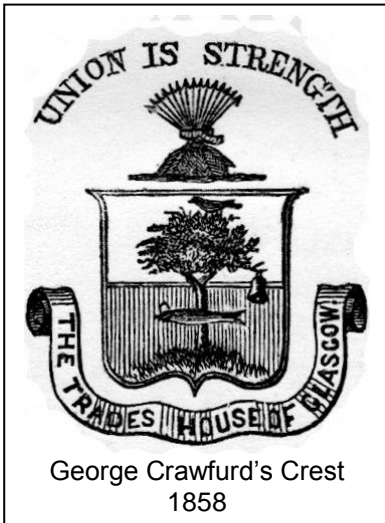
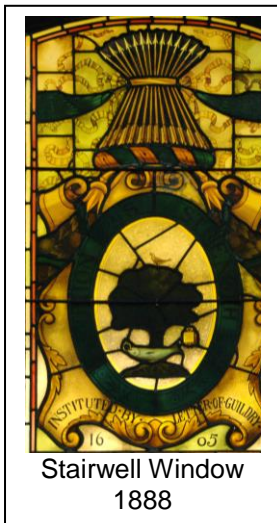


Trades House of Glasgow Archivist Report “Debunking Myths”

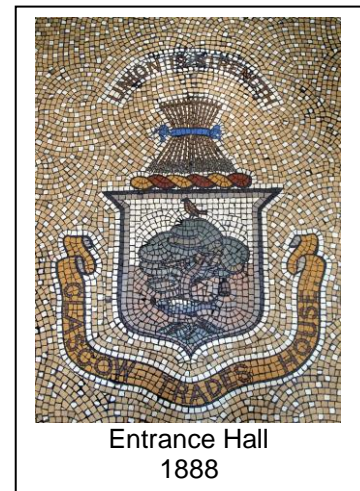


It is a well-known fact that the number of arrows on the crest of the Trades House Coat of Arms has always been 14 arrows. Each arrow representing one of the Incorporated Trades in the House, hence the motto, Union is Strength.

But what do we base this assertion on? The answer I believe is word of mouth and this is a notoriously poor method of passing on fact as the story is liable to alter over the years. In fact the first time that we can find a printed copy of the House Coat of Arms is in George Crawford's book, "A Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Trades House of Glasgow", printed in 1858. An illustration of the crest from this book can be found to the left of this article, and strangely there are fifteen arrows on the crest. Some may ask, "Is this an error?" The answer would be a resounding no. This is exactly what



George intended and we know this from a copy of a letter in the Trades House letter book of 28th January 1858, in a letter to Messrs. Bell and Bain, he wrote: "He is satisfied with the sketch of the Seal with the exception of the arrows which are diminished in number. There should be 15 of these to represent the Trades House and 14 Incorporations." So George Crawford may have been designing the crest. On checking the crest on the 1888 window in the stair of the Hall, there are fourteen arrows as on the 1888 terrazzo floor in the entrance hall.



It was not until about 1902 that the Trades House of Glasgow registered its Coat of Arms.

The second Myth to be debunked was the reason why the Incorporations decided to have their Coats of Arms registered with Lord Lyon. Some say that it was because the Lord Lyon was at a dinner in the Trades Hall and commented on the Arms not being registered, this is a good story, but not based on any evidence. Others claim that the Trades House Lodge insisted on having them registered to allow them to be displayed on their new chain of office. This myth is based on a misinterpretation from the Trades House Lodge History of 1945 where it states: "The outstanding feature in the composition of the Collar or Chain is the introduction of fourteen escutcheons or shields, representative of the fourteen Incorporated Trades of the City. Over each of these escutcheons is placed a panel which bears the name of one of these Incorporations. The shields are intended to have emblazoned on them the legitimate Coats of Arms of their Incorporations. Only four Coats are at present so displayed, as only four of the fourteen Incorporations are in possession of legitimate arms. The remainder are left blank until the ten Incorporations obtain Patents or legitimize the Arms presently used." This is simply a statement of fact and not the reason for the registering of the Arms.

The reason for registering was simply that in 1902, the House wished to have its Arms and those of the fourteen Incorporations emblazoned on the roof or some other decorated part of the renewed Cathedral. The Clerk stated that: "*the Cathedral was a State building and that no Coats of Arms would appear on the building unless they had been registered at the Lyon Office.*" At that time none of the Incorporations had their Coat of Arms registered and the House suggested that each of the Incorporations should have their Coats of Arms registered.

In 1948, the House agreed to pay for replacing one of the stained glass windows in the Quire, and is the sixth window on the south wall counting from the east most end. The House agreed to pay £1000 and each Incorporation was asked to pay £100 for the window. The window can be seen by all visitors to the Cathedral and is in full glorious colour.

In 1957 the House Finance Committee approved payment of £250 for four new pews for the Cathedral and the House and the fourteen Incorporations had their registered Coats of Arms were carved on the ends of the pews in full colour. The pews are located adjacent to the Trades House window previously mentioned above.

It is only with the creation of the Archives store in the basement of the Trades Hall that some of the above information has been able to be found. We believe that there are a lot more hidden gems waiting discovery and a team will be formed in late September to help uncover them.

The archivist is always happy to visit Master Courts etc. to keep them up-to-date with any new discoveries and to give talks on the Trades House and Hall to groups, clubs etc. If you would like to be part of this team, or know of a club or group who would like a talk on the House or Hall, please email craig_bryce@hotmail.com.

For tours of the Trades Hall, please phone or email the Trades House office.