



Trades House of Glasgow

Heritage Newsletter No 4

December 2023



Welcome to our third Newsletter. The Heritage and Archives team wish all in the Trades House and Incorporations a wonderful Christmas and a very pleasant New Year.

Trades House Tour Guide Training

It has been a wee while since the last Trades House Tour Guide training session and we have great pleasure in announcing that the next session will take place on Tuesday evening of 27th February 2024 at 6.15p.m. Anyone wishing to become a tour guide or wishes to know more about the Trades Hall should book a place with Katrina at: katrina.tilston@tradeshouse.org.uk

New Book Scanner

We have great news to report! The Society of Deacons and Free Preseses of Glasgow has kindly donated £2,400 to enable the Archives team to purchase a book scanner. This will enable us to scan books that cannot be scanned on a flatbed scanner without causing them damage. We can then share them on our publicly available website www.tradeshouselibrary.org



The Society of Deacons and Free Preseses was formed in 1780, 77 years before the Association of Deacons who were instituted in 1857. Initially the Society was set up to support Deacons and Preses who had fallen on hard times, but in 1876 the rules of the Society changed to allow anyone to join who were desirous to participate in the Society's charitable aims. The reason for the change was the setting up of the Association of Deacons who were recruiting members from the same pool of people and for the same charitable purposes.

For membership details, please contact the clerk at: psc@blaneycarnan.com

The Grand Antiquity Society has also agreed to purchase a computer and software to run the new book scanner which should be up and running mid-January 2024.



The Grand Antiquity Society was instituted on 16th November 1756, by a number of persons, all Burgesses, for the purpose of uniting the old Burgess families of the City, preserving the continuity of Burgess-ship amongst them from generation to generation, and of affording relief to each other and their widows.

To become a member you normally have to hold three Burgess Tickets, your own, your parents' and your grandparent's' or in-laws. Anyone wishing to join the Society should contact the clerk at tom@monteithsolicitors.com

We are now looking for someone to help in the archives with scanning books, no experience necessary as full training will be given. For further information please contact Craig R Bryce at: craig_bryce@hotmail.com.

ARCHIVES

Trades House Free School

The Trades House has a wonderful history for the education of children in the Incorporations. As far back as September 1649, at a meeting of the Trades House, they discussed a motion made a number of times concerning the setting up of a school and schoolmaster for instructing poor children whose parents were not able to pay for their education. In November of that year, the school was duly established. I am delighted to say that the House seems to have been interested in gender equality way back then as on 29th November 1651 the House met and discussed the remuneration of the teachers and decided to pay John Fultone elder, Skinner £3 and [] Semple, daughter of the deceased [] Semple £3. So begins the history of the Trades House and its support of education.

The most recent Trades House School began in 1808 with Mr. Archibald Newbigging (Weaver) proposing that the House should appoint a committee to converse with the chaplain to see if, with an augmentation of twenty or thirty pounds to his salary, he could take charge of a school by himself, or find a person to do so under his superintendence to instruct fifty or sixty children under the patronage of the House. The House unanimously approved the motion.

It took until November 1808 before the School was finally established and initially only boys were allowed to attend. By 1839, 108 boys and 54 girls, the sons and daughters of freemen of any of the Incorporated Trades of Glasgow, could be admitted to the School to receive the benefit of all branches of education taught in it.



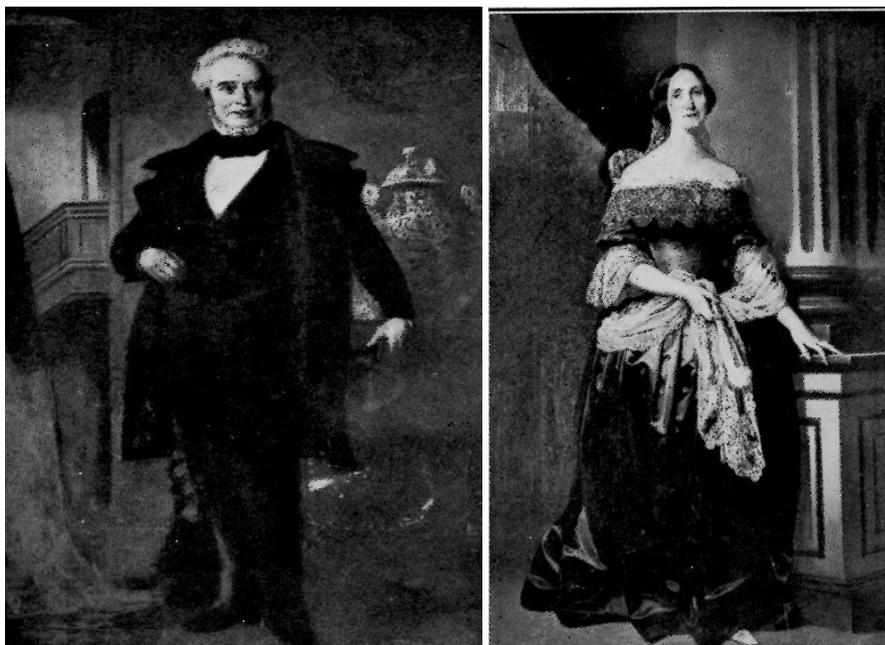
Thomas Struthers

In 1841 Thomas Struthers was appointed Principal Teacher and he remained so for 22 years. During his tenure he was keen to have his title of Principal Teacher changed to Headmaster. This request went to a full meeting of the House but was refused, possibly because the new designation may have meant an increase in salary.

For more information on the Trades House Free School, the rules affecting pupils and teachers, please use the following link:

https://www.tradesouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/trades_house_school_story.pdf

James Buchanan and Jane Buchanan (nee Jack)



On walking up the stairs to the Grand Hall you will have noticed the portraits of James and Jane Buchanan, but how often have you considered why their lower legs are missing? When the House received these two paintings, they were full length paintings but as the frames were too large, it was decided to cut the lower portion of their legs

off and to reframe the paintings in a more suitable size. Some might call this vandalism.

More about the story of James and Jane Buchanan can be found at:

https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/james_buchanan_biography_v2021.pdf

LIBRARY

Stother's Christmas and New Year Annual



Annual publications traditionally come out just before Christmas and *Stother's Christmas and New Year Annual for Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire 1911/1912* was no exception. The introduction to the *Annual* was written by Thomas Stothers of Hamilton in November 1911 just before it was published. Unlike Post Office Directories, which provide lists of businesses and addresses of inhabitants, the volume provides a quite detailed guide to organisations such as churches, hospitals, schools, civic administration, electricity and water supply as well as prominent people of the day in Glasgow and its environs. Sports clubs such as football and water polo are not forgotten. The volume has a large section at the front advertising businesses long since defunct, such as Jas. Gibbon and Son, motor car

merchants, The Caledonia Soap Works in Paisley and the very latest in oven ranges from Allan Ure & Co at Springbank Foundry.



The Trades House occupies several pages. The Deacon Convener, Mr Graham Service and each of the Deacons (and Visitor) are each given an individual picture together with a short resumé of their working life. There is also an image of the grand hall with a plastered ceiling (subsequently replaced in 1955 by avodire wood).



Although the volume is called an 'Annual', searches through other library catalogues have only found one previous edition, that of 1910/11 which is held in the Mitchell Library. However, for anyone wishing to find out about life in Glasgow and district around 1911, the volume in the Trades House Library is a mine of information. If you wish to view either this volume or any other of the books in the Library please email: info@tradeshouse.org.uk A full list of Library holdings can be found at <https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org> (scroll down the page).

MUSEUM UPDATE

Since joining my colleagues at the start of the summer I've been reviewing the extent and physical condition of material held in the main 'House' collection only. For now, my attention has been on items currently on display in various locations within the building itself, some of which would benefit from being labelled for better information purposes. Also, whether there is scope to enhance the visual appeal of certain areas of the building by bringing items out from store for the enjoyment of staff, visitors, and corporate clients alike. So far, the display of framed (facsimile) archival photographs in the basement cloakroom area has already been welcomed.

Areas for future consideration include the back stairs, where staff have indicated that they would like to see this area brightened up, in recognising of course that many visitors/corporate clients also use these stairs to access the North and South Galleries and Museum. First impressions are very much that this staircase is 'functional' but dull! In addition, the North and South Galleries and the Robert Adam room might benefit from the placing of one or two significant pieces, reflecting the importance of the building and its unique history, whilst fully appreciating the need for these spaces to appeal to the broadest market for future rental bookings.

Finally, I have investigated the physical condition of the important carved benches in the entrance foyer. Many of the joints in the back panels and arm rests have opened up and this is an increased risk of damage occurring. These will require attention in the future, and I have engaged a respected colleague to present a condition report, outlining what needs to be done and what the eventual costs might be.

HISTORY OF THE TRADES HOUSE AND CRAFTS

First Free Election of Deacon Convener

190 years ago, October 1833 must have been a happy time for the Trades House as on 9th October 1833, a meeting was called to elect the Deacon Convener for the following year under the recently enacted Bye Laws. Bailie McLean moved and Mr. Fowler seconded that Mr. McLellan, the previous year's Deacon Convener should be re-elected. Bailie Wilson moved and Mr. Alston seconded that Mr. James Graham should be elected Deacon Convener. Twenty-eight people voted for Deacon Convener McLellan and 29 members voted for Mr. Graham. The House therefore appointed Mr. James Graham as Deacon Convener. Until this date the House had selected three potential candidates and the Provost and Magistrates had elected one from the three as Deacon Convener.

[The privilege of the House electing their own Deacon Convener came about due to an alteration in the Borough Reform Bill]

Deacons Choosing Dinners ~ Visitations

On the 19th August 1898, the House set down the rule for Visitations by Incorporations to ensure a uniform approach. This rule is still in force and the rolling order of visitations is still strictly adhered to.

In 1912 the Deacon of the Incorporation of Masons indicated that his Master Court had observed with regret the gradual breaking away of the old custom of all Incorporations dining on the same evening. Two Incorporations had that year dined on evenings subsequent to the Deacons' Choosing - and suggested that some effort should be made to maintain uniformity of practice. After due discussion all agreed that every effort should be made to have all the Dinners on the evening of the Deacons' Choosing, to conform to the ancient custom. Clearly this idea has not lasted as each Incorporation now dines on different dates.

It is interesting how old customs die and new ones replace them.

Message from the Chair



Merry Christmas and a happy New Year! The Heritage Committee and all our volunteers continue work away on behalf of the House and Crafts - it's been exciting to get going again after the restrictions of Covid. You'll notice more material displayed on the walls of the basement area (and ask the hallkeeper to access the many craft boxes now on display down there) and soon the back stairs will be displaying material too. The arrival of the book scanner is going to really help us increase the scanned accessible material on the website. So, a very sincere thank you to everyone who has contributed this year – it's really making a difference. Enjoy it! Regards, Ruth Maltman

Trades Hall Tours

Stairway Notes

- The main public staircase follows a typical Adam double staircase plan.
- The stair was rebuilt by James Sellars this is one of the few areas of the Trades Hall which retains original details, with some particularly fine plasterwork and an interesting tablet above the entrance to the Grand Hall which commemorates the opening of the building. Set in a circular panel is the Trades House' grant of Arms, very similar to Glasgow's, but with a red field as the lower part of its background.
- The internal arched window with its two fluted columns supporting carved urns was the work of Glasgow Architect James Sellars.
- In 1888, Sellars was responsible for extending the building this side of the double doors and creating a rear entrance from Virginia Street. At the same time, he rebuilt much of the original Adam staircase.
- Traces of this influence can be seen in the ornate moulded cornice, the urns and fluted columns of the stair window and inspired the glazed barrel-vaulted ceiling.
- The double height of the space, combined with the natural light from above and the delicate plasterwork create a light and airy feeling. In Adam's plans there was a committee room above.
- The plasterwork panels just below the vault, feature sheaves of fourteen arrows which represent the fourteen Incorporated Trades and occur more frequently than the Arms of the Trades House throughout the building.

Stained Glass Window

- The stained glass window shows the old Arms of the Crafts as they appeared in 1888, when the Hall was remodelled by James Sellars.
- The background of each panel is made up of little painted icons; thistles, roses and harps, to symbolise Scotland, England and Ireland.
- The cost of installing the window was borne by James Tullis the Deacon Convener of the time.
- In the upper part of the window, the Trades House Arms appear again, with the inscription 'Instituted by Letter of Guildry 1605', flanked by two seated boys.
- There are two marble busts on the staircase. The gifting of such sculptures was a popular way of ensuring one's relatives would be remembered in times to come.
- William Maclean, who was Deacon Convener in 1827-28 and James McLennan, Deacon Convener in 1893-94.
- The painting above the right-hand bust is of George Crawford who was Clerk to the Trades House from 1831 to 1875. He is shown as a man of learning, holding pince-nez glasses in one hand and a letter in the other. His 'Sketch of the Trades House', though not in the same league as Lumsden's work, is still referred to for information to the present day.
- The painting above the left-hand bust is that of Ex Deacon Convener William Maclean whose bust is below the painting.
- The two portraits are of James Buchanan and his wife. James Buchanan rose from humble beginnings as a blacksmith in Glasgow's East End to amass a huge fortune trading with Jamaica in the early 1800s. On his death he left a legacy of £10,000, the equivalent of nearly half a million pounds in today's money, to pay for the education of Craftsmen's children.