Incorporation of Masons of Glasgow

Newsletter

February /March 2024

It is said that the Trades of Glasgow built the city and their importance to the growth of the burgh can be seen in the wealth of goods which were exported across the globe. The trades of Glasgow founded the Alms House in 1605. representing 14 historic crafts within the burgh.

The Alms house. sat partly on this site. on the Manse of Morebattle. and was known as the Trades Hospital. It supported 'six poor men with clothes. cloths. candles and £48 Scots per year'.

400 hundred years ago. when a funeral passed by here on route to the Cathedral burial ground. one of the Alms house poor men tolled the bell in the belfry. 'The Deid Bell'. gave the name to this street. Bell 'O' Brae.

A box sat here which asked for Dyke money. 'Give the puir and thou sal have treasure in heaven'.

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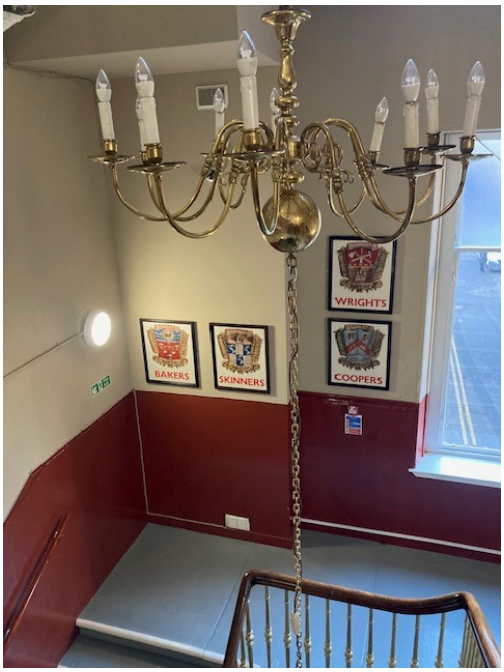
Front Cover

The plaque marking approximately our old house position before 1794 is on the gates of Barony Hall next to the Provand's Lordship in Castle Street. We moved to the present Trades Hall ~1790s. It's an amazing history.

Old Incorporation Arms



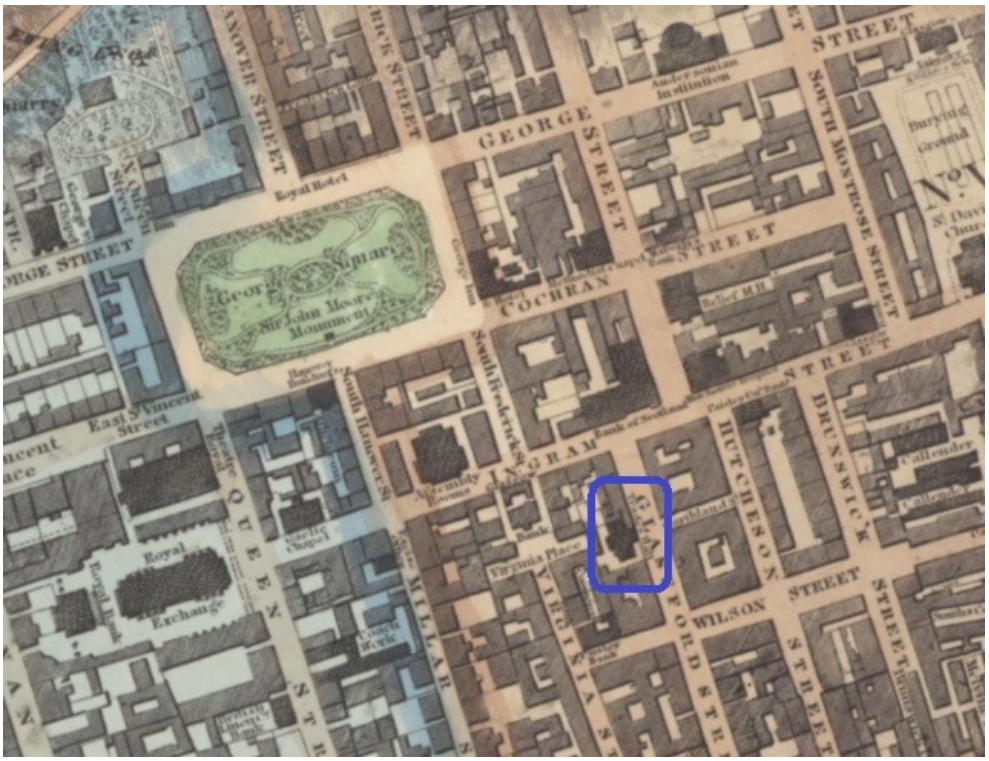
Great to see the old arms of the Incorporations now placed on the rear staircase which certainly brightens up the opening. We have an amazing history with even more amazing artefacts so let's show them off.

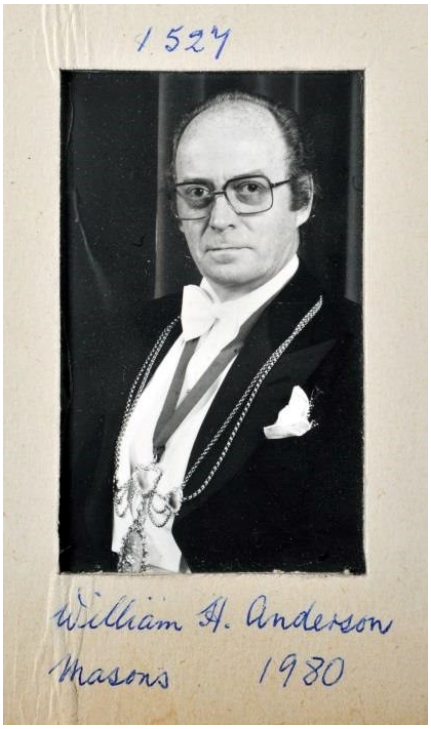
Granite Stones

Great to see these stones from the Thames river bank at Victoria Embankment were not discarded, but have been kept for later use. Read the plaque to the left - they can be found in Little Britain (street) near St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London.

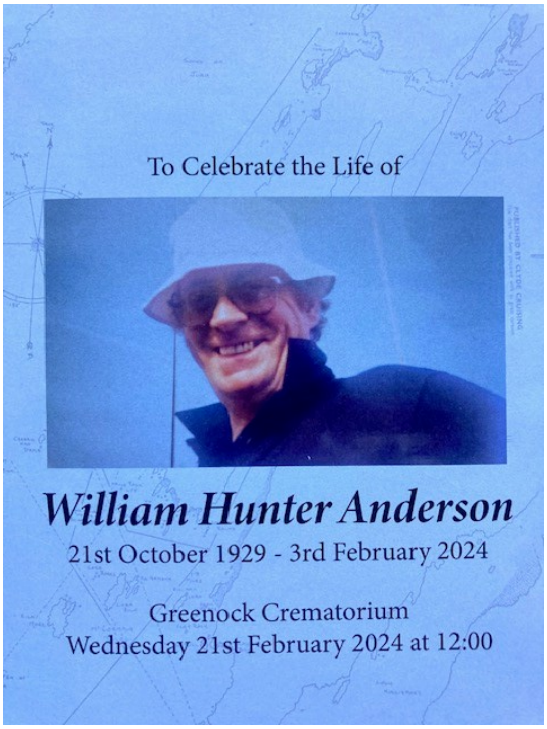
Glasgow in 1828

The excerpt from an old Glasgow map of 1828 is fascinating. First of all it's great to see Trades House of Glasgow marked as a significant building (only just over 30 years old at this point). We also have no Queen's Street station, but the Theatre Royal down from the Square with no City Chambers yet. The Assembly Rooms are in Ingram Street. The Royal Bank behind the Royal Exchange is now the flagship for Lush. Only one statue is shown on George Square, viz. Sir John Moore of Corunna. The Andersonian Institute is present, now part of Strathclyde University. I'm sure there are other things to notice.



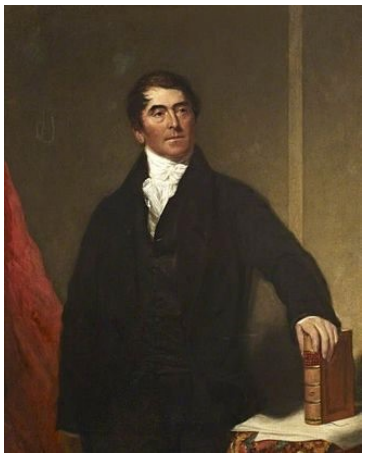


They say things go in threes. Well sadly, this has happened—we have lost a third Past Deacon in a short time. Bill Snr away after a good innings and sailed across the bar (sailing term, not a pub!). Our thoughts are with Past Deacon Young Bill and family.



The Mechanics Classes

In 1799 Dr. Garnett was called to London to fill the first professorship of the Royal Institution, and was succeeded in the Andersonian (right & now part of Strathclyde University) by Dr. George Birkbeck (below), who formed a special class for the gratuitous instruction of the operatives of Glasgow in Mechanical and Chemical Philosophy, " in the belief that men should be taught the principles of the arts they practise." That definition of technical education has not been superseded during the passage of years and is still the creed of the College.

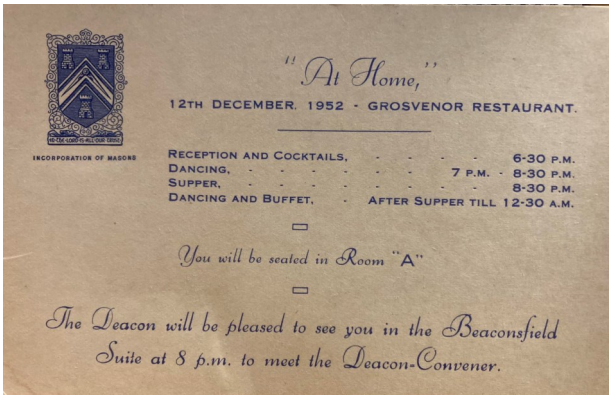


This special class became so large that it had to meet in the Trades Hall, and at a time when the population of Glasgow was less than 70,000 it contained 700 students. It became known as the Mechanics' Class and remained in existence until 1823, when it detached itself from the parent institution. Desiring to retain some connection with its own history, it called itself the Mechanics' Institution, a name destined to be spread all over England as well as Scotland, and to be attached to some institutions which have since grown to a stature then undreamt of.

Although Trades Hall is no longer used for formal taught classes, examinations, etc are still taken within the hall, groups can visit for a tour of the Adam building and weddings are still a common feature.

Various

The 1952 “At Home” supper in the old Grosvenor Restaurant which used to be across from Central in Gordon Street. It was also from this restaurant that the lights in the Grand Hall originated from when it closed.



INCORPORATION OF MASONS

“At Home,”

12TH DECEMBER, 1952 - GROSVENOR RESTAURANT.

RECEPTION AND COCKTAILS,	6-30 P.M.
DANCING,	7 P.M. - 8-30 P.M.
SUPPER,	8-30 P.M.
DANCING AND BUFFET,	AFTER SUPPER TILL 12-30 A.M.

You will be seated in Room “A”

The Deacon will be pleased to see you in the Beaconsfield Suite at 8 p.m. to meet the Deacon-Convener.

Interesting board at Stirling Castle showing masons, carpenters, slaters, smiths, glaziers and quarriers under the control of a master mason in ~1500.

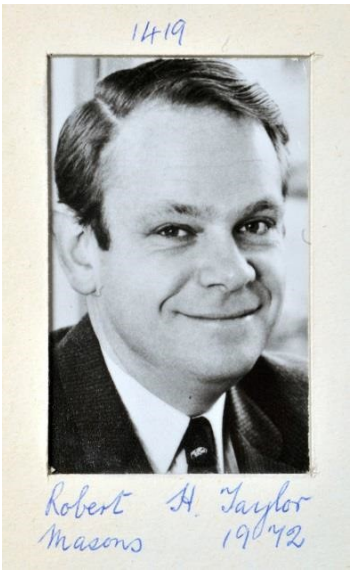
Fantastic night at the Candlemas Social Evening last February with 5 new members sworn in. Thanks to all who participated including the entertainment Calum MacColl and Norrie MacKinnon who were outstanding. Five new members were sworn in—Alastair Buchanan, Mick Connor, Scott Connor, Chris Dyson and Peter Trowles and we welcome them to the Incorporation.

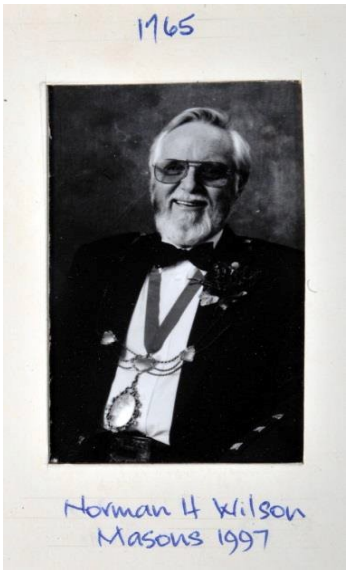
An Act of Parliament of 1846 abolished the exclusive privileges of the Incorporations and brought to an end the days of exclusive trading. In many burghs the craftsmen proceeded to divide their funds and break up their societies. In Glasgow a wiser policy prevailed. The trades of the city immediately addressed themselves to the task of self-reformation. From the ashes of their trade organisations they re-erected, on a surer foundation, those houses of refuge, the fourteen Incorporations of Glasgow. The doors were thrown open to all Burgesses of repute, and while each craft continued to gather within it men associated in some way with the trade of which its members once had the monopoly, the old spirit of exclusion was gone. The constitutions of the Trades took on a uniformity which brought about a wholesome and continuous Christian rivalry in doing good. The Incorporation of Masons has at all times been conspicuous for its readiness to extend the helping hand to those who unfortunately have “fallen by the way."

By Ephraim Lawrie

Various

Having just lost three Past Deacons already this year, it is our very sad duty to announce the deaths of Past Deacons Robin Taylor (1972) and Norman Wilson (1997).





Interesting article linking old Glasgow, the University, the Alms House, the Trades, the Auld Hoose and many more:

A Royal Infirmary Appears in Glasgow – Glasgow Royal Infirmary and the Development of Endocrinology (wordpress.com)

The legendary Sloan's Pub:- this etching, by Glasgow-born artist Thomas Bonar Lyon (1873-1955) shows what is today's smoking and outside drinking area as it looked in the early 1900s. A safe and handy spot to park your barra! The little known (and little changed) Morrison's Court after Past Deacon John Morrison of Morrison & Mason Ltd who built much of the area.

Trades House of Glasgow

Heritage Newsletter

The latest Heritage Newsletter can be accessed at:

tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/heritage_newsletter_no_5_~_march_2024_final_b.pdf

Please note some of the appeals from the team; all essential to the TH moving forward.

Forthcoming House Events

Craftex in the Trades Hall on 6th to 8th June 2024

Incorporation Events

Box Opening – 23rd May, 2024—details to follow soon.

Masons' Outing—hoping to have a trip in May but where and when will be notified in due course.

Happy Easter

to all at the Incorporation

General Information

Incorporation Website:

Incorporation of Masons of Glasgow: Supporting Stonemasonry and Allied Trades - Home

Trades House Website:

The Trades House of Glasgow

Trades House Digital Library:

The Trades House Digital Library - Home (tradeshouselibrary.org)

Should you have any information, points of interest, photos, etc. about our Incorporation, please email:

masons.trades1551@gmail.com