

A Short History of the Incorporation of Cordiners in Glasgow



By
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Incorporation of Cordiners

Edited and additional material
by
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Foreword

The vast majority of this short history was written by Joyce Steele and Christine Linnell with Craig Bryce editing and adding material which had been discovered in the archives and other sources.

This short history is not meant to be a definitive history of the Incorporation as at the time of editing, another much more extensive book had been commissioned by the Master Court of the Incorporation. The aim of this book was to act as a stopgap until the final book could be produced.

For those interested in reading in more depths about the Incorporation's history, I would draw your attention to the excellent book "*History of Cordiners in Glasgow*", which was written in 1883 by Ex Deacon William Campbell of the Incorporation. This book is available in the Trades House Library or via the internet at the Trades House Digital Library and can be downloaded by using the following link:
https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/history_of_incorporation_of_cordiners.pdf

Joyce and Christine carried out extensive research into the Craft and its origins and prior to the Craft being Incorporated. Much of this wonderful material has had to be removed to create a more concise history until the final version can be produced.

Some of a manuscript prepared in 2008 by Joyce Steele, detailing a modern version of the history of the Cordiners and written at their request, has been incorporated but again, at the risk of 'dumbing-down', much of her research has been omitted. Christine Linnell reduced the material so well researched by Joyce and added new and interesting information concerning the Incorporation of Cordiners and lastly, Craig R. Bryce was asked to edit both and add new material, some of which has come to light in the archives of the Trades House held in the Trades Hall and previously unknown. This booklet is intended as a stopgap which will be available on the internet until the definitive book is completed.

Second, what has resulted in the form of this booklet, is an overview of both Trade Guilds in general, and the Glasgow Cordiners in particular: Cordiners being Barkers, Tanners, Curriers and Shoemakers, taking their name from the best available leather which came from Cordova in the medieval period.

The Cordiners' are fortunate in having access to many remaining records of the past: existing Minute books cover periods from 1550-1682, 1759-1956 and from 1993. While these are excellent resources for research, the reader is completely at the mercy of the Clerk and many details have been tantalisingly left out. The Minutes very rarely cover aspects such as how and when traditions began; the location of the Cordiners' possessions, or what actually took place at a "upset" dinner (upset often spelt as Wpset from the old Scots). William Campbell's 1883 account, as the first Cordiners' History, does not fill such gaps although his book is lengthy and authoritative. There are also original Seals of Cause, account books and membership records dating from the early nineteenth century, held at the Mitchell Library archive.

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Chapter 1

Introduction:

The origins of the Cordiners in Glasgow are obscure, but it must be assumed that there were leather-workers and in particular, shoemakers producing goods for the inhabitants of Glasgow from the very early days; although whether they were in any way regulated or formed any sort of grouping is not known.

According to “The Cronikils of Scotland”,¹ it was necessary for James I in 1431, to persuade “*mony nobill Craftsmen out of France, Flandiers, and other parties*” to come to Scotland and replace the Scottish craftsmen who had been slain in the prolonged wars with England. Again, how many arrived, particularly in Glasgow, is a matter of speculation, although some evidence might be sought in such surnames as “Fleming” or “Crawford”, neither of which appear in the early lists of office-bearers within the Cordiners. Mungo Hamilton (spelt variously Hammiltoun and Hammiltone) would seem to be the first Deacon with any pretensions to a Fleming name and as he held that office from 1596-1598, this might seem a little late for the King’s invasion of foreign labour, although Mungo may have been a descendent of incoming Flemings or there may have been others who did not appear on the Craft lists.

An Act of the Scottish Parliament in 1424 directed all crafts in burghs to choose a “heid man” or deacon to lead them, which possibly suggests that guilds may have been in existence for a while by that time and that, should the need arise, the government were keen to communicate with an elected spokesman rather than a group of uncontrolled craftsmen. Trades and merchants were almost certainly becoming more organised by this time and in 1450, James II renewed the powers of the Bishops of Glasgow in the city, which included appointing magistrates, the regulation of trades and the right to incorporate crafts. The incorporation of crafts was achieved by the issuing of a seal of cause or letter of Guildry, and none appear to have been granted in Glasgow until that of the Skinners in 1516.

The Cordiners and Barkers of Glasgow were first recognised by grant of the Provost, Bailies, Council and Community, dated 27th February, 1558-1559, with consent of Archbishop James Beaton. They obtained another grant on 27th June 1569, after the Reformation.

Some in the Craft, through their first historian, Deacon Wm. Campbell, used to lay claim to legal recognition of the Cordiners and Barkers as early as 27th June 1460, by a ratification of the Provost, Bailies, Council and Community on that date of certain Regulations of their Craft. The date 27th June however, is ominous - the same date as their second Charter - and on reference to the petitioners' names we find them to be exactly the same, with a few omissions and misspellings, as the names of the petitioners to the Town Council for their second Charter of 1569.

A Royal Charter was granted by King George V. in 1918.

But where did the term Cordiner come from? The name originated in Spain as a derivation of the name of the city of Cordoba, which was famous for the production of cordouan leather, called cordwain in England. To this day the Worshipful Company of Cordwainers in London still carry on the heritage and traditions of the Craft, much like we do in Glasgow. Historically, there was a distinction between a cordiner, who

¹ Fordun

made luxury shoes, boots, and other leather items out of the finest leathers, and a cobbler, who repaired them. the cordiner made quality footwear, as well as other leather goods, or worked with “new leather”; whilst the cobbler worked only with “old leather” or merely repaired the worn finished article. Cobblers were rarely as wealthy or as influential as cordiners and throughout the Middle Ages, laws were regularly enacted prohibiting cobblers from making new shoes. The term “souter” or shoemaker was used alongside cordiner in Scotland, a term that will be remembered from Robert Burns’s *Tam o’Shanter*, in which Tam’s friend is Souter Johnnie.

The Burgh Records of Glasgow highlights some other work that was carried out by the Cordiners such as: In January 1589/90 Johnne Neill, Cordiner was made a Burgess and Guild brother without charge, for supplying six good and sufficient footballs for the town or else pay 20 shillings as the price instead. On 1st October 1744 Robert Freebairn, cordiner, was paid £4 12s. 2d. sterling for dressing and mending the leather buckets and the pipes of the fire machines. The repair of leather pipes and buckets appears quite frequently in the records and always with reference to the Cordiners.



As late as 1850, most shoes were made on straight lasts, there being no difference between the right and the left shoe and breaking in a new pair of shoes was far from easy. Of course, the wealthy would always have made-to-measure shoes, but for the ordinary person, there were but two widths to a size. A basic last was used to produce what was known as a "slim" shoe and when it was necessary to make a "fat" or "stout" shoe, the shoemaker placed a pad of leather over the cone of the last to create the additional foot room needed. However, in 1828, a foreman called Blanchard at the

Springfield Armoury in Massachusetts developed a duplicating lathe for the manufacture of gun stocks. A Philadelphia shoemaker saw that the lathe could be used to produce shoe lasts and soon discovered that, by reversing the cam which guided the cutter, a mirror image could be produced. By 1841 the United States military was using left-and-right shoes, as was the rest of the world within a few decades.

And so, to modern times, where leather may be not the only material used for footwear, but leather is still crafted into a variety of highly-sought after and decorative items – the craftspeople of today may no longer be widely-known as Cordiners or even Cordwainers, but they certainly continue the rich heritage and follow in the footsteps of their talented and innovative forebears.

Saint Crispin

Religion ran through every aspect of medieval life and so it is not surprising that it should play a big part in the history of the Cordiners. On election to the Cordiners, all masters had to swear an oath to uphold the statutes of the guild, and this contained a

strong religious element. This oath was usually administered by the Deacon of the Cordiners.

The Cordiners paid for the upkeep of St. Crispin's altar in Glasgow Cathedral, usually visiting on the Saint's Day and providing money for candles and the recital of masses for the dead. The maintenance of altars by the Incorporations in Glasgow ceased with the introduction of Protestantism and the abolition of all things "Roman Catholic". It was common for a member of the Cordiners who had insulted his Deacon or committed some other infringement of the Cordiners rules to be fined and having to pay a pound of wax for the Saint's Altar.

Guilds

The Incorporation of Cordiners was an organized group of leather workers, mainly shoemakers; given official authority in Glasgow in the 15th century to regulate their trade. The reason that the Cordiners wished to become Incorporated was to protect the members of the guild from encroachment by people outside the area who were not members of the Incorporation, to ensure quality of workmanship, to arbitrate between members in dispute with one another or with another Incorporation or merchant

These were self-employed people living in the pre-industrial city of Glasgow, Masters being free and independent, with the authority to enforce the flow of trade and the supply of materials to their members. This led to a system of self-government resulting in a recognised hierarchy of worthy, elected officials in each guild, presiding for limited periods of time and enforcing strict regulations, drawn up according to the dictates of each trade, to sustain the honour and prosperity of its members. Two other fundamental characteristics of the original guilds were the ever-important work of charity funded by fees, fines, donations and bequests, and a deep religious commitment, which in the case of Glasgow's Cordiners was tied to the Cathedral. Taking care of its members was an important part of a guilds' responsibility, providing a very real social advantage for them; supporting elderly or infirm members, widows, and orphans of guild members, providing dowries, hospitals, funeral expenses, and a 'tramping' allowance for those needing to travel to find work; they also arranged social occasions and festivals for their members. An example of the methods of protecting the members of the Incorporation of Cordiners can be found in the Minutes of the Trades' House for June 1735, when "*Archibald Scott the Deacon of the Cordiners complained about the encroachment of outentown Cordiners and unfreemen in the burgh. Ruling: The House appointed Archibald Scott, Deacon of the Cordiners to go to Edinburgh with others to assist him to advise lawyers and to do whatever else they could to stop the encroachment.*"

Members of an Incorporation also had duties and obligations to the city. They had to pay tax for the benefit of the city and its inhabitants, they had to ward the city which meant patrolling it in times prior to the advent of the police force, they had to form the local militia in times of trouble and defend the city against invaders. This included participating in "wappinshaws" weapon shows, where they practiced with their own weapons. Deacons also had to store their weapons in the Almshouse to ensure that there were sufficient arms for their duties. An example of this can be seen in the Trades House minute of 10th August 1649: "*The said day the deikin conveyner, deikins of crafts and their counsell which for the maist pairt being present for many and good causes moveing thame it is in acted statut and ordanit be them all in ane voyce that everie new elected deikin shall give in to ye hospitall in place and sted of his muskett ane sufficient sword and belt worth the sowme of ten merkis money and*

*that everie new elect it deikine conveyer the first year of his electioun shall give in to the said hospitall in place and sted of his corsslatt ane pick and sword and ane belt.”*¹ This makes it clear that the Trades House retained the need to defend the town in times of war or threats of civil disobedience. There are numerous mentions of Deacons and Conveners delivering their arms to the Trades Hospital or Almshouse over a long period of time. The Cordienrs had special duties associated with their Craft and in October and November 1640, payment was made for providing the army in hose and shoes.

They were paid two hundred and thirty-nine pounds 12 shillings for eight score pair of shoes that was sent to the camp to the towns company and given to the Deane of Gild to lay².

To control competition between members, no-one was allowed an unfair advantage by cornering the market through the purchase of a larger supply of a commodity than required for usual production, possibly creating a shortage and thereby being able to overcharge fellow craftsmen. Finally, to ensure that supply never outstripped demand, the number of Masters and apprentices within a guild was firmly controlled; during difficult economic times the number of Masters was often kept deliberately low. Members who broke the rules might be fined, beaten, or expelled from their guild.

Of all these functions it is the charitable work which predominates today; the focus on religion having been replaced by traditions upheld by individual Incorporations, with their different social occasions and regular meetings of officiating members.
















Incorporations do not have a single equivalent body today as they were a cross between a Trade Union and an Employers Federation. The Master Court of the Incorporations set wages and hours of working and no other member of the Incorporation could pay a higher wage or allow their employees to work less hours without receiving a fine or other form of punishment. Long before the welfare state was even thought about, the Incorporations paid money to widows and looked after decrepit tradesmen when they were no longer able to work.

Glasgow had guilds of both tradesmen and merchants. There are, fourteen Trades' Guilds, known collectively as the Trades' House which has its own headquarters, designed by Robert Adam in 1791, in Glassford Street in the centre of the city.

These are the:

¹ Harry Lumsden's Records of the Trades House of Glasgow 1605 - 1678. Page

² Burgh Records of Glasgow 1573 to 1642, page 424.

			
Hammermen Incorporated 1536			Tailors Incorporated 1527
	Trades' House of Glasgow Incorporated 1604		
Cordiners Incorporated 1558			Maltmen Incorporated 1605
			
Weavers Incorporated 1528	Bakers Incorporated 1556	Skinners Incorporated 1516	Wrights Incorporated 1600
			
Coopers Incorporated 1569	Fleshers Incorporated 1580	Masons Incorporated 1551	Gardeners Incorporated 1690
			
	Barbers Incorporated 1656	Bonnetmakers & Dyers Incorporated 1760	



Together, and individually, they elect officers annually for each Guild and for the Trades' House, headed by the Deacon Convener of the Trades. In their work today, the Crafts of the Trades' House act as charitable foundations for the common good, supporting worthy causes such as schools, hospitals, children, and the elderly. The Merchants' House also has a long venerable history with its first Constitution being granted in 1605; consisting of wealthy merchants in the past, it continues to operate today much in the same way as the Trades' House.

The members of the Cordiners were also among those selected to the leets to become Bailies and in 1574 James Braidwod, Cordiner was put forward for this auspicious role. Unfortunately, he did not achieve the position in 1574 but in 1580 he was chosen to sit on the Town Counsel.

There are also instances of discipline recorded in the Burgh Records which does not show everyone in the Incorporation of Cordiners in a good light an example of this comes from 1574, when Thomas Craig, cordiner, was found in the wrong for non-comperance; and also for the transporting of the gallows at his own hand furth of the auld accustomat place so near hand the town; and is ordained to repone the same again³. And again, on 25th June 1574, Johnie Gilmour, cordiner, was found in the wrong and amerchiament of court in breaking of the statutes made regarding the peat bog of auld⁴. The prison system does not appear to have been great as on 13th September 1605, Thomas Neill, cordiner, was found in the wrong and amercement of court, of his own confession, for coming out of ward, being wardet therein, and for coming down the tollbooth stair with one drawn dagger and for wounding and bleeding of John Towris upon the head to the great effusion of his blood⁵.

Masters, Journeymen and Apprentices:

Membership of the Incorporation of Cordiners was highly sought after but neither easy nor quick to achieve, membership would eventually lead to higher social status and power within the community, and it involved three stages:

1. An apprentice - A male teenager who went to live and train with a Master and his family, he would be tied to him for a period of between five to nine years. His parents paid for the apprenticeship so the boy would be unpaid, not allowed to marry whilst serving his apprenticeship, and would learn only the most basic techniques until he was trusted by his peers to keep the secrets of his chosen trade, the so-called *mysteries*.⁶ Upon completion of an apprenticeship and production of a qualifying piece of work, called an "Essay", an apprentice became a craftsman or journeyman and would as such be entitled to a salary.
2. A journeyman - would be given papers which entitled him to travel to other towns and work for other Masters; such journeys could span large parts of Europe and were an unofficial way of communicating new methods, techniques, and designs. Like journey, the distance that could be travelled in a day, the title journeyman derives from the French words for 'day', *jour* and *journée*, from which came the

³ Burgh Records of Glasgow 1573 to 1642, page 7.

⁴ Burgh Records of Glasgow 1573 to 1642, page 18.

⁵ Burgh Records of Glasgow 1573 to 1642, page 234.

⁶ An apprentice had to have a contract, governed by the guild, with his master. The guild made sure that both sides kept the agreement. Sometimes parents had to pay a yearly fee as well as the "entrance fee". The fees could be so many bags of flour, a couple of sheep, or a simple payment of cash.

middle English word *journei*, denoting that these craftsmen were paid by the day, thus day-labourers.

3. A Master Craftsmen - the final step for a journeyman would usually require several years of experience, the approval of all Masters of a guild, a donation of money and other goods (often omitted for sons of existing members), and the production of an exceptional piece of work, a masterpiece which would illustrate the abilities of the aspiring master craftsman and often retained by the guild, using his own tools and materials and working in his own time, which in effect meant Sundays. There was a cost to join on election, understood in the sense of a tribute or payment for the protection of the society, but as a Master they would be entitled to set up their own workshop, employ their own apprentices and journeymen, and potentially, become a wealthy burgess or even leader of their guild.

Chapter 2

Glasgow, Markets and Incorporations

Burghs and Markets



Glasgow Cathedral with Western Towers as they appeared from the Merchant Park Cemetery in 1833.

(Frontispiece to M^r Lellan's "Glasgow Cathedral.")

The early history of Glasgow is lost in the mists of time, but it is believed that in the sixth century, St Kentigern founded a church and Christian settlement on the present site of the Cathedral beside the Molendinar Burn. St Kentigern is more usually known in Glasgow by his diminutive name, Mungo or "Dear Friend", and appears in his bishop's regalia on the City's coat of arms.

The present cathedral, consecrated in 1197, was built on the site of Bishop John's church by his successor, Bishop Jocelyn.

Glasgow, then, was essentially a small settlement ruled by a bishop with the majority of its inhabitants clustered around the cathedral and the Bishop's residence. So, Glasgow was in effect a village by the side of the River Clyde and was very limited in its range; apparently occupied by the "bishop's men", who would seem to have been styled "natives" or "serfs" or "burgesses, free tenants, and vassals" in 1235.

Glasgow was created a burgh of barony in favour of Bishop Jocelyn around 1174 by the first-known charter, issued by King William the Lion, who granted "to God and St Kentigern, and to Jocelin Bishop of Glasgow, and his successors, for ever, that they shall have a burgh at Glasgow, with a weekly market upon Thursday, fully and freely with all freedoms, liberties, and customs which any of my burghs throughout the whole of my kingdom enjoy."

Glasgow Fair

A further charter, dated 27th June 1176, gave the King's absolute protection to all attending the markets at Glasgow, "in coming there, standing there, and returning thence, providing they behave themselves according to the laws and customs of my burghs and kingdom". By a third charter of 1190, King William gave, granted and confirmed to God and Saint Kentigern, to the church of Glasgow, and Jocelin the bishop of that place, and to all his successors for ever, a fair to be kept at Glasgow, and to be held every year for ever, from the octave of the Apostles Peter and Paul (6th July), for the space of eight days complete. This fair was to be held on the feast days of the patron saints of the Cathedral and is the basis of the present "Glasgow Fair" holiday.



The Town Council had on occasions to reprimand the Deacons of the Trades in Glasgow for turbulence and trouble in the town caused by their craftsmen and an example of this can be seen when on 7th July 1583, several deacons including Johnne Andirsoun, deacon of the cordineris were charged to answer to the provost and baillies for turbulence and tumult made by their craftsmen at the fair on 6th June 1583. They were to be cautionaries [in this case, a cautionary was a person who put up a sum of money ensuring the good behaviour of his members) until 16th July that no turbulence should be made by any of their members. The Deacons were unwilling to give assurances for every member, the baillies therefore ruled that anyone involved would pay a hundred pounds fine and be banished from the town. The craftsmen were also banned from carrying arms or wearing armour.

It has been argued that the erection of the Cathedral and the establishment of the University form the true origins of Glasgow; but the part played by the trades and

merchants of Glasgow in its making should not be underestimated as will be seen in the following pages.

Reformers and Destruction

The Cordiners' seal of cause of 1558 had the distinction of being the last to be granted by Archbishop James Beaton, as he fled to Paris before the wrath of reforming zeal reached Glasgow. Possibly sensing the destruction to come or merely ensuring his future comforts; he had the foresight to take with him all the cathedral treasures, the diocesan registers, and the huge collection of relics. John Knox's fiery sermon against idolatry and denouncing the mass at Perth in 1559 is credited with firing the Reformation into life, which quickly travelled to St Andrews and other places, although it took some time before the good folk of Glasgow were affected by the growing fervour.

Several Acts of Parliament were passed encouraging the demolition of the cathedrals, abbeys, and monasteries of the Roman Catholics; and the wave of destruction in the west of Scotland was rigorously executed by the Earls of Arran, Argyll and Glencairn. In 1579, the principal of the University, Mr Melville, roused a mob to destroy the cathedral church, but legend has it that the Crafts "ran immediately to arms" and threatened to bury Mr Melville under any stones that he pulled down. The leaders of the Crafts were summoned to appear before the youthful King James VI and his Council, who apparently approved and applauded their actions, saying that too many churches had been destroyed and he would not tolerate any more such abuses.



Defence of the Cathedral
By the Glasgow Trades

All items that could be described as idolatrous were removed from the cathedral and destroyed, but the fabric of the cathedral was saved with very little damage. However, some damage was caused at a later period; the church having been allowed to decline

after becoming the property of the Crown. At one point, it appears that the magistrates converted the stair and galleries into a cellar, using it to store the gallows, not wishing to meet the expense of building a shed for this purpose! These gallows were to cause problems for Thomas Craig, cordiner, who on 2nd April 1574, was found in the wrong for transporting the gallows at his own hand from the old, accustomed place near the town and was warned not to do it again. The cathedral was eventually restored by public subscription and stands today as a survivor of the Reformation.

These fourteen trades were incorporated in Glasgow and no more have been added.

Trades' House and Royal Burgh

The Cordiners are fortunate in that their Minute Books, except for three periods, are extant from 1550; it is disappointing that the Clerks did not always seem interested in writing for posterity, often noting items briefly and certainly not finding it necessary to record what may be considered momentous events. Thus, the minutes for 1605 do not mention the creation of the Trades House at all; an event that must have featured greatly in the lives of all the craftsmen. The Clerk, J Craig, would appear to have been more concerned with the nature of the donation the craft would make to the Trades Hospital for that year:

“The quhilk day the deakin and haill brethir of craft being convenit considering with thame selfis that be the act writtin on the uthersyde of this leif the hospital can nocht be cetaine of that yeirlie dewtie Thairfor and for remeid therof the deikin and brethir present for thame and thair successouris dedicattis to the craftis hospital twenty pundis money yeirlie in al tymcuming salang as pur decayit craftsmen is sustenit therin quhilk thai ordane to be payit quarterlie at foure severall termes in the yeir and the quarer comptis yeirlie as is withinwrittin to be collectit be the Deakin for the tyme for the bettir payment of the said yearly dewtie.”

The Minutes certainly make no mention of the momentous meeting of the deacons from the fourteen incorporations on 8th November 1604 in one place and the “whole body of the merchant rank” assembled in another to discuss the way forward. At first, the crafts were avid supporters of the Reformation and then backed the Presbyterian Church, while opposing the Episcopal and Papist factions, as well as resisting the magistrates and Town Council. The factionalism within the town became damaging to all parties and it was clear that the unsatisfactory situation could not continue. This polarisation of Glasgow's various ruling parties at least served to unite the various crafts into some sort of grouping for mutual support. Another consideration which may have instigated the sudden desire for the warring sections of Glasgow to come to an understanding was that the Convention of Royal Burghs was at that time urging Scottish towns and cities to adopt “the comely order of other free burghs”.

It was not until 1583, that the respective rights of the magistrates, merchants and trades in Edinburgh had been adjusted by a political constitution known as the Decreet Arbitral or Letter of Guildry produced by a commission umpired by King James VI. A similar commission was created in Glasgow and two commissioners travelled to Edinburgh to collect the Letter of Guildry, which was issued on 6th February 1605. This proved to be a lengthy document of sixty-four sections, but most importantly it allowed for the provision of the foundation of a Merchants' House presided over by a Dean of Guild and a Trades' House presided over by a Deacon Convener, both of whom had seats on the Town Council.

The names of those burgesses or freeman of Glasgow who were alive in February 1605 were entered into the city records either under merchant or trade rank and this

enrolment has continued unbroken to the present time. During that first year, there were two hundred and thirteen burgesses of merchant rank and three hundred and sixty-three burgesses of trade rank, of which there were fifty Cordiners, being third most numerous after the Tailors (sixty-five) and the Maltmen (fifty-five). It was at this time that the order of precedence of the crafts was decided, although the criteria used is unclear as it does not seem to be connected to the date of incorporation. The order has remained unchanged since that time: the Hammermen; the Tailors; the Cordiners; the Maltmen; the Weavers; the Bakers; the Skinners; the Wrights; the Coopers; the Fleshers; the Masons; the Gardeners; the Barbers and the Dyers, later including the Bonnet-makers.

It had been hoped that the unification of the fourteen trades as the Crafts Guildry or Convenery would go some way towards calming strife between the various crafts and between the crafts and merchants. However, this seems to have been a vain hope, as in the words of a local historian: "In the 16th century violent contests between merchant and trade ranks respecting the government of the city. The merchants had exercised the whole sway, monopolised the magistracy, and assumed the sole right of managing. The trades, who were more numerous, insisted on a participation of office".¹

The next milestone for Glasgow was to secure the erection of the city into a royal burgh, which was finally achieved in 1636 by a charter from Charles I; although this charter was subsequently ignored by the Parliament which, in 1641, granted the provost and Baillies the right "to hold courts, for actions and service of brieves". It has been argued that the King's charter erected Glasgow into a royal burgh, which was then subsequently ratified by Parliament in 1641.

1568 and the Battle of Langside

On 13th May 1568, Mary Queen of Scots fought her last battle at Langside and the Cordiners fought there on the side of the Regent. It was at after the Battle of Langside that the Regent, after the thanksgiving service, was entertained by the Magistrates and a great many of the Town Council very splendidly, suitable to his quality; at which time he expressed himself very affectionately towards the city. And well he might, for the city had supported the army; the bakers specially distinguishing themselves by supplying all the bread required. The "baxters" did not lose anything by their generosity; on the contrary, they, by Matthew Fauside, the Deacon of their Incorporation, a very judicious projecting man, obtained from the Regent a gift of the Archbishop's mill on the Kelvin, with the land attached to it. Others of the Incorporations were also benefited. The city's zeal in the Regent's cause turned out a very good investment.²

Bishops Wars

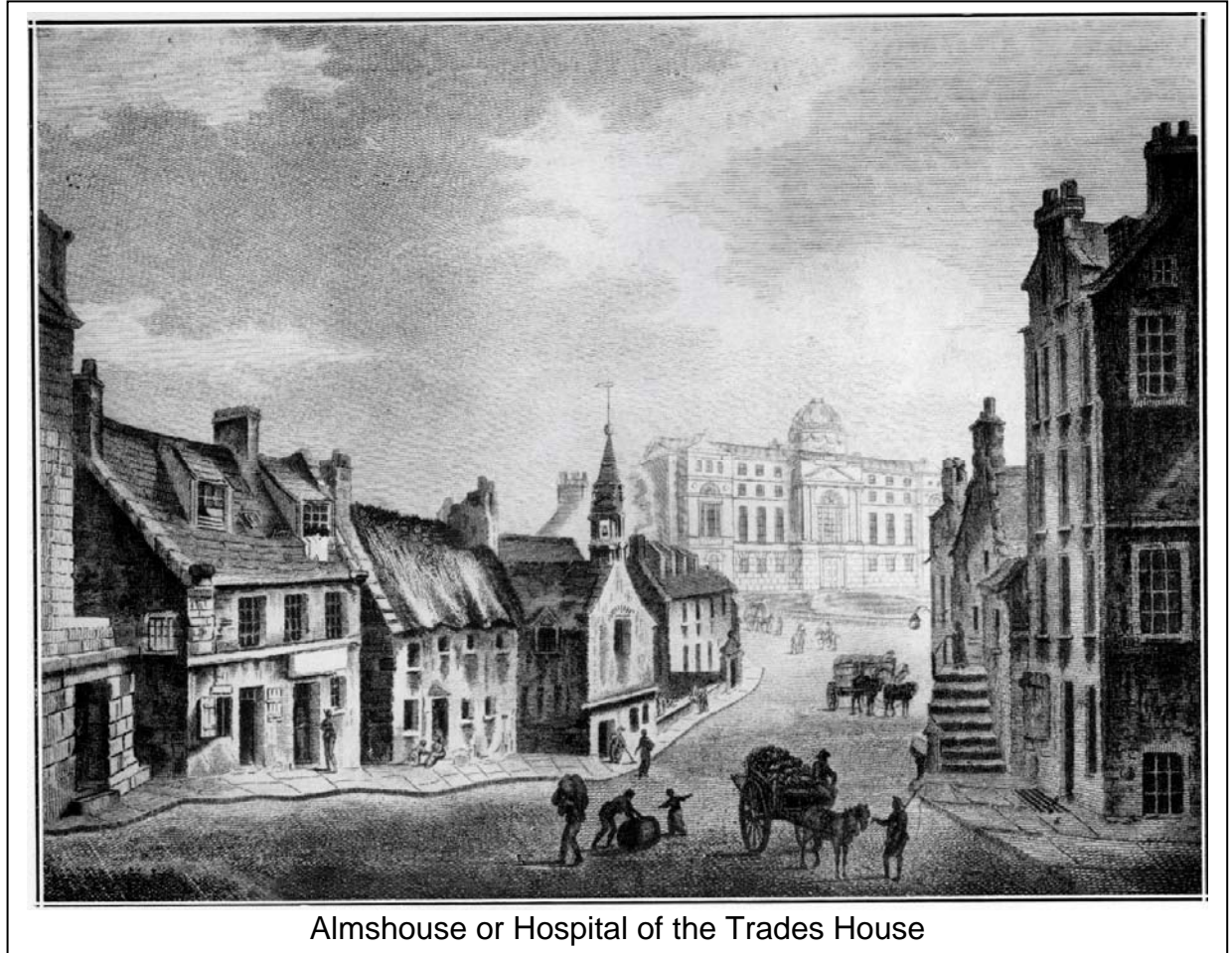
In April 1639, the city divided into eight quarters, and captains were appointed for training inhabitants to handle arms, there were fifty men sent to the borders. In June 1639, John Andelson, cordiner, was appointed captain for another company to be sent out and on 19th June 1639 there was disbursements for Captain Andelson's company and for swan's feathers. This was part of the Bishop's Wars and consisted of a dispute over the governance of the Church of Scotland that began in the 1580s and came to a head when Charles I tried to impose uniform practice on the Church of Scotland and Church of England in 1637. These impositions were opposed by most Scots who preferred Presbyterian Church Governance and signatories were known as

¹ M'Ure

² Alexander Malcolm Scott, *The Battle of Langside*, 1885, Page 55.

Covenanters. After the Covenanters took control of government following the 1639 war, they passed a series of acts that amounted to a constitutional revolution, confirmed by victory in 1640.

From Cromwell to Bonnie Prince Charlie



Almshouse or Hospital of the Trades House

For many years, the Deacons of the 14 Incorporations had been storing their weapons in the Almshouse and a considerable number were amassed in 1652 when the House was concerned about invasion from England and that they might seize the arms which they had gathered over the years. Rather than the Deacons giving in a sword and belt, it was agreed that they would pay £8, and every new Deacon Convenor should pay £12.³

In 1650, Cromwell entered Scotland with an army of sixteen thousand men; after defeating the Scottish army at Dunbar and taking possession of Edinburgh, he marched to Glasgow.

Fortunately, his presence does not seem to have antagonised the citizens of Glasgow, quite as much as it did in other Scottish locations. There is a story concerning a shoemaker, who had been born and bred in England, although his father had been one of James VI's Scottish footmen. He had settled in Glasgow on the death of his father and Cromwell, spotting him in the crowd during a service at the cathedral, had him brought to him, it transpired that they had grown up together. The shoemaker had noticed that one of the officers had whispered something to Cromwell during the

³ Lumsden ~ Minutes of the Trades House, February 1652 ~ page 298.

sermon and asked what he had said. "He proposed," said Cromwell, "to pull forth the minister by the ears; and I answered that the preacher was one fool and he another."

In 1657, Cromwell deferred the election of the magistrates in Glasgow, causing renewed difficulties for the Council. It was resolved by Mary, Duchess of Lennox, who was exiled in Paris, taking the responsibility for the appointment of the Provost. This apparent anomaly arose from the ownership of land and recalled the overlordship of the Archbishops of Glasgow before the flight of Archbishop Beaton a century earlier. Thus, Glasgow's status as a royal burgh was once again in question.

During this period, Glasgow was visited by far less welcome guests even than Cromwell: plague, famine, and fire. Periodic episodes of plague were not uncommon during the Middle Ages due to the nature of the crowded housing and generally unsanitary conditions, coupled with lack of effective medication. It is estimated that some 30,000 people died of the plague in Scotland between 1645 and 1649, and the spread was no doubt aided by the seemingly continual movement of armies at that time. Despite the ravages of the plague in 1645-46, it has been calculated that Glasgow had a population of between five thousand and seven thousand five hundred in 1600, rising to some twelve thousand in 1680.

Famine caused by failing crops and fire that destroyed "the best of the buildings, with a third part of this town, and almost all the shops and warehouses, with the residences of the merchants."¹ also arrived to upset the lives of the good folk of Glasgow. Raging fires destroyed large parts of the city in 1600, 1652 and 1677; while in 1712, a great flood, raised the water level by nearly 20 feet, devastating parts of Bridgegate and Saltmarket and the lower parts of the city. It is curious, then, that the various Clerks of the Cordiners chose to record nothing about any of these calamities in the minutes; particularly as craftsmen must have been affected in some way. Possibly the Cordiners' records were taken away to protect from the possibility of infection by plague as occurred during the outbreak in Stirling in 1645 when the papers of the town were taken away from the Tolbooth and stored in chests. However, as "Gilbert Marshel, notarie" chose not to record any of these misfortunes or the Cordiners' reaction to calamity in his minutes, the reader can only speculate. With the Coronavirus raging in Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom, one must wonder how much discussion has taken place at Master Courts on this terrible topic. Certainly, the Spanish Flu does not have any mentions in the Trades House Minutes for the period.

Union of Crowns 1706

The eighteenth century saw the proposed Union between Scotland and England, which was extremely unpopular, and the people of Glasgow were incensed enough to riot on several occasions. So incensed, in fact, that John Stevenson, the Deacon of the Cordiners was sent with John Bowman, Dean of Guild and Robert Scott, Deacon of the Tailors, to present an address before the Parliament in Edinburgh voicing the concerns of Glasgow and that address is recorded in the minutes of the Parliament for 17th November 1706. During the rioting in Glasgow, it was necessary for the Provost to hide in a folding bedstead and make a somewhat undignified escape to Edinburgh; while the rioters disarmed the town-guard and set prisoners free. However, when troops were eventually despatched towards Glasgow, the rioters yielded and gave up their arms to the deacons of the crafts, as "the only constituted authorities left in the city"²

¹ Clelland's Annals sited in Crawford 1858: 77

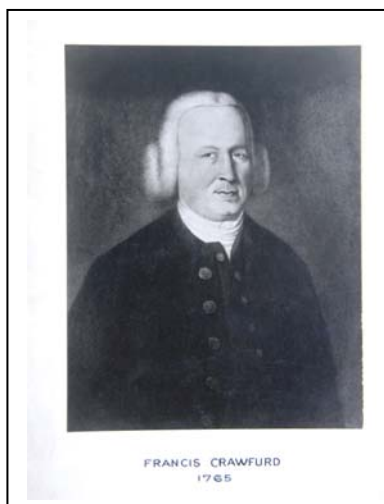
² Crawford 1858:100

1715 Rebellion

In consequence to the threat from the Jacobites, the citizens of Glasgow raised and equipped a regiment of 600 men in support of the House of Hanover and the reformed Government. They fortified Glasgow and then marched to Stirling, where they took care of the Castle and Town, and guarded the bridge, whilst the King's Troops took part in the battle of Sherrifmoor on 13th November 1715.

After the battle, some hundreds of rebel prisoners were sent to Glasgow to keep in safe custody and to be maintained by them. The people of Glasgow loudly complained against the imposition which lasted until the rebellion was suppressed.⁴

1746 and the Battle of Falkirk



On 17th January 1746, the Royal Army was defeated by the Jacobite army at Falkirk, where the Glasgow Volunteers were sorely handled by the Highlanders.

The Glasgow Volunteers which consisted of two battalions of four hundred and fifty men each, Francis Crawford who was later a Deacon Convener carried the colours at this engagement. The Hammermen also had their own colours, and these had also been carried at the battle of Langside.⁵

The portrait shows Francis Crawford who was a member of the Incorporation of Wrights about the time that he was Deacon Convener of the Trades of Glasgow in 1765.

1746 Terms with the Jacobite Leaders

In September 1746, the House met and discussed the imminent threat of the Jacobite army. Glasgow was in no condition to resist and as in the words of the time: "*that the inhabitants and their trade and dwellings are in imminent danger of irreparable losses and inconveniences*", they appealed to the magistrates and council to meet with the leaders of the Jacobite army and make the best terms possible with them to save the city and inhabitants from the dismal consequences. The Town Council approved the appointment of a committee to deal with the Jacobite leaders who came to the following agreement with the invading army leaders: They would pay £5000 sterling and goods to the value of £500 sterling to save the city from being attacked and plundered.⁶

On 8th September 1746 the Magistrates and the Town Council met to discuss the fines imposed by the Highland Army. The Trades House met later to discuss the two fines imposed, i.e., £15000 and sundry other things imposed by the pretender's son but due to the good negotiations of John Hay, writer of the signet, the demands were reduced to £5000 sterling and £500 in goods. On 25th December 1745, the pretender's son (Bonnie Prince Charlie) entered the city, and a demand was made for 6000 short cloth coats, 12000 linen shirts, 6000 pairs of shoes, 6000 pairs of tartan hose and 6000 blue bonnets. The city did not have sufficient funds to pay for the goods and individuals paid or provided cash to enable the fines to be met. The magistrates asked the Trades and Merchants Houses if they would agree to them applying for reimbursement

⁴ George Crawford, Sketch of the Trades House of Glasgow, 1858, Page 100.

⁵ George Crawford, Sketch of the Trades House of Glasgow, 1858, Page 103.

⁶ Lumsden, Records of the Trades House 1713 to 1777, Page 322, September 1745.

from the King and Parliament and if that failed, they wished to tax the people based on their ability to pay and to prolong the tax of 2d on each pint of ale and beer brewed by or for the use of the private inhabitants. The House agreed to the above.⁷

Unfortunately, the minute book covering the period 1682-1758 is missing, but it is doubtful that the Clerk would have seen fit to record the entry of Prince Charles Edward Stuart or Bonnie Prince Charlie into Glasgow on his retreat from England in 1745. During the 1715 rising, the citizens of Glasgow had equipped a Regiment of six hundred men to support the Hanoverians and so it was presumably with some trepidation that the people received the Jacobite army. However, the Prince is said to have done his utmost to ingratiate himself with the citizenry; and it was while he was enjoying his sojourn in the city that he met Miss Clementina Walkinshaw, who became his mistress. She was the youngest of ten daughters of John Walkinshaw Esq of Camlachie and Barrowfield and is said to have been extremely beautiful. She later joined Prince in France, was created Countess of Alberstorff by the King of France and produced a daughter, Charlotte Stuart, Duchess of Albany, who was later legitimised in Paris.

Possibly the love life of Bonnie Prince Charlie would have been too frivolous to be included in the Cordiners' minutes; but it might be expected that the demands of the Prince's army for shoes would have caused some comment. His demands were not modest: six thousand cloth coats, twelve thousand linen shirts, six thousand pairs of shoes, tartan hose and blue bonnets – the articles were purchased and delivered at a cost of £5,000. This large order may have in some small way compensated for the disruption caused by the army; although the Prince and his entourage finally left in January 1746 with a great deal of plunder, as well as a Baillie and a merchant as hostages. Provost Cochrane does relate that the only recruit to the unhappy Prince's cause to be made in Glasgow was "Ane drunken shoemaker, who must have fled his country for debt, if he had not for treason".

⁷ Lumsden, Records of the Trades House 1713 to 1777, Page 332, September 1746.

Chapter 3

Deacons, Collectors and Box Masters

Decline of the Crafts

The decline of the Cordiners and other Incorporations in Glasgow started in the 1700s with disputes and encroachments on their powers and rights. In the 1600s the Cordiners had a series of issues where they strived to control their members. A few examples from the minutes of the Trades' House are: In January 1657, *"Hew Andersoune and James Mitchell Cordiners and shoemakers, complained that the Barkers and Tanners (Cordiners) were supplying insufficient quantities of leather to the shoemakers. They asked that the most qualified shoemakers become masters in equal numbers to the barkers and tanners to enable fair votes to take place. Ruling: The six most qualified shoemakers should become Masters in the Cordiners and that in future they should be half shoemakers and half Barkers and Tanners."* This is an excellent example of ensuring fairness within the Incorporation. In February 1661, we find recorded a complaint by the Hammermen where they cite Hugh Andersone, Cordiner was making belts and that this was inappropriate as beltmakers were appendices of the Hammermen. The Trades' House ruled that the Cordiners should not make belts or infringe the liberties of the Hammermen. Unfortunately, Hugh Andersoune, Cordiner made further belts and was brought before the Trades' House where he was fined £10 and escorted to prison by the House Officer. So, in the 1600s we find that the power of the Incorporations was strong and the punishments available to them was high. By February 1757, the powers of the Incorporations were still quite strong, but signs of their deterioration were clear to be seen. An example of such is: *"James Lindsay Deacon of the Hammermen and John Forsyth Deacon of the Cordiners petitioned the House concerning several actions pursued before the Lords of Council and Session by the Hammermen and Cordiners against James Dunlop junior and other merchants and three saddlers for making and selling saddlery, boots and shoes without being freemen Hammermen or Cordiners. The Lords of Council and Session found in favour of the interlocutors and the Hammermen and Cordiners sought the Houses' agreement and support in appealing to the House of Lords. Ruling: The House agreed to pay 1/3 of the costs with the Hammermen paying 1/3 and the Cordiners 1/3. The Deacon Convener and Baillie Robert Finlay agreed to go to London and plead their case."* In the past the appeal would not have been necessary as the case would have been upheld.

The reason that some of the changes were taking place was due to the industrialisation of the traditional crafts. In Glasgow, by 1740, some six hundred and eighty-five thousand metres of linen was being produced, Tennents opened a new brewery in 1745 and by 1750 there were five sugar refineries; attracting a veritable army of workers, none of whom were regulated by the Crafts or had need of apprenticeships or lengthy training. An example of how this affected the Incorporation of Cordiners can be seen in March 1757 when *"A letter was sent to the House from William Bogle, James Douglass junior, Thomas Peter, James Dunlop and Robert Marshall all partners in the new saddle and shoe factory in Glasgow indicating that each*

partner would pay the freedom fines of the respective trades and their servants would become liable for the same dues and regulations. As the partners were not practical men in the business, they asked that they be allowed not to sit an essay as their foremen would do so and be in charge of the workmanship of the factory. The Deacons suggested that the foremen would sit the essay and be entered as a freeman of the respective trade. The Deacons of the Hammermen and the Cordiners had convened meetings of their trades and they had agreed to this. Ruling: The House, by a majority ratified and approved the Deacons' decision." In this example it is clear that the Incorporation were trying to accommodate the changes in society and to benefit financially from the new factories. This was to be a steady trend until 1846 when the Incorporations lost their powers completely.

The introduction of a series of Acts of Parliament in the early nineteenth century finally sounded the death knoll for the authority and influence of the Incorporations. Beginning with the Representation of the People Act of 1832 (more commonly known as the Reform Act) that introduced wide-ranging changes to the electoral system of the United Kingdom; and ensured greater popular participation in the election of town councils that had previously been elected only by the burgesses i.e. local heritors, lairds, merchants and craftsmen. This was almost immediately followed by the Burgh Reform Act (1833); and then the Burgh Trading Act (1846) that finally served to abolish exclusive burgh and incorporation privileges; and made it entirely legal for anyone to set up a business or practice a craft anywhere in Scotland without being a burgess or member of Incorporation.

This should have signalled the decay of incorporations, but they had not actually been abolished and were determined to continue, even if in a slightly different form. The Cordiners began by considering the proposition of converting the Incorporation into an annuity society, but this suggestion was abandoned in 1848. However, the Cordiners still held funds, could legally enrol members, collect entry money, oversee apprenticeships, and continue charitable works. Thus, the Cordiners and their fellow crafts became, in the main, charitable organisations; and since the membership was no longer restricted to Cordiners, the numbers continued to rise. The offices and responsibilities of Deacons, Collectors and so on, therefore changed to meet the new role of the incorporation.

Trouble and strife were a feature of the Master Courts in the mid-1700s and in December 1759, *"John Scott and Robert Gray both late Deacons of the Cordiners complained that John Bannatyne the present Deacon of the Cordiners had not followed the normal election procedure of the Masters, Box Masters, Clerk and Officer and they asked that election be declared null and void. Ruling: The House unanimously found that Deacon John Bannatyne had proceeded in an inappropriate manner in the election and therefore it was nul and void. John Bannatyne said that he would appeal to the magistrates and the House ruled that the business of the Cordiners would have to be carried out by the present Deacon and Masters etc., from the preceding year. John Bannatyne in open court said, "that he would not be trampled upon by a sett of prepossessed gentlemen and uttered other disrespectful expressions"*.

The House therefore classed and set aside John Bannatyne from having any vote in any affairs of the House for six months. The House instructed William Lang, the Officer of the Cordiners to inform the old and present Box Masters of their decision and that it would stand until John Bannatynes' appeal was heard." Even in the 1700s the Deacons and Masters held positions of authority and a degree of power, the posts were strongly contested with different factions disputing the procedures followed. It is interesting to note the follow up action of John Bannatyne, when in April 1760, "*Deacon John Bannatyne of the Cordiners presented a petition indicating most humbly that he had been guilty of an error and mistake in not obeying and fulfilling the sentences of the House for which he was sorry. He asked that he be allowed to carry out their wishes. Ruling: The House directed John Bannatyne to convene the members of the Cordiners and to elect a leet as for the proper election.*"

There are numerous records where individuals have slandered or insulted the Deacon and/or the Deacon Convener, for which they received punishment. One such example concerning the Incorporation of Cordiners took place on September 1761, when "*It was reported to the House that John Finlay, Cordiner, at a public meeting of the Cordiners had several times cursed and swore at the meeting and called the Deacon Convener Daniell Munro, "a damned bitch, bougor" and called him many bad names and threatened him. The House was of the opinion that John Finlay be brought to justice in front of the magistrate so that he might be fined and imprisoned.*" Many a present-day Deacon Convener might be glad of similar powers to punish those who spoke unkindly about him/her.

The Incorporation of Cordiners did manage to have an Act of the House enacted which prevents anyone holding two offices in an Incorporation simultaneously. In January 1765, "*A petition and protest was presented by John Zuill, Nathaniel Jones, Archibald McAlister and William Ralston to the effect that the election of John Cummings to two offices, i.e., Collector and Master, was wrong and should be made null and void. The governance of the Cordiner should consist of: a Deacon, Collector and six Masters elected by the trade and two goudies or Box Masters, one chosen by the Deacon and one chosen by the trade, in all 16 persons. Ruling: The House ruled that the election of John Cumming as Master was null and void and that a new leet should be drawn up for the election of a Master. The House also enacted that no person in any Incorporation shall hold two offices.*"

The Modern Master Court

Currently, each Incorporation is ruled by a Master Court or committee, which, in the case of the Cordiners, consists of a Deacon, Collector, Goudie, Late Deacon, Late Collector and, at present, some thirteen "Others", often ex-Deacons and those yet to be Deacon. The Deacon, Collector and Goudie all serve for one year and the Deacon can be likened to the chairman of the committee, presiding over meetings, attending the Master Court of the Trades' House and various social events including the choosing dinners of all the other Incorporations. The Deacon and his Lady also receive invitations to the dinners of the Worshipful Companies of Cordwainers and Patten-makers in

London and the Cordwainers of York. The Masters and their Ladies from the three English Companies are in turn invited to the Cordiners' annual Dinner and Dance. The links with the Cordwainers of London appear to date from the twentieth century, as the minutes for 1937 imply that the first invitation for the Deacon was to a meeting at the Cordwainers' Hall in Canon Street, which was unfortunately bombed in the Second World War. The only other entry is in 1952, when:

“The Clerk was instructed to send cordial greetings to the Worshipful Company of Cordwainers and to the Worshipful Company of Curriers in London, it being noted that the Deacon had been invited as a guest to the annual Dinners of both Companies.”

The links with the Worshipful Company of Curriers are no longer extant; however, it is not clear when the cordial greetings ceased.

The Collector is the deputy to the Deacon; and usually becomes Deacon after a “fallow” year or year out of office. The Goudie, which seems to be an appointment peculiar to the Cordiners, is the most junior member of the team; and whose main function seems to be to wield the Goudie Box at the various entertainments, collecting donations. Appointment to be the Goudie is the first step on the ladder to becoming Deacon and following the year in office; the holder becomes a member of the Master Court, with the opportunity to move on to the higher offices of the Craft in his or her turn. The Deacons and Visitor¹ of the Incorporations are elected to office and sworn in on Choosing Day, which is the first Friday after 15 September. The Master Court normally meets a minimum of four times a year and oversees the work of the Craft, including administration of the bursaries and pensions.

The use of “late” and “ex” is sometimes confusing to new Craft members - not to mention postmen! For the year following a Deacon's (and Collector's) term of office, he or she is known as “Late Deacon” (or “Late Collector”); and thereafter the title is “Ex-Deacon”. Any Ex-Deacon may stand in for the serving Deacon and wear the chain of office in his or her stead.

The Trades' House is presided over by the Deacon-Convenor, who is the third citizen of Glasgow; after the Lord Provost and Lord Dean of Guild, the leader of the Merchants' House. The Collector of the House has a similar role to that within the various crafts and similarly has a “fallow” year before becoming Deacon-Convenor in his turn. The Deacon-Convenor and Collector of the House are chosen from the ranks of ex-Deacons and ex-Visitors; and the serving Deacons and Visitor are all members of the Master Court of the House. It is important to know that the Deacon like the Deacon Convenor is an elected position and holds no real power. His or her role is to guide the Incorporation/House and has to sway the votes of the members to have his/her ideas approved.

¹ Thirteen of the fourteen Incorporations of the Trades House of Glasgow are led by Deacons; however, the Visitor presides over the Incorporation of Maltmen.

Deacons, Visitors

The title of Deacon, as the leader of a Craft or Guild is peculiar to Scotland – in England and on the continent, Master is more usual. Deacon was a title apparently taken from a particular office in the early Christian Church; and as the early deacons were often known as “Deacon and Kirk-maister”, the custom probably derives from an affiliation to the church, possibly that the Deacon received the weekly offerings and paid the expenses to the altar and services in the church. A statute of James I in 1425 mentions deacons for the first time: “handicraftsmen” were encouraged to elect “a deacon or maister man over the laife for the time, so that the lieges be not defrauded in time to come as they have been in time bygone through untrue men of crafts.” An addition to the statute in the following year, commands that the Deacons should be elected. Curiously, at certain periods, deacons were declared prejudicial to the realm and their election was made illegal, starting with a further statute of 1426. The privilege was restored in 1457 by a statute of James II. The office of deacon was revoked as “right dangerous” in 1493 and again by an Act of the Scottish Parliament in 1555, although that Act was rescinded in 1556. During these periods, the term “Visitor” was often used and can be seen in the minute book of the Cordiners for 1555-56 when Robert Muir was styled “Kirk Maister & Visitour”. The term of Visitors may appear rather at odds with the duties of the Deacons, but in days gone by the Deacons had to visit the places of work of their members to ensure that they were producing work to the correct standard.

It would appear that Deacons were sometimes paid “wages” which may simply have been expenses to cover the extra costs associated with the office; although specific expenses, such as travelling to Edinburgh on craft or Trades’ House business, were readily reimbursed. A further “perk” seems to have been the possession and control of the mercat or craft box which contained all the money belonging to the craft, at least until the advent of banks in Glasgow in the mid-eighteenth century. The minutes show that the control of the box was very important and as the outgoing Deacon was sometimes invited to repay money before handing over the box, it might be assumed that this control often proved extremely useful to him! Possibly, the craftsmen also thought so as in 1562/63, a law was passed that ensured that a keeper should be appointed for a year, although the Deacon also kept a key. Trust appears still to have been a bit of a problem as it was also decreed that the keeper should be liable to replace any contents that might be mislaid or stolen!

Collectors



Collector's Medal

Collector was the term used to denote the treasurers of the Incorporations of the Trades House of Glasgow; although, it is not used in the minute books until James Flemying was recorded as such in 1626/27. This might seem curious as it might be assumed that a treasurer would be required from the earliest times; however, the first accounts to appear in the minute books were for the year 1785/86. The money of the craft was kept in the craft or mercat box, which, according to the early minute books, was “tane” (taken) or “sett” to the Deacon or others for sums such as “xxxvijs. money” (thirty-eight shillings) in 1591 and “Lijjs. lijds” (One pound, three shillings and three pence) in 1602. It therefore seems likely that the position of Collector did not exist until 1626, the year after the law was passed to appoint a Box-maister. For the years 1627/28 and 1630/31, William Coittis and Johanne Andirsoune were named “Boxmaister and Collecteur” respectively and although not specified, it

seems that the two posts were held by the same person until 1631. It is a little confusing, as for some years Boxmaisters are not mentioned, however it is not entirely clear whether this is because they were not appointed or merely omitted from the minutes.

Nowadays, a Collector can expect to hold the position of Deacon after a fallow year, but during the first couple of centuries holding the position of Collector seems to have had little bearing on eventually becoming Deacon. By 1626, the monopolisation of the role of Deacon by certain families could only be achieved by taking office in alternate years. When it is remembered that men from certain families, such as Richart Allane¹ and Jon Willsoune elder and younger,² managed to serve upwards of three terms, it is understandable why there were very few vacancies for outsiders. Therefore, it was not common for Collectors to necessarily become Deacons, Johanne Andirsoune was an exception, sandwiching a term as Collector between two terms as Deacon between 1629-1632. However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, it became more usual for a Collector to be appointed to Deacon immediately, the convention of waiting for a “fallow” year becoming the norm by the First World War.

From the outset, as the Craft's treasurer, a Collector was expected to keep accounts meticulously and then justify his accounts before handing them over to the incoming incumbent. However, as the years passed, the post of Collector became more burdensome and time-consuming, until in 1927 Collector Thomas McBride complained about the huge collection of papers

¹ 1624/25, 1632/33 and 1634/35

² 1626/27, 1628/29, 1630/31. 1638/39, 1640/41, 1642/43, 1646/47 and 1651/52

that he had received on taking office, including two deed boxes, wooden boxes containing cash books, letter books and papers used by previous Collectors. He suggested that the bulk of this collection should either be destroyed or handed to the Clerk for safe-keeping and that he should retain only books that were actually in use. A couple of months later, Collector McBride further proposed that the duties of the Collector were so arduous that they should be rearranged by “combining the more onerous duties of the Collector and those of the Clerk.” Thus, the post is now more of an honorary one and includes very little actual accountancy - it is doubtful whether succeeding Collectors are entirely aware of the debt that they owe to Collector McBride!

Box-maisters and Goudies

The Craft's box was clearly the most important possession of the Craft and thus its control was both important and desirable, which is presumably why it was decided that the responsibility should be shouldered by a new appointment of Boxmaister in 1625. A “Kepar” of the box was recorded for the years 1562/63 (James Braidwod younger) and 1563/64 (Thomas Craig). It is interesting that James Braidwod younger became Deacon for two years after holding this appointment, but Thomas Craig did not rise to the higher rank, so clearly this fleeting role had little bearing on future preferment.

For the first six years, the post of Boxmaister seems to have been held by the Collector, but in 1631, two Boxmaisters were appointed as well as the Collector, although there are several years following when none are recorded. However, from 1642, two Boxmaisters are elected every year along with a Collector. The role of the Boxmaisters was to hold the keys for the mercat box, and so were also known as Kiemaisters – it would seem that the keys were for the inner and outer box, as in the appointments are described as “Box Master for the uter” and “Box Master for the Inner” in 1653/54. For some years, there were three Key Masters, which may be because there is some evidence that two boxes existed: one for the money and one for the charters.

From the 1780s, there seems to have been only one Box Master, which was also called Goudie; but this reverts to two again in 1789/90 when the designations became “Deacon's Goudie” and “Box Master or Goudie.”

The post of Goudie appears to have been peculiar to the Cordiners of Glasgow and the origins of the word are obscure, but it is likely to be connected with *gawd* or gold, which would be consistent with the task of looking after the Craft's money or gold.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the two Goudies were known as the Deacon's Goudie and the Trade's Goudie and were appointed by the Deacon and the members of the Craft respectively. The Trade's Goudie was elected by those members present on Choosing Day, and by the twentieth century, it was with the tacit understanding that he would become Collector during the following year. The appointment of the Deacon's Goudie was the sole prerogative of the Deacon, and his name was usually announced by the Deacon on Choosing Day. The Deacon's Goudie usually became a full member of the

Master Court during the ensuing year. It has been suggested that one of the main duties of the Deacon's Goudie was to ensure that his Deacon returned home safely. The last mention of the Deacon's Goudie was in the Annual Report of 1986/87 and as the minutes for those years are sadly missing, it is unclear as to why the appointment was permitted to lapse.

As with Collectors, Goudies or Boxmaisters were rarely mentioned in the minute books and the only interesting record is extremely brief omitting all the interesting details. In 1794, William Allison was forced to resign as Box Master and was fined £1. 10s., apparently for "bad and outrageous behaviour at the master court." As he does not afterwards feature in any of the lists of appointments, it must be assumed that his behaviour was indeed reprehensible and outrageous! Similarly, in August 1832, Collector Henry Jacques was forced to resign as he found himself in financial difficulties when his company ceased trading.

Officers

Officers are very much in evidence from the earliest minute book in 1550, but their original purpose is not immediately obvious, although later it appears that an important element of their role was to summon the members to meetings. Attendance by members at meetings was compulsory, and it seems that the fine levied on absentees depended on how much notice they had been given by the Officer. Until 1640, it appears that the election to the post was by ballot, and it was not necessarily a very popular appointment, as very few of the main families seem to strive to hold the appointment. Officers rarely advanced to other posts and mention of the post was often omitted entirely from the minutes, including one notable period of sixteen years (1597-1613).

Each Craft had its own Officer. The Officer was also given clothing as part of his remuneration, although it is not entirely clear whether it was actually a uniform. The first mention of this gift was in the minutes 1637, when Wm Patersoune was given "ane new joupe of gray claithes."

Certainly, the accounts of 1813 show that by that time the Officer, John Leighton, received a salary of 8s a week, a New Year's Gift of 4s and various items of clothing such as stocking a £1. 12s. However, Mr Leighton's successor, William Naismith, clearly considered that the remuneration in money and kind was clearly lacking as he petitioned the Master Court in 1825, 1826, 1827 and 1829 "*craving an augmentation of salary.*" Sadly, on each occasion his request was declined although on the third request, it was agreed to give him 2 guineas for his exceptional services. Clothing seems to have constituted a considerable part of the payment to the Officer, although the amount of new clothing received in any one year seems to have been dependent on the amount of available funds. Shoes and stockings were provided most years, but suits, great-coats and hats were often at two or three yearly intervals.

During the early years of the twentieth century, the Officer retired, and the post was not mentioned in the minutes for several years until 1920, when the item merely notes that the post would not be filled for the present. There is no

further mention of the Officer, until 1937, when the Officer's uniform was returned to the Clerk as the last Officer had recently died. It is interesting that no-one could remember the nature of the duties of the Officer, after an absence of only twenty years. The Clerk was charged to "endeavour to ascertain the duties formerly discharged by the Officer and the remuneration paid to him," after which it was decided that no further action should be taken and indeed no action has not been taken since.

Clerks

The Clerk was a very important official of the Craft, in that he wrote the minutes and dealt with any other correspondence - as clearly literacy was not widespread in the mid-sixteenth century. The first record for a Clerk, David Makkewne, was in the minutes for 1551; and he seems to have been a superior Clerk as in 1553, he recorded his name as Sir David Makkewne.

Although the minutes usually state that the Clerk was elected each year, it is clear that after the first appointment, the ballot was a matter of form and the Clerk continued for years until retirement. Clerks were usually lawyers or at least notaries: David Wylie (1562 to 1582)² is described as "scribe"; whereas J Craig (1609-1625) is described variously as "notarius" and "notary clerk to the said Craft".

Possibly the most notable clerks in recent years were father and son, Robert Peel Lamond and Robert Lamond, who both served for long periods. Robert Lamond succeeded to the post on the death of Benjamin Mathie² in August 1831 and served until his death in 1899 when his son took over the reins until his death in 1931. Thus, somewhat amazingly, Robert Lamond senior and junior gave a whole century of service to the Incorporation of Cordiners of Glasgow.

In 1927, Mr Lamond had overseen the dramatic expansion of the Clerk's duties to include most of the accountancy work that had previously been the remit of the Collector. It is interesting to note, that on his death, the appointment of a new Clerk was not by election, but on interview by the Master Court. There were several "nominees" including Mr Rowley Orr, who had deputised as Clerk during Mr Lamond's prolonged illness and been admitted to the Craft at the far hand in 1930. However, John Chalmers Brechin was chosen, and he served for some thirty-one years, when Mr James Welsh became Clerk, who also served for over thirty years.

The Clerk was important to the Craft and was paid for his services, for instance, in 1823/4 the Clerk's salary for two years was £32.10s and this did not increase greatly over the following century even though the duties had increased substantially. Mr Brechin's starting salary was a mere £150 per annum, which was increased to £250 per annum in 1944; although a further eleven years would pass before the next increase of £100 was made.

² David Wylie is mentioned in the minutes during these dates, however, there are long periods before and after this period when the Clerk is not mentioned at all.

³ Benjamin Mathie also served as Clerk for a considerable time – some twenty-seven years from 1804 until his death in office in August 1831.

It should be noted that the post of Clerk was always held by a member of the Incorporation, although this was usually after the appointment had been made, for example, Robert Lamond became a freeman in September 1831, some six weeks after his appointment at the beginning of August. Thus, Clerks are eligible to hold posts within the Master Court, although this seems to have occurred only once during the history of the Craft. James Welsh served as Collector in 1969/70 and then as Deacon in 1971/72; during which period the duties of Clerk were carried out by James Risk, another partner in the same law firm.

Keeper of the Seal

In the eighteenth century, the Keeper of the Seal is mentioned in the minute book as having been elected on two occasions (1792 and 1795). There is no other mention of this position, or the responsibilities expected of the holder; nor is there any mention of the existence or use of a seal in the minutes.

Deaths in Office

During a period of some four hundred and fifty years, it would be surprising if there had not been some deaths in office. Happily, as far as is recorded, this occurrence has not as common as might be thought.

Alexander Swoird, the Collector, died in March 1640 and it may seem surprising that the minute entry is really very matter of fact:

“The quhilk day convenit in the craftis hospitall John
Lisoune preentt deacone and maist pairt of the vocatioun
quha wer present James Snodgers be pluralitie of voittis
is maid collector quhill ane uther be chosin in respect of
the dai the of Alex^r Swoird collector.”

However, it was a similar stark entry that heralded the death of one of the Masters, Tober McUmphra, who was replaced by Gabriel Park in May 1665.

In the minutes for November 1803, the death of Clerk, Robert MacAulay, was announced.

The minutes of 2nd February 1815 also appear to be more interested in the accounts than the death of Collector William Kirk:

“The Meeting considering that by the death of Mr Kirk the Collector it
will be necessary to make up a State of his Accounts they nominate
and appoint to endeavour to procure the Receipts of the payments
made and to make up a State of Accounts to be laid before another
Meeting.”

Collector Kirk's successor, John Somerville, was elected in March 1815. Collector Charles Scott's death in August 1822 is recorded in the same way in the minutes, although the vacancy was not filled until Choosing Day in the following month.

Mention has already been made of Benajamin Mathie, who served as Clerk for some twenty-seven years from 1804 until his death in office in August 1831. Deacon Daniel Bell's demise in 1843 caused considerable controversy, as after William Glass had been elected in his stead, Peter McGrigor disputed the eligibility of "country members" to vote and the question had to be taken to the Trades House for "consideration". Until Peter Hepburn was confirmed as Deacon, Deacon Hepburn as Late-Deacon was invited to take the chair, which meant that there appear to have been a grand total of four Deacons for that particular year of office.

Chapter 4

Chains, bells and the crafts box

Deacon's Chain of Office



Most Deacons' chains among the Crafts in Glasgow seem to date from the Victorian era; however, from a minute book entry of 1798, it would appear that in this respect the Cordiners may have been the first Craft in Glasgow to possess such an item. Deacon James Smith informed the Master Court that it was "being mentioned by some of the masters" that the "gold chain wore by the Deacon should be laid aside or sold on account of none of the incorporations having

furnished or used one for their deacones." This would seem to be the first mention of a chain of office worn by the Deacon, certainly of the Cordiners; although, of course, it is possible that the relevant reference would be found during the period 1682 to 1758, for which there are no records. Curiously, the Deacon and his Master Court decided that the chain should be sold, but that they should lay the motion before the Incorporation before doing so. When the motion was put before the brethren on Boxing Day, some two months later, they decided unanimously that the chain should not be sold, and presumably it continued to be "wore" by successive Deacons.

Campbell,¹ in his *History*, describes how he "called the attention of the Incorporation to the deacon's medal or badge of office and chain," which presumably was the same the one as mentioned in 1798. He apparently told them that it was entirely out of keeping with the importance and position of the Craft, adding that the obverse side was incorrect according to heraldry, the emblems and date of incorporation were incorrect, and the city arms were erroneous. Deacon Robert Paterson and the Master Court were obviously persuaded by Campbell's damning arguments and the minutes for February 1881 show that it was agreed to choose a design for a new medal and chain; "it being understood that the cost is not to exceed £60 after crediting the value of the old Badge and Chain." Sadly, from possibly the oldest chain in the Trades' House, the Cordiners' new chain was to become one of the youngest.

And by the end of the following month, Deacon Paterson was duly invested with the new medal and chain of office, "which had been previously handed round among the Members of the Incorporation for inspection." The inauguration was held at Mr John Forrester's, 7 Gordon Street, Glasgow at a meeting of all the members, who were served cake and wine. The medal and chain were designed and made in space of about six weeks by Mr Robert

¹ Campbell 1883:18-19

Sorley, Goldsmith, Buchanan Street; and after crediting the old ones, the new ones cost fifty-seven pounds. The Deacon also reported that Mr Sorley had provided two casts in stucco of the Metal which would be deposited in the Deacon's Box.

According to Campbell, the design of the new medal was as follows:

“On the obverse side of the medal is the arms of the craft and the motto above, and around this the words, ‘Incorporation of Cordiners, Glasgow,’ while round the rim or edge of the medal are the words, ‘Medal and chain re-designed, 1881.’ On the reverse side of the medal is the city arms, and around this the words, ‘Incorporated 27th February, 1558, and 27th June, 1569. Ratified 30th September, 1693.’”

Unfortunately, during the early 1990s, the medal and chain were stolen, and the present medal and chain are yet a third incarnation. The Cordiners then are possibly the only Craft in the Trades' House of Glasgow that have had three different chains and medals. The Deacon wears the chain for all formal occasions with only one exception – when the Deacon is dancing; for which there is a special Dancing Medal. The Deacon's Lady and the Collector also wear medals, which are pinned onto lapels, rather than hanging from chains.



At the end of a term of office, the retiring Deacon and his Lady are both presented with replicas of the deacon's medal to mark that their period of office. It is difficult to know when this custom began, as the first mention of the medals is during the Second World War, it was noted in the minutes that it was not possible to obtain new replica medals. It was decided “to write to the representatives of certain past Deacons expressing the hope that they might see their way to hand over to the Incorporation any Replicas in their hands, which the Incorporation would be prepared to purchase if necessary.”

Crafts or Deacon's box

As mentioned in previous chapters, from the earliest times the money and valuables of the Crafts were kept in wooden boxes; in the case of the Cordiners, the box was variously named in the minutes as “craftis box”, “Deacon's box” and the “Charter box.” Before the advent of banks, the box was extremely important and as has been seen, provisions were made to ensure that it was well looked after and secure, by using two locks, two keys and two separate box masters or goudies. By the end of the nineteenth century, the box was used for keeping things of importance to the Craft. The serving Deacon kept the box at his house as seen at the death of Deacon

Davidson when the box had to be retrieved in order to fulfil the pledge to show it at the “Old Glasgow” Exhibition.

Over the years, various interesting items were added to the box, including six copies of Campbell's *History*, the hand-painted Wall Programme with the Coat of Arms of the Incorporation that had been in use at the Coronation Ball in 1937 and a Burgess Ticket of the City of Glasgow dated 7th June 1799 in respect of Mr John Steel, that had been donated by his descendant Mr Robert G Cook in 1944.

Along with many of the other Craft boxes and other burghal items, the box was lent to the Empire Exhibition held in Glasgow in 1938; and was described in the catalogue as “date 1708, of Queen Anne oak, with carved ends and metal handles, two locks, and brass plate in front.” Sadly, some time during the late twentieth century, the box was “misaid”, and there is no current knowledge of the box or its whereabouts. It would seem that the only extant illustration is a photograph of the whole Trades’ House exhibit from the Empire Exhibition catalogue.

Bells



Incorporation of Cordiners Bells

Some of the other Incorporations of the Trades’ House have bells; but it seems that only the Cordiners possess three, which are used at the Craft’s Dinner. The first mention of bells in the minutes was in 1787:

“The sd day it was agreed that a Bell should be provided for the Incorporation to be used by the Deacon at the Meeting of the same and order the Collector to provide the same,”

Incorporation of Cordiners in Glasgow, 1788.” and although the minutes imply that the Incorporation would pay for the bell, there is no mention of payment in the accounts. The second bell is inscribed “Incorporation of Cordiners, 1794” and the third, “Given by Col. Charles Walker, of the 1st Regt., Lanarkshire Local Militia, to Mr John Craig (for the third time), present Deacon of the Incorporation of Cordiners of Glasgow, for the use and behoof of the Trade, and in token of respect to the Deacon and regard to the Craft – Glasgow, 2nd August 1815.”

Curiously, it is inscribed, “The gift of Deacon John Jenkins to the

The three bells are of differing sizes, and at the Deacons’ Choosing Dinner, the largest is rung by the Deacon, the medium-sized bell by the Collector and the smallest by the Goudie. Whenever the Deacon wishes to speak at the Dinner he rings his bell, followed by the Collector and the Goudie; and it is a particularly effective method of silencing the assembled throng. Unfortunately, there is no record or knowledge as to how or when this very

useful custom was instituted, but it does appear to be unique within the Trades' House of Glasgow.

Armorial Bearings



Incorporation of Cordiners
Pre 1921 Coat of Arms

Armorial Bearings on the Incorporation and an appropriate device was devised to use on papers belonging to the Incorporation, which has been used ever since.

Lands

From earliest times, the Incorporations of the Trades House of Glasgow bought lands within Glasgow, from which they were able to draw rents. The lands of Gorbals are among the oldest owned by the Trades. The history of ownership is long and involved, dating from 1640, when Sir Robert Douglas deponed various lands in the of the ancient burgh of barony of Gorbals and Brigend in favour of the Community of Glasgow, Hutcheson's Hospital, and the Craft Hospital. The area was some three hundred and forty-seven acres and the some "seventy-eight acres, three roods and fourteen rails" was bought by the Trades House for thirty-one thousand merks. By a contract of 1650, the Trades House divided the land into thirty-one parts or shares and invited the Incorporations to anticipate. Only the Gardeners, Barbers and Dyers failed to take up the offer; and the Cordiners' part appears to have been "two thirty-one parts;" as was the Hammermen and Skinners.

This was a huge investment for the Incorporations to make at that time and the land was developed to provide a return and in the mid-eighteenth century there appears to have been a woollen mill and the rest of the land was occupied by Tradeston village, which was a fashionable suburb by the nineteenth century.

The Crafts seem to have been interested in acquiring coats of arms during the early years of the twentieth century and the Cordiners were not exception. It was decided to apply to the Lyon King of Arms for a grant of Armorial Bearings in 1921; and later in the year the Clerk reported that the cost would be £48. The Clerk was then despatched to Edinburgh where he accepted a Patent conferring



Incorporation of Cordiners
Modern Coat of Arms

Other possessions



Incorporation of Cordiners
Snuff Mull

The Cordiners do not own a large number of possessions, which may reflect the lack of permanent residence for the first couple of centuries. A “handsomely silver mounted buffalo horn snuff mull” was presented to Craft in 1886 by “Edmund Baird Paterson a member (who is presently abroad)”.

The Deacon sits in an ancient and handsome wooden chair, although it is possibly a somewhat uncomfortable place to sit for any length of time. In 1927, Deacon John Watson began his meeting by mentioning how comfortable he found his chair since it had been furnished by a comfortable leather cushion on which was stamped a Cordiners’ cutting knife and he moved that a hearty vote of thanks be passed to Late Deacon William Martin, who had been the donor for this useful present.



Incorporation of Cordiners
Wine Coolers

Mr Robert Lamond, the Clerk, not only bequeathed funds for the Clerk’s Fund, but also left two silver wine coolers to the Craft. The wine coolers had apparently belonged to Mr Lamond’s grandfather and at that time (1931) were valued for insurance purposes at £25 each.



Incorporation of Cordiners
Deacons Silver Goblet

At social occasions within the Trades House, the Deacon drinks from a splendid silver goblet, as indeed do all the Deacons and Visitor of the other Incorporations. The individually designed goblets were given to the Incorporations in 1970 by Lord Forte.

Similarly, a silver cup was given to the Incorporation by ex-Deacon Colonel Douglas Davies in 1974 and is traditionally used at the annual Old Deacons’ Dinner.



The Incorporation is one of the few Crafts in the Trades House who still have their shield from 1929 which was painted by G. Goldie Killin. The shield, which was made, along with shields for the other Incorporations, that were displayed at the Empire Exhibition in 1938. The shields, which were hand-painted, cost “£5 : 19 : 6” each, were returned to the Clerks of Incorporations in the following year. The shield is now located in the Archives room in the basement of the Trades Hall and was discovered during the search for museum and archive materials.

In 1947, the Misses Bishop wished to donate a silver centrepiece, which had belonged to their late father, to the Craft and the Master Court agreed to accept the gift. However, the centre-piece was shown to Messrs J R & W Laing and they submitted an extremely disdainful letter regarding the item, beginning with the rather scathing description, “a large Electro-plated Epergne”. Messrs Laing clearly disapproved of this item and pointed out that apart from the storage question, which would be very difficult, the expense to the Incorporation would be over £4 per annum for cleaning and polishing and removing when a Function was being held, and that after careful consideration they suggested that the gift be declined. The Master Court were clearly swayed by these negative comments and subsequently declined the gift.

Miscellaneous

The Cordiners also have a number of items in the Trades' Hall and other locations which are owned by the owners of the properties in which they are housed and for completeness are listed below:

Ancient Crest



An ancient crest of the 14 Incorporations was discovered during the search of the Trades' Hall for items to be moved to the archives. The Cordiners' arms are similar to the Incorporation of Hammermen's' Arms with a crown above the traditional leather cutter.

Frieze in Grand Hall



The magnificent frieze which encircles the Grand Hall was completed in 1903 and the Cordiner's section has the distinction of having one of the four ladies in the frieze. The depiction is a romanticized image on silk and was painted by Belgium artists.

Bench in Entrance Hall

In the entrance hall of the Trades Hall there is a magnificent bench which was made by Belgium refugee craftsmen during the First World War. Each of the Incorporations are depicted on this bench with the armorial bearings of the Incorporations at the time. They differ from the present shields as they had not been approved by the Lord Lyon at this time.



Alms House Painting



Incorporation of Cordiners
Alms House Painting

Most of the Incorporations have a painting which at one time was located in the old Trades House Alms House or Hospital near the top of the High Street, in Glasgow. The Cordiners painting shows the tools of the trade and can be seen in the Craftsman's Gallery in the Trades' Hall.

Glasgow Cathedral



Incorporation of Cordiners Window
In Glasgow Cathedral

Glasgow Cathedral has a magnificent stained-glass window which was donated by the Trades House and the 14 Incorporations in 1951, it has the Trades House and the 14 Incorporation's Armorial Bearings in full colour in the Window.

The pews in front of this magnificent window which were also donated by the Trades House and the 14 Incorporations in 1957, has their armorial bearings on the end of each pew.



Cordiners Arms on
The Pews in Glasgow Cathedral

Chapter 5

"To Infinity... and Beyond" – the Cordiners go forward into the 21st Century!

Did those twenty-three craftsmen who signed the original Seal of Cause, whether in 1460 or later, imagine that the Cordiners would be extant some Five hundred and fifty years later? Certainly, it seems most unlikely that they could have ever envisaged the many changes and transformations that have led to the way in which the modern Incorporation is constituted and managed.

The minutes, though, the main source of our knowledge of those earlier craftsmen, imply that they were too busy getting on with their core business of regulating their Trade, maintaining their assets and ensuring their very survival, to be too bothered about the future. Whilst it is true that they put things in place for the immediate future: maintaining the standards of their craft; accumulating funds; securing the well-being of the needier members and maintaining their position and status within the City framework; it is unlikely that they spent much time worrying about the shape of the long-term future. It is perhaps significant that possibly one of the greatest events in their history – the Incorporation of the Trades in 1604 – does not even rate a mention in the minutes. This phenomenon is seen throughout the entire history of the Craft until recent times – the minutes continue very much as before, except possibly increasingly reflecting the growing importance and wealth of the Incorporations, particularly in the area of building projects and more complex finances. This lack of interest in the future seems to have persisted into the nineteenth century, as it would appear from the minutes that the Reform of Burghs Act in 1842 was not even discussed by the Master Court. When it is remembered that this piece of legislation virtually changed the entire *raison d'être* of the Incorporations, it is amazing that it seems never to have been mentioned by name or the implications discussed in detail.

Similarly, the histories of the nineteenth century do not look to their future, they merely describe the past and allude in passing to their present, but not in any great detail. For example, the final chapter of the *Sketch of the Trades House*¹ is titled "Public Proceedings" and lists the municipal processions in which the Trades had participated and the occasions upon which the Trades had addressed the Sovereign and petitioned both Houses of Parliament. The chapter ends somewhat abruptly with the French translation of a long and poetic address to the Emperor Louis Napoleon and his Empress on the occasion of their visit to Queen Victoria on 17th April 1855. This practice is also to be found in the *History of the Cordiners*, which again has no real assessment of the contemporary situation or future direction of the Incorporation.

¹ Crawford 1858: 276-280, Chapter LVI

When attitudes changed is a moot point; however, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, an attempt to review the current standing of the Craft and speculation as to its future direction would now be seen as a sensible finale to a history rather than a curiosity. Thus, this final chapter will endeavour to fulfil that aim.

So, how stand the Cordiners now?

Clearly, the days of the practising cordiners, or indeed shoemakers, playing an active part in the industrial or economic life of Glasgow are long gone. A combination of technological advance, economic pressures and competition from cheaper overseas imports put paid to any remnants of such an industry several decades ago. However, despite the fact that no actual cordiner or shoemaker has been on the pension roll for some time and also that few current craftsmen will have played an active part in the leather trade, the Craft can quite rightly argue that it remains alive and most definitely kicking. Similarly, as one of the Incorporations of the Trades House of Glasgow, the Craft continues to play a role in the municipal life of the City. The Deacon-Convener's status as third in Glasgow's civic hierarchy may not retain the power of the past, but the post certainly retains a measure of influence that should not be underestimated.

Laddies and Ladies:

In the fifteenth century and for some considerable time afterwards, membership of the Craft was a very necessary part of the life of any cordiner who wished to ply his trade within the City of Glasgow. Nowadays, that requirement has long gone and thus it might have been assumed that such Craft organisations would dwindle or cease to exist, as in so many other cities. However, the Incorporations of Glasgow have adapted and have managed to survive by espousing a modern purpose that would surely have been applauded by the founding Craftsmen. In Glasgow, burgess tickets continue to be issued and the Crafts, including the Cordiners, continue to attract recruits to the membership.

Participation in social and charitable activities of a modern Craft is probably not the first consideration for more youthful citizens, but joining at the Near Hand, through family connections, remains a useful recruiting area. However, it should perhaps be acknowledged that the fruits of such recruitment – i.e. the new member playing an active part in Cordiner activities - may not necessarily be reaped for some years after the initial introduction.

The number of recruits at the Far Hand varies from year to year as do the ages and presumably the reasons for joining. The rates of entry money charged to new members is regularly assessed. In April 2000, a new recruit joined at the Far Hand at the age of 71 years, which might seem to be a fairly advanced age and his entry money of £101 (i.e. £30 + £1 per year of age) reflected this. This may have been somewhat exceptional and not exactly representative of new members in age, but until recently he was certainly typical in one respect – he was a man! However, one new and conceivably

very fertile area of new members has now been opened up to most of the Incorporated Trades of Glasgow – women!

In the past, it is clear that women were useful to the membership of the Crafts only as a conduit for their non-Craftsmen husbands to join at the Near Hand through their Craftsmen fathers. However, the appearance of the Sex Discrimination Act has changed all that, even if not very speedily! It is true that the Act was mentioned in minutes of the Trades when it was enacted in 1979, but then the matter was not raised again until 19th April 1995, when the minutes state that “The Deacon made mention of the continued discussion on the possibility of admission of Ladies to the Trades House Crafts.” The Tailors and the Hammermen were the main supporters of the cause to admit the “monstrous regiment”, with opposition coming mainly from the Masons and the Weavers, effectively producing stalemate as only one dissenting Incorporation was required to completely block the process. Eventually, after some considerable time and much heated dispute, this right of veto over the wishes of other Incorporations was ended; which effectively meant that all the Incorporations would be able to make their own decisions on this matter.

However, nothing much happened for a further five years until June 2000, when it was reported that the Deacon-Convener had held a series of meetings advocating the establishment of a Ladies Section of the Trades House. It transpired that the Cordiners had not actually offered a view when the matter of admission of women had been discussed in the House in 1995, but on this occasion the Master Court agreed unanimously to oppose a Ladies Section and to vote that Ladies should have full membership, having argued that a Ladies Section would be demeaning and that the benefits were unclear and doubtful.

However, opposition to full membership of Ladies continued within the House, leading to the formation of the Trades House Ladies Association in April 2001 and Legal Opinion being sought to confirm that the “European convention of Human Rights did not restrict exclusion of women from membership of Incorporated Trades”. The Cordiners continued to advocate the full admission of women and a motion to do so was passed unanimously at the Craft’s 2003 Annual Meeting, (although it should be noted that the Hammermen and Weavers began their procedures to admit the fairer sex in 2002). It soon became apparent that the whole process was far from simple. The Cordiners began the protocol early in 2004 which involved making amendments to the Craft’s Royal Charter granted by King George V in 1919, which provided that all members should be male. A formal Petition was laid before Her Majesty the Queen at Privy Council on 16th December 2004, and a Supplementary Charter was granted and then sealed by the Great Scottish Seal in Edinburgh; and finally, after only four centuries, it was legal for women to be admitted as full members of the Incorporation of Cordiners.

However, it was the Incorporation of Hammermen that had the distinction of enlisting the first royal lady in the person the Princess Anne, the Princess Royal and to the Incorporation of Barbers went the accolade of electing the



**Dr Christine Linnell
Deacon 2013**

first female Deacon.² However, the Cordiners have not lagged too far behind and in the year 2013 Christine Linnell was elected as the first female Deacon in the Incorporation of Cordiners. Clearly, the inclusion of women into the Crafts has had more far-reaching consequences than merely swelling the numbers of members and adding a feminine perspective to the Master Court; but the majority of opinion seems to welcome this step forward into a new era for the Craft.

Thus, increased membership for the Cordiners would seem to be a distinct possibility for the future, but the Master Court cannot rest on their laurels and active recruiting and promotion of the Craft must continue to be of prime concern. It is fairly astonishing that an institution as ancient as the Trades House and one that has played an integral part in the civic life of Glasgow for over four centuries, is so poorly known and understood by the majority of its citizenry; and some form of education and information programme to enlighten and encourage new blood to all the Incorporations might be a consideration for the future.

Charity and Good Works

“Charity begins at Home” could have provided a suitable motto of the early Cordiners, as their main charitable work was towards their own membership; although as the years went by, it is clear that this was extended more generally to those in need. The Craft also contributed much of their wealth through the Trades House to institutions for the care of the infirm and the old; although they seemed to have a particular interest in “lunatics”, as can be seen in contributions to the Glasgow Assylum for Lunatics (1818) and the Royal Lunatic Assylum at Gartnavel (1842)!

The Craft continues to support a wide variety of worthy causes in and around Glasgow, as can be seen from this list of charities to which donations were made in 2019 to 2021:

In recent times, leather footwear production by Cordiners has disappeared in Scotland, with the influx of cheap footwear from overseas, and for well over a century, the Cordiners have been a purely charitable organisation, providing grants to Glasgow-based organisations and individuals, as well as sponsoring educational prizes at Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow School of Art, and Glasgow Clyde College, for practical projects using leather.

Each of our grants is usually in the region of £1,000, and we generally support small organisations, based in the Glasgow area, rather than large charities. Most of our charitable giving supports people in need (especially children), and education. In recent years, we have given grants to, among others:

² Annemieke Cunningham(2006-2007)

	2019	2020	2021
Grantees	3,610.00		600.00
Grantees Outing	270.00	144.00	
Donation - Glasgow City Mission	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Donation - Sir Thomas Lipton Foundation	1,000.00		
Donation - KIND Scotland	250.00	600.00	
Donation - Glasgow Disabled Scouts	603.00	3,000.00	5,000.00
Donation - Modern Apprentice of the Year Awards	250.00		
Prize - Glasgow Clyde College	1,000.00	200.00	1,000.00
Prize - Glasgow School of Art	1,000.00		
Purchase of Football Boots for Refugees	1,046.52		
Glasgow City Council - PEPASS Donation		8,332.47	
Outdoor Resource Centre - Donation		5,000.00	
Reverse Rett - Donation		250.00	
Glasgow Caledonian University - Prize			1,000.00
PEPASS Donation			15,000.00
Trades House - Craftex Donation	1,000.00		
George Webster - Grant		2,570.00	
Targeted expenditure for the year	13,048.52	21,096.47	23,600

We also support charitable and educational activity within the Trades House on an annual basis, for example, the Draper's Fund and the Craftex exhibition.

Our total charitable giving in 2018 were in the region of £36,000.

BODY AND SOLE - aims and objectives

Since 2017, our Master Court has been reflecting on the need to better focus our charitable giving, and the outcome of our deliberations is that we established in 2018 a new charitable initiative, called "Body and Sole".

Our primary aim is to provide sports footwear (in line with our shoemaking heritage), for children and young people from disadvantaged areas of Glasgow, to encourage participation in sport and outdoor activities generally, with attendant health benefits, both physical and mental, over the longer term. To facilitate this, we have established an association with PEPASS (Physical Education, Physical Activity and School Sports), a division of Glasgow City Council Education Department.

Following initial discussions with managers of PEPASS and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, letters inviting bids for sports footwear were sent out in 2018 to heads of PE in deprived area schools across Glasgow, and six replies were received from schools and one from the Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme. The bidders were asked to give examples of why they felt provision of sports footwear to their school was necessary. The answers made harrowing reading, with some children having only one pair of shoes, so that they could not reasonably participate in outdoor sport on a muddy field, and had to sit out the activity, with attendant stigma from their peers.

KEY PARTNERS/ the size of the challenge

The Education Department publishes annually in April a Standards and Quality Report, revealing the high levels of deprivation in Glasgow schools,

with 38,701 children living in SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) deciles 1 and 2, the most deprived. The report also outlines the good work of the Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme in Glasgow schools.

PROGRESS ~ YEAR 1- 2018

Our Master Court felt able to support all the school bids in 2018, providing 680 pairs of assorted sports shoes, and establishing a pool of 150 pairs of walking boots for the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, which will allow large numbers of pupils to participate in the various activities required for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. We awarded grants in total of around £11,000 in our pilot year, 2018, including a small donation to a Social Work project.

This funding was utilised to assist young people in 6 different secondary schools in Glasgow where the percentage of the school population living in SIMD level 1 and 2 is over 75%.

YEAR 2- 2019

Looking forward to the 2019-2020 financial year, we anticipated a need for significantly more sports footwear for the following reasons.

- Footwear provided this year is unlikely to fit the children's' growing feet in a year's time
- Only a minority of schools sent in their bids for funding by the deadline in 2018, so we suspected that we had only just "scratched the surface" of need.
- The bid from the Social Work Department had much merit, but lack of funds limited our ability to help in 2018.

Our predictions proved correct, and in 2019, we received bids from 40 schools, totalling £33,000. As this sum was well beyond our means, it was necessary to reduce the awards to several schools, but in the event were able to provide sports footwear worth £12,000 to Glasgow schools, £5,000 to the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, Glasgow, and £5,000 to Glasgow City Council Social Work Department, to provide footwear for the Glasgow Outdoor Centre, which does excellent work with some of Glasgow's most deprived children.

Despite doubling our donation to £22,000 in 2019, there is still a high level of unmet need within Glasgow schools, and we have made a direct appeal to our members to support this project, which hopefully will further augment our resources. Any help we can receive from outside sources would be extremely helpful to our efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of many schoolchildren in the Glasgow area.

With the devastating effect of COVID on the schools and children not being able to participate in activities has meant that this excellent initiative has been held back in supporting our young people, but it is anticipated that this will be resolved in the near future.

Conclusion

So how stand the Cordiners now?

It can safely be said that the Cordiners stand very well and are well-equipped to face the next four hundred years. The Trades House of Glasgow and its constituent Incorporated Trades have seen and coped with tremendous changes during that time, but this must be inevitable in any long-established institution that manages to survive. The ability to develop and adapt to new challenges can be seen throughout the history of the Incorporated Trades of Glasgow. Currently, the need for change is of particular relevance to the very survival of the Trades Hall, which must adapt to suit the economic rigours of modern society; although interestingly, the favoured solution seems to include a return to a model which pertained earlier in its history. The Trades, including the Cordiners, have adapted to a new modern era by embracing change in such areas as the admission of women, whilst continuing to maintain the caring, charitable work. However, even in this important area of charity, modern approaches are being developed to take account of changing situations – the Cordiners may no longer offer apprenticeships to the young people of Glasgow, but the Craft takes an active interest in and offers practical support, to the Strathclyde Youth Clubs Association.

As to the future that is obviously a far more difficult question and maybe present Cordiners should have the confidence to leave the details of that to forthcoming generations of Cordiners to decide. For as long as each generation of the Craft leaves it in the best possible heart and continue to take pride in guarding the core traditions towards charity and fellowship, those heirs will surely prove to be able and worthy custodians of the traditions and well-being of this truly historic Craft.

God is our Hope.