

**The Convener Court  
of the  
Seven Incorporated Trades  
of Stirling**

By  
**DAVID B. MORRIS**  
Town Clerk, Stirling.

*(A Paper read to the Stirling  
Natural History and Archæological Society,  
18th December, 1928)*

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*William Courtall*  
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## The Convener Court of the Seven Incorporated Trades of Stirling.

### HISTORICAL.

The institution of the Convener Court of the Incorporated Trades in Stirling and in other burghs in Scotland was a development of the great struggle for freedom which to a large extent constitutes the history of the Crafts. This conflict was very severe on the Continent of Europe and in England during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The oppression of the Craftsmen by the wealthier merchant burgesses, who had become consolidated in Merchant Guilds, was responded to by the tradesmen forming themselves into Craft Guilds. In Scotland, a similar development took place, although later in date. There is evidence of the mutual jealousy of merchant and craftsman in the Laws of the Four Burghs, which were collected and methodised in the reign of David I. (1124-1153), and in the Laws of the Gild which were compiled and dated between 1249 and 1294. The Stirling Charters also disclose this feeling at an early date. In the Charter of Alexander II. of 1226, the waulkers (fullers or bleachers of cloth) and weavers were excluded from the Stirling Merchant Guild, and this was confirmed in the Charter of David II. in 1360, and in that of Charles I. in 1641.

The fifteenth century phase of the conflict in Scotland concerned the election of Deacons. We must not think that Deacons did not exist until so late a period as that. The Crafts had some kind of organisation as early as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and we must believe that this implied the election of a chairman or head, by whatever name he may have been called. While the Craft Guild, in its secular aspect was the Trade Union, the Friendly Society and the Social Club of its members, we must not forget that the Craft had a very definite and important religious side. Each Craft was a Fraternity, named after some patron saint, and undertook definite duties and responsibilities in connection with the church. A survival of the association of the Crafts and the Church is the word "Deacon." Deacon is an ecclesiastical term of great age. In mediæval

times it signified the person whose duty it was to assist the priest in performance of religious duties. The chief officer of the Craft is believed to have undertaken these duties at the altar of their patron saint, and hence he was styled Kirkmaister, Godsmen, or Deacon. The two first of these terms fell into disuse, but the last remained, and to this day the Chairman of a Craft is termed the Deacon.

The first phase of the legislative struggle of Merchant Guild and Crafts in Scotland is an Act passed by the second Parliament of James I., held at Perth on 12th March, 1424. "It is ordainit that in ilk toune of the realm, of ilt sundrie craft used thairin, be chosen a wise man of the craft, and be consent of the officer of the toune, the quhillk shall be holdine Deacon or master over the rest for the tyme, to governe and assay all workis that beis made by the craftsmen of that craft, so that the Kingis leidges be not defraude and skaithed in tyme to cum as they have been in tymes bygone through untrue men of the crafts."

This is the first mention of Deacons in an Act of Parliament. It would be tedious to follow the varying phases of the conflict which fluctuated as the contending parties gained influence with the ruling powers in Parliament. The following is a brief summary:—

1424—Crafts to have the right to choose Deacons; 1426—The powers of Deacons restricted to seeing that the men of the craft produced sufficient work, the Town Council to fix the price of craftsmen's goods and workmen's wages, workmen to be punished who do not fulfil the work which they undertake. 1427—The right of crafts to elect Deacons annulled. 1427—The Town Council to elect a warden for each craft. 1457—The goldsmiths to have a Dean of their craft, litsters neither to buy nor sell cloth; 1466, craftsmen not to use merchandise. 1469—Each craft to choose a person to have a voice in the election of Provost, Bailies, and other officers. 1473—Wardens and Deacons of goldsmiths to be appointed. 1487—Craftsmen not to use merchandise. 1493—Cordiners to have no right to dues on shoes sent to market. The crafts appear to have gone on choosing Deacons, and in 1493 Parliament proclaimed "that the using of Deacons of men of craft in burghs is rycht dangerous," and should cease for a year, and that workmen

should not be paid for holidays. The flow of legislation still continued. 1496—The Town Council to fix the prices of craftsmen's goods. 1535—A commission appointed to fix prices so that craftsmen be not allowed to charge exorbitant sums, craftsmen to finish work which they have begun, drawers of cloth and litsters of false colours to be punished. 1551—The Town Council to see that the Deacons and crafts do not charge exorbitant prices. 1555—The choosing of Deacons forbidden and visitors to be appointed instead. This last Act failed to meet with acceptance, and its provisions were dispensed with by a letter under the Great Seal, granted by the Queen Regent, Mary, and dated at Stirling, 16th April, 1556. This letter restored to the crafts their right of choosing Deacons, along with other powers and privileges, notwithstanding the Act of Parliament. The letter was long looked upon by the Seven Incorporated Trades of Stirling as the great charter of their privileges, and a copy of it was kept in the Convener Court box. A similar letter was granted by Queen Mary on 1st March, 1565, when she came of age, and James VI. also issued a letter with the same purport on 22nd July, 1581. The dispute, so far as legislation was concerned, was now practically at an end.

#### THE INSTITUTION OF THE CONVENER COURT.

During the long drawn out struggle, of which the foregoing is evidence, the necessity for combination among the different trades in a community must have presented itself. Clearly the craftsmen acted together, and regular meetings of the Deacons for consultation must have taken place. Out of these meetings arose the Convener Courts in Stirling and elsewhere. The necessity for some one to call the Deacons together in an emergency, and for some one to preside over the gathering had to be solved, and so the office of Deacon Convener was created. Perhaps the procedure was informal at first, but later on the Convener of the Trades became a definite and recognised official in the burghal economy. When this took place in Stirling is not clear. The Convener Court minute books prior to 1732 are lost, so we get no help from that source. In the Town Council minutes prior to 1566, we find no mention of the Convener Court. The burgh records are, with some slight exceptions, awaiting between that date and 1595. In the elections

record of 1595, the name of the Deacon Convener is given for the first time, namely, Robert Robertson, alias Tennent. We may assume that the Convener Court, as presently constituted, originated towards the end of the sixteenth century.

At that time, and for a long time previously, there were eight trade incorporations, namely, the seven which combined in the Seven Incorporated Trades, and the maltmen, who do not appear ever to have been represented on the Convener Court, but throughout retained their independence.

#### THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CONVENER COURT.

The Convener Court consisted, throughout its entire history, of fourteen men, two representing each of the constituent Crafts. These two were, in each case, the new Deacon and the old Deacon. The Deacon was chosen annually by the free choice of the whole members of the Craft. He became the chairman of the body. The man whom he displaced became automatically the Old Deacon, whose functions were those of Vice-Chairman. The invariable custom of the Trades, which is still faithfully observed, was for each Craft to meet separately at Michaelmas, generally on the same evening, and elect their new Deacon. The fourteen new Deacons and old Deacons then met at a later hour, and elected one of their number to be Convener.

It has been the rule that the Court does not proceed to the election of the Convener and other office-bearers until its number is complete. If any of the New Deacons and Old Deacons are absent, the duly qualified members present co-opt temporarily such other members of the Trades as they may choose to complete the number fourteen, the co-opted members not being necessarily or usually members of the trade which they are called in to represent. This process was styled "filling up the Court," and was carried through with much formality. At times when there was competition for the office of Convener, there was keen voting when the Court was being filled up. The fourteen members then chose one of their number to be Preses for the day. All were duly sworn, and in earlier times there was read over to the meeting a series of Acts or Resolutions of previous Courts, which were held to settle questions of principle in the government of the Trades' affairs, including Acts as to Adamson's Mortification and Allan's

Mortification. These formalities ended, the Court appointed their Convener, who held office for a year. They also elected a Clerk, a Boxmaster or Treasurer to the Convener Court, a Boxmaster to Adamson's Mortification and the Trades' Officer. They elected auditors of their own accounts, and for a time they appointed two additional auditors for the accounts of Allan's Hospital, as well as seeing to the appointment of the two Extraordinary Auditors.

It may be of interest to notice how the choice of Convener has been distributed among the Seven Trades. The figures from 1595 to the present date are as follows, the Trades being given in the order of priority in which they are invariably set forth in the records:—

	Individual Conveners Elected.	Combined Years of Office.
1. Hammermen ... ..	34	95
2. Weavers ... ..	16	40
3. Tailors ... ..	14	38
4. Shoemakers ... ..	9	17
5. Fleshers ... ..	12	28
6. Skinners ... ..	5	9
7. Bakers ... ..	38	107
	128	334

#### ROLL OF CONVENERS.

The roll of Conveners is as follows:—

1595	Robert Robertson, Peudar maker, Hammerman.
1599	John Henrysoun, Baxter.
1602	Robert Robertson, Peudrar.
1604	John Cuthbert, Skinner or Glover.
1606	John Henrysoun, Baxter.
1608	James M'Clelane, Tailyour.
1611	Thomas Couper, Tailyour.
1614	Robert Henrysoun, Smith.
1617	Thomas Couper, Tailyour.
1619	Andrew Downie, Hammerman.
1622	Robert Henrysoun, Hammerman.
1625	John Mathieson, Sadlar.
1627	Robert Henrysoun, Smith.
1630	John Anderson, Tailyour.
1633	James Howstoun, Cordiner.
1635	Christopher Russell, Baxter.
1642	James Howstoun, Cordiner or Shoo-maker.
1645	Robert Kidstone, Baxter.

1648 Christopher Russell, Baxter.  
 1650 Robert Russell, Baxter.  
 1656 Robert Kidstone, Baxter.  
 1659 Thomas Downie, Hammerman.  
 1665 James Howstoun, Cordiner.  
 1667 John Galloway, Tailor.  
 1671 Robert Anderson, Baker.  
 1678 John Lowrie, Hammerman.  
 1679 John Dick, Hammerman.  
 1683 Alexander Turnbull, Baker.  
 1684 John Lowrie, Hammerman.  
 1686 John Dick, Hammerman.  
 1688 James Graham, Hammerman.  
 1691 James Russell, Baker.  
 1696 James Laurie, Hammerman.  
 1701 Robert Duncan, Flesher.  
 1702 John Anderson, Baker.  
 1704 William Allan, Tailor.  
 1706 John Archibald, Hammerman.  
 1708 John Anderson, Baker.  
 1710 John Littlejohn, Flesher.  
 1712 John Laurie, Hammerman.  
 1714 John Littlejohn, Flesher.  
 1715 William Allan, Tailor.  
 1717 Christopher Russell, Baker.  
 1721 Coline M'Laurie, Hammerman.  
 1723 James Buchanan, Baker.  
 1732 Thomas Blackader, Hammerman.  
 1735 John Gilfillan, Baker.  
 1738 Hugh Lennox, Tailor.  
 1740 Robert Stevenson, Flesher.  
 1742 Robert Anderson, Baker.  
 1744 Walter Stevenson, Flesher.  
 1746 John Nicol, Weaver.  
 1747 Charles Lyon, Shoemaker.  
 1749 Walter, Stevenson, Flesher.  
 1750 John Sawers, Baker.  
 1751 Andrew Turnbull, Tailor.  
 1753 Robert Melvill, Hammerman.  
 1755 John Sawers, Baxter.  
 1756 Andrew Riddell, Hammerman.  
 1758 John Gilfillan, Baker.  
 1760 John Hutton, Baker.  
 1762 John Sawers, Baker.  
 1764 Alexander Cuthill, Baker.  
 1766 John Hutton, Baker.  
 1768 Alexander Cuthill, Baker.  
 1770 Robert Barclay, Glover.  
 1772 John Paterson, Weaver.  
 1774 Alexander Carrick, Baker.  
 1776 John Paterson, Weaver.

1778 Daniel Brown Skinner.  
 1779 John Stewart, Hammerman.  
 1782 John Forman, Baker.  
 1783 George Gilfillan, Weaver.  
 1783 Archibald Dow, Hammerman (Interim).  
 1784 Alexander Cuthill, Baker.  
 1785 James Jaffray, Baker.  
 1787 Archibald Sawers, Baker.  
 1789 John Murdoch, Shoemaker.  
 1791 James Peddie, Hammerman.  
 1793 John Reid, Weaver.  
 1795 James Smart, Shoemaker.  
 1797 Alexander Sutherland, Hammerman.  
 1798 John Dick, Weaver.  
 1800 John Reid, Weaver.  
 1802 Alexander Sutherland, Hammerman.  
 1804 William Henderson, Baker.  
 1806 Peter M'Gibbon, Taylor.  
 1808 William Murdoch, Baker.  
 1810 William Henderson, Baker.  
 1812 William Dougall, Flesher.  
 1814 Thomas Anderson, Flesher.  
 1816 William Dougall, Flesher.  
 1818 William Thomson, Weaver.  
 1819 William Telford, Baker.  
 1820 David Gray, Skinner.  
 1822 John Thomson, Hammerman.  
 1824 James Stevenson, Weaver.  
 1825 William Dougall, Flesher.  
 1827 John Stevenson, Weaver.  
 1830 Thomas Anderson, Flesher.  
 1832 John Stewart, Hammerman.  
 1834 William Stevenson, Weaver.  
 1836 John Stewart, Hammerman.  
 1838 Archibald Stevenson, Weaver.  
 1840 William Grant, Hammerman.  
 1842 Archibald M'Owan, Tailor.  
 1844 James Peddie, Hammerman.  
 1846 William Grant, Hammerman.  
 1848 James Millar, Baker.  
 1850 Peter Reid, Skinner.  
 1852 William Taylor, Weaver.  
 1855 George Thomson, Hammerman.  
 1860 Archibald Borland, Baker.  
 1861 William Campbell, Shoemaker.  
 1862 Archibald Watt, Baker.  
 1865 Wright Cumming, Shoemaker.  
 1867 James Taylor, Weaver.  
 1870 Archibald Watt, Baker.  
 1874 John Thomson, Weaver.  
 1885 William Brown, Hammerman.

- 1892 James M'Queen, Tailor.
- 1894 James Thomson, Hammerman.
- 1901 John King, Weaver.
- 1903 Daniel Wylie, Flesher.
- 1912 J. S. Ralston, Shoemaker.
- 1913 John Duff, Baker.
- 1920 Thomas Ferguson, Tailor.
- 1925 Robert M'Culloch, Tailor.

#### THE EXTRAORDINARY AUDITORS.

From 1695 to 1901 the Convener Court carried through the appointment of two "most substantial, knowing, and conscientious tradesmen," as the minutes always bore, to be Extraordinary Auditors. The practice was for the seven Trades to meet separately and each to appoint two delegates. The Convener presided at a meeting of these fourteen, who were generally different men from the Deacons and Old Deacons. The delegates chose the two Extraordinary Auditors out of their own number. A record of the proceedings was entered in the Convener Court minute book, and the Convener reported to the Convener Court, who passed on the names of the Extraordinary Auditors to the Town Council. This duty originated in the following circumstances:—

Towards the close of the seventeenth century, a practice crept in of allowing the Provost as remuneration for holding that office a yearly salary of 1000 merks Scots, besides the dues paid by entrants to the Guildry. The first to accept such payments was John Schorte, who was Provost from 1645 to 1648, and from 1649 to 1653, and succeeding Provosts seem to have done so also. By the time of John Stevenson, who occupied the Provost's chair from 1694 to 1696, there was a good deal of corruption in the management of the town's affairs, and the Common Good property was freely wasted for the benefit of Councillors and their friends. His predecessor, John Dick, had contrived by some means to obtain a lease of certain burgh lands without any public roup, and naturally the more public-spirited citizens were incensed. Led by John Burd, afterwards a Bailie, they complained to Sir James Stewart, the Lord Advocate, and took proceedings in the Court of Session. Provost Dick, on 5th May and 23rd June, 1694, got the Council to approve of his defending the case at the expense of the Common Good. Ultimately, the Council repudiated Dick, and let the lands to another tenant. Dick,

however, stuck to his lease and defied the Council. These proceedings led to the passing of the Long Act. Provost Dick was expelled from the Scots Parliament for using threatening language to the Commissioner for Burntisland, and he ultimately fell into poverty and became a pensioner of Cowane's Hospital.

The Long Act was passed by the Town Council on 3rd August, 1695. It provided that no Councillor should be tenant of the town's or Hospital's property, that the Provost's salary should cease, that the Town and Hospital Accounts should be audited yearly by four Extraordinary Auditors, two appointed by the Guildry and two by the Seven Incorporated Trades, and that the Act should be read over by the Town Clerk every year to the newly-elected Council. The clause in the Long Act referred to is in the following terms—

"And to the effect, that all fraud, malversation, and embezzlements whatsoever, may, in all time coming, not only be done away, but effectually prevented, therefore it is further enacted and ordained, that in all time hereafter it shall be reputed as a part of the Sett of this Burgh, that neither Provost nor Bailie for the time when they are in office, shall be Auditors to the Town Treasurer's accompts, but that, besides the ordinary number of Auditors, in use to be chosen by the Town Council yearly, and hereby ordained to be so elected for the future, there shall likewise be chosen yearly, by the Guildry of this Burgh, two of the most intelligent, experienced, and substantial Merchants of their number, who, with other two of the most substantial, knowing, and conscientious Tradesmen, also to be chosen yearly by the body of the Seven Incorporated Trades (the election of which four additional Auditors, by the Guildry and Trades, is hereby appointed to be within ten days after election of the Magistrates and Council yearly), shall only audite and fit the said Treasurer's accompts, exclusive as to all others; and which number of ordinary Auditors, so to be chosen yearly by the Town Council, with the saids four additional and extraordinary Auditors to be chosen by the said Guildry and Trades, shall likewise be Auditors in all time coming to the accompts of the Over and Nether Hospitals, merk upon the boll of malt and multure; but

no way exclusive as to the saids Magistrates and Council present or to come; who, in respect of the Mortifications of the saids several Hospitals, and Constitution of the said Merk upon the boll of malt, are still to continue Auditors as to these accmpts, and to concur with, and be assisting to the saids ordinary and extraordinary Auditors in fitting and clearing thereof. Like as it is hereby declared, that the saids Auditors, ordinary and extraordinary, so to be elected yearly as to the saids whole accmpts, shall have power to approve or reject the saids accmpts, in whole or in part, as they shall find just cause, and to report the same to the Council as approved or rejected; and that none others shall have power to approve or reject the same, but the saids Auditors, ordinary and extraordinary, or plurality of them, in time coming."

These Extraordinary Auditors were regularly appointed each year by the Guildry and the Trades, and they audited the Town and Hospital Accounts down to 1801. The Educational Trust Scheme came into operation in 1886, and the Trust Accounts are audited by the Scottish Education Department. Cowane's and Spittal's Hospitals' Accounts are now, along with the Town's Accounts, audited by a professional auditor, nominated by the Secretary for Scotland in terms of the Town Councils (Scotland) Act, 1900, and the Stirling Corporation Order, 1901. That Provisional Order repealed the Long Act and abolished the Extraordinary Auditors, and it put the debt of the Hospitals upon a statutory footing.

By the year 1822 the reading of the Long Act had become a meaningless formality, because its provisions were openly disregarded in the letting of Hood and Ladysnuck farms to William Dougall and Thomas Anderson. The Guildry raised an action in the Court of Session against the Patrons of Cowane's Hospital, and after somewhat prolonged proceedings an agreement was come to which was embodied in an Interlocutor of Lord Moncrieff, dated 9th July, 1831. It provided that feus, sales or leases for more than one year of Cowane's Hospital lands should proceed by public roup, that debts due to the Hospital should be promptly recovered, that solvent tenants should not be relieved of their leases, and that the Accounts should be published. One important clause was contained in this Interlocutor, although it had no direct concern

with the subject of the litigation, namely, that the application of the funds of Cowane's Hospital should not be considered as restricted to the support of any special or fixed number of gild brethren. Judicial sanction was thus obtained for the hitherto unauthorised practice of extending the benefits beyond the number of twelve decayed Gild brethren. The Town Councils (Scotland) Act, 1900, the Stirling Corporation Order, 1901, and the Stirling Corporation (Water &c.) Order, 1922, have entirely superseded the provisions of the Interlocutor.

#### THE MEETING PLACES OF THE TRADES.

The time honoured rendezvous of the Seven Incorporated Trades throughout a period measured by centuries was invariably referred to as "their meeting place on the hills." In the records of each of the Crafts and of the Convener Court the phrase occurs as the tale is told of many a crisis in their history, of much anxious consultation, of doings heroic and commonplace, joyful and sad. Where was this meeting place? Until the nineteenth century the broad slope where Upper Bridge Street, Queen Street, Irvine Place, and Princes Street now are was practically unbuilt on, and consisted of gardens, crofts, and waste land. The town ended on that side at the back walls of the gardens on the east side of St. Mary's Wynd and at the ancient gateway near the present Marykirk. The open space referred to was really a continuation of the Gowan Hills and was known as the North Craigs, the Little Gowan Hills, Duncan's Green, and Cowane's Hospital Crofts. What is now Upper Bridge Street was known as "the Whins," and as it was the gathering place for walking the marches, it should be distinguished from "the Hills." On the west side of Irvine Place, which was then called "the way leading to the bridge," was situated the Hospital erected by Robert Spittal, for the accommodation of the beadsmen or pensioners, and the adjoining ground, probably of considerable extent, formed part of Spittal's bequest. This Hospital was called the Nether Hospital to distinguish it from the Over Hospital which was situated near the Parish Church. The Seven Incorporated Trades had a special interest in Spittal's bequest, and hence they found an appropriate meeting place "on the hills" adjoining the Hospital. Probably the meetings sometimes took place in the open air,



but in bad weather or after dark, they would be held inside the almshouse building. In the beginning of the eighteenth century the building became dilapidated, and the lands were gradually sold. Only a small portion still belongs to the Town Council, occupied partly as a bill-posting station.

The Trades finding themselves in need of a more convenient meeting place purchased in 1712 a house on the north side of Baker Street known as "Lowrie's turnpike." This I believe to be the property which afterwards became the Free North Church Mission Hall, now used as a furniture store. It evidently proved unsuitable, and was sold in 1722.

The Trades returned to their old meeting place, but we find it described on 30th April, 1737, as in great disrepair. In 1738, part of the almshouse fell altogether, and the Trades then met sometimes on the hills and sometimes in the "fore Tolbooth" in Broad Street. What remained of the almshouse was sold in 1751. Two old memorial tablets were removed from the ruins. One was placed on the house, No. 82 Spittal Street, which was described as the "Hospital House in the Back Row." While this property belonged to Spittal's Hospital as an investment it now appears clear that the building never was used as an almshouse or as a meeting place of the Trades (Ronald, Trans. 1901-2, page 71). It was sold in 1800. The other tablet was placed in the new Trades Hall which was erected in 1751. This hall, which most of us remember well, continued to be the meeting place of the Trades until 1907, when it was sold to the School Board. Upon its site the Primary High School was erected. In the sale of the hall it was stipulated that the Board should provide the Trades with a suitable meeting place, and their gatherings are now held in a room in the High School.

#### THE BUSINESS OF THE CONVENER COURT.

One is curious to know what was the business transacted by the Convener Court. Like any well constituted body they elected their chairman, the Convener, although this was a privilege that had for a time to be fought for. They also, as we have seen, annually elected their office-bearers and officials and auditors of various kinds. Their income was derived (first) from contributions levied on newly joined members and accounted for by the Deacons or Boxmasters of the respective

trades, (second) from fines imposed when they sat as a Court of Discipline, and (third) from the produce of invested funds. A great part of their time was taken up with the administration of these funds, never very large in amount. Investments were constantly being made generally on personal security, and frequently proved unstable, requiring steps to be taken to recover the money. This was often difficult, and it rather seems as if losses were made from time to time. Although each of the seven Trades had its own poor fund, out of which widows, orphans, and necessitous members were relieved, the Convener Court also administered charity, and the circumstances of such cases were duly considered.

The Convener Court exercised an oversight of the finances of the separate Trades. How this right was constituted does not appear. If one of the Trades desired to borrow money, it first obtained the approval of the Convener Court. If a Trade proposed to relieve a tenant of his obligations or a new member of part of his entry money, it was necessary to obtain the Convener Court's sanction. When any members of one of the Incorporations were dissatisfied with the management of its finances, an appeal to the Convener Court was competent, and the decision of the Court apparently was obeyed. It does not follow that supervision was invariably exercised. The practice varied from time to time, and it seems as if the Convener Court took no steps to interfere with the administration of an individual Trade unless a complaint were made, or something was being done flagrantly against the interest of good government. A Trade also applied to the Convener Court when the members desired to strengthen their hands in any step of importance which they proposed to take.

Generally speaking, the Convener Court was a Court of Appeal, open to any member or group of members of any of the seven Trades against a decision of their Master Court or of the Trade as a body. There appeared also to be a right of appeal to the Town Council on the part of a member of the Convener Court against a judgment of his colleagues. All this code of procedure was unwritten and based solely on precedent. The marvel is that it worked so well, and was so loyally observed and respected. The Convener Court was undoubtedly, throughout a long period,

a most useful tribunal for the administration of justice among the members of a body constituting a substantial section of the community.

Not only was the Convener Court a civil court, but it was also in its way a criminal court. The good behaviour of the craftsmen was scrupulously seen to by the individual Master Courts, as the records of each of the seven Trades show. And so also in all matters concerned with the business of the Convener Court, strict discipline was enforced not only on litigants and witnesses, but also on the members of the Court themselves, not omitting even the chairman. Disrespectful observations or actions were summarily dealt with, and the Minutes of these proceedings are not lacking in humour.

The Convener Court had the patronage of Adamson's Bursary, and of the boys to be put forward for the benefits of Allan's Mortification. The Convener Court also, as the executive of the Seven Trades, administered their share of the patronage of the Parish Church, although the Trades individually expressed their views as to the calling of ministers from time to time.

Perhaps the business that occupied the greatest amount of the time and thought of the Convener Court was the protection of the privileges of the Trades. There were three classes of men who had to be carefully guarded against, and with whom the position of matters was either armed neutrality or open feud. First there were those who sought to work at any of the occupations included in the combination without joining as full members and paying the dues. There might be odd strangers arriving in the town, or journeymen or apprentices working on their own account, or perhaps working ostensibly as servants but really as masters on behalf of some unqualified person. Second, there were fully qualified tradesmen living outside of the town who sought to sell their goods in the town without entering with the Crafts. Weavers and others living in the Castlehill were a source of trouble, that area being included in the Constabulary of the Castle, and therefore beyond the Town Council's jurisdiction. Country butchers and shoemakers from all the surrounding villages had to be specially dealt with. Third, there was the "auld enemy" of the Trades, the Guildry, with which body questions of the infringement of their respective rights were of constant occurrence.

#### POSSESSIONS OF THE CONVENER COURT.

Certain relics belonging to the Convener Court are deposited in the Smith Institute. These include the Box with the Seven Keys. The existing box, which is a handsome article of polished mahogany, was made in 1829 by John Fisher, cabinetmaker. It cost £4 4s, towards which each trade paid twelve shillings. The brass plate was taken off the old box and placed on the new. This brass plate bears to have been engraved by John Christie, gunsmith, in 1759. The box is furnished with seven locks, and beside the keyholes are the name and emblems of each Craft in their order. These are as follows:—

- No. 1 Hammermen, Hammer and Crown.
- No. 2 Weavers, Spool and Shuttle.
- No. 3 Tailors, Shears and Goose.
- No. 4 Shoemakers, Coronet, Knife, and Measure.
- No. 5 Fleshers, Knife and Cleaver.
- No. 6 Skinners, Shears and Glove.
- No. 7 Bakers, Crossed Peels and Souffle.

These emblems have been copied in the stained glass window in the main staircase of the Municipal Buildings. It was intended that each Deacon should possess the key of the lock assigned to his Trade, so that all had to be present before the box could be opened. It is long since this practice fell into abeyance.

Inside the box was preserved the banner of the Seven Incorporated Trades, which is now displayed on the wall in the Smith Institute. This was popularly known as the "Blue Blanket." The name is not at all descriptive of the Stirling flag. We would suggest that the name originated either from an older flag, which on that supposition would be blue in colour, but of which there is no evidence, or, more probably, from association with the Edinburgh Trades' banner, which was also styled the "Blue Blanket." It rather appears that the name was sometimes applied generally to all Scottish Crafts' banners. Thus King James wrote in his "Basilicon Doron": "The craftes-men thinke we should be content with their worke, how bad and dear soever it be, and if they in anything be controlled, up goeth the blew blanket." The Stirling flag is a large oblong of silk, measuring 9 feet in height, as the banner would be carried, and 7 feet 9 inches in breadth. It is made up of a white St. Andrew's cross from corner to corner, the stripes measuring 10 inches in width. The

remainder consists of vertical bands,  $7\frac{1}{4}$  inches wide, alternately of pale buff and faded blue. These are fitted unsymmetrically into the four triangular spaces left by the cross, so that the bands of buff and blue do not correspond. When the flag was got is not known, but it appears to be very old. There is no evidence in support of the statement that it was a gift by Mary Queen of Scots to the Trades. It is probably one of the two banners which were defiantly carried by the Trades in the tumult of July, 1616, a quarrel which ultimately came before the Privy Council. One wonders what became of the other flag, the new one procured by the Trades contrary to the ruling of the Town Council, and carried by Thomas Taylor, which was forfeited to the Council "to be usit be tham at their will and plesour."

In the box was also kept the Convener's sash, now exhibited in a case in the Smith Institute. It is a piece of cream-coloured silk, measuring 8 feet 4 inches long by 1 foot 4 inches wide, and having a fringe 8 inches deep at both ends. There is a sewed border along both sides,  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch deep.

#### ADAMSON'S BURSARY.

One of the privileges of the Convener Court which has all along been highly valued is the right of presentation to the Bursary at Glasgow University known as the Adamson Bursary. Adamson's Bursary was founded by a Letter of Mortification of date 3rd March, 1674, by Mr. David Adamson, for some time Minister of the Parish of Fintry, in the Presbytery of Dumbarton. The original Deed of Mortification has been lost, and no copy is known to exist. Its precise terms are therefore not available, but it has always been understood that the Bursary was restricted to sons of members of the Seven Incorporated Trades, and to be tenable at the University of Glasgow. In 1706 the recipient was required to be a "Bursar of Philosophy." In 1772 it was declared that the person elected shall be a "Gown Student either for three years only if he shall enter the Logic Class, or during four years only if he shall enter the Greek Class." At the present time the Bursar takes the Arts Course.

The Rev. David Adamson was probably born in Stirling, his father being John Adamson, a notary in the town. He may have been educated at the Stirling Grammar School, but of this there is no evidence. His name is found in the list of those

matriculating in the University of Glasgow in 1617, but, as he took his degree of Master in Arts there in 1619, it is possible that he had gone through part of his University curriculum at some other University. He was ordained to the ministry about 1634.

In the Records of the Presbytery of Dumbarton, Mr. Adamson's name occurs for the first time in a Minute of 19th May, 1640. In the Records of the Kirk Session of Fintry, which, though extending as far back as 1632, contain only a few notices of that date and do not begin to be continuous till the year 1640, his name occurs for the first time, of date 25th December, 1640, annexed to an account of the Poor's Funds. Mr. Adamson's name appears as a contributor of twenty merks towards the building of the College of Glasgow with the designation "of Fintrie" attached to it; and though no date is fixed to his contribution, it seems probable, from its relative position to other contributions, that it was made in 1636.

Mr. Adamson's wife was Elizabeth Nairn, probably a daughter of the Rev. William Nairn of Dysart, who had previously been minister at Kippen. An entry in the Kirk Session Records, 4th June, 1643, bears that "the Minister represented to the Elders in Session, that he intended to build a dask (in the kirk) for his wife, and desired a convenient place for the purpose." She died in March, 1697.

From 1644, onwards, through a succession of years, frequent mention is made in the Kirk Session Records, of his "diligence" in obtempering the "injunctions" so rife in those troublous times, and in promoting "voluntarie contributions for the armie," the "excommunication" of such malignants as the Marquis of Huntly, Earl of Montrose, &c., the observance of fasts and thanksgivings in connection with the public transactions of the period, and the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant. But the most frequent entries in the Record are those which illustrate his zeal for education. In the year 1648, if not earlier, he took steps to have a school "held at the kirk," and from that time forward, there are continual intimations of the anxiety which he felt to have the youth of the parish properly instructed. His efforts, for this purpose, seem to have been the occasion of involving him in no

small degree of trouble. Having been instrumental in setting aside a schoolmaster of the name of Wisheart, on the score of neglect of duty, Wisheart was provoked to stir up certain "slanders" against him, which afterwards became the subject of judicial investigation by the Presbytery. These "slanders" seem to have been of a very pitiful kind, as for instance, that "ane stot had been slaine in the minister's barne, and by the minister's man, upon a Saboth morning," that he had ordered or allowed his man to prepare "devotts" also, upon a Saboth, and that, upon some occasion, he had "taken two dollars for baptising a bairne." Visitations of the parish were held in 1650, 1652, and 1654, at which these charges were dealt with, and the minister was exculpated. Nevertheless, the same or similar slanders appear to have been very soon revived, and again made the subject of Presbyterial inquiry. A visitation was intimated to be held at the kirk in the month of October, 1654, which, however, was afterwards "stopped," in consequence of a meeting of Synod having been appointed for the same day at Kilpatrick Wester; whereupon, the parishioners resolved to transmit to the Synod a testimonial of their minister's "abilities in the work of the ministrie, and of his good conversatione." A testimonial was accordingly granted, "unanimouslie subst. be ye whole parochie," and directed to be entrusted to a commissioner, to be presented on occasion of the "tryall of Mr. David Adamson," and with instructions to the said commissioner, that "gif he found any thing lyk to be fondit to ye prejudice of their said minister, then to do and act all that lawful is, for his and their protection and defence." This is dated November, 1654, but the proceedings connected with it, appear to have been protracted for a considerable period. They resulted, at length, in the acquittal of the minister, and the exercise of discipline upon Wisheart.

Thus far the Records of the Kirk Session; but the Letters and Journals of Baillie, 1637-1662, not only continue the narrative, but give us some insight into the secret springs of all this persecution. It would appear that Mr. Adamson took part with Douglas, Baillie, Dickson, and the more moderate of the clergy, in carrying certain resolutions in favour of reinforcing the army by the admission, on certain terms, of persons who had been excluded by the Act of Classes. This

procured for them the designation of the "Resolutioners," whilst the minority, which condemned any approach to a junction with the "Malignant" party, were styled the "Remonstrants" or "Protesters." In a letter to Mr. William Spang, towards the end of 1655, Baillie, in alleging that the Remonstrators, "as unquestionable masters, doe within the bounds of the Synod whatever they think expedient," mentions amongst other instances, that "Mr. David Adamson, though of many libelled scandals they got not one proven, yet still they keep on the panell." And in the course of the following year (1st September, 1656), after alluding to a persecution of Mr. Allan Ferguson of Drimmen, Baillie says: "This process, and another of his neighbour, Mr. David Adamson of Fintrie, where also, after much noyse, nothing was found, has made their fervour of purging in our bounds much to relent; for, as oft I told them, they will find on tryell, that the men to be purged out are on their side, not on ours, if there were any justice."

It appears, however, from the Records of the Presbytery of Dumbarton, that, three years later, Mr. Adamson's conduct was again made the subject of judicial inquiry. Whether from that want of justice in the proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Courts at which Baillie so broadly hints, or whether from Mr. Adamson's own infirmities, this inquiry resulted in his deposition for drunkenness on 26th October, 1659. After the Restoration, the Scottish Parliament, on 5th July, 1661, voted a sum of £100 sterling to Mr. David Adamson, but no designation is affixed to his name as to that of some other ministers or late ministers in whose favour similar votes are recorded. (Acts Parl. Scot. Vol. VII. Append. p. 81.) It appears from the Presbytery Records that, a few years afterwards, Mr. Adamson had made application to be allowed to resume the functions of a minister. Of date, 31st January, 1665, there is recorded the following finding of the Presbytery, "anent an appoyntment of the Archbishop, &c., that they sould oppen Mr. David Adamson his mouth to the exercise of the ministrie, or otherwayes to declair that they find cause why they could not do it." It may be warrantable to infer from this finding that, in compassing Mr. Adamson's condemnation, justice had at least been strained to her full stretch.

"The Presbytery finding that the said Mr. David was deposed for sundrie scandales mentionat in his sentence of deposition, and that he still justifies himself, and refuses to acknowledge any guilt in these particulars, as also that after search and inquirie maid both by the elders and others, and the oath of the Clerk of the Session, we find him not fullie cleared of that particular upon which much of the stress of the sentence was laid, and we being partly his judges in the said sentence of deposition, we cannot for these reasons open his mouth unless we take negative guilt upon ourselves in pronouncing such a sentence, which we cannot doe."

Of Mr. Adamson's subsequent history, we have not been able to procure much information, further than the fact that he spent the close of his days in Stirling. His residence at Stirling is expressly mentioned in a minute of the Dumbarton Presbytery, dated 17th February, 1674, about a fortnight previous to the date of his Letter of Mortification. Adamson died at Stirling in 1676. He left the manuscript of a work never published, entitled "Practiques regarding Manses and Bargains about Them." (Hew Scott's Fasti. Deeds instituting Bursaries, etc., in the College of Glasgow, 1850.) From what we know we can picture Adamson as a keen, intelligent, courageous man, perhaps inclined to be litigious, as befitted one whose father was a lawyer, broad-minded also, and out of sympathy with the narrower ecclesiasticism of his day, with a special interest in education and a love for his old home—together a notable and worthy Son of the Rock.

The patronage of Mr. Adamson's bursary seems to have been originally vested in John Campbell of Dowan and his heirs, and transferred by him to the Convener Court of Stirling. The earliest record of the transaction in their Books is an "Act concerning Adamson's Mortification in Stirling," dated 31st August, 1706:—

"AT STIRLING, the last day of August,  
1706 Years,

The which day the Deacon Convener and remanent Deacons, new and old, of the Seven Incorporated Trades within the Burgh of Stirling, being convened at their ordinary meeting place, and taking to their serious consideration that the deceased Mr. David Adamson, some time Minister at Fintrie, by his letter of Mortification, dated

3d day of March, jm. vic and seventy-four years, did legate and mortify the sum of 800 Merks, due by the persons contained in the said Mortification, for maintaining ane Bursar of Philosophy in the College of Glasgow, being the son of any Tradesman within the said seven Incorporated Trades, by which Mortification, the said sum of 800 Merks is appointed to stand and continue as ane constant and perpetual stock, and only the annual rent thereof to be applied for the use and end foresaid. By which also it is provided, that the said @ rent should fall due, and payable to John Campbell of Dowan, and his heirs, during the vacancy of the Bursar, as the said Mortification of the date foresaid in itself more fully bears. Likeas, the said John Campbell, by his discharge and renunciation, dated the 6th day of July last, by past, not only renounced in favour of the said Convener and Deacons present and to come, the right of nomination and presentation of the said Bursar from time to time, competent to him and his forebears, by virtue of the said Mortification, but also discharged them, and their successors in office, of the @ rent of the said Mortified sum, as well of all years and terms bygone that the same was not applied or employed for maintaining the said Bursar, as in all time hereafter, to the effect that during the space of the said vacancies, so often as they shall occur, the same may be added to the stock for augmentation thereof; reserving always power and liberty to the said John Campbell, his heirs, and successors, to call and pursue the said Convener and Deacons, for making payment of the said @ rents in time coming, in case they shall happen to bestow or employ the same for any other use than for maintaining the said Bursar, or for augmenting the said stock, as the said renunciation and discharge likewise more fully bears. And the said Convener and Deacons likewise considering the great trouble, pains, and expences they have been at in making effectual the foresaid mortified sum so far as could be recovered thereof, which at this present time extends to 700 Merks, and being most willing and desirous that the same, with the annual-rents thereof, should be secured against all embezlements whatsoever, therefore, they all of one consent, hereby declare that the said sum of 700 Merks money foresaid is, and shall continue, as ane perpetual stock for the use and end above mentioned, in all time hereafter; and that it shall



not be in the power of them or their successors in office, to embezzle, or dilapidate, or diminish the same, any manner of way whatsoever; all which power they for themselves and fairsaids hereby renounce, discharge, and disclaim for ever. As also the said Convener and Deacons, by these presents, bind and oblige them and their successors in office, (that) during the vacancy of ane Bursar, so oft as the same shall occur, to add the @ rents of the said 700 Merks, so far as shall happen to fall due from time to time, to the said principal sum for augmentation thereof, for the more comfortable and plentiful entertaining of the said Bursar upon the @ rents thereof, and no way to employ or apply the same for any other end, use, or purpose whatsoever, under the pain of being holden and repute unfaithful Deacons, embezzlers of the said mortified money, and incapable to bear the office of Deacons in all time hereafter; and that it shall be in the power not only of any Deacon, but even in the power of any tradesman within any of the said Seven Incorporated Trades, to call and pursue the Convener and remanent Deacons, embezzlers of the said principal mortified sum, or @ rents thereof, before the Magistrates and Council of the Burgh of Stirling, for the time, or any other Judicatory competent for repetition, and making up of so much thereof, as bees misemployed or embezzled be them, contrary to the terms or tenor heirof. And LASTLY, the said Conveener and Deacons appoint this present Act to be read publicly in Court, after every annual election, upon the day that the new Deacons are to be sworn and admitted, who are hereby appointed and obliged to subscribe a particular act for observance thereof, in every article and clause of the same, with certification if they refuse, they shall neither be sworn nor admitted as members of the said Court. And the said Conveener and Deacons consent, that an extract of this present act be registrate in the Council Books of the said Burgh, and that the Magistrates and Council thereof interpone their authority thereto, to thê effect the same may be inviolably observed in all time coming, and constitute their pr'ors for that end. In testimony whereof, the said Convener and Deacons have signed these presents, day, month, place, and year of God above written.—William Allan, Conveener, John Anderson, Deacon, &c."

In 1772, in consequence of certain demands made by the Faculty of the College, the Convener Court

made inquiry, and in their Minute of 1st September, 1772, it is recorded that the Deed of Mortification had not been seen; that search had been made in the Sheriff Clerk's Office from 1674 for upwards of forty years without finding it; that it had been discovered that the original fund was a debt due to Mr. Adamson by "Kirkamuir"; and that of the 800 Merks mortified, only 700 Merks had been recovered from the donor's heir in 1706. Thereafter the following Minute was passed, and a copy certified by the Clerk was transmitted to the College authorities:—

"AT STIRLING, the twenty-third day of October, seventeen hundred and seventy-two years: Which day the Convener Court of this Burgh having met, on lawful warning, concerning the affairs of Mr. David Adamson's mortification of a fund toward the maintenance of a Bursar of Philosophy in the College of Glasgow, who must be the son of a freeman of one of the Seven Incorporated Trades of this Burgh, who was entitled to the interest of the mortified sum, now greatly increased by the annual rents during vacancies; and having considered the demand made by the Faculty of the said College, relative to the said fund and Bursary, and being willing to give all reasonable satisfaction thereanent to the said Faculty, the said Convener Court does freely and voluntarily hereby agree to the following resolutions, which shall be observed by the members and their successors in office, in all time coming—*Primo*, as often as a proper person applies, when there is a vacancy, the Convener Court shall elect him; or if more apply, and the fund be so encreased as to afford it, and that more apply than one, the Conveener Court shall elect whom of them applying they shall find most promising a Bursar, or Bursars, on the said mortification, and give or order an extract of his or their election, in a letter directed to the Principal of the said College, and that extract shall bear, that the person or persons elected shall be a Gown Student in the said College, either for three years only, if he shall enter the Logic Class, or during four years only, if he shall enter the Greek Class; and that he or they shall not be entitled to the payment of his or their Bursary, but under this express condition, that he (or they) shall produce a certificate to the Convener Court, from the Principal or Professor under whom he has studied, of his or their regular attendance, of his or their diligence and proficiency

in his or their studies, and of his or their good behaviour, in all respects, as a Student—*Secundo*, that the security for the fund of the Mortification whether heritable or moveable, shall be exhibited to the College, or any authorised by them, as often as required at this place allenarly—*Tertio*, that the Convener Court shall, from time to time, when asked, show the state of the mortification to any impowered by the Faculty of the College, that it may appear to all concerned, that everything relating to the said mortification is managed with integrity."

In a volume issued by the Glasgow College authorities in 1850, containing information as to bursaries, it is stated that in the end of 1781, or beginning of 1782, the members of the Convener Court were served with a summons before the Court of Session, at the instance of the Principal and Professors of the College to show their accounts. I cannot find any trace of such proceedings, and the Convener Court book contains no mention of them. I think the statement is an error, caused by some confusion of dates arising out of the correspondence of 1772.

Under the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889, certain Commissioners were empowered to regulate bursaries held at any of the Scottish Universities. They issued an Ordinance, dated 30th July, 1894, which dealt with the Adamson Bursary. General Regulations were prescribed, but the most important provision was the abolition of the restriction of the bursary to sons of freemen of the Seven Incorporated Trades of Stirling. These Regulations were the subject of much anxious thought on the part of the Convener Court. The Ordinance, as originally drafted, was keenly opposed by them, and they succeeded in convincing the Commissioners of the justice of their case. The Regulations have worked quite well. In no case has a bursar been appointed other than a Stirling student. The Bursary, throughout the long period of its existence, has been of immense benefit to many deserving young men from Stirling. Its present value is £40 per annum.

## Extracts from the Records of the Convener Court of Stirling.

1732.

30 Sept.—Robert Stevensone relieved of £30 Scots due to the Fleshers as a year's rent of yaird in the Back Row.

William Bowie, flesher, relieved of balance of his entry money, the rate having been reduced since he entered.

23 Dec.—The Deacon and Master Court of the Cordiners found to have been mis-spending their funds.

1733.

3 Feb.—Approved of the boxmasters to the Convener's Box having borrowed 500 merks from the Cordiners.

3 April—A Committee appointed to meet a Committee of the Gildry as to some alleged infringements by the Hammermen.

12 April—The Deacons reported that each of the Trades had agreed to a community of trade betwixt them and the Gildry, providing the articles to be communioned upon should please them.

17 May—The Cordiners heard as to a dispute about their accounts.

John Hill, cordner, fined forty shillings Scots for calling William Howstoun, cordner, "ane idiot."

4 Aug.—The Convener and Deacon of the Weavers appointed to go with the Town Council's representatives to present an address to the Commission of the General Assembly as to the affair of the Rev. Mr. Ebenezer Erskine.

1 Sept.—Found, in a dispute among the Baxters, that the custom and practice of the hail seven trades is that every apprentice must be bound for five years, and that for none of these years can any wages be allowed him.

12 Sept.—Ane exact Account of Charge and Discharge with respect to the Mortification of Mr. David Adamson from the founding thereof till this date submitted. Robert Napier allowed £8

Scots for his pains, but this shall not infer that the boxmaster shall have any allowance in future.

- 17 Oct.—Arranged to discharge a bond for 200 merks over the Fleshers' back tenement in the back row.  
 26 Nov.—Agreed to borrow 250 merks from Adamson's Mortification.  
 3 Dec.—The Weavers' Officer fined 40 sh. Scots for not attending to the opening of the trades' loft last Sunday.

1734.

- 17 Jan.—Robert Stivensone fined 40 sh. Scots because he did take off the Convener's hat and weig and in a disdainfull and contemptuous manner threw the same to the floor.

The preses having called the above Robert Stivensone a scandalous devil in face of Court, the Court altho the said expression be unbecoming the chair, yet considering the same appeared to be vented out of a jocose manner and not out of any bad design, they fine him in half a merk Scots and ordain him to acknowledge he was in the wrong and beg pardon.

- 19 Jan.—No procurator shall be allowed to compare before this Court and plead.

1735.

- 3 April—Agreed to press Colonel John Erskine of Carnock to pay 500 merks the price of Lawrie's Turnpike sold to him thirteen years ago.

- 3 May—The Boxmaster reported that he had gone with the letter to the Colonel's house at Culross and left the same there in regard the Colonel was from home at the time, but that they never have had any return to that letter. Agreed to raise letters of Horning and charge him thereon for payment of the said sum.

- 22 Nov.—Robert Gilchrist dealt with for tearing three or four leaves out of the Weavers' book.

1736.

- 8 Feb.—Four members fined for lending out the best mortcloth for the burial of a child under sixteen.

- 26 April—Appeal heard against a judgment of the Weaver Court..

- 22 May—Legal expenses for proceedings against Colonel Erskine to be paid.

1737.

- 10 Jan.—Case of Alexander Graham, hatter, against the tailors considered.

- 12 Feb.—Kenneth Hosock, tailor, when warning John Weir, tailor, to attend the Convener Court, said it was by the Devil's orders he was warned, and that the Convener and Weir might go be damned and that they might go to hell. He pled he was in drink and was fined 40 sh. Scots and to beg the Convener's pardon.

- 30 April—The money lately recovered from Colonel Erskine to be lent out.  
 The Fleshers authorised to borrow 100 merks Scots from the Incorporation or Society of Cordners in the Abbey of Cambuskenneth, to whom the Fleshers already owe 100 merks Scots.

- 12 Oct.—Agreed that no Convener continue in office longer than two years.

- 21 Nov.—A hammerman fined for calling the Convener a speaking beast.  
 Two Acts of the Weaver Court confirmed.

1739.

- 29 Mar.—Considered a remit from the Town Council in appeal by the Deacon of the Cordiners against a decision of the Convener Court. Witnesses examined on oath.

- 21 May—Two Cordiners and two members of the Convener Court not Cordiners appointed to be judges of the outgiving and expending of the Cordiner Trade's money.

- 15 Sept.—Agreed to limit the expense of the Trades' dinner at going the marches, and of their dinner with the Magistrates and Council on the day of the Election, and of the Convener's farewell dinner before the election.

1740.

- 9 Feb.—Approved of an Act of the Tailors anent their orphans.

Received a Petition from John Corse, Sadler, and George Mill, Hookmaker, in name of the Tradesmen of the Royal Burgh of Forress, setting forth the hardships they labour under through not being incorporate and the discouragement they have met from their Magistrates, the Court extremely sympathise with their brethren in Forress, advise them to apply to the Royal Burghs and to raise a Declarator or other process before the Court of Session.

23 Feb.—Refused to confirm an Act of the Cordiners as to their entry money, as the Cordiners should have reserved the liberty of lowering or raising their entries, and it is unreasonable any member of any trade should be hindered from taking what number of apprentices he sees proper.

23 Aug.—Approved of the Fleshers selling their heritage and part of their gate penny for payment of their debt.

1741.

28 Mar.—George Balfour, Officer, to be furnished with a pair of shoes.

1742.

26 June—Alexander Græme, hatter, fined for abusive expressions to the Deacon of the Tailors.

1743.

6 July—Alexander Græme signs a promise to behave in a Christian and brotherly way to the Deacon.

24 Dec.—Alexander Græme extruded from the Tailors till he find sufficient caution for his future behaviour.

1744.

28 June—Find that a Shoemaker encroaches on the privileges of the Hammermen by making scabards to swords.

1746.

4 Sept.—£12 Scots given to the widow of a Deacon.

1747.

10 Jan.—Objection taken to the Convener Court meeting in the fore Tolbooth. Explained that the Court has been in use of

meeting anywhere within the burgh on their ordinary business, though at Elections they went to the Hills where the whole Trades meet, as a house could not contain them.

23 May—Managers appointed to the Hammermen as their affairs are gone into the utmost disorder.

1748.

29 Sept.—Appoint the young men of the several Trades to meet the Lords now and in April as usual.

1750.

19 June—A Baker forbidden to employ persons as workmen who have never served to the trade.

1751.

19 Jan.—Complaint of an apprentice Cordner that his master maltreats him and puts him to lie in ane out house wanting the roof.

23 Feb.—Minute as to the need of a new meeting place, the almshouse of Robert Spittal being now altogether unfit for the reception of any number of persons whatever and being a most unfit place for meetings because of its lying out of the way and being a rugged and dirty place, agreed to build a new house at the head of the Hospital Yeard without the hedge of the yard formerly bestowed on the archers and affords a walk at present.

2 Mar.—The Almshouse sold to Patrick Stevenson, merchant for £28 12s Sterling.

23 Mar.—Arrangements completed for building of new Trades House.

5 Oct.—Agreed to accept £5 Sterling from the Free and Accepted Masons of Stirling Kilwinning for the privilege of holding their Lodges in the new Trades House.

27 Nov.—Agreed to accept £7 from the Maltmen for liberty to meet in the Trades House lying in the Nether Hospital yard head.

1752.

16 Mar.—The officer to be paid £6 Scots yearly.

29 Aug.—Seats to be got for the new house.

1755.  
10 April.—The whole newly entered men of the Seven Trades to go to the town's marches annually to meet the Lords, who now come to the town twice a year.
- 30 Aug.—As the office of Rector to the Grammar School is not yet supplied, recommend to the Council that the school wages ought to be augmented to 2s per quarter.
1756.  
7 June.—The widow of a baker forbidden to take an apprentice, but allowed to employ journeymen.
1760.  
2 Jan.—A Preses chosen to act as Convener till Michaelmas in place of the Convener now deceased.
1765.  
23 Mar.—Five members appointed to meet with the Fleshers to endeavour to clear up their accounts.
1766.  
18 Aug.—Dispute as to the Tailors' finances.
1769.  
18 Nov.—The Maltmen and Mechanics asked what they will give to the flooring of the house.
1773.  
14 Sept.—There being an equality of votes in the election of Deacon of the Cordiners, the point decided by the Convener Court by the throwing of dice.
1774.  
1 Jan.—The Water Scheme reported on.  
13 Aug.—Disapprove of a barber being entered as a Skinner.
1775.  
16 Oct.—The Mechanics, Maltmen and Kilwinning Lodge contribute to the repair of the Trades House.
1778.  
7 Dec.—Recommend the Town Council to purchase the Longrack fishings for Allan's Hospital.
1779.  
2 Sept.—Agreed to give John Paterson a garret room at the back of the Hospital House in the Back Row.

1781.  
8 Sept.—Approve of obtaining an additional supply of water for the burgh from the rising grounds of Touchadam or Touch.
1782.  
14 Dec.—A Preses chosen to act as Convener till Michaelmas in place of the Convener now deceased.
1783.  
15 Jan.—A Committee appointed to consider a Scheme for the relief of the widows.  
23 Dec.—A cushion covered with blue velvet with tassels erected before the Convener's chair in the church.
1784.  
12 April.—A new entrant to the Skinners ordained to serve as officer to that trade for one year in conformity to the Byelaws of the trade.  
30 Sept.—A series of disputes as to the election of Deacons and office-bearers.
1785.  
7 Sept.—Country members not to be allowed to vote at elections.
1786.  
22 April.—The Trades Officer to ring the town bell. John Finlay, teacher of music from the College Band of Glasgow to have the use of the Trades Hall for one month for the purpose of teaching music between seven and nine in the evening, paying a shilling per week and paying all damages that shall be done to the house by him or those he teaches.  
1 July.—Defer consideration of the contributions of the respective Trades for building the Writing and English Schools. Wrights allowed to put up two benches in the Trades Hall while they are building the schools.
1787.  
6 Mar.—The affairs of the Skinners taken under the care of the Convener Court.
1788.  
24 Nov.—No member of the trades to be admitted unless he is first admitted burgess by the Town Council.



1789.  
27 April.—No trade to be lawfully warned unless on twelve hours' previous notice.

1790.  
23 Feb.—The Omnigatherum allowed the use of the Trades Hall.

23 Nov.—Inquiry into Indentures nominally for five but really for four years, and the practice of paying apprentices journeyman's wages before their Indentures are out.

1792.  
26 July.—Alleged incroachment on Allan's Hospital property by the building of the new weigh house and Mr. Wingate's dwelling above it.

29 Sept.—Agreed to engross in Minute Book Act of Town Council of 5 February, 1791, as to extending the Back Walk to the port.

1793.  
26 Feb.—Complaint by John Fisher as to the ill treatment and victuals given to his son, Daniel, found to be groundless, and as the boy has been taken away from the hospital by his father he is not to be received back.

1795.  
24 Dec.—Daniel Fisher appointed to Adamson's Bursary, having given in a certificate by Doctor Doig as to his proficiency at the Grammar School.

1796.  
1 Mar.—Agreed to get a new chair.  
25 April.—Agreed to accept the use of a meal ginel procured by the Weavers during the present dearth and to place it in the hall.

11 Oct.—Recommend the Town Council to sell the planting on the side of the road to Cambusbarron.

1798.  
15 Nov.—Recommend the Patrons of Allan's Hospital to let the second flat of the new schoolhouse if the upper flat and garrets accommodated the teacher and his family and the Hospital Boys.

1799.  
10 Jan.—The use of the hall given to Captain M'Gregor of the Clan Alpin Fencibles, and to Captain Colin Campbell of the Perthshire Royal Militia.

11 May—Thanks voted to Major Mayne and the Stirling Royal Volunteers who prevented the bad effects of a riotous mob on the streets of this burgh on Friday the third of this month.

1800.  
27 Feb.—Recommend the Patrons to sell the house belonging to Spittal's Hospital in Spittal Street.

1801.  
19 Feb.—The boys boarded with their parents on account of the dearth of provisions.

2 April.—The first and second seats in the West Church let.

1802.  
24 Mar.—The builders of the house of Worship in the adjoining garden allowed an entry by the entry to the Tradeshall for a yearly feuduty of five shillings, and that they make a sufficient door and replace the marble inscription and the other stone where the Convener Court shall think proper.

15 Dec.—Allow Mr. Willis the use of the Hall gratis for the examination of his congregation two days in the week from 11 till 2 o'clock for a month or five weeks.  
Allow Mr. Tailor the use of the hall for teaching in the evenings for half a guinea a month.

1803.  
27 Feb.—The Religious Society allowed to hold their meetings in the hall for 12s 6d per month.  
The Trades' Green let at a guinea of rent.

1808.  
1 Aug.—The seats in the East Church belonging to the Trades let by roup for five years.

1814.  
17 Mar.—The Corn Bill opposed.

1815.

2 May.—Object to delay in finishing the New Market and in commencing the house and steeple where the present Meal-market stands.

3 Nov.—Action of Suspension in the Court of Session against the election of James Eadie as Deacon of the Tailors. Interlocutors by Lord Pitmilley and Lord Reston.

1816.

4 Oct.—Respecting the demission of Mr. M'Laurin one of the English teachers, recommend the Magistrates to prefer a teacher who follows the old system to succeed Mr. M'Laurin.

1817.

29 Aug.—Mr. William Bruce's Society to have the use of the hall for their worship on Sundays and on the evenings of Wednesday after seven o'clock.  
A girl to be taught sewing at the expense of the Hospital.

1818.

10 Nov.—The trades' loft in the East Church to be advertised to let.

1819.

29 Jan.—The several trades subscribe to assist the Burgesses of Aberdeen to resist a Crown Warrant, and the Hammermen of Leith in an action against them.

1821.

23 Oct.—A cripple girl to be transferred from Mr. Rae's school to Mr. M'Dougal's school for writing.

1822.

24 Dec.—Considering the alarm in the country that there exists a practice of lifting new buried dead, a palpable instance of which has lately happened in the churchyard of Stirling, and that the use of mortsafes cannot be obtained by many, recommend that a scheme be established for a permanent watch of the churchyard.

1823.

24 Oct.—Mr. Shaw's school taught in the hall.

1824.

5 June—Commemoration of John Allan.

This being the return of the day after a lapse of one hundred years on which John Allan made his donation, the boys maintained by the Hospital and the other boys and girls who receive books and education assembled in the school-rooms as directed by the Committee appointed at last Court, and were conducted by their teachers to the Provost's house at the farther end of Skinner Street, where they were received by the Magistrates, Council, and respective Trades, and the whole formed a regular procession to the Church preceded by a band of music. The Revd. Dor. Small one of the Patrons preached a suitable sermon, after which the children were conducted to the Guildhall and received a collation superintended by their parents, patrons, teachers, and many others taking deep interest in them and in the fete. And they being dismissed the magistrates, council, and friends were regaled in the lower Guildhall by an entertainment served up in suitable style for the occasion. The members of the Seven Trades assembled severally and passed the afternoon in conviviality and every mark of regard for the memory of the donor.

22 Sept.—The opinion of counsel to be taken concerning the claims of persons pretending to be John Allan's friends. Reported that the Court of Session had repelled the claim of a local militia soldier to exercise the freedom of the shoemakers within the burgh of Dumbarton.

1825.

1 April—A Committee appointed to examine at the different schools the lists of boys and girls receiving books and education at the expense of Allan's Hospital.

19 Nov.—Recommend that all the children on Allan's Hospital be educated by Mr. Rae, teacher, for £56 in the year.

1826.  
10 Aug.—Resignation of Mrs. Cecilia Main, teacher of sewing, etc., to the girls. Recommend the appointment of Marion Bruce.
1827.  
17 Jan.—The Court approve of the box the Clerk has produced for the Court Books.  
21 Mar.—General Graham, Stirling Castle, having borrowed the small northmost carpet in the Trades Loft in the West Church in 1817 and failed to return it, resolved not to insist farther on the subject.  
5 Oct.—Committee to inspect the Convener Court box in which is contained the blue blanket and sash and papers.
1828.  
4 Jan.—A new box to be got immediately.
1829.  
3 Oct.—Reported that a handsome mahogany box has been made by John Fisher and that the brass plate of the old box is preserved and placed on the new. Each trade to pay twelve shillings. Certain papers deposited in the box also the blue blanket and sash.
1830.  
28 July—Resolved to commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of the gift of Robert Spittal by processing with the Magistrates and Town Council.  
2 Dec.—Agreed to petition both Houses of Parliament on the subject of Parliamentary Burgh Reform, the Petition to the Commons to be presented by Mr. Johnstone and the one to the House of Lords by Lord Brougham, the Lord Chancellor.
1831.  
16 Mar.—Resolution in support of Parliamentary Reform.  
21 Sept.—Agreed to abandon the custom of the Convener's Concert, also of dining at the meeting of the Lords.  
A full account given of the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new bridge on 8th inst.

1832.  
11 July—The Convener Court green used for the erection of a Cholera Hospital.  
26 Sept.—The election of office-bearers held in the King's Arms Tavern on account of cholera.
1833.  
5 Mar.—Meetings to consider the Burgh Reform Bill.  
2 and 5 April Do.  
18 Sept.—Meetings resumed in the Trades Hall.  
23 Sept.—As the Seven Deacons will be deprived of their seats in the Town Council owing to the Reform Act, which comes into operation on the first Tuesday of November, and will not have sitting rooms in the Magistrates' Gallery in the East Church, resolved to reserve the front loft seat belonging to the Trades. The Court resolve that a remonstrance of their deprivations be submitted to His Majesty's Commissioners.
1834.  
13 Sept.—Agreed to petition Parliament for the amendment of the Reform Act.
1837.  
8 Mar.—Hall occupied as a school house by D. Clark, teacher.  
17 April—The boys belonging to Allan's Hospital to have a free pleasure sail to Newhaven and back on the offer of the Stirling Steam Boat Company.
1838.  
25 June—Agreed to take part in the procession at laying the foundation stone of the new Corn Market, the Blue Blanket to be carried before the Convener, and the trades' colours to be carried at the head of the respective crafts.
1840.  
5 Aug.—Trades Hall let to the Stirling and Bannockburn Caledonian Society.  
14 Dec.—The use of the Hall granted to the Society of Christian Unitarians, and also to the "Tea-Tottlers" of Stirling.
1842.  
5 Sept.—Addresses to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert adopted, on the occasion of their visit to Stirling on 13th inst.

1843.  
25 Oct.—Protest against the Town Council calling Ministers to the Second and Third Charges without consulting the Trades.
1844.  
18 Mar.—Considered proposal to erect baths at St. Ninians Well Green.
1845.  
9 April—Use of Hall on Sundays granted to the Baptist Congregation.
1846.  
31 Mar.—Considered the depredations committed on the wall, etc., of the Hall by the scholars of the Stirling and Bannockburn Caledonian Society, and agreed to meet a Committee of the Highland Society.
- 10 July—Agreed to take part in the procession at laying the foundation stone of the bridge of the Scottish Central Railway Company across the Forth.  
Address to be sent to Sir Robert Peel on the passing of the Corn Bill.
1848.  
20 Jan.—Object to a cemetery at Laurelhill as it would interfere with the feuing of Southfield.
1853.  
21 May—A subscription being asked from the Convener Court towards the erection of the Stirling Academy, agreed to recommend a subscription to be given from Spittal's and Allan's Hospitals.
1854.  
20 Mar.—As there is no Skinner resident in Stirling agreed to take the interim management of that Incorporation.
- 28 July—Agreed to walk in procession at laying the foundation stone of the High School on 3rd August, and to engage the Dunblane band which will attend for a less sum than the Stirling Flute Band.
1855.  
5 Sept.—Considered a proposal from the High School Committee to give up the Trades Hall and ground in exchange for a new hall to be provided under a hall to be erected at the High School.
- 11 Sept.—Proposals as to new Hall declined.

1856.  
23 June—Agreed to walk at the meeting regarding the Wallace Monument except the Shoemakers, who declined.
1861.  
23 May—Agreed to walk in procession at the laying of the foundation stone of the Wallace Monument on 24th June.
1863.  
23 Feb.—Resolved to walk in procession on marriage of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales on 10th March.
1867.  
3 Oct.—Alterations on the East Church approved on condition that certain pews are allotted to them in place of their seats in the gallery which is to be removed.
1870.  
8 Aug.—Bailie George Christie's Scheme for the future Administration of the Hospitals, Mortifications, etc., in Stirling, considered and criticised.

