought the celebration to life, noting that as the nation approached its 250th year, it seemed only fitting to mark the milestone alongside the sister societies. Guests then spent the afternoon touring the chapel grounds, where history was very much on display. The cornerstone was laid in 1903 on the 125th anniversary of the Continental Army's evacuation from Valley Forge and funded through the nickels and dimes of small donors. It helped earn the chapel its reputation as "the soul of Valley Forge." Guests enjoyed the Cloister of the Colonies, with its thirteen bays honoring the original states, and the National Patriots Bell Tower, home to the DAR Patriot Rolls and the Justice Bell, a 1915 replica of the Liberty Bell that once rang out for women's suffrage.

The celebration itself was a feast for every sense. The Merzey Beat, a Beatles tribute band, kept guests singing and swaying through the afternoon, while a whole roasted pig, chicken with Guinness ale mushroom gravy, and Maryland jumbo lump crab cakes anchored a spread that also included summer corn, an array of salads, and dessert. Cocktails, wine, beer, and mocktails were poured by Toast, The Mobile Celebration Station. Younger guests enjoyed patriotic face painting and balloon characters, while the Kingessing Morris Dancers drew the whole crowd, young and old, out to the parking lot for their performance. A lively silent auction rounded out the day's festivities.



**This was all made possible through the dedication of Committee Chair, Gregg Edwards and the event committee:** Diane Canning, Evie Giegerich, Bill Wright, Frank O'Donnell, Michael Poxon, Susan Gerrity, George Tyndall, Taylor Williams, David Leslie Hughes, and Debbie Webster. Their two years of planning turned a milestone into a celebration our societies will long remember.

We are equally grateful to our generous sponsors, without whom the day's success would not have been possible.

**Thanks to Founding Sponsor Fisher Phillips LLP, our Liberty Sponsors** Charles & Judy Barber,



Gregg Edwards, Tench & Julia Forbes, Will Forbes, Matt & Jeanine Gilbert, Mr. & Mrs. David Hain Jr., Kate & Ryan Heinig, David & Norma Leslie-Hughes, Theresa & Paul Murtagh, and Frank & Susan O'Donnell, and **Patriot Sponsors** Tench Forbes, Susan Gerrity, Kate Heinig, Jim Hall, Bob Marvin, Michael Poxon, Tom Showler, Bill Thompson, George and Ronna Tyndall, and Debbie Webster.

Our thanks as well to the Philadelphia Continental Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution Color Guard for lending the day such ceremony and dignity.



The celebration proved such a success that our societies were honored to present Washington Memorial Chapel with a \$1,000 donation in gratitude for hosting us on its magnificent grounds. The chapel's staff were wonderful hosts in every sense, and we are already looking forward to the next occasion that brings our sister societies together in patriotic fellowship.



Created and co-executive produced by Oliver, the film tells the story of the nation's founding through the lens of Philadelphia, America's first capital, and does so through voices too often left out of that story. Beginning with the arrival of the first ship carrying enslaved Africans, the documentary traces

*"Restores to the historical record the enormous role Black people played in the shaping of our country's fundamental institution."*

— Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Harvard University

how Indigenous people, enslaved Africans, lawmakers, and artisans together shaped a new nation. Though rooted in Philadelphia, it is, as the filmmakers note, a shared American story whose debates and ideals still resonate today—one that belongs, in this Semiquincentennial year, to all Americans.

The film had its broadcast premiere on WHYY-TV12 in May, following a local premiere at the Philadelphia Film Society, and has since been picked up for national distribution across PBS stations. Historian Henry Louis Gates, Jr., called it a compelling exploration of the role of Black Americans in the nation's founding. Annie Connolly of Bear House Media served as executive producer alongside Oliver.

We are proud to count Oliver among our members and friends, and prouder still to see Philadelphia's fuller story reach audiences across the country during this milestone anniversary year. Members are encouraged to watch at [becomingamericanmovie.com](http://becomingamericanmovie.com), [PBS.org](http://PBS.org), or via the PBS app.

**Watch It Live with Oliver Wednesday, September 2** as part of the ESU Happy Hour Program to talk about his new film. The webinar is free, but you will need to register at [shorturl.at/gWL7B](http://shorturl.at/gWL7B).





This past spring, the Philadelphia Outward Bound School (POBS) partnered with the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) to introduce the Duke of Edinburgh Award to four schools. In total, 86 students from Bodine, Constitution, Parkway, and Masterman high schools came to POBS to complete a wilderness skills day in preparation for their Adventurous Journeys.

Students practiced cooking on camp stoves, setting up tents, navigating with maps, and hiking together to Wissahickon Creek. SDP plans to continue offering the Award at select schools in the coming year, with POBS continuing to support the Adventurous Journey component for participating students.

## ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT

Maya Artis is a junior from Springside Chestnut Hill Academy who recently completed her Bronze Award with the Philadelphia Outward Bound School. Maya first became involved with Outward Bound through a partnership with her school, where she completed an expedition with POBS as part of her freshman orientation.



Maya (second from right) during her Adventurous Journey, an Outward Bound expedition in North Carolina.

After her five-day expedition on the Appalachian Trail, Maya wanted to continue growing and challenging herself through expeditions and began pursuing her Duke of Edinburgh Award. For her three activities, she chose rowing, painting, and gardening.



A watercolor by Maya as part of her award

Her more recent 10-day alpine backpacking adventure in Yosemite was an impressive fourth Outward Bound expedition for her. She tackled challenging terrain and covered 33 miles over eight days of hiking, crossing 10 lakes and summiting Fernandez Peak at 10,500'.

Outward Bound expeditions give students opportunities to build deep and meaningful relationships with one another while benefiting from time in nature, disconnected from technology and familiar routines. The Duke of Edinburgh program allows students like Maya, who have a strong interest in the outdoors, to expand their horizons while choosing physical activities, skills, and areas of service they are motivated to pursue.

## MID-SUMMER

In mid-July, a group of 20 students from the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda visited Philadelphia to undertake their Gold Adventurous Journey as part of the final requirements for the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Over the course of 10 days, they took part in a backpacking trip in the Delaware Water Gap, provided service at Erdenheim Farm in Flourtown, and experienced some of the landscape and history of the city of Philadelphia. To commemorate, friends joined in celebrating the students' accomplishments at their Expedition Graduation at the Discovery Center on Monday, July 13.

It was an active summer experience for POBS all around.

# EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SPOTLIGHT

## ST. JAMES SCHOOL

David Kasievich

### A STANDING OVATION FOR A ST. JAMES GRADUATE

St. James graduate Kevine Dupree delivered one of the most memorable moments of this spring's Dr. Audrey Evans Benefit, earning a standing ovation from more than 350 guests as he accepted the 2026 Graduate Award. His heartfelt remarks celebrated a journey of resilience and growth and offered a powerful reminder of the lifelong impact of St. James' Graduate Support Program.



Head Chef Deborah Anthony, Kevine Dupree, and Assistant Head of School Sonya Kedarnath.

At the community of St. James, our commitment to students extends far beyond eighth-grade graduation. As a tuition-free Episcopal middle school serving North Philadelphia, we believe every child deserves the relationships and support needed to thrive. Through graduate support, our team continues to walk alongside every graduate through high school, college, and into adulthood, providing mentoring, academic guidance, career counseling, and a lifelong community of encouragement.

Kevine's journey reflects the lasting impact of those relationships.

Now 22, Kevine graduated from Mercy Career and Technical High School before earning a bachelor's degree in psychology from Lincoln University. Today, he works with Philadelphia's Careers through Culinary Arts Program (C-CAP), helping young people discover opportunities for their own futures.

Accepting the award, Kevine reflected on growing up "as a gay, Black man" and the courage it took to embrace his authentic self.

"The version of me standing here today was never guaranteed," he shared. "It took time. It took growth. It took unlearning fear and learning courage. It took finding the strength within myself to say, 'I am deserving. I am worthy. I belong here just as much as anyone else.'"

Presenting the award, Assistant Head of School for Graduate Support Sonya Kedarnath described Kevine as someone who "embodies perseverance and purpose," while Head Chef Deborah Anthony recalled Kevine's curiosity in the kitchen beginning in fifth grade and the pride his family took in watching his passion for cooking grow.

Kevine concluded his remarks with a message for today's students:

"Be bold. Be innovative. Be inspiring. Take up space. Ask questions. Challenge norms. And above all else, be yourself unapologetically, fully, and without compromise. Because the world doesn't need more copies. It needs truth. It needs you."

While Kevine's accomplishments are remarkable, what makes his story especially meaningful is the enduring relationship he continues to have with St. James. Our graduate support team has remained by his side since eighth-grade graduation, celebrating milestones, offering guidance through challenges, and helping him navigate each new chapter of life.

The ongoing support of the Society of St. George Philadelphia helps sustain this work and strengthen the programs that ensure every student has the opportunity to thrive. Your generosity makes it possible for graduates like Kevine to know they will always have trusted adults in their corner and a community that believes in their potential.

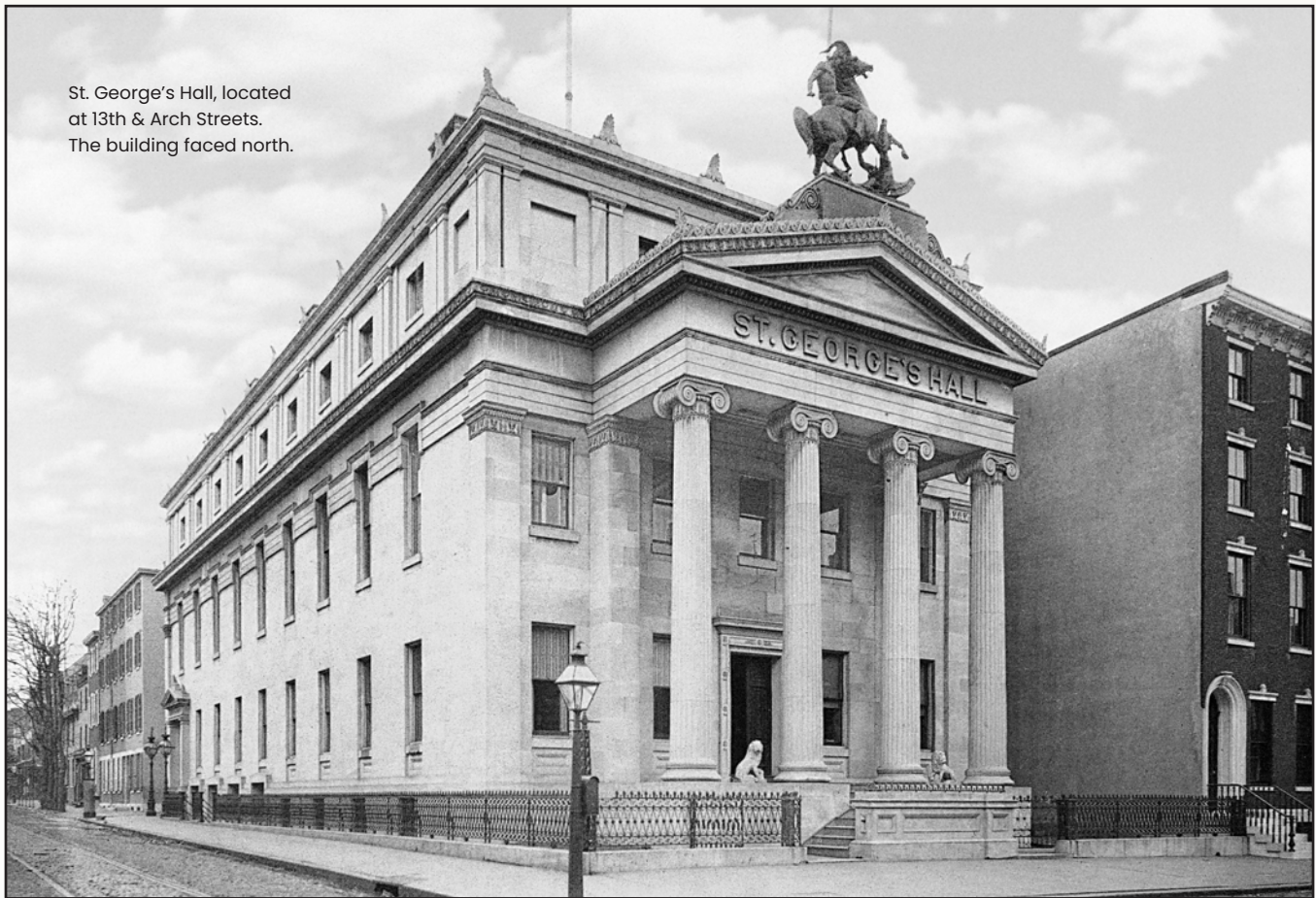
Kevine graduating Lincoln University in 2025



# MATTHEW NEWKIRK

## ORIGINAL OWNER OF ST. GEORGE'S HALL

George Tyndall



St. George's Hall, located at 13th & Arch Streets. The building faced north.



Matthew Newkirk was an American businessman, railroad magnate, banker, and philanthropist.

He served as president of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad, which provided the first direct rail service between Philadelphia and Baltimore. The railroad built the first permanent bridge across the Schuylkill River south of Market Street in recognition named it the Newkirk Viaduct.

He was involved in an extraordinary range of business, educational, and civic endeavors. He served as a director of the Second Bank of the



Matthew Newkirk  
May 31, 1794 – May 31, 1868

United States and was an investor in the Little Schuylkill Navigation, Railroad, and Coal Company, and the Cambria Iron Company. He also served on the board of Girard College and as a trustee of Princeton University, contributed to Lafayette College, served as president of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, and was a founding member of the Polytechnic College of Pennsylvania. He also donated land that helped establish Fairmount Park.

Born in Pittsgrove, New Jersey, on May 31, 1794, to Cornelius and Abigail Newkirk, he was one of nine children. As a teenager, he moved to Philadelphia and worked for a dry goods merchant on Front Street where he learned the business.

Newkirk served in the War of 1812 and married Jane Reese Stroud in 1817, who sadly died of tuberculosis just 21 months later. He partnered in a dry goods store with

his sister, opening on North Second Street. After finding success, he formed a partnership with William Heberton in 1821 and established Newkirk and Heberton at 95 Market Street.

In 1832, Newkirk purchased a resort hotel at Brandywine Springs west of Wilmington, where he also had a vacation cottage and spent considerable sums improving the building and grounds. During this time, friend Nicholas Biddle convinced him to become a director of the Second Bank of the United States.

In 1835, Newkirk purchased a lot at the corner of 13th and Arch Streets and, in 1837, built the mansion that would eventually become St. George's Hall. Designed by Thomas Ustick Walter, the marble residence featured a fresco by Italian artist Nicola Monachesi.

Walter was one of the founders of the American Institute of Architects, and his best known work is the dome of the US Capitol in Washington, D.C. During this period, Newkirk raised money to build the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad, much of whose right-of-way is still in use today by Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. He was also a major real estate investor, owning properties in 11 states and becoming the largest landlord in the city of Philadelphia.



Newkirk died May 31, 1868, in his Philadelphia mansion and was interred at Laurel Hill Cemetery. In 1875, his family sold the mansion for \$70,000 to the Society of the Sons of St. George, who extended the building southward, added a third floor under the direction of architect James H. Windrim, and placed a commissioned sculpture of

St. George and the Dragon atop the pediment.

The mansion was sold for \$160,000 to Henry C. Lea in 1896, who leased the building to the society until a new buyer sought to clear the lot for redevelopment.

In 1903, St. George's Hall was demolished, and the statue of St. George was moved to its next location at 19th and Arch Streets (*stay tuned for the story of the society's second official location at 19th and Arch Streets*). It was another sad loss of a handsome building that had been part of the fabric of Philadelphia, only to be replaced by a parking area.

A deeply religious man, Newkirk served for 34 years as an elder of Philadelphia's Central Presbyterian Church.

He was survived by one child, Matthew Newkirk, a Presbyterian minister. In his will, he bequeathed substantial sums to the University of Delaware and the Presbyterian Church.

One piece of Newkirk's mansion survived — the front colonnade, later erected as the

entrance to a house called Mercer Manor, which stood on the eastern edge of Princeton Battlefield near the spot where General Hugh Mercer was mortally wounded. When Mercer Manor was demolished in 1937, its owners, the Institute for Advanced Study, presented the portico to the State of New Jersey.

Today, a marker can be found on the freestanding remains of the colonnade at Princeton Battlefield State Park, a small artifact and enduring reminder of the building that once served as the official home of the Society of the Sons of St. George.



The freestanding remains of the St. George's Hall colonnade at Princeton Battlefield State Park

# MOVEABLE FEAST

George Tyndall

Part six in the series on dinner and meeting locations throughout the city of Philadelphia.

## MASONIC HALL

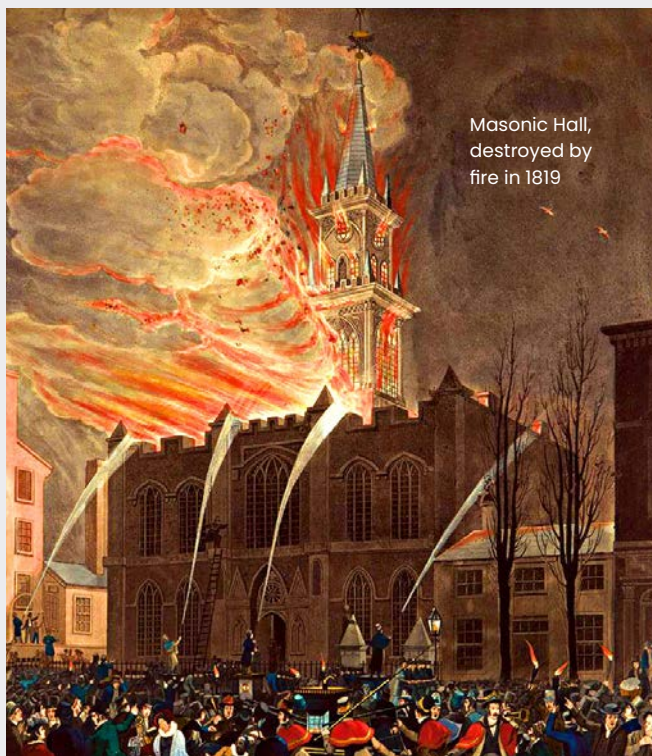
The Masons and the Society of St. George share a common meeting place in their histories — Tun Tavern. The St. Andrew's Society, the Marines, and the Pennsylvania National Guard also have connections to the famous tavern, where the society had its unofficial start.



Tun Tavern

As history records, Byrne's Tavern became the first officially documented meeting place of the Society of the Sons of St. George in 1772.

The Masons moved throughout the city over the course of their history, and not always under ideal circumstances. In 1755, the Freemasons' Lodge opened as the first purpose-built Masonic meeting space in the Western Hemisphere. During the Revolutionary War, the building was used as a jail then later sold. Meetings were subsequently held in various homes, a Quaker meeting house, and even



Independence Hall.

Between 1811 and 1819, the first Masonic Hall was built on Chestnut Street between 7th and 8th. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by a massive fire, the dramatic print depicting the fire brigade battling the blaze. It was rebuilt the following year and hosted the first ever Philadelphia Flower Show.

As Freemasonry grew in popularity, a new building designed by Sloan & Stewart was completed in the Gothic style in 1855. Members of St. George met here in April 1841. From surviving prints, the structure resembled a lacy wedding cake

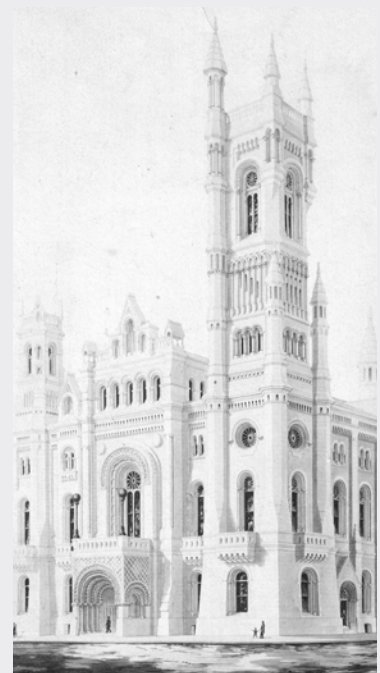


*(and I assure the attendees were decked out to match!)* Before long, however, this location became too small for the Masons' growing membership.

Plagued by poor basement ventilation and other structural issues, and criticized by its members, the property was sold — and the building was eventually destroyed by fire in 1886.

So, westward ho! The Masons moved on to their current home at One North Broad Street. Completed in 1873, the magnificent Masonic Temple predates Philadelphia City Hall by nearly three decades.

*Perhaps we should plan to make this historic landmark another society meeting destination in the future!*



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## THE ORDER OF ST. GEORGE



### HELPING ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE BRANCHES AND SOCIETIES REVIVE, THRIVE, AND GROW

Contributed by Mark Lanyon

**There are three things a branch or society can do to revive, thrive, and grow:**

1. Hold creative events that active members can invite prospective members to attend.
2. Attract new members and retain active members by hosting events throughout the year.
3. Recognize that young people are the lifeblood of any organization and make attracting younger members a priority.

Here are just some of the things being done throughout North America to achieve these three objectives:

#### ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE CAROLINIAN BRANCH (CHARLESTON, SC)

The Carolinian branch holds events throughout the year to keep active members engaged and attract new members.

Events this year have included Cocktails and Conversations, a meet-and-greet designed to introduce prospective members

to the society; free concerts such as “The British Are Coming,” featuring music of the British Isles; Guy Fawkes Night; Croquet and Pimm’s events; *Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale*; participation in the Carolina Day Parade; and an impressive Christmas dinner.

The Charleston branch has worked hard to overcome the setbacks of the COVID era. Rather than focusing on large and costly events, the branch has concentrated on smaller, less expensive gatherings. By doing so, it has been able to create more opportunities to engage prospective members.

#### THE ST. GEORGE’S SOCIETY OF BALTIMORE

The Baltimore society also holds events throughout the year to keep active members engaged while providing





Royal Society of  
St. George Carolinian  
Branch (Charleston, SC)

prospective members with opportunities to experience what the society is all about. Events include the Prince of Wales Brunch; the Annual St. George's Day Dinner; the annual St. George Cup polo match; Trafalgar Night Dinner; Remembrance Sunday Service; British War grave marking;

and MG on the Rocks, a British car show.

These creative events provide opportunities for members to invite prospective members to join in the fun, meet current members, and learn more about the society.

The approach is working. At last year's St. George's Day Dinner, eleven new members were inducted into the society. At this year's dinner, that number grew to nineteen.

## ST. GEORGE'S SOCIETY OF TORONTO

To attract younger members, the society has created a subset of membership called "George," which caters specifically to a younger audience. Headed by Adwet Sharma, the group encourages younger members to invite friends—whether or not they are initially interested in joining—to events such as sporting events, movie nights, and "Pleasant Hour" gatherings, their version of happy hour. At the last two Christmas events attended by Mark Lanyon, at least one-quarter of those in attendance were under the age of 40.

Throughout the year, the society either hosts its own events or invites members to attend events held by other organizations. These include Pleasant Hour, Quiz and Chips Night, various concerts, horse racing, and movie events. Offering a variety of activities throughout the year helps keep current members engaged while giving them opportunities to introduce friends who may wish to join.

## ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE CALIFORNIA

The California Branch has planned a new event for its members called Cups and Saucers. The "Cups," representing new members, and the "Saucers," representing long-standing members, will come together to share stories, spark friendships across generations, and celebrate and promote England, Englishness, and English customs.

It is another example of a branch using creativity to engage both new and longtime members while strengthening connections within the organization.

## IN CONCLUSION

These are just a few of the ways branches and societies are reviving, thriving, and growing throughout North America. By offering creative events, keeping members engaged throughout the year, and finding new ways to welcome younger generations, these organizations are building stronger communities and laying the groundwork for continued growth.

## THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE IS GROWING IN NORTH AMERICA

### ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE OF ATLANTA

After more than a year of hard work and dedication by Robert Soderstrom and Jerry Vogler, the Atlanta Branch received formal approval at the RSSG Council Meeting on June 5.

### ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE OF THE PALM BEACHES

After more than a year of hard work by Jim Williford, the Palm Beaches Branch received formal approval at the RSSG Council Meeting on June 5.



The St. George's  
Society of Baltimore

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# A MEMORIAL REMEMBRANCE

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IT IS A VERY SAD TIME WHEN WE LOSE CHERISHED MEMBERS AND FRIENDS  
OF OUR ST. GEORGE SOCIETY. THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY WILL  
ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND FRIENDSHIP.

## RICHARD D. LULL, 92



Richard Dixon Lull, known fondly to everyone as “Dick,” passed away peacefully at home on May 9, 2026, while receiving hospice care. He was born on January 17, 1934, in New York, the son of Emily and Edward Lull. While he was growing up, his family moved frequently. After moving to Pennsylvania,

Dick attended Germantown Academy and graduated from Villanova University. He also followed in his father’s and grandfather’s footsteps by attending the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis.

Coming from a long line of military service, Dick proudly continued a family tradition spanning generations. His great-grandfather, Edward Phelps Lull, fought for the Union during the Civil War and was captain of the USS Constitution, which at that time served as the temporary U.S. Naval Academy. His grandfather, Army Colonel Charles Edward Terry Lull, served during World War I, while his father, Edward Earl Lull, fought in the Pacific Theater during World War II. Dick served as a Marine.

Professionally, Dick worked as a sales manager for Airstream trailers, traveling across the United States. Before retiring, he worked as a salesman for Jaguar on the Main Line.

A longtime member of St. Thomas’ Episcopal Church, Whitemarsh, Dick was devoted to his church community. He loved serving in Stephen Ministry and was a longtime member of the Cemetery Committee.

Sailing was one of Dick’s great passions. He was a past Commodore of the Tall Oaks Yacht Club and a member of the Rock Hall Yacht Club, and was captain of a 34-foot sailboat named Southern Cross. He loved sailing and racing sailboats on Barnegat Bay and cruising the Chesapeake aboard a trawler also named Southern Cross. His many affiliations also included the British Officers Club of Philadelphia, the Military Order of the Foreign Wars, University Lodge No. 51 of Philadelphia, and the Society of St. George, Philadelphia. A 32nd-degree Mason, he was also a former member of the Philadelphia Cricket Club.

He is survived by his brother Terry of Florida and his sister Connie of Wyoming and was predeceased by his brother Tom. He is also survived by several nieces and nephews. He will be deeply missed by his loving partner of 38 years, Patricia Beard.

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AND LUNG CENTER IN BROWNS MILLS,  
NEW JERSEY.

**LET LIGHT PERPETUAL SHINE UPON THEM AND GIVE THEM REST.**



## 2025 ANNUAL ST. GEORGE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Members and friends of the Society of St. George gathered for the Annual Christmas Party, filling The Philadelphia Cricket, Flourtown Branch with warmth, good cheer, and the sounds of the season.

Dressed in their most festive attire, 45 guests came together to celebrate the holiday in the company of friends old and new.

The evening began with a lively cocktail hour followed by dinner and wine in a setting as warm and inviting as the company itself. The highlight of the evening came as guests gathered around the piano to sing traditional Christmas carols. Pianist Sira Jittapirom, engaged for the occasion through the efforts of Greg Cantwell, provided the musical accompaniment, while the Cantwells led fellow members in song, filling the room with holiday spirit.

We were delighted to welcome Neil and Lee Tanner, as well as Fr. Tommy and his wife, Leslie, among our guests for the evening. Their presence, alongside our loyal longtime members and a number of new members joining us for the first time, made for a truly memorable celebration and a fitting close to another wonderful year for the Society.

The Society extends its sincere thanks to all who attended, with special thanks to Rich and Pattie Booker, who served as our Club sponsors, and to Greg Cantwell for his efforts in arranging the evening's music.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS  
FOR THIS YEAR'S SHINDIG:  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13!**



*The Dragon*

## THE HISTORIAN'S ROLE IN CONFIRMING THE ANCESTRY OF AN APPLICANT

T. Michael Poxon

The membership application asks applicants to provide the place and date of birth used to establish eligibility and to confirm their family tree back to an English or commonwealth ancestor. Applicants should also identify immediate family members, including spouse, children, and parents.

The historian works backward through the family tree to verify this connection. Because public records are often limited for the most recent 50–70 years, applicants may be asked for additional details such as birth dates, residences, deaths, burial locations, siblings, and recent ancestors. These details help connect the family tree to census, marriage, death, and other public records.

If the application lacks sufficient information, the historian will contact the applicant. Existing genealogical research prepared for another organization may also be useful. Occasionally, a proposed family line proves inaccurate, but another ancestral line may establish eligibility. Research resources include Ancestry.com, MyHeritage.com, BeenVerified, and JustAnswer.

### SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Established in partnership with Arcadia University (formerly Beaver College) in Glenside, Pennsylvania, this prestigious program provides financial assistance to students from the Philadelphia region who are studying in England. Awards from the endowment generally range from hundreds to thousands of dollars.

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Reside in the Philadelphia area; intend to study in England through an Arcadia program; demonstrate financial need and have a good academic record; be of English descent.

Students interested in future opportunities should contact the Society of St. George, Philadelphia, or Tim Barton, Director of Academic Solutions & Access, Arcadia Abroad at [barton@arcadia.edu](mailto:barton@arcadia.edu).



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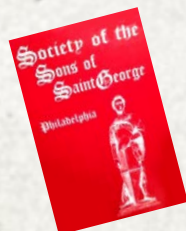
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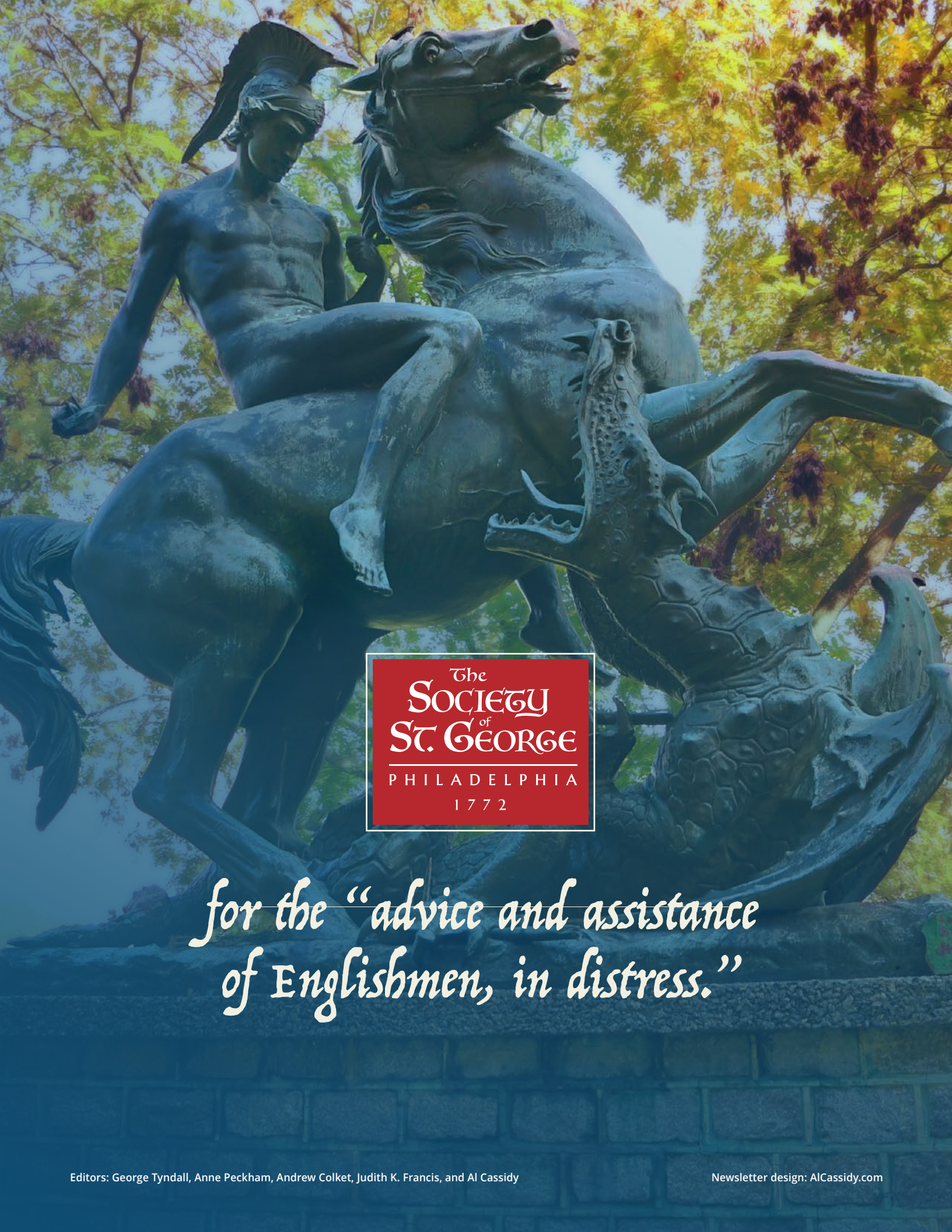
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