

The Incorporation of Bonnetmakers and Dyers of Glasgow



THE INCORPORATION OF BONNETMAKERS AND DYERS is the youngest of the fourteen Incorporations which comprise the Trades House of Glasgow, having been formed as recently as 1597, but what it lacks in seniority is more than made up for by the amount of good works done within the Craft through the enthusiasm and support of our large membership.

EARLY DAYS OF THE BONNETMAKERS

The first Charter, granted in 1597, gave our Craftsmen the exclusive right of carrying on trade in the Burgh, and the power to enforce a high standard of workmanship among those engaged in the making of bonnets, woollen socks and wylie-coats. It was not until 1760 that the Dyers, whose Craft was closely connected with the Bonnetmakers obtained legal recognition and the "Bonnetmakers and Dyers" was thus formed. The original Charter did not make it compulsory for any Burgess practising the craft of dyeing to enter the Incorporation, but a subsequent Charter of 1801 rectified this defect.

With the advantages of a legally recognised Craft came certain civic duties, and as a Burgess each member was required to keep arms and turn out when called upon to watch and ward within the Burgh. As a Craft it was also bound to maintain its old and incapacitated members, and the widows and orphans of deceased members. In this way the Incorporation began to play an important part in the life of the city, improving the standard of craftsmanship and at the same time contributing to the public welfare with that sense of service which still continues.

THE INCORPORATION TODAY

The exclusive rights and trading privileges of the Incorporation disappeared by Act of Parliament in 1846 which spelt the end of many similar associations in other Burghs, but the Glasgow Incorporations kept on, concentrating their resources on the benevolent work which is now our main object.

Today our assets approximate £90,000 and each year Pensions and Precepts amounting to approximately £3,000 are paid to approximately 50 pensioners. In addition, each pensioner in the Glasgow area is visited annually by members of the Master Court.

The business of the Incorporation is in the hands of the Master Court which comprises the Deacon, Late Deacon, Collector, Late Collector, Deacon's Goudie, and ten Trades Masters. There are four quarterly meetings each year and our two social functions are the Deacon's Choosing Dinner, usually held in October, and our "At Home" held in February. There are also various sporting activities, including fishing, golf, curling and bowling.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE INCORPORATION

To become a member of an Incorporation today is regarded in Glasgow as an expression of good citizenship, and each new member joining is helping to enable the benevolent work of the Incorporation to be maintained. Where there is no previous family connection entry is by the "Far Hand", but sons and sons-in-law of a member have the privilege of entering the Incorporation at the "Near Hand", in each case being entitled to become a Burgess of the City of Glasgow.

The office of Collector came into being in 1640 and his responsibilities have not changed appreciably throughout the Centuries; in other words it has always been his chief duty to enrol new members.

It is therefore my privilege to most cordially invite you to become a "Bonnetmaker and Dyer" and I hope that this invitation will have your favourable consideration.

Collector.