



Trades House of Glasgow

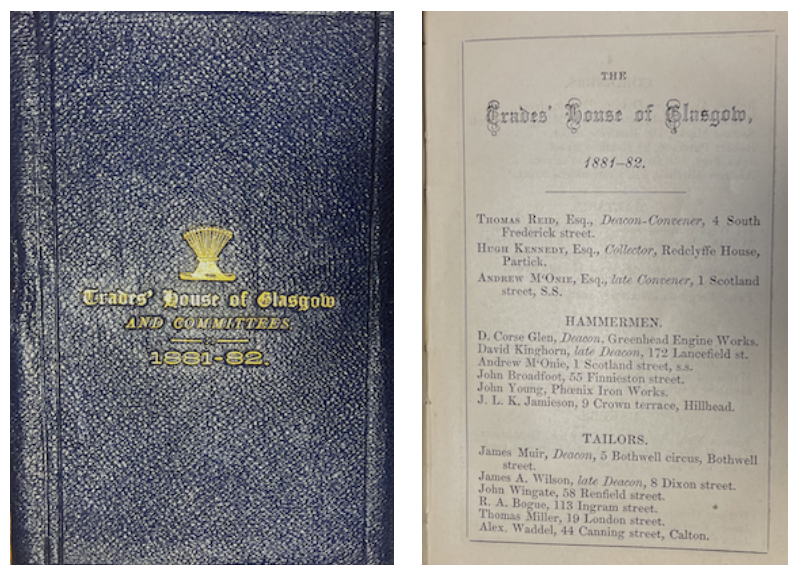
Heritage Newsletter No 13

March 2026



ARCHIVES

A 'Blue Book' from Australia



A leather-bound 'blue book' from 1881-82

The Trades House handbook was an annual publication which listed the main office bearers and members of master courts of the House as well as Standing Orders etc. We have recently received an email from Australia asking us if we would like to have a copy of the Trades House Handbook from 1967. As it happens, we were lacking this particular edition of what was known as the 'Blue Book' and it is now being sent to Glasgow all the way from Victoria, Australia. The earliest copy of the handbook in the archives is one dating from 1878 and it would be good to see if we could acquire a whole set of these little books. They are a great source of information as they provide addresses as well as names. The missing years are: 1879; 1898-1904; 1911-1941; 1957-1959; 1968-1972. The latest copy held in the archives is 1973 but the books may have been published after

this date. If you have any of the missing years stored away on a shelf or in an attic and are happy to donate to the Trades House Archives, please let us know by emailing info@tradeshouse.org.uk

The Friends of Glasgow Necropolis

Many famous Glaswegians including engineers, artists, iron founders, inventors, scientists, poets, factory owners and business people of Victorian Glasgow are buried in the Necropolis along with thousands of other Glaswegians who are buried in unmarked graves. Very much visited to this day, it was the first garden cemetery in Scotland with a landscape inspired by Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. Over the years it has suffered from under-investment, natural decay and vandalism. The Friends, who were founded in 2005, works with Glasgow City Council to decide priorities and a schedule of activities to help preserve and promote this important space within the City. Hugely popular tours which attract many international visitors are given by the Friends to publicise and help people understand the importance of the Necropolis to the history and culture of the City.

Many families with connections to the Trades House are buried in the Necropolis and we are working with the Friends to find out more about



William Lightbody, Deacon of the Incorporation of Wrights 1902/03

them. An example of this is the Lightbody family whose family lair is in Compartment Lambda. Lair 61. William Lightbody (d. 1868) was a wright by trade and built a successful 'Vat and Tun' business on Sydney Street, supplying the brewing and distilling industries. He was admitted as a member of the Incorporation of Wrights on 2 July 1833. His son, also William, carried on the business and was Deacon of the Incorporation of Wrights in 1902/3. The family had a very long association with the Trades House. An ancestor was Maltman William Lightbody who was Deacon Convener in 1648/1649 and 1651.

To find out more about the Friends of Glasgow Necropolis visit their website at <https://www.glasgowneecropolis.org>

Hall Officers/Keepers from 1879 to 1967

Former Honorary Archivist, Craig Bryce, has produced an updated history of the Trades House Hall Officers/Keepers from 1879 to 1974.

The House Officer has an ancient role, being mentioned in the Letter of Guildry which established the Trades House in 1605. The role of the Officer once the House had moved its new home in the late 18th century was ‘take charge of the Hall buildings in Glassford Street, and protect them from harm’, to ‘deliver cards for the all the meetings of the House and its committees, carry the books to and from those meetings, and attend the same, kindle the fires and ring the bell’ and ‘To aid and assist the collector of the building committee, in the letting of the halls’.



Hall Keepers Paul Kay and Zaki Djoudi maintaining a long tradition.

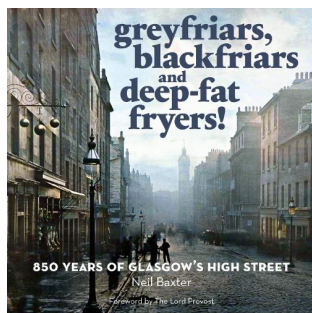
A separate role of Hall Keeper for dealing with Hall lets was instigated in 1901 due to the increased age of Mr John Farrell who had been Officer of the House and Keeper since 1884. The roles and tasks of the Hall Keeper have evolved over the years, and they remain a vital part of the workings of the Trades Hall. This history

supplements Craig’s History of the Hall Officers from 1605 to 1826. Both articles can be downloaded from

<https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/trades-house.html> (scroll down the page).

LIBRARY

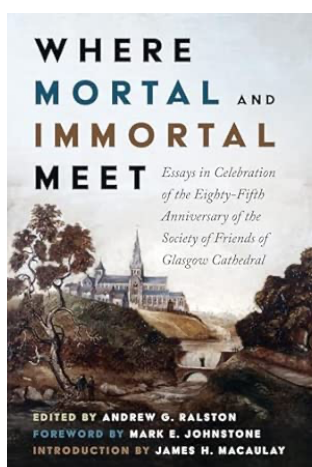
Latest additions to the Trades House Library include:



Neil Baxter, *greyfriars, blackfriars and deep-fat fryers! 850 years of Glasgow's High Street*, Glasgow: Baxter Jardine Ltd, 2025.

For many centuries the High Street was the centre of the city of Glasgow. This work takes the reader century by century through the history of the High Street from its humble beginnings as a steep forest path connecting a small hilltop hamlet with the River Clyde to its busy life right at the centre of the city until the focus of Glasgow started to move west over two hundred years ago. The building of the cathedral and its subsequent developments, the Bishop's Castle, the arrival of the Blackfriars and the consequent establishment of the Dominican Friary, the beginnings of the university, Glasgow Royal Infirmary, markets and everyday life, are all covered in this beautifully illustrated volume. Sadly, apart from a few buildings such as the Cathedral and Provands Lordship, very little remains. However, with the aid of this book, the reader can visualise what life was like in the city many centuries ago. This book was kindly donated to the Trades House Library by Ex-Deacon Convener Ruth Maltman.

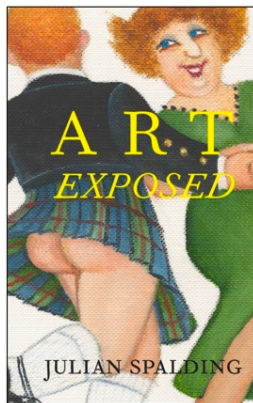
Further books awarded the Sir Robert Smith prize have been donated to the Trades House Library by The Grand Antiquity Society:



Andrew G. Ralston, *Where Mortal and Immortal Meet: essays in Celebration of the Eighty-Fifth Anniversary of the Society of Friends of Glasgow Cathedral*, Eugen, Oregon: WIPF & STOCK, 2021.

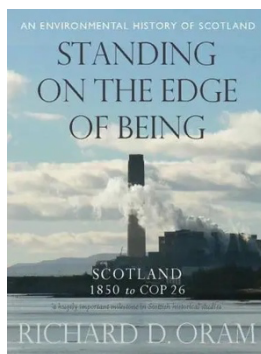
This work, awarded the Sir Robert Smith prize in 2022, has two primary aims a) to trace the history of the Society of Friends of Glasgow Cathedral from its foundation in 1936 and b) to make available the work that has been conducted on the Cathedral's history since the publication of George Eyre-Todd's work *The*

Book of Glasgow Cathedral: A History and Description was published in 1898. The Editor of the volume, Andrew Ralston provides a history of the Friends and a chapter on ‘Worship in Glasgow Cathedral, 1865-1915’, whereas the chapters on the earlier history of the Cathedral include work by distinguished Scottish historians, several of which are based on lectures given to the Society of Friends over the years such as Ian B. Cowan’s ‘Glasgow Cathedral and its Clergy in the Middle Ages’ and Roger A. Mason, ‘The Glasgow Assembly of 1638’. James Macaulay, who died in 2022 shortly after the publication of this book, was the then Chairman of the Friends. An architectural historian, he contributed a chapter on ‘The Western Towers of Glasgow Cathedral’ in which he much regretted the demolition of the two towers of unequal height which used to grace the West Front of the Cathedral. For anyone interested in the early history of the cathedral, this work is an indispensable guide.



Julian Spalding, *Art Exposed*, London: Pallas Athene, 2024.

Julian Spalding was Director of Glasgow Museums from 1989-1999 and this book is an account of his professional life and the many people he has met and had dealings with. The work has been described as a ‘brilliant critique of art today’.



Richard D. Oram, *Standing on the Edge of Being, Scotland 1850 to COP26*, Edinburgh: John Donald, 2024.

This is the third and final volume in Professor Richard Oram’s environmental history of Scotland series and brings the reader from the 1850s to more recent times with the climate crisis as it impacts us today.

Craig Bryce’s history: *Glasgow’s Best-Kept Secret: The History of the Trades Hall*, 2019, was the very first recipient of the Sir Robert Smith prize and is available for purchase (£20) from the Trades House Office at:

info@tradeshouse.org.uk. Details of the books in the Trades House Library

are available online at <https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org> (scroll down the page to download a PDF list).

MUSEUM

The Heritage team continues to welcome new additions to its already extensive library, museum and archive collections. In most instances these donations have an importance beyond the physical objects themselves and provide a valuable insight into the history of the Trades House, the individuals associated with the building, the 14 crafts, and the other interlinked organisations. However, occasionally, an item is acquired for the collection that leaves plenty of unanswered questions as to the narrative behind the object.

A set of 15 EPNS (electro-plated nickel silver) spoons in a presentation box was recently gifted to the House by Richard Service via Dr Alistair Dorward, former Deacon Convenor. The cased spoons originally belonged to Richard Service's grandfather, Andrew Graham Service, who was Deacon Convener in 1911/12. (Graham Service is also remembered for his contribution to the funding of the three stained glass windows in the Saloon in 1915, along with former DC's William Beattie and Jackson Millar.)



For now, the history behind the spoons is unclear as there is no date attached to them. The spoons' heads are each decorated with the arms of the 14 Incorporations and the handles engraved with the Crafts' individual mottos; the 15th spoon in the set carries the Trades Hall's own Coat of Arms and its handle engraved with 'Union is Our Strength'.

There is a real quality to these spoons epitomised by the fact that they were made by JR and W Laing Manufacturing Jewellers operating out of two city centre locations in Gordon Street and Brunswick Street, Glasgow. Founded in 1840, Laing's are Scotland's oldest luxury jeweller and as a family business are still in existence today.

The question remains why and when were these spoons commissioned? Given the time, effort and money spent on their original design, would it have been practical to simply commission just one set? If not, and a small edition was in fact produced, then there must be other examples hidden away somewhere.

If anyone can enlighten the Heritage team with some hitherto unknown insights into this intriguing story we'd be delighted to hear from you.

Please email info@tradeshouse.org.uk if you can help us find out more.