

Hammermen of Ayr

Taken from an original manuscript of their Minutes

Introduction

In 2023 the honorary archivist of the Trades House received a gift to the Trades House of a series of ancient pages from the Minutes of the Incorporation of Hammermen of Ayr. The pages had been transcribed from old Scots to modern Scots and typed onto very thin paper.

Notes on the Minutes

The words on the modern paper reads:

From the looks of the paper of the two foolscap double leaves from an old Craft Minute Book I would date the paper as of the period 1650/1675.

The writing is distinctly of the style common in the middle of the seventeenth century.

One of the leaves is marked "21" and the other is marked "22".

The front page of 21 has the following writing as follows:-

"Upon XXIIII day of August the hail brethern of the craft convened in John Wallace's house of the Deacon's.

Hew Neisbit came that day and satisfied the craft for his dinner and his upset and they held themselves weill content and paid thereof."

The next entry is:

"Upon the XXX day of October the hail brethern of the craft convened in John Wallace's house and chose their Deacon"

A list of 28 members follows and votes are recorded in favour of two candidates. John Wallace seems to have received 7 votes and George Smith 6 votes. The last name in the list is the name of Neisbit, the Officer of the craft. (The Officer was usually the latest member).

There is nothing recorded in the inside pages of pages 2 and 3 but on the 4th page which is written in reverse (a common custom) there is an entry regarding an apprentice.

The rest of the page is very badly written and through bad usage would be extremely difficult to decipher, but it is apparently a Minute referring to an election as there is a long list of names marked with votes.

While month and day are mentioned in all these Minutes, the year is not mentioned.

Th 4th page of the leaf marked 22 shows the date 1693, although the "6" is formed in such a way that modern readers would think it a "5".

On the first page there is a Minute –

“Upon IX October 1693 convenit within the Deacon John Wallace’s house, the maist part of the Hammermen and elected and chose the Deacon in manner after following:-

“Leets”

*John Wallace IIIII
William Campbell
George Hunter
John Beatty IIIIIII
David Whyte
Hew Neisbit*

The same day the hail Hammermen has elected and chosen John Beatty Deacon of the Craft who has sworn to do his faithful duty sufficiently as becomes.

The names of persons upon the Council of Craft –

*John Wallace, Auld Deacon
William Campbell
Hew Neisbit
Matthew Pollok
David Whyte*

The day and year of God above written the hail Craft elected George Smyt, Elder, Officer of Craft who swore to do his hail duty sufficiently as becomes.

The which day the Deacon aforesaid with the consent and advice of the hail Craft ordains all the questions and motions to be upon ane Monday at eight hours before noon who being convenit by the Officer shall meet at the time foresaid where they shall be warnit under the pain of ane unlaw forgiven without ane sufficient excuse and if the Officer be deforced in taking of the unlaws the deforcing person to pay ane double unlaw forgiven and the unlaw to be 5/-.” (5d sterling).

Page 2 of 22 contains the following:-

“There is in the Common Purse £5” (8/4d sterling)

There follows:-

“Upon the III day of June the haill brethern of the Craft convenit in John Beattie’s house, the Deacon’s, Matthew Came and satisfied the Craft for his dinner and his upset and they held themselves weill content and satisfied thereof and discharge the same forever.

And upon the same day William Macormik came and satisfied the Craft for his dinner and his upset and they held themselves weill content and satisfied and discharged the same forever.

Upon the Day of August the haill brethern of the Craft convenit in John Beattie’s house, the Deacon’s, John Wallace, Younger, came and satisfied the Craft for his dinner and his upset and they held themselves weill content and satisfied and discharged the same forever.

Upon that same day William Hunter came and satisfied the Craft for his dinner and his upset and they held themselves weill content and satisfied and discharged the same forever.”

The 3rd page of leaf 22 contains no writing.

The 4th page (in reverse) is very indistinct, badly written and badly damaged but it is the record of an election as the voting marks are clear.

Thomas Wallace has the greatest number of votes and was elected Deacon and immediately thereafter he appointed his Council and the Officer of the Craft.