



BEING A MEMBER OF AN INCORPORATION AND THE TRADES HOUSE OF GLASGOW

The Trades House and the Incorporations can be an intriguing mystery to potential members, to those who have recently joined and even long established members.

This little booklet is designed to help enlighten all who are interested in these ancient and venerable institutions.

There are 14 Incorporated Trades in Glasgow, each meeting within the Trades Hall in Glassford Street. Each individual Incorporation has a long and distinguished history going back over hundreds of years. They are the constituencies which elect the members of the Trades House. Initially the Incorporations regulated apprenticeships and accredited master craftsmen. The individual Incorporations continued to supervise the individual craftsmen acting as supervisory bodies while serving the public as points of reference when the customer was dissatisfied. Additionally each Incorporation provided benevolence to its own individual members and/or their dependents.

The more 'functional' aspects of the Incorporations have been removed but the benevolent aspects of each Incorporation remain. It should be noted that apart from individual Incorporations the Trades House supervises a large number of Trusts as well as being represented on outside Trusts and public bodies. The Crafts also have a role in fostering the promotion, if not the retention, of the skills embodied in the original vocational callings as well as their modern development and heritage. Where they are able to do so, the Incorporations are keen to continue these educational and training roles which are in a real sense a continuation of the ancient traditions of the Crafts.

Who is eligible for membership of an Incorporation?

Any male is eligible if properly nominated and approved by the Master Court. In most of the 14 Crafts an infant may become a member from birth. Notable exceptions are the Maltmen and the Skinners, where an applicant must be at least 14 years of age.

Freeman of the City

Because of the part the Trades and Merchants Houses used to play in the local government of Glasgow, to become a member of an Incorporation it is essential to acquire a Burgess Ticket certifying that the applicant is a freeman of the City of Glasgow. This is acquired for a small fee through the Clerk of the selected Incorporation.

Who is the Clerk of an Incorporation?

This gentleman is usually legally qualified and serves as Secretary and Treasurer of the Incorporation. He issues all notices and calls meetings of the Craft, including Choosing Day assemblies. He advises the Master Court of the Craft and records their minutes.

What is the Master Court?

This is the ruling body of an Incorporation. The principal member is the Deacon of the Craft (Visitor in the Incorporation of Maltmen) and he usually chairs the meetings. In his absence the chairman is normally the Collector, (the member of the Master Court responsible for overseeing the finances of the Incorporation) or the Late Deacon. The correct method of address is "Mr Deacon, Sir" or "Deacon William Robertson". Similarly for the Collector. When these two gentlemen complete their respective terms of office they become "Late Deacon" (Visitor) or "Late Collector" respectively. After a period (usually a year) as "Late Deacon" the former Deacon of most of the Crafts is for ever after referred to as "Ex Deacon" by the Trades House and most of the Crafts, although some of them will refer to a "Past Deacon", "Auld Deacon", or "Old Deacon". The 'Late Collector' is effectively the Collector in a fallow year - preparing to become Deacon of his Craft.

Members of the Master Court

The other members of the Court are usually elected for variable periods of between one and five years and can be re-elected. If proven to be interested and effective, any member may be elected Collector of his Incorporation. This clearly indicates a serious commitment to the duties and responsibilities of the particular Incorporation which, apart from attending the Master Court and thereby looking after 2 or 3 beneficiaries (often confusingly called pensioners because of their ages), can involve the members in other activities of the Incorporation, e.g. helping to organise social events: ferrying old persons to social functions; helping with arrangements for

specific functions e.g. Choosing Dinner.

Collector and New Members

Apart from his responsibility for finance, the Collector issues and receives applications for membership and these are processed by the Clerk. It is expected that all members of each and every Incorporation will propose suitable gentlemen as potential members. Great care has to be taken NOT to recommend anyone who has a criminal record or who may simply be joining hoping to receive benevolence (those with this latter aim must be refused). It is normal practice to ensure that new members are financially secure and that a new member is prepared to work for the Incorporation. Most Incorporations have an upper cut-off age to prevent possible abuse of benevolent funds. Exceptions are made depending on good and reliable evidence being proffered by the principal proposer.

Lammas Meeting (AGM)

In most Crafts this meeting is so called because it usually takes place in August (when this term-date falls). It is the formal annual meeting of an Incorporation at which a review of the year's activities is presented to the Craft and nominations to the Master Court are tabled. Not all Crafts hold a meeting at that time, e.g. the Hammermen's General Meeting is held on Choosing Day.

Choosing Day (Usually 3rd Friday of September)

On this day all of the Incorporations hold their elections and install their new Deacon (Visitor) and Master Court for the ensuing year. It is at this meeting that the Representatives (like local councillors or members of parliament) to the Trades House are elected and all members of all Courts are expected to attend. The Choosing Day meeting receives a formal visitation from the Deacon Convener accompanied by the Collector and Clerk of the House. There is usually a short meeting of the Master Court at the closure of this particular meeting, which reflects ancient ceremony, and sometimes a meal or a "pear-eating" reflecting the clearance in 1791 of the garden in Glassford Street for the erection of Robert Adam's Trades Hall.

Choosing Dinner

The Incorporation of Masons by tradition hold their Choosing Dinner on Choosing Day. The other Incorporations also used to hold their Choosing Dinners on the election day but now do

so on different dates throughout the year. Some functions are all male (usually with an additional mixed event) and at some the ladies are present. Such dinners traditionally have good speakers, and some have other special features or additional entertainment. They give each member the opportunity to invite non-members as guests, thereby introducing them to the fellowship of "The Auld Hoose".

Other Traditional Functions

Each Incorporation has at least one additional function particular to that Craft. Most of these individual functions are historically based and apart from being extremely pleasant, help to cement friendship among members. It has to be said that in some cases attendance is restricted to the members of the Master Court and Ex Deacons. There are however several open events, which allow social communication between different Crafts. Such functions usually allow an Incorporation to raise extra monies for benevolent purposes, e.g. students in distress, Erskine Hospital, etc.

The House

The 14 Incorporations joined together and, eventually under the motto "Union is Strength" built the Trades Hall. The whole Craft body is led by the Deacon Convener who, with the Late Deacon Convener, Late Collector and the Collector of the House along with the Clerk of the House, form the policy and general purposes committee known as the "Platform of the House." This committee is responsible for the overall supervision of the Trades House. The Platform mirrors the senior members of each Master Court. The House collectively has supervision of several million pounds in trusts, managed and supervised on a day-to-day basis by the Platform.

Deacon Convener

This ancient post is now generally held for one year. In Glasgow the office dates back to 1604 and is held in such high honour that the occupant of the Chair, becomes, during his term of office, the third citizen in Glasgow with a non voting seat on the Glasgow City Council. The first citizen is the Lord Provost (who is the Lord Lieutenant) and the second is the Lord Dean of Guild, who is the chairman of the Merchants House.

The Deacon Convener chairs all the meetings of the House at which, depending on Act of Parliament, each and every Incorporation is represented by either 4 or 6 members.

The Deacon Convener has a civic function as well as a House function and during his year in office can be expected to attend over 300 functions either in the Trades Hall, the City Chambers or at many different venues in Glasgow, in Scotland and in England. On occasion in the absence of, or along with, the Lord Provost and Lord Dean of Guild, the Deacon Convener may represent the City of Glasgow. Clearly on occasion he may require to nominate or request a member of the Platform to deputise on his behalf. Individual members of Incorporations will meet with the Deacon Convener at Choosing Dinners and on Choosing Day as well as other social functions.

The Deacon Convener presides over meetings of several of the larger trust funds where advice is obtained regarding individual beneficiaries of the House by one of our social workers.

The Collector of the House

This individual is chosen annually and becomes responsible for all the financial aspects of the House. He accompanies the Deacon Convener at the Choosing Dinners of each Incorporation as well as at many major House functions and certain social events outwith the House. The gentlemen holding these two offices clearly have a wide social commitment to the affairs of the House and through their membership of the Platform Committee have the advice and experience of the Late Convener, the Late Collector, and the Clerk.

Clerk of the House

The Clerk of the House is legally qualified. He is the Clerk of the Platform committee and responsible to the House. As chief executive, the Clerk is responsible for the total administration of the Trades House office and receives the Craft Election Returns from which the Blue List of House members and officials is created. The present Clerk is also Secretary to the Trades Hall Trust - *a separate body which controls the fabric of the Hall*, as well as being responsible for the Trades Hall employees and administrative staff.

All of the major funds are supervised by the Clerk in terms of day to day administration and all communications concerning House matters are the responsibility of the Clerk of the House. Matters concerning the Hall are the responsibility of the Secretary to the Hall Trust and his staff.

Matters of rules, protocol, and administration can be referred by individual House members or the Incorporations to the Clerk of the House who may seek the comments of the Platform of the House. He acts as the common link between the House and the Trustees of Trades Hall, and also with civic, academic and national bodies. He can often help to direct certain matters to those with specialist knowledge or advise in the appointment of an appropriate member to a particular organisation such as a non-House trust body, e.g. Glasgow Humane Society, Glasgow Caledonian University, etc.

Deacon Convener's Choosing Day (Trades House AGM)

The annual meeting of the House is held on the second Wednesday in October and this can be regarded as the Deacon Convener's Choosing Day. The Collector is also elected on that day. On the evening of his appointment the Deacon Convener along with Collector of the House hosts the Trades House Annual Dinner, which is one of the major events in the social life of Glasgow. The guest list for the Dinner includes the Lord Provost, the Lord Dean of Guild, the Sheriff Principal, HM Forces, Government Ministers, representatives from business and commerce, the heads of other Craft Guilds outwith Glasgow as well as the current members of the House and Representatives on Public Bodies.

Kirking of the House

On the Sunday morning immediately following the Deacon Convener's Choosing Day a Divine Service is held in Glasgow Cathedral at which all members (with their families) of all Incorporations are invited to attend. It is hoped that members of the Incorporations will invite non-members to participate in this significant service, thereby helping to introduce non-members to the family of the House. Preceded by the Mace, the leading members of the Trades House and the Clerks take part in a formal procession wearing morning dress (kilts are so regarded). The usual order on this occasion is as follows: Platform Committee (Deacon Convener and Collector first), former Conveners (most recent last), Representatives in Craft order, the Preses of the Grand Antiquity Society, the President of the Association of Deacons and the Right Worshipful Master of the Trades House of Glasgow Lodge.

Chain Gang

One of the most pleasurable aspects of the House is that each Deacon visits all of the other

Incorporations' Choosing Dinners. The Deacon Convener, the Collector of the Trades House, Deacons and Visitor, the Preses of the Grand Antiquity Society, the President of the Association of Deacons and the Master of the Trades House of Glasgow Lodge are known as "the Chain Gang". Many life long friendships are established during that particular year. Some Chain Gangs are fortunate in that they are associated with particular events in the life of the House, e.g. 200 years' anniversary celebration in 1994 of the building of the Hall.

Preses of the Grand Antiquity Society of Glasgow

Those who hold near-hand burgess tickets as freemen (or freewomen) of Glasgow and either personally or through their spouse have a parent one of whose own parents or parents-in-law (appropriate burgess tickets must be produced for all three generations of their family), are entitled to apply to become a member of this ancient society which participates fully in the House's social activities. The chairman of the Directors of the Society is known as the Preses, pronounced "pree-sees", and the Collector is known as the Treasurer. The Directors hold a private dinner every year at which the Chain Gang are invited guests, and there is an annual organ recital and summer ball at which Craft members and their friends are welcome.

President of the Association of Deacons

When a member becomes a Deacon (Visitor) on Choosing Day he joins the Association of Deacons. This Association has a benevolent function and looks in particular to the needs of relatives of former Deacons who find themselves in financial difficulties or straitened circumstances. The Association of Deacons appoints its President on an annual basis and has its Treasurer as its other principal office bearer. Just as the Grand Antiquity Society has its annual ball, the Association of Deacons has its annual cocktail party which is open to all Master Courts and their guests.

The Trades House Lodge

Many years ago (1920) it was considered that the formation of a Masonic Lodge would greatly help to promote harmony within the whole Trades House organisation. A Lodge was formed and ever since then the Master of the Trades House Lodge has been regarded as a member of the Chain Gang. All members of the Lodge are members of an Incorporation.

Helping the House to Help Others

All members of every Incorporation are expected to support the efforts of the Trades House to add to the benefits and knowledge of the House within the community at large. Apart from the specific functions mentioned which in actuality concern solely members there are a number of functions where members can commit some time and effort on behalf of the City and those less fortunate than themselves, time being the only cost. Enjoyment and excellent social and pleasurable entertainment may be the reward.

New Year's Day Concert for Action Research

This function is sponsored and supported by Trades House. It is held in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall and can expect to raise approximately £20,000, which is donated to Action Research - a charity which supports and sustains medical research in Scotland and the UK.

Doors Open Days

The Trades Hall is an integral part of the "Doors Open Days" in Glasgow - usually falling on the Saturday and Sunday following Choosing Day (3rd Friday in September). The doors of Trades Hall are open to the public who with volunteer guides are given a tour of the Hall. Any Craftsman's family can participate. Suitable notes are provided for the guides.

Lord Provost's Procession

Each year the Trades House decorates a float which participates in this procession. The Deacon Convener of the day, together with the Lord Dean of Guild is a principal participant in the procession along with the Lord Provost and traditionally the theme of the float mirrors the work of the Incorporation of which the Deacon Convener is a member.

CraftEx

Each individual Incorporation has usually "adopted" at least one appropriate college which teaches and instructs young people in trade skills and craft. This support usually takes the form of monetary awards and certificates to reward excellence or unusual and exceptional skills. On a much bigger scale, in conjunction with all of the colleges in the area, the Trades House not only financially rewards merit but affords a 'centre of city location' at the Trades Hall to allow a display of the best efforts by young men and women to the public in general. This also affords an excellent opportunity to bring the efforts and aspirations of the Incorporated Trades

to the wider public. Volunteers from each and every Incorporation assist on the several days of this event by being present either to assist the organising committee in setting up the exhibition or acting as security/stewards during the open exhibition. This completion has been recognised by UK Skills as an outstanding national event.

Schools Craft Competition

All maintained schools in Glasgow may nominate the work of particular pupils. The work, part of the normal curriculum, is judged by a House Committee. Certificates are presented by the Deacon Convener with the Lord Provost in attendance at a ceremony held within the Trades Hall.

Glasgow Schools' Millennium Award

This new award is designed to recognise those schools which have done most to interact with the surrounding community. Beginning in 2000, this award recognises significant contributions of particular schools to the benefit of those living in the local area.

Sports

The House through individual sports Conveners organises various sporting competitions which have been specifically geared to allow a mixing of the members of the various Incorporations and hence a pleasant way of encouraging social intercourse among the various Incorporations. Such events include golf, bowling, curling and fishing. The lady of the Deacon Convener also organises an annual ladies' golf competition.

Trades House Lecture

Since 1990 the House has invited and sponsored a distinguished international speaker to deliver the Trades House Lecture which is given at a different university in Glasgow each year. This lecture is open to all members of the House and the general public as well as university staff and students.

The "Craftsman"

The House produces the Craftsman magazine - a small well illustrated document which helps summarise the main events and outlines the various charities associated with our organisation. It also helps as a useful medium in which the good works of the various Incorporations can be acknowledged and communicated to the non-members of the House.

Erskine Hospital

The Trades House, the Merchants House and the Cargill Trust take it in turn to host a Christmas lunch at Erskine Hospital. The Deacon Convener and Platform are invited to attend every year; the Deacons and Visitor join them in the year when it is the turn of the Trades House to pay for the lunch. The ladies are included in the invitations. Participation in this visit is a most rewarding experience.

Beneficiary Visitations

Our most important work has traditionally been with the needy and the elderly, described in olden days as "decayit Craftsmen, their widows and unmarried daughters in necessitous circumstances" and to this day most of the Crafts' own individual funds are applied in this way. While the majority of beneficiaries are old age pensioners, this is not the case with all of them. Grantees and beneficiaries should not therefore be described as "pensioners" and the money grants which are given to them are not pensions but discretionary awards renewed after a regular visitation and report each year. There are three basic categories of people who are prima facie eligible for support, i.e., (i) those who are members of or otherwise have a direct connection with one of the 14 Incorporated Trades and/or the Trades House, (ii) those having a connection with the former biscuit-making company of MacFarlane Lang & Co Ltd (which ceased independent operations on 10 January 1966) and (iii) other applicants whose only connection is with Glasgow.

Obtaining Help

If you learn that a member or connection of your own Incorporation is in pecuniary distress, you should mention this to one of the Trades House social workers and/or your Clerk in the first instance. They will normally arrange for the needy person to receive an application form in which questions are asked about their general financial situation, and thereafter one of the social workers will make a visit to go over this with them and report on their condition to your Master Court. If your Master Court is able to make a grant, that will in turn open up the possibility of further financial assistance being forthcoming from the Trades House itself, (dependent upon a positive report from one of the social workers). This does not necessarily mean that two reports will be made, as the one may serve.

If you come across someone in need who has no connection with any of the Incorporated Trades you should refer their case in the first instance to one of the social workers and/or the Trades House office. This is because, generally speaking, the Incorporations do not have funds available to help such people; however the Trades House administers a number of trusts which may potentially be able to give a degree of support. Here again, the applicants will be visited by one of the social workers and reports made to the Platform Committee. The report and visitation made by one of the social workers are therefore an essential first step in securing assistance. If this is approved, that then sets in motion a regular series of visitations.

Types of Visits

Visitations fall into two basic categories, i.e., (a) by one of the Trades House social workers, and (b) by House and/or Master Court members and/or their families.

Every year each of the grantees will normally receive a professional visit from one of the social workers, at which their financial and other needs will be discussed and as a result of which any necessary follow-up reports will be made to the office.

In the case of grantees who receive assistance only from one or more of the Incorporated Trades, they will normally receive a visit once a year led by a member of the Master Court of the awarding Craft. This can sometimes lead to several visits a year in cases where applicants have connections with several Crafts.

Where applicants are in receipt of Trades House benevolence, they will receive a visit from a Trades House visitation team, possibly from people who have no connection at all with the applicants' own Incorporation(s). The Trades House office will issue a visitation list each autumn to everyone on the visitation teams, and the visitors are expected to make a written report which they can speak to at the meeting of the Pensioners committee the following March. These visitations are quite unlike those of the social workers, and nowadays are intended to be of a social nature only. Often the grantees' main need is other human contact and visitations of this sort are eagerly welcomed.

If you become a visitor, it is important to bear in mind the sensitivities and social situation of those upon whom you are calling. This means observing the usual rules of confidentiality and not leaving papers containing confidential information around, or even losing them.

A good guide to visitations is to behave in the same way that you would like visitors to behave towards yourself. Of course, this is not always easy, and you are strongly urged to follow the Trades House social workers, recommendations.

Making Visitations

Appointments to visit should be made in writing. The social workers also recommend visitors to give a good amount of notice and alternative dates. You should try to avoid making initial contact by telephone as it can be quite disturbing for old people to receive unexpected telephone calls from strangers. Before you call, you will be given confidential information about those you are to visit and this should not be taken to the homes of the visitees - or, indeed, anywhere else. Please go in daylight, if at all possible, and do not go alone. If you are visiting as part of a Trades House visitation team and the other member cannot accompany you, consider taking a member of your own family instead. The Trades House team visitation system is set up to ensure that whenever possible you will visit the same small number of grantees each year, so that over the period of your House membership it is possible to build up a meaningful relationship with the beneficiaries. (If for any reason a visitor encounters difficulty with an individual being visited, then arrangements can be made to alter the visitation team).

Craft Liaison with Grantees

Many Crafts will have appointed a member of the Master Court to have a special co-ordinating relationship with their beneficiaries. As that person becomes more senior it is a good idea to ask someone more recently recruited to the Master Court to be his colleague and eventual successor in the work. This colleague in olden days carried the bag of gold coins and is sometimes still called a goudie.

Helpers

The role of the Trades House social workers is pivotal in our work, but there are three other important groups who also work with the elderly.

The longest-established of these is the Hammermen Service Group, a very active organisation who inter alia organise a pantomime outing and a summer trip every year. These trips and outings are always much enjoyed and all fourteen Crafts, the Trades House itself, the Grand Antiquity Society and the Association of Deacons are all invited to nominate beneficiaries to

participate. In order to cover costs, the expenses are divided up according to the number of participants. Further information about this group can be obtained from the Hammermen's nominated Chairman, who can be contacted via that Incorporation's Clerk.

Contact

Some years ago the Trades House established a Contact the Elderly Group, who may be contacted through one of the House social workers. Happy and informal links with the beneficiaries are fostered through this group, who organise afternoon tea parties and other outings at the homes of Craft members and their wives who act as host and hostesses. Some of the members not only act as hosts but as drivers. There is always a need for help with transport arrangements. If you would like to be either a host or a driver - or both - please contact one of the co-ordinators via the Trades House office.

Finally, there is the steering group of the Trades House committee on pensioners headed by a co-ordinator. This group comprises the key elected members of the House and officials who have everyday contact with the grantees and helps to ensure the smooth running of the whole system. If you have any queries or questions, the Trades House office will be glad to help.

Trades House Tea Party

The main event organised by the Trades House Pensioners Committee is the annual tea party for grantees, generally held in the Trades Hall on a May weekday afternoon. The invitations are usually sent out by the House office during March or early April. The whole Chain Gang act as hosts at tables laid out within the Grand Hall, where they are joined by as many beneficiaries as possible. The Collector of the Trades House has a special duty on these occasions, which is to organise a short musical entertainment, and it is often at this tea party that the Deacon Convener will publicly announce the candidature of anyone wishing to stand for election as Collector of the Trades House in the autumn.

Roy Scott
Collector of the House

Gordon M Wyllic
Clerk to the House

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