Incorporation of Masons of Glasgow

June—August 2025

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Front Cover: The Saloon showing one of two Robert Adam fireplaces with the guard by ex Convener Percival Agnew. The carved onyx clock on the mantelpiece with the lion and unicorn was designed to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953. There is an explanation of the Commonweal Fund above the fireplace. At the top of the mahogany panels, you can see a number of armorial bearings including those of the fourteen Incorporated Trades.

My thanks to David Collie of for this image. **www.davidcolliephotography.co.uk**

To commemorate Glasgow's 850th anniversary, the Deacon Convener, along with the 14 Incorporated Crafts and the **Lord Provost of Glasgow** have planted pear trees on an 'unloved' piece of land at Glasgow Cathedral

The significance of planting pear trees?

The Trades Hall, designed by Robert Adam was built over a pear orchard which ran from High Street to Glassford Street. The Incorporations of Wrights, Masons and Skinners & Glovers all still feature pears in some of the Craft events.

Doors Open 2025

Short YouTube clip of the Trades House of Glasgow:

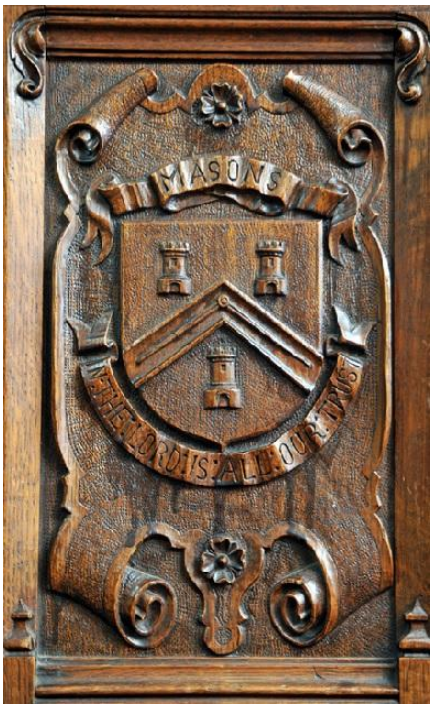
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4xJM-iHCRA

Doors Open is now 20th and 21st September, 2025 - come along, you are most welcome.

New Dean of Guild

The Deacon Convener, Richard Paterson OBE, congratulates the new Lord Dean of Guild, Tony McElroy, at the Kirking of the Merchants House at Glasgow Cathedral on Sunday 1st June.

The Incorporation of Masons Charter dated 1551



The Craft was erected on 14th October, 1551, by a grant from the Provost and Bailies of Glasgow in favour of the Masons, Coopers, Slaters, Sawyers and Quarriers within the Burgh and City. This was after the time of Gavin Dunbar, who died in 1547, and before the consecration of Archbishop James Beaton (the second of that name), who was appointed in September 1551. The Archbishop's Seal is therefore awanting, and was never appended. The Coopers disassociated themselves from the union in 1559, and the Sawyers or Wrights in 1600, leaving the Masons, Slaters and Quarriers combined together, as they are to this day.

George Crawford tells us that the Masons were incorporated by King Malcolm III. under Royal Charter given at the Court at Fordie on 5th October, 1057, following upon a Petition from the Operative Masons of the City of Glasgow. However, this is pure myth and there is no documentary evidence for this charter. As the Incorporation charter of 1551 brought together five groups of the building trades, then it is safe to say they existed before 1551, but how long before is impossible to state.

School Craft Competition

A plea from the Chairman Prof. Bruce Wood who is looking for volunteers to help run the competition. This year entries were received from S1 to S6 and were judged in Broad General Education, Woodwork, Metalwork, Design and Manufacturing, Engineering Science and Graphic Communications.

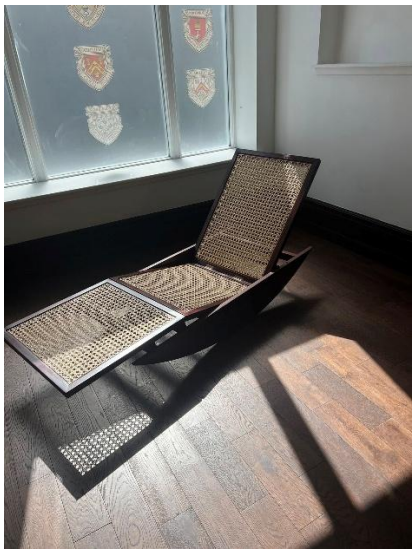
Prizes are awarded to some fifty pupils at a ceremony held in the Trades Hall attended by senior representatives of Glasgow City Council, Glasgow City Council Education Services and the Trades House.

If you want to know more, please email me or Jackie directly: jackie.mullen@tradeshouse.org.uk

Craftex 2025

Amazing work from Graham Kelly PD, George McNeillie (Masons) and Paul McDevitt PD of Wrights.

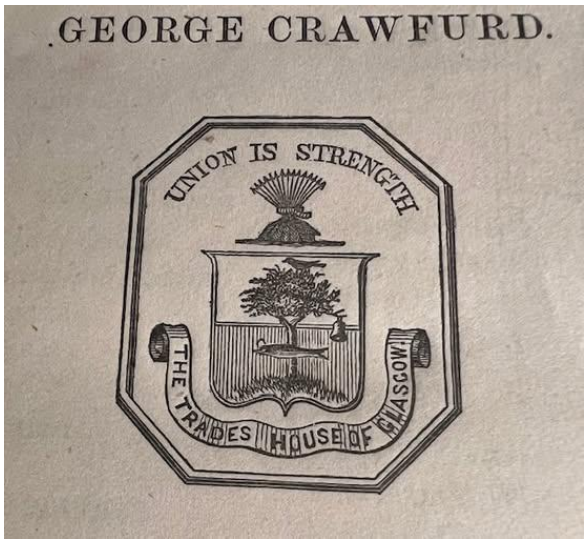
Some images from June:



Burgess Tickets

From Crawford's A Sketch of The Trades House of Glasgow in 1858:

"The hail sume of money that shall happen to be gotten in any time hereafter, for entries as gild brother, shall be divided in this form, viz.:—All that enters as gild brother, as a merchant, the money shall be applied for the weal of the Merchante Hospital, by the dean of guild, with advice of the merchant council: And all that is gotten and received from any crafts-men, and their assistants, who shall enter gild brother, shall be applied to their hospital, and decayed brethren of the crafte men, by the deacon convener, with the advice of the rest of the deacons."



The distinction between the guildry and convenery of a royal burgh was not introduced by name. The word guildry was made applicable to both classes; and the words merchant and craftsman, were used to distinguish the members of the two separate ranks constituting the guildry.

This use of the word merchant creates confusion, by inducing the notion that the merchant rank, formerly called the Merchant Hospital, now styled the Merchant House, is a society or corporation of merchants, which it is not. The words Merchant Rank, Merchant Hospital, Merchant House, designate the whole burgesses of Glasgow who are not comprehended by, or included in, the trades rank. Every description of profession, occupation, or employment, not connected with the fourteen incorporated trades; consequently, clergymen, writers, and merchants, ironmasters, coalmasters, spinners, warehousemen, grocers, spirit-dealers, brokers, and downwards, to huxters, labourers, and coal-porters, who enter burgesses under any designation, not of the craft rank, are members of the merchant rank.

Cathedral Windows

The new ‘Glasgow 850’ windows have been installed last June in the vestibule of South Door.

A Sketch of The Trades House

From Crawford's A Sketch of The Trades House of Glasgow in 1858:

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Another extract from Crawfurd's book:

There is a marked exclusion of the merchant rank (of the Statute 1690, Chap. 18) — "the whole body" — from this act of ratification. The word merchant is ignored, the merchant rank is passed over in silence, while the incorporations and deaconries are specially confirmed; an exclusion which is very significant of the Reformers' estimate of the conduct of the class which was styled "the whole body of the merchant rank." It seems also singular, that at this early period of the reign of William and Mary, the system of poll election by the burgesses was departed from, and that of nomination and self-election restored. The magistrates and councillors, who were elected by poll of the burgesses in the preceding year, had by this charter and statute the right conferred on them to nominate their successors.

Having introduced their friends into the town council by poll election, the Whig government appears to have thought it prudent to keep them in power, by enacting that the existing town council should choose their own magistrates, provosts, bailies, and other officers, within burgh. It must be mentioned, however, that at this time Rutherglen was the only burgh in Scotland in which the system of self-election did not

prevail. The magistrates and councillors of Edinburgh, and all the other burghs, appointed their successors; and the government may have been unwilling to make Glasgow another exception to the general practice, without having been influenced by any doubt of the loyalty of the inhabitants. The Deacon Convener was John Gilchrist, a tailor.

Following on from the previous post from Crawfurd's book:

The system of self-election, which was established under the Act 1690, evidently became unpopular within twenty years; and the convention of burghs required all the royal burghs to transmit a statement of the manner in which the provost, bailies, and councillors were elected under it.

In October, 1711, the magistrates and council prepared and transmitted a statement of the practice which prevailed in Glasgow, and which they styled the sett of the burgh.

From this it appears that the town council consisted, in that year, of a provost, three bailies, thirteen merchant, and twelve trades councillors, along with the dean of guild, deacon convener, and treasurer, as extraordinary councillors; that the provost and two of the bailies were elected out of the merchant rank, the third bailie out of the trades rank; and that the councillors were elected under an incomprehensible juggle of leets, to secure a thoroughly close election.

This sett contained the following clause — "At the election of the dean of guild, deacon convener, treasurer, and others, upon the foresaid Wednesday, after the election of the council, do convene the provost, bailies, and councillors, both of the merchant and trades ranks, together with the deacons of the respective incorporate crafts in the burgh; and because the said trades bailie, and councillors, and deacons foresaid, do exceed the number of the magistrates and council of the merchant rank, there are as many merchants added to them as make the merchants and trades ranks both alike in number, and then there is a leet produced from the Merchant House and Trades' House respectively, and the dean of guild and deacon convener were elected."

The jealousy of the influence of the deacons, continued to be evinced under this sett, and provision was thus made for neutralizing that influence.

The records of the Merchant House show that that corporation regularly elected a certain number of its members "to balance the deacons" at this election. The introduction to the election meeting of as many elected members of the Merchant House, as there were deacons in attendance, gave the merchant rank the preponderance. The deacons, therefore, found that they were always overbalanced, and generally did not attend this mockery of election. Sometimes, however, they unexpectedly attended, and then there was "a hurry scurry" to get hold of the merchants who were elected to balance them, and if any of those elected balancing gentlemen could not be found, there was no scruple in picking up a few persons off the street, to enter the council room and there "balance the deacons."

It is scarcely credible that this mockery of election continued from 1690 till 1833.

Banner Presentation

On Friday 13th (!!!) June, some Craftsmen visited the City of Glasgow College to hand over a banner giving details about the two busts on display in their foyer - one being an HLI soldier and the other a nurse in WW1. Thanks to everyone in the Stonemasonry Department for their help. Deacon Craig is seen with Andy Pollock of CGC.

MASONS

IN·THE·LORD·IS·ALL·OUR·TRUST

In line with a long tradition of supporting young stonemasons, **The Incorporation of Masons of Glasgow** in the Trades Hall in Glassford Street commissioned two busts to commemorate the end of the First World War and some women receiving the vote for the first time in 1918.

Stonemason and sculptor, Alistair Denovan completed the pieces in white Carrera marble as a commission from the Incorporation with the help and support of the City of Glasgow College, where he studied as part of his apprenticeship.

Alistair originally graduated from Edinburgh Art College in 2009 with a degree in sculpture. After working in the Scottish Highlands for a few years he relocated to Ayrshire and began a Stonemasonry apprenticeship with the National Trust of Scotland in 2013. Growing up in Orkney he developed a passion for restoration which he now does on self-employed basis and completes stone carvings on a commission basis.

The two characters chosen for the busts were William Sclater who was born in 1889 at Ettrick Place, Glasgow and Ann Stone Guest who was from Stoke-on-Trent.

They met when Quarter Master Sergeant William Sclater of the 9th Highland Light Infantry was a patient in Leicester's Military Hospital after receiving a wound to his cheek caused by shrapnel on 13th December 1916. They married in 1918.

Prior to his wound, William had spent six months at the battle of the Somme, being one of only three of his Company who survived.

Prior to the war, William had been a pupil at the High School of Glasgow and on recovering from his injuries, William was unable to return to the trenches and was sent to Redford Barracks in Edinburgh. He was demobbed in Hamilton on the 8th July 1919 and returned to his previous employer. William became an Officer in the Boys Brigade in Glasgow.

Ann Stone Guest joined the Territorial Force in July 1910, signing her name as Annie Guest. Prior to the war Ann worked as a private nurse in Paris and Nice but with the outbreak of war she was called up and was posted to a casualty clearing station.

During the Second World War, Ann worked in the burns unit at Leeds and died in 1968.

Scottish Charity No. SC013588

Royal Garden Party

The Chain Gang (Deacon Craig in the back) and guests attending the Royal Garden Party at Holyrood Palace on 1st July with DC Richard and Pauline.

Peace Garden

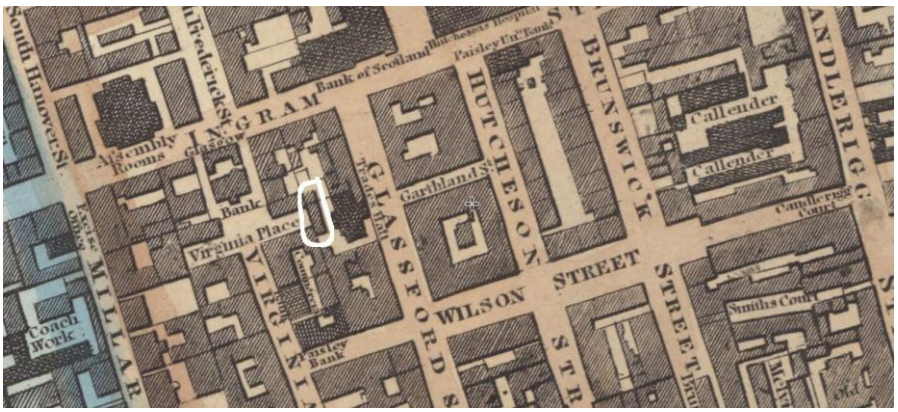
The Deacon Convener was honoured to be invited by the Lord Provost of Glasgow to the official opening of the Peace Garden at Glasgow's Botanic Gardens, marking the 80th anniversary of Hiroshima Day and commemorating Victory over Japan Day (VJ80) which is dedicated to peace, remembrance and education

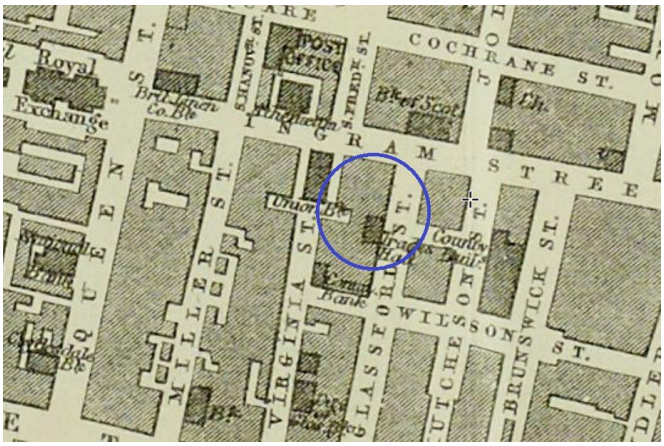
The garden was designed by local school children.

A moving day, remembering the past and building hope for the future.

Any Ideas?

To the right are 1825 and 1865 maps showing Trades Hall - the first map has the Trades Free School (outlined in white) where the foundation stone was laid in 1808 and the second when the schoolhouse had been removed. The school was then working in the upper floor of Trades Hall which had been extended under Past Deacon David Hamilton.





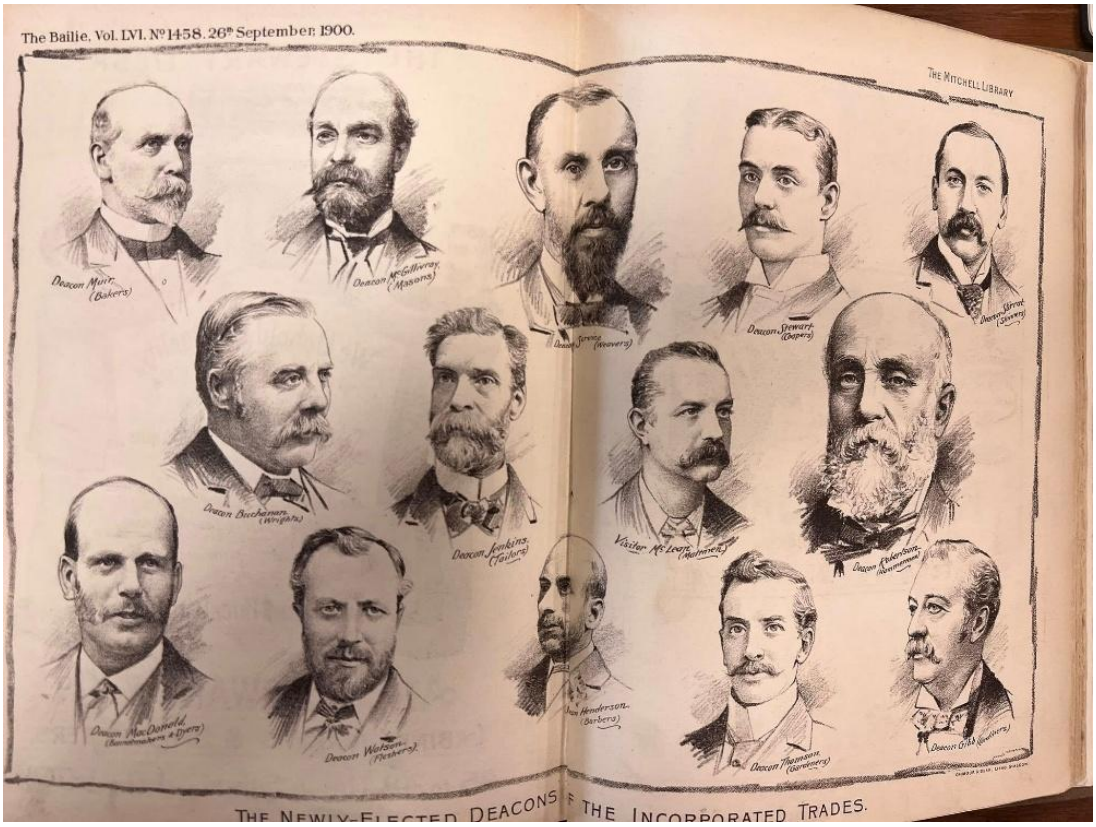
Glasgow has a good record for recording the ceremonies of laying foundation stones, but I have drawn a blank here.

Can anyone help?

New Craftsman

Congratulations to **Dominic D'Angelo** our newest laid stane joining the Incorporation at the Lammas Court and receiving his certificate from Deacon Craig. We welcome Dominic who has given talks on Glasgow 850 and The Alexander Thomson Society. Perhaps a suitable talk could be given in the future..... Just saying, Dominic

Old Deacons



The following has been scanned from *The Baillie* in 1900 when the newspaper published full drawings of all the deacons and visitor:

Mr. R. A. M'Gillivay, the Deacon of the Masons, is well and favourably known in Trades' House circles. Besides the Masons, he is a member of the Incorporation of Wrights, he is an Anderston Weaver, he belongs to the Association of Deacons and Free Preses, and Lodge St. John No. 3 bis, numbers him among its adherents.

By trade Mr. M'Gillivray is a plasterer, and he likewise carries on business as a stone carver and sculptor. For seven years he held the office of President of the Glasgow Master Plasterers' Association. Among his present stone carving contracts is one for the inner hall of the new Art Galleries. The Masons, the *Bailie* may say, are to be warmly congratulated on their new Deacon.

Bits & Pieces

Plastering work at Craftex 2025

Gilmorehill House, photographed by Thomas Annan on the eve of its demolition in 1870.

Remarkably, the new Gilbert Scott building's twin quadrangles are taking shape around it. It was built by Past Deacon David Hamilton in 1802 for merchant and slave owner Robert Bogle.

The Trades' House and incorporations received £1,692 (over £100,000 today) from the proprietors of the Glasgow, Paisley, and Ardrossan canal, in 1814, for two acres and one rood of the lands taken for the purpose of making the canal, and £732 10s. further in 1823 for 3,237 square yards, taken for increasing the company's accommodation.

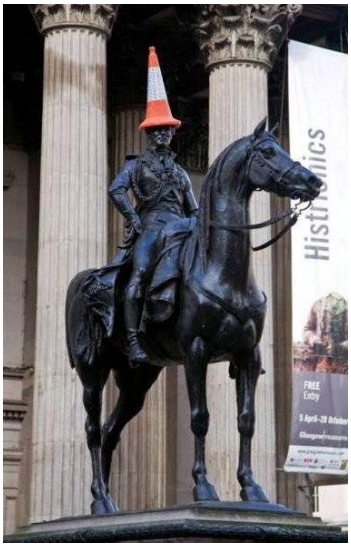
For those sums the Trades' House and incorporations took payment in shares of the stock of the canal company; and those shares are now worthless, through the total failure of that enterprise.

Quick Question

What's the difference between the two images (left 1888 and right 1858) and why?

George Crawfurd's Crest 1858

Answer: The main difference is the number of arrows - 14 on the left and 15 on Crawford's Sketch believed to represent the 14 Incorporations and 1 for the Trades House itself.



The well know statue of the Duke sits in front of our Past Deacon David Hamilton's reconfiguration of the house (now the GOMA). However, we now have proof that this is an accurate depiction of the Duke!!

See Page 15!

Have you decided what classes to go for yet? If you're joining us for the Gala this year? Are you gonna treat yourself to Deluxe entry or saving all your pennies for the marketplace? You've still got time to decide - and we'll go through all the ticket types in the next few days to help!

The Glasgow School of Yarn will take place from October 17th to 19th 2025 at the Trades Hall in Glasgow.

Tickets are on sale from: **www.glasgowschoolofyarn.co.uk**

Proof of the cone . . . my apologies!!!

Trades House of Glasgow

Heritage Newsletter

The latest Heritage Newsletter No. 10 can be accessed at:

heritage_newsletter_no_10b.pdf

The last five Bailies have now been uploaded and can be seen at:

Baillie Volume 38 1891
Bailie Volume 39 (1) 1891
Bailie Volume 39 (2) 1892
Bailie Volume 40 1892
Bailie Volume 41 1892 to 1893

Past editions of this newsletter can be accessed at:

Archives - The Trades House Digital Library

Forthcoming House Events

Deacon Convener' Choosing Dinner—Wednesday 8th October

Glasgow School of Yarn 17 – 19th October

Incorporation Events

Pear Eating – 18th September 2025 at 7pm

Choosing Dinner—19th September 2025 at 6.30pm

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