

**Trades House of Glasgow**  
**The Story of**  
**Deacon Convener Duncan Niven (1760 and 1761 : 1777 and 1778)**  
**Incorporation of Barbers Deacon (1747 : 1755 : 1758)**  
**and**  
**Deacon Convener Walter Ferguson (1813 and 1814)**  
**Incorporation of Barbers Deacon (1797)**



Craig R Bryce  
Trades House Honorary Archivist

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**Deacon Convener Duncan Niven (1760 and 1761 : 1777 and 1778)**  
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### **Introduction**

The Incorporation of Barbers are an ancient Craft who received their Charter in 1656. Since that time, they have supplied two Deacon Conveners.

The first was Deacon Duncan Niven was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1716, his father was William Niving and his mother was Mary Campbell. It was not uncommon for names to be spelt as they sounded. The witnesses at the christening were William Hadden and John McLachlan. Their parents were married in Glasgow on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1812 in Glasgow.

Duncan Campbell had a sister called Katrin who was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1729

Duncan Niven became a Burgess and member of the Incorporation of Barbers on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1739 as a Near Hand. He was the eldest son of William Niven who was a barber. His father received his Burgess ticket as a Far Hand Barber on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1732 at the desire of Matthew Brown, one of the clerks of Session, conform to act of council dated 21 Sept. 1732.

Duncan became the Collector of the Barbers in 1742 and 1743 before becoming Deacon in 1747 and then again in 1755 and 1758. Deacon Duncan Niven went on to become Deacon Convener in 1760 and 1761. He was re-elected as Deacon Convener in 1777 and 1778.

Deacon Duncan Niven was a well-known citizen. He entered the Incorporation upon the completion of his apprenticeship in 1739, his father being the Collector for that year. He took an active and leading part in all the business of the Trade, and of the City generally. He was chosen Trades' Bailie in 1763 and 1775, and Preses of the Glasgow Highland Society in 1765. His Barbel's shop in Bell's Wynd was a well-known and much-frequented meeting place.

It is related of him in "Glasghu Facies, 1836," that he was with the Trades' Battalion at the Battle of Falkirk in 1746, and for his gallant and heroic behaviour, he was in the next year, 1747, chosen Deacon of the Barbers. Also, as representing the Trades' House, he went to London with the Lord Provost in 1778, and made a tender to His Majesty, of raising the Glasgow—afterwards the 83<sup>rd</sup>— Regiment, to take part in the American War. This last incident is evidently the foundation of a mythical, after-dinner story, which is told in Mackenzie's "Reminiscences of Glasgow." It relates the supposed adventure in London of a Deacon of the Barbers, a weaver, and a Gallowgate grocer, of a period about thirty years later.

13th Oct. 1766. There was taken out of the box, a Disposition of the Deacon Convener's House, in favour of the Surgeons and Barbers, of a share of the great tenement of land at the Cross, commonly called the Trades' Land, effeiring to One thousand Merks Scots. The said Disposition to be delivered to the Deacon Convener, in order to complete the sale of the said land. The Incorporation's share realised £54. 5s. 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d. paid in 1769, and a Bond by the Convener's House for £48. 10s. 10<sup>10</sup>/<sub>16</sub>d. which was paid up in 1773. The property was sold to James McLehose, Maltman. 13th June 1768.

Deacon Convener—Duncan Niven formerly referred to join the other Incorporations in Subscribing a Sum to defray the expense of raising a Battalion of men in the City of Glasgow, for His Majesty's service. The Master Court agreed to lay the same before the Trade, and at a meeting held on the following day, the Trade voted One hundred pounds Sterling to be paid from their funds, for such purpose.

Duncan appears to have been a considerate man as he made eight men Burgesses free gratis by nominating them as Deacon Convener. He also had an apprentice, who received his Burgess Ticket as a Barber through serving his time with Duncan. The following are the list of people who received their Burgess Tickets through Duncan:

William McCulloch, a merchant was one of the first and he was made a Burgess and Guild Brother on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1762.

Charles Hutton, merchant was next to receive his free gratis Burgessship on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1762.

William Smith, a lace weaver was nominated by Duncan Niven, Deacon Convener on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1763.

Robert Logie, Barber served his apprenticeship under Duncan and became a Burgess on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1763.

James Hunter, Tailor granted his Burgess ticket free gratis, on the nomination of Duncan Niven, deacon convener on 17 April 1764/

John Wilson, Hammerman was granted his Burgess ticket on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1776 on the nomination of Duncan Niven, bailie, conform to act of council dated October 1764.

William Hamilton, jeweller was granted his Burgess Ticket on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1776, on the nomination of Duncan Niven, bailie.

Robert Brown, merchant was granted his Burgess Ticket, free gratis on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1778, on the nomination of Duncan Niven, deacon convener .

Joseph Affleck, merchant, was granted free gratis his Burgess Ticket on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1780, on the nomination of Duncan Niven, Deacon Convener.

## **Deacon Convener Walter Ferguson**

### **Parents' Marriage**

James Ferguson, wright and Jean Morrison were married in Glasgow on 15 May 1770

### **Birth**

Walter was born on 22 Jan 1771 in Glasgow. His parents were James Ferguson, wright and Jean Morrison. John Buchanan and George Reid were witnesses at his christening. James and Jean were married on 15 May 1770 at Glasgow.

### **Siblings**

Peter Ferguson born on 25 Jul 1781 Glasgow

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Jean Ferguson born on 31 Aug 1784 Glasgow  
George Ferguson born on 24 Nov 1787 Glasgow

### **1783 Burgess Details**

James Ferguson, Walter's father, received his Burgess Ticket through his marriage to Jean, Lawful daughter of Walter Morrison, maltman, B. and G.B. on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1783

Walter Ferguson, received his Burgess Ticket as a Barber, B. and G.B., as the eldest son to James Ferguson, Maltman B. & G.B. on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1792.

### **1795 Collector and Deacon of the Incorporation of Barbers**

In 1795, Walter was elected as Collector of the Incorporation and two years later as was the practice, he was elected Deacon of the Incorporation in September 1797.

### **1798 Trades House Battalion**

5th June 1798. The Deacon laid before the meeting, an extract from the Trades' House anent raising a Trades' Battalion of Royal Glasgow Volunteers, and a committee was appointed to get subscriptions.

### **1799 Glasgow Directory**

The only listing of Water Ferguson in the Glasgow Directories that could be accessed was when Walter was hairdresser at the corner of Bell Street, Glasgow.

### **1809 Glasgow Directory**

The 1809 Glasgow Directory shows Walter Ferguson as a Trades' Counsellor

### **1810 Glasgow Directory**

The 1810 Directory lists Walter Ferguson as a Trades' Bailie.

### **1813 and 1814**

In October 1813 Walter was elected to be Deacon Convener of the Trades House of Glasgow. Little did he know the time that it would take for another Deacon of the Incorporation of Barbers to survive to reach this high office.

### **1813 and 1814 Water for the City**

Shortly before Walter Ferguson took office there was discussions concerning the water supply in Glasgow and on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 1813. The House and the Barbers were taking under consideration the great advance that had been made by the proprietors of the Glasgow and Anderston Water Works, for the supply of water to the inhabitants; and considered the said advance to be extravagant in the extreme, particularly upon the lower classes of the community possessing houses at low rents. Therefore, the meeting, so far as they are interested, agreed to discontinue taking said water.

Also the meeting resolved, that the Incorporation recommend to the Magistrates and Council, to give directions for putting the public wells into proper repair, and opening new ones if such shall be found necessary. So as to afford a sufficient supply of water, for the use of the inhabitants.

Deacon Convener Ferguson must have been instrumental in preparing the resolution from the Trades House that would be considered by the Incorporation on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1813 where they would consider a resolution of the Trades' House,

finding "That any attempt by the Magistrates of Glasgow to apply to Parliament for liberty to erect new Churches, and for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the same, imposing a tax on the spirituous liquors consumed within the City, or on the rental within the Burgh, is highly impolitic and altogether unnecessary. And if persisted in, that this meeting will by every legal and constitutional means oppose the same from being carried into a law."

The Trade agreed to oppose such a Bill in toto, and to contribute towards the expense of opposition.

Clearly their consumption of spirits and beers were more important than their religious spirits.

### **1814 Regulating the Price of Grain**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> April 1814, the Incorporation observed that it is was intended to bring into Parliament a Bill, for regulating the prices at which Grain might be imported into this country, founded upon a Report of a Select Committee of the House of Commons.

They resolved unanimously,

First. That under any circumstances, to prevent the necessaries of life being imported into a country, is obviously impolitic and unjust.

Second. That the obstruction of importation, especially of any of the principal articles of subsistence of the labouring classes of society, must heighten the prices of these commodities, and thereby occasion national calamity, by encouraging internal discord and emigration.

Third. That should any Bill of the kind be brought into Parliament, this Incorporation will co-operate with other public bodies entertaining similar sentiments, in opposing the same upon every legal and constitutional ground.

And Lastly. That these Resolutions be published in the " Glasgow Courier " and " Herald " newspapers.

### **1815 Glasgow Directory**

In 1815 Walter was listed as both the Deacon Convener and a Trades' House Bailie.

### **1814 Election of Bailie**

The following extract from the Counsel Minutes describes the process of electing the Councillors of the city of Glasgow.

*"At Glasgow the Fourth day of October Eighteen hundred and fourteen years. Convened The Lord Provost and his Counsell along with Walter Kirkland, all of the City of Glasgow. The Magistrates & Council of the City of Glasgow being in Council assembled, instituted "An Act for the more effectual preventing Bribery & corruption in the Election of Members to Serve in Parliament" was publicly read, in presence of the said Magistrates and Members of Council, before named.*

*The said day, being the first Tuesday after Michaelmas, and the ordinary day for electing those who shall bear office as Provost and Baillies for the ensuing year, for this Burgh, the Magistrates and members of Council before named, being Convened*

*in the Council Hall; And the Counsellors except the Provost & Baillies being removed from the Council table, the said Provost and Bailies set down the leet of the Counsellors of the Merchant rank capable of being elected Lord Provost of this Burgh for the ensuing year, being only Sixteen in number, instead of Seventeen (owing to the Dean of Guild being an ordinary Member and the Master of Work, having resigned,) to the effect one of them might be chosen to bear office or Provost for the ensuing year. And the said Counsellors being divided into four leets, each leet containing four persons, and these leets being Severally voted upon, after the persons in each leet had removed from the Council table,*

*Henry Monteith was Unanimously Elected and Chosen to bear office as Provost of this Burgh for the ensuing year; who accepted of his said office, gave his oath de fideli administrations officii, and took and Swore the oaths of allegiance and abjuration, and Subscribed the same with the assurance.*

### **1813**

*Eighteen hundred & thirteen, Joshua Heywood & William Leckie who was elected Merchant Baillie at Michaelmas Eighteen hundred & twelve, & Robert Tennent who was elected Trades Baillie at Michaelmas Eighteen hundred & twelve, together with Walter Ferguson present Deacon Convenor of the City, having been all, (as well as John Guthrie Dean of Guild who was absent) Summoned to attend this dict, personally, or at their dwelling places, as was verified by William Murray Council officer and because the said Kirkman Finlay was elected Provost at Michaelmas Eighteen hundred & twelve & Eighteen hundred & thirteen, and the said Charles Stuart Parker was elected a Merchant Baillie at Michaelmas Eighteen hundred & twelve & Eighteen hundred & thirteen, and the said William Dalglish was elected a Merchant Baillie at Michaelmas Eighteen hundred & thirteen, & Michaelmas last, whereby three of the Merchant electors were wanting, Therefore the said Electors made choice of James Coats, James Robertson & Alexander Stewart Merchants in Glasgow, to be Electors of the Merchant rank in place of the said Kirkman Finlay, Charles Stuart Parker & William Dalglish. And because Archibald Newbigging was elected a Trades Baillie, at Michaelmas Eighteen hundred & thirteen and Michaelmas last, and William Rodger was elected a Trades Baillie at Michaelmas Eighteen hundred & twelve & Eighteen hundred & thirteen, whereby two of the Trades Electors were wanting, Therefore the said Walter Ferguson took his place as one of the Electors of the Trades rank in place of the said Archibald Newbigging, and the said Electors made choice of Robert Tennent Junior, Maltman, to be an Elector in place of the said William Rodger, whereby the number of Electors present were completed to Eighteen; to which number it is necessary to complete them in terms of the Set of the Burgh as now established. Afterwards, the said Eighteen Electors so convened, being, in terms of the Set and Regulations of the Burgh, to make choice of those who are to bear office as Counsellors, instead of those disqualified by Seniority, or who have died or refused to accept of their officers, there was laid before the said Electors by the Town Clerks, a list of the Members of Last year's Council, specifying the dates of their having been admitted into Council. And the said Electors having examined the said List, and having considered that in terms of the Set and Regulations of the Burgh the two Senior Counsellors of the Merchant rank, and the two Senior Counsellors of the Crafts rank, full to be disqualified, and new ones elected in their Stead: That Joshua Heywood was elected a Merchant Counsellor on the twenty third of April Eighteen hundred and eight"*

### 1817 Glasgow Directory

In 1817 Walter Ferguson is listed in the Glasgow Directory under the title of “*Trades’ Councillers*” he was also a member of the Dean of Guild Court and he was the Collector of the Trades House of Glasgow.

### 1818 Glasgow Directory

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### 1827 Trades Bailie

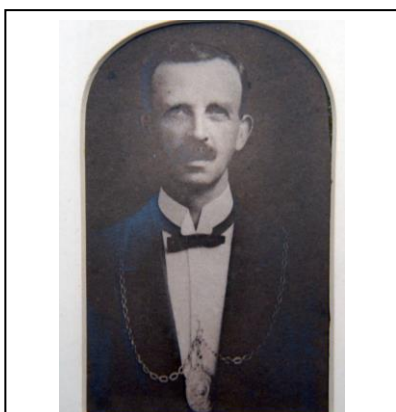
On the 2 October 1827. There were eleven crafts candidates for the position of youngest or second trades bailie. They were split into two groups of six and five, Archibald McLellan and Walter Ferguson coming top of their respective groups to run off against each other. In the event McLellan was elected unanimously.

No records could be found of Walter having married or having children and his date of death is also unknown.

### Present Day

Apparently two Deacons of the Incorporation of Barbers have stood to become Deacon Convener, but both died before taking office. There is now a superstition in the Incorporation of Barbers about the dangers of being selected to become Deacon Convener.

### Deacon David Borland



David Borland  
1919  
Collector 1920  
Died: 9 October 1921

The following Deacons were elected as Collectors of the Trades House:

First is David Borland who died on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 1921, before assuming the position of Deacon Convener. David was a Singar Broker and had been married to Jane Dobbie. David died at 7 a.m. at 11 Newlands Road, Glasgow, aged 53 years. The cause of David’s death was a cerebral haemorrhage.

### Deacon William Alexander Hogg

The most recent potential Deacon Convener was William Alexander Hogg AIB (Scot) (better known as Bill). Bill was a Banker and was married to Hope Scott in Partick in 1960. Their son William was Deacon of the Barbers in 1997. Bill was the Deacon of the Incorporation of Barbers in 1968 and 1973. He was invited to become the Manager of the Drapers Fund in 1986 and became Collector of the Trades House in 1987. He died in January 1989 aged 62.



William A Hogg AIB (Scot)  
1973 ('68)  
Collector 1987  
Died January 1989