



Trades House of Glasgow

Heritage Newsletter No 8

December 2024



ARCHIVES

New Acquisitions

The archives have just been offered Tom Gilchrist's papers from his year as Deacon Convener from 2004 to 2005 when he was Deacon Convener during the 400th anniversary of the Trades House. This will join the many other papers from other Deacon Conveners which are in the process of being recorded and filed in the archives.

Skinner and Glovers

Neil Headrick, past Clerk to the Incorporation of Skinners, Furriers and Glovers from 1987 has passed to the archives a large number of old Charters of the Skinners from 28th May 1516 and 21 full size, colour copies of the Skinners coat of arms from 1924.

The archives are delighted to receive the above but there are many more than we require and we would be delighted to offer copies to any Skinners a copy for their personal use.

Trades House Tour Guide Training

Jan Dobson is organising a session of Trades House Tour Guide Training on 14th January 2025. The session starts at 6.15p.m until 9p.m. The session covers the history of the House and Hall, Health and Safety and support available for guides. A Trades House U.S.B. stick is issued to all participants which contains all the information required to conduct tours.

The Tercentenary of the Trades House of Glasgow

In 1905 the Trades House celebrated its 400th anniversary in the Trades Hall. It looks as if it was a superb evening with lots of food, dancing and singing. The House was in great unity and all Incorporations enjoyed participating in the anniversary. The extract from the programme below illustrates some of the merriment of the evening

IN THE CORRIDOR of the UPPER HALLS, from half-past Eight till half-past Ten.

THE SCARLET BAND.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. March, | - - - Paris, | - - - Mezzacapo. |
| 2. Overture, | - Merry Wives of Windsor, | - - Nicolai. |
| 3. Waltz, | - - Gold and Silver, | - - - Lehar. |
| 4. Selection, | - - Veronique, | - - - Messenger. |
| 5. Fantasia, | - - Plantation Songs, | - - - Clutsam. |
| 6. Scotch Selection, | The Thistle, | - - Myddleton. |
| 7. Three Dances, | Henry VIII, | - - Ed. German. |
| 8. Caprice, | - - Espagnole, | - - Mascheroni. |
| 9. Descriptive Piece, | A Day in Naples, | - - Byng. |
| 10. Galop, | - - St. Petersburg, | - - - Lumbye. |

Conductor, - - Mr. F. F. MEATEN.

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IN THE LARGE HALL, from Nine till half-past Ten o'Clock.

SONGS.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Annie Laurie, | - - - - - | Douglas. |
| | Mr. WALTER HARVEY. | |
| 2. { a. Songs my Mother taught me, | - - - - - | Dvorak. |
| b. A Birthday, | - - - - - | Cowen. |
| | Miss RETTA McALLISTER. | |
| 3. Come into the Garden, Maud, | - - - - - | Balf. |
| | Mr. J. R. L. CORRIGALL. | |
| 4. Star of Eve (Tannhauser), | - - - - - | Wagner. |
| | Mr. WALTER HARVEY. | |
| 5. Ca' the Ewes to the Knowes, | - - - - - | Burns. |
| | Miss RETTA McALLISTER. | |
| 6. Lend me your Aid, | - - - - - | Gounod. |
| | Mr. J. R. L. CORRIGALL. | |
| 7. { a. Were I a King, | - - - - - | Goring Thomas. |
| b. In her Garden, | - - - - - | Henri Loge. |
| | Mr. WALTER HARVEY. | |
| 8. Last May a Braw Wooer, | - - - - - | Burns. |
| | Miss RETTA McALLISTER. | |
| 9. The Moon's on the Lake, | - - - - - | Lee. |
| | Mr. J. R. L. CORRIGALL. | |

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For more information on the 400th anniversary, please click on the following link:

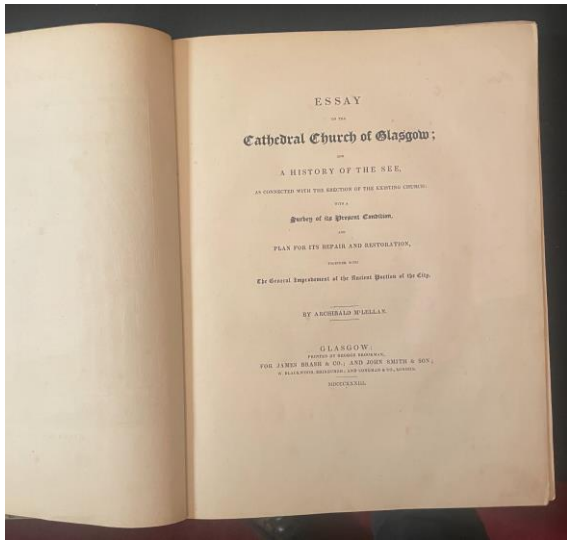
www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/ter_centenary_of_trades_house002.pdf

January will be the 850th anniversary of the City of Glasgow where hopefully there will be lots of celebrations and the House will be 450 years old. This is an ideal time to look back at all the good that the House has been involved in and to think about what more we can do for the benefit of the House and Glasgow.

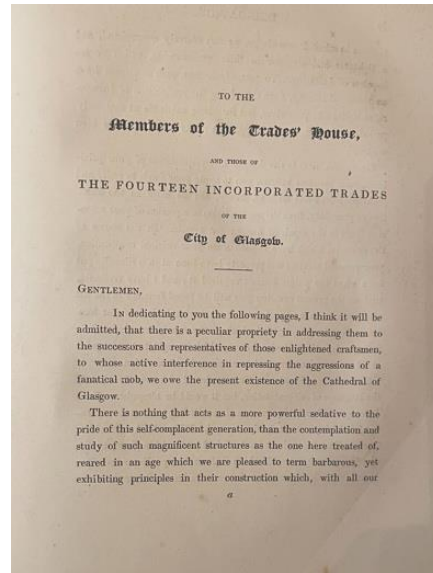
LIBRARY

Two Books in the Library on Glasgow Cathedral

Former Deacon Convener, Archibald McLellan, whose portrait hangs in the Grand Hall, was the founder of the city art collection and was also a great supporter of Glasgow Cathedral. He, along with the architect David Hamilton who designed the additions to Trades Hall, was an early member of the Glasgow Dilettanti Society whose aims were 'to improve the taste for and advance the knowledge of the Fine Arts'. He became the Society's President in 1834. The year before McLellan had presented a paper to the Society which was subsequently published as *Essay on the Cathedral Church of Glasgow, and a history of the See*, in which he proposed various improvements for the Cathedral which had, by this time, fallen into disrepair. He dedicated the work to the Trades House and the members of its crafts, remembering the time during the reformation in the 16th century when members of the Trades House had prevented the Cathedral from being pulled down, writing that the preservation of the cathedral was due to the 'enlightened craftsmen. . . whose active interference' repressed 'the aggressions of a fanatical mob'. Not all McLellan's suggestions for improving the building were carried out but he certainly raised awareness of the need to conserve it for future generations.

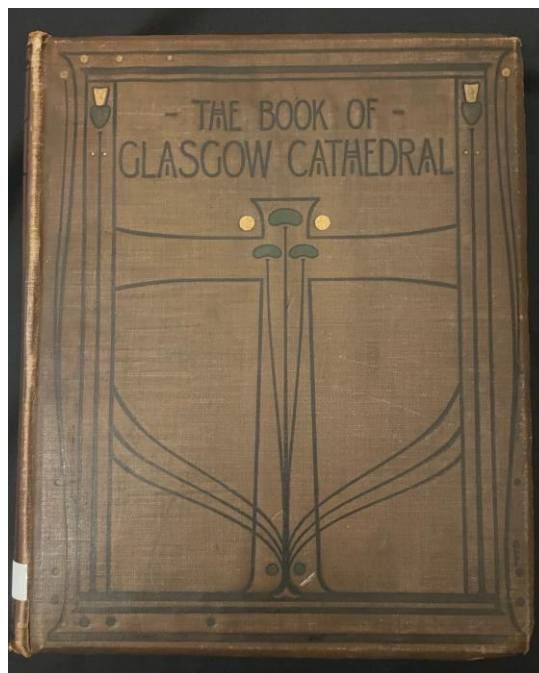


Title page of McLellan's *Essay on the Cathedral Church of Glasgow*, 1833



Dedication to the Members of the Trades House and the fourteen incorporated trades.

It would be in 1898 that the first really detailed history of the Cathedral, *The Book of Glasgow Cathedral*, was published. The work was edited by historian George Eyre-Todd and had chapters by some of the best historians of the time. Lavishly illustrated, this work rapidly became a key resource for anyone interested in the history of the building. Its cover was designed by decorative artist and book designer Talwin Morris (1865-1911) who was a friend and patron of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The design depicts a cruciform within which are three plant forms representing the Holy Trinity. This is flanked by two stylized thistles of Scotland. Only 1,000 numbered copies of this work were produced and the Trades House Library has two of them.



The Book of Glasgow Cathedral edited by George Eyre Todd, 1898. Cover design by Talwin Morris.

If you wish to view either of these books or wish to contact the Librarian please email: Info@tradeshouse.co.uk

MUSEUM

Of the multiple artefacts long associated with the history of the Trades House, the ceremonial mace is one of those objects that many will automatically recognise for its visual beauty, but most will know next to nothing of its origin and history. The Trades House virtual museum cites the mace as being the gift of the Train family in 1928 and presented to the House by the Master Court of the Incorporation of Masons to commemorate John Train (senior), Politician and Master Builder as Deacon Convener. It is alleged that the Mace was fashioned from a piece of wood salvaged from the River Clyde by Benjamin Parsonage of the Glasgow Humane Society.

But what of the artist/craftsman who sculpted the mace? Understandably perhaps, it might be assumed that this was the work of someone from one of the 14 in-house crafts or with links to nearby Glasgow School of Art. In fact, the artist was Englishman Walter Gilbert (1871-1946) who first studied at [Birmingham Municipal School of Art](#) and then the National Art Training School, now the [Royal College of Art](#). Gilbert worked for The Bromsgrove Guild of Applied Arts in Worcestershire where he was a director; the Guild was a company of [modern artists](#) and designers associated with the [Arts and Crafts Movement](#) working in various materials - metal, wood, plaster, bronze, glass etc. He later became assistant manager for H.H. Martyn of Cheltenham, a highly respected wood and stone carving company.



The Trades House Mace and the Royal Coat of Arms cartouche on the gates of Buckingham Palace. Both were designed by Walter Gilbert (1871-1946).

Gilbert and his associates were prolific in their artistic output, working throughout the UK and with the occasional commission overseas; from the designing of lamps and a Royal Coat of Arms cartouche on the gates of Buckingham Palace (1906) to a cast lead fountain of *Neptune* for a leading industrialist in Kansas City (1911), through to a number of War Memorials, post WW2, including notable examples in Troon and Clydebank.

In 1928 Gilbert was commissioned to carve four saintly figures onto the wooden pulpit of the newly built War Memorial chapel at the University of Glasgow - *St Margaret, St Columba, St Bride* and *St Oran*, with a further figure *The Sower*, representing "the Sower who sows the seeds of the world" carved into the newel post of the pulpit.

And the connection between Gilbert and The Trades House? The contractor overseeing the building of the University Chapel was one John Train senior (his company then trading as John Train and Co. Ltd) but whether there exists any surviving correspondence surrounding the actual commissioning of the mace is unclear, so some further investigation is needed.

HISTORY OF THE TRADES HOUSE AND CRAFTS A few wee interesting stories taken from *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow 1663 to 1690* edited by J.D. Marwick, 1905.

28th October 1665

It was concluded that the Listerers (Dyers) were to get a new tak of the walk milne, conform to the former, and the same dewtie, for so many years they please, keeping conditions of the old tak.

17th December 1667 ~ Gardeners appoint their Visitor

The Deacon Convener requested to the Magistrates and Counsel that the Gardeners that they would name a Visitor to the Gardeners for one year to come. After consideration they nominated Andrew Ralstoune, Gardener, to be Visitor in the town for one year.

9th October 1668

The Provost and Balies of this and two preceding years chose thirteen council Merchants and 12 Craftsmen to be on the Council for the year ensuing.

17th October 1668 ~ Setting prices

Wheat leaf weighing 1lb 1oz 3 drops to be sold for 12 d.; rough tallow, 40s. the tron stone; candle 48s. the tron stone.

14th November 1668 ~ Ratification of Hammermen of Glasgow and Gorbals

The Council met to ratify and approve the contract and agreement lately made between the Hammermen of this Burgh and the Hammermen of Gorbals.

23rd January 1669 ~ Ratification of Cordiners of Glasgow and Gorbals

The contract made in this Burgh with Cordiners and those in Gorbals was ratified and approved.

18th September 1669 ~ Death of Deacon Convener Manasses Lyll

The Provost, Balies and Council by pluralities of votes in respect to the deceased Deacon Convener Manasses Lyll, the late Deacon Convener, that John Hall, Churigan to be Deacon Convener.

Trades Hall Tours

Craftsman's Gallery and Museum Notes

School Room and Museum

- The Craftsmen's Gallery was originally added as an extension to the Trades Hall in 1838 as a purpose-built schoolroom. The Trades House had a school in the old Alms-house but when this closed, the House decided to establish its own school, known as the Trades Free School. In 1838 sixty boys would take their places in this room, sitting on the oak benches which you see here.
- The Trades Free School helped to meet the need until the Education Act of 1872 meant that the Trades Free School was no longer necessary. It was now compulsory for all children under the age of thirteen to attend school. Individual enterprises like the Trades Free School provided many children with the opportunity to discover new worlds and perhaps even contributed to the next generation of Glasgow entrepreneurs.
- Initially the Trades Free School was only for boys, the sons of freemen, but in 1838 girls were admitted. By 1844, 216 pupils attended the schools, half of them boys and half of them girls.
- During their four years here they were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, church music and the principles of religion. A female teacher taught the girls needlework and knitting.
- The tapestry depicting the Finding of Moses was made by one of the pupils and won the Trades School prize, a solid silver medal.
- Bible stories and religious instruction were an important part of the curriculum.
- As well as attending classes through the week, pupils also came to school for two hours on Saturday mornings when religious instruction, history and geography were taught.
- Perhaps surprisingly, no science was taught, but particular attention was paid to spelling.
- Pupils sat four exams each year; those who failed to make the grade in spelling and reading were given extra tuition by the female teacher to bring them up to scratch.
- Literature was certainly considered important, and the school had its own library, housed in large bookcases in the schoolroom. The students were clearly avid readers, borrowing over 1,600 books during one session alone.
- On the wall you can see a portrait of Thomas Struther, who was Principal Teacher of the Trades Free School for twenty-one years, from 1845 to 1866.

Museum

- This room now contains a permanent exhibition on the history and work of the Trades House and the individual Incorporations who elect its members, as well as a brief section concerning the continuous development of the Trades Hall.
- Please note the following:
 - Alms House Bell
 - Charter Chests with numerous locks
 - Deacon Convener's hat and shoes
 - Trades House Mace
 - Craft Chairs
 - Maps showing development of Glasgow

Craftsmen's Gallery

The Gallery is now a passageway which goes to the South and North Galleries which were also School Rooms in the past. The corridor has a number of interesting paintings from the Alms-house and other paintings and prints.