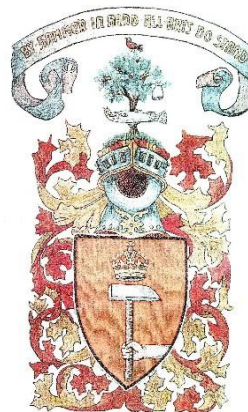


The Trades House of Glasgow



The Incorporation of Hammermen



## THE HAMMERMEN SERVICE GROUP

### *REVIEW OF THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE*

**1972 TO 2023 & BEYOND**



Robin M Brown  
Chairman  
12 September 2023

## 1.0 Summary

The Hammermen Service Group (HSG) was initially set up in 1972 with the aim of younger members of the craft assisting pensioners within the Incorporation of Hammermen (IHG) both on physical tasks such as gardening, decorating, etc and also providing visitations and companionship, sometimes in the form of Outings, all on a voluntary basis.

This evolved over the years with the main emphasis being on two Outings annually — a Summer Outing, typically on a Saturday in late August by coach to a smart hotel in central or southern Scotland for lunch, and in the winter, early in the New Year, attendance at the Kings Pantomime after a pre-theatre meal.

In the mid 1980's, following requests from other Crafts, invitations were extended to pensioners from all Crafts and Trusts, with each Craft/Trust funding their own pensioners and guests.

At the peak over 170 people attended the Summer Outing (in four coaches) whereas numbers now have fallen to about 40. This reduction has resulted from a range of factors including the effects of the Covid pandemic, and declining pensioner numbers in most crafts.

With the imminent retiral of most of the HSG Committee, and with very limited support for continuation, after over 50 years of activity, the **Hammermen** Service Group will wind down this month. The possibility of a re-birth, in a slightly different format, as a **Trades House** Service Group, involving representatives from more Crafts, is under consideration. Support for this proposal has been muted so far from all quarters.

## 2.0. Formation of Hammermen Service Group

Extract from letter dated 23rd February 1972 from J.A.Rutherford, Clerk to Incorporation of Hammermen, sent to 64 younger members of the Craft resident in the Greater Glasgow area :

*“DEVELOPMENT OF INCORPORATION ACTIVITIES: The Incorporation of Hammermen which, as you know, works principally in the fields of training of younger members and in charitable activities towards its own pensioners, is anxious to develop its activities and the involvement of its membership over a wider field.*

*The Master Court has authorised me to write to you to invite you to attend a meeting of younger members of the Incorporation in order to explore the extent of their interest in such developments.*

*The kind of activities which are envisaged are those which would enable people with education and skills to put these at the service of the community at large in some way or another. The potential contribution of the younger Craftsmen lies more in the use of their time, their skills and their knowledge, than in the use of money. The kinds of thing that come to mind are the provision of help and advice to old folk (and young for that matter) in such things as coping with the, for them, baffling problems of form filling, dealing with formidable looking official documents, a little time spent for company's sake for the lonely the young and skilled, so difficult, a little practical with jobs that are so simple to the young and skilled, so difficult and costly for the elderly or infirm. An exploratory meeting for this purpose will be held at 1 Blythswood Square on Friday 7th April 1972 at 4.30pm”*

This meeting was attended by 7 younger members who resolved to form a committee, to be known as *Hammermen Service Group* to further develop the broadest objectives of this Craft initiative, commencing with visitations to Pensioners to ascertain their non-financial needs.

Extract from the Annual Report of the Incorporation of Hammermen as at 31st July 1972 stated;

*“During the year a number of younger members of the Craft formed The Hammermen Service Group to reinforce and if possible extend the existing activities of the Craft by some form of voluntary service or personal assistance to Pensioners and others in need. Members of the Group have been able to help a number of Pensioners with domestic and household problems. Members of the Craft between the ages of 18 and 35 who are interested in joining the Group are required to inform the Clerk.”*

Hence the Hammermen Service Group was born !

### **3.0 The Early Years of The Hammermen Service Group — 1972 to 1984**

The initial services to Pensioners such as house decoration, gardening and minor handyman jobs were soon changed to organising Outings for the Hammermen pensioners, each with a guest, to locations in Central Scotland, for the Summer Outings, such as Culzean Castle, Loch Lomond, Loch Katrine, Blair Drummond, Scone Palace, Falkland Palace, Holyrood Palace, New Lanark, Inverary, and Hopetoun House.

The number of attendees on the Summer Outings at this stage, with only Hammermen Pensioners and their guests, plus HSG committee members, typically totalled about 20, usually in a hired coach with driver but sometimes in a self-drive mini bus plus private cars. Lunch was generally arranged in a good hotel before the afternoon visit to a stately home or sail on loch. Sometimes afternoon tea was taken in lieu of lunch, or on occasions, as well as lunch.

Winter Outings, in mid-January generally, involved attendance at Pantomimes at the Kings Theatre for productions such as Robinson Crusoe, Babes in the Wood, Jack in the Beanstalk, Sleeping Beauty, Aladdin, Cinderella, Mother Goose, and Sinbad the Sailor with the stars of that era including Stanley Baxter, Chic Murray, Francie & Josie, Jimmy Logan, and Johnny Beattie.

In the early 1980's a pre-theatre meal at the Royal Scottish Automobile Club in Blythswood Square was added to the Winter Outings.

The leaders of the HSG in this period were Peter Towndrow initially and then Anthony Broadway.

### **4.0 The Middle Years of the Hammermen Service Group — 1984 to 2010**

This 25-year period was the 'Golden Era' of the Group.

Outings were bigger events, involving Pensioners from all 14 Crafts and from various Trusts also. In 1984 some other Crafts requested that they send their Pensioners on our Outings, on a pro rata re-chargeable basis. Willing to assist others and as it is almost the same organisational effort for an Outing with 150 participants as it is for 25, we agreed to the suggestion.

Now three, or even four coaches, were needed for our Summer Outings to accommodate the much larger numbers. The luxury coaches were normally hired from Allander Coaches in Milngavie who over the years proved to be reliable, helpful and understanding of our needs.

Nearly always the Deacon Convenor of the Trades House and the Deacon of the Hammermen, with their wives, attended the Outings.

On a craft-funded basis Deacons, Visitor and Clerks were encouraged to attend the Outings and liaise with their own pensioners, although this seldom happened. Venues selected for the Summer Outings were largely based on the reputation and

facilities of the hotel, with a large function suite, conservatory, ballroom or dining room accommodating over 150 people, usually on an exclusive basis. These Outings were always on Saturdays, usually towards the end of August.

The geographical range and travel distance from Glasgow was extended, but nonetheless kept at about two hours maximum drive time. New venues, slightly further, afield came within range including Fife, the Borders and lowland Perthshire.

Hotels visited included Gleneagles, Crieff Hydro, Peebles Hydro, Rusacks in St Andrews and also Old Course Hotel in St Andrews, Turnberry, Dunkeld House Hotel, Troon Highland Hotel, Marine Hotel in North Berwick, Green Hotel in Kinross, Hospitality Inn in Irvine, Royal Scot Hotel in Edinburgh, Open Arms Hotel in Direction, and Ayr Race Course.

Due to their particular appeal and suitability return visits were made to a few favourites, namely, Crieff Hydro, Peebles Hydro, and Dunkeld House Hotel.

We discovered some hotels did not favour coach tours, and some hotels preferred wedding bookings, with bigger bar bills, compared to our sedate low-consumption visitors.

We also learnt by experience that our plans initially were sometimes too ambitious — a two-hour outward coach journey, pre-lunch drinks in the hotel bar, three course meal with coffee, visit to a stately home, afternoon tea and return journey to Glasgow — all starting at 10am and arriving back by 6.30pm was simply too much — either too rushed, late return, or unachievable.

A more relaxed format for the typical Summer Outing evolved with a leisurely lunch (with full table service for food and bar, and not buffet style) in the selected hotel, free time in the town (eg, Crieff, Peebles, St Andrews, Dunkeld — usually with a frequent shuttle bus service between hotel and town centre), and concluding with a light afternoon tea back in the hotel before heading for home.

Shopping or sight-seeing in the town was favoured by our Pensioners in preference to a visit to a nearby stately home with a rushed guided tour.

Sometimes, much to the amusement of our guests, we handed out 'pocket money' (£2 or £3) to our Pensioners for purchase of ice creams in the afternoon.

The objective of these Outings was to provide, at no cost to the participants, a well-organised, hassle-free, worry-free day-out for the Pensioner and one guest, possibly their spouse, other family member, friend or carer.

All expenses including meals, drinks, coach hire, sweets, gratuities, postage, etc were charged to account and the total account was apportioned by our Treasurer on a pro rate, equitable basis related to the number of attendees per Craft or Trust. Recovery of the cost was sought from each Craft or Trust within four weeks of the event.

Each Craft or trust was responsible for transporting, or arranging taxis for, their own pensioners to and from the starting point in Glasgow City centre usually in or beside the Buchanan Bus Station.

For the Winter Outings we continued the broad theme of pre-theatre meal followed by attendance at Kings pantomime. However over the years some adjustments had to be made to the formula, some for reasons outwith our control and some to satisfy the preferences of our Pensioners :

- + Shorter pantomime season : Our booking had to change to be in first few days of New Year and not mid January as before, as the season terminated about 4th January.
- + Closure of RSAC : We transferred our pre-theatre meal to Thistle Hotel or Marriott Hotel initially and then in subsequent years Trades Hall, using chartered double decker bus to transfer Pensioners between venues.
- + Different entertainment : From 2013 onwards we moved from Pantomimes in January to headliner musical shows in March, including Fame, Annie, Dolly and Buddy.
- + Revised performance times : From evening shows at 7.30pm we transferred to Matinees at 2.30pm

In this period the average cost per pensioner / guest for the Summer Outing was about £60 per person and for the Winter outing about £40 per person.

Total number of attendees at Outings in this period fell slowly from over 160 in year 2000 to about 100 a decade or so later. These numbers include Pensioners, their guests, HSG helpers (typically 12) and Trades House officials (typically 6).

The peak attendance at a Summer Outing was in 2000 with 176 attendees at Turnberry, travelling in 4 coaches. For the Winter Outing the peak attendance was also in 2000 with 155 attendees.

Separate accounts were opened for each Outing, and then closed once all bills were paid and recoveries received from Crafts and Trusts. The Annual Accounts were prepared by our Treasurer and audited by an independent auditor.

The Outings have been very well received and much enjoyed by all participants. Most attendees greatly look forward to the Outings, and for some the Outing in August is their summer holiday.

Typically the HSG committee met twice per year to discuss and make arrangements for the Outings — with a Business Meeting held in the Spring and a Business / Social Meeting in the Autumn.

The Chairman of the Hammermen Service Group for this period, and beyond to 2023 was Robin M Brown, who was also Deacon of the Incorporation of Hammermen in 1996/97.

In 1987 some of our Hammermen Pensioners and some of the HSG members were introduced to HRH Duke of Edinburgh who opened the Hammermen 450th Anniversary Display at the Kelvin grove Art Gallery and Museum.

## 5.0 The Recent Years of The Hammermen Service Group — 2011 to 2023

Circumstances changed in this period :

- \* Pensioner numbers in most crafts were in decline, with few new pensioners being added.
- \* The age profile of the Pensioners was changing with some living longer, but possibly less agile and less confident about travelling.
- \* Lack of confidence by our core market to attend Outings
- \* The committee members of HSG were growing older with few younger members coming forward.  
— most now in their sixties where the suggested age range originally for members of HSG was 18 to 35 years.
- \* Bureaucracy and regulations were ever tightening — GDPR, Data Protection, Health & Safety, etc
- \* Communications chains between HSG and Pensioners were ever lengthening via Trades House office, Clerks, Master Courts, Social Worker, etc
- \* Various attempts to involve new-blood younger member on HSG have been unsuccessful
- \* Litigation, insurance, indemnity and liability were of greater concern now than before
- \* The Covid Pandemic severely disrupted arrangements for three years — 2020 to 2023
- \* Some of the Pensioners died due to Covid
- \* At hotels competition increased from more lucrative wedding bookings
- \* Requirement at some establishments now to pay in full, including drinks, six weeks before the event
- \* Need to plan ahead and book hotels two years in advance.

## 6.0 The Future of the Hammermen Service Group

The HSG will be disbanded soon after the Outing on 12th September 2023 for the following reasons, some of which were cited above, but are repeated here in a different format, as reasons / causes for the discontinuation :

1. Declining Pensioner numbers — *34 from Crafts and 38 from Trusts as at January 2023*
2. Advancing age profile of Pensioners — *many in 70's, 80's & 90's and in poorer health*
3. Falling attendance at Outings — *down from peak of 174 in millennium to 38 in September 2023*
4. After-effects of Covid Pandemic — *hesitation by pensioners in attending large social events*

5. Advancing age profile of HSG Committee — *some members now over 70 years and retiring*
6. Formation of Committee — *'new blood' needed to replace some long-serving members*
7. Recruitment difficulties — *attempts at enrolling HSG members have been unsuccessful*
8. Lack of awareness of HSG — *efforts to improve profile within THG were largely unsuccessful*
9. Promotional initiatives — *failed to increase pensioner numbers & to increase support for HSG*
10. Increasing bureaucracy and regulation — *GDPR, Data Protection, Health & Safety, Insurance, etc*
11. Possible funding issues for some crafts — *reduced income resulting from fall in Stock Market*
12. Diminished need for our services and activities — *more assistance provided from other sources*

Three senior members of HSG, namely Robin Brown (Chairman), Gordon MacLennan (Secretary) and Ian Young are retiring — all in their seventies and over twice the suggested retirement age of 35 when the Group was established 'for younger members on the Craft' in 1972. Robin & Gordon have served for the full 51 year term.

Two members of HSG, Colin Botfield (Treasurer) and Roddy Young have offered to assist in the establishment of a Trades House Service Group, and to guide any such new Group in the transitional period.

After settling the charges for the Outing on 12th September 2023 the residual funds, plus the initial start-up loan of £3000, held in the account of Hammermen Service Group will be returned to the Incorporation of Hammermen.



## 7.0 Testimonials

*The Pensioners greatly appreciate the Outings, and the commitment and assistance of the helpers. The HSG Outings are enjoyed by beneficiaries and are positive for the wellbeing of our beneficiaries. I will support any plan there might be to keep Outings alive*

*The excellent work you and others have achieved in over 50 years deserve the highest respect and indeed fulsome appreciation*

*I am sorry to hear of the demise of the HSG — I did enjoy my time working with you and the group*

*You and the other members of the group have given tremendous service to so many over the years and the cessation of the Group's work is a real loss*

*Your group has done a remarkable job over a considerable number of years*

*I am saddened to hear that this will be a farewell party and sincerely hope that it will rise again in some Trades House form*

*I'd like to thank you and HSG for all your hard work and dedication over many years*

*The HSG has given countless thousands of pensioners great enjoyment over the decades*

*It is sad that the HSG is having to end but as with many things Covid has caused a big change in everyones lives in many ways*

*We would like to congratulate you and the Group for all the efforts over many years which have given a lot of pleasure to many pensioners and guests*

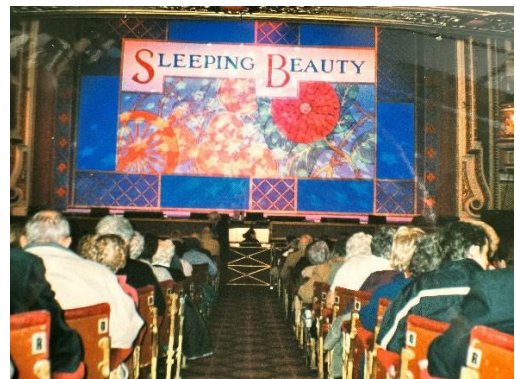
*The HSG gives invaluable support to our pensioners— the popularity of the Outings continue to be much appreciated*

*The HSG has been an enormous success undertaking its valuable contribution to the work of the House for 50 years*

*The whole concept of the Group was marvellous... incredible work by the committee*

*We express gratitude for all the work that HSG has done over the years — it has been very valuable and enhanced the reputation of Trades House.*

*HSG has brought friendship and enjoyment to many*



## 8.0 HSG Committee Members

Over the 50+ years of existence — 1972 to 2023 — the following Hammermen have served on the HSG Committee — some as general helpers, and some with specific responsibilities, such as Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Convenor for Summer Outing, Convenor for Winter / Spring Outing — names given in alphabetical order by surname — apologies for any omissions:

Colin Botfield  
Robin Brown  
Aldis Hamilton  
David Harrison  
Mhairi MacLennan  
Gordon MacLennan  
Jim Morris  
Peter Shand  
Calum Thomson  
Ian Young

Anthony Broadway  
Jan Dobson  
Norman Hamilton  
Donald Laing  
Kirsteen MacLennan  
David Manson  
Michael Rennie  
David Stirrat  
Peter Towndrow  
Roddy Young

## 9.0 Summer Outings

1973 Duck Bay Marina and Bear Park  
1975 Blair Drummond Safari Park  
1977 Peebles Hydro & Traquair  
1979 Scone Palace & Huntingtower Hotel  
1981 Holyrood Palace & Hawes Inn  
1982/2 Drumlanrig Castle & Auchencastle  
1984 Inverary Castle & Argyll Arms Hotel  
1986 Abbotsford & Peebles Hydro  
1988 Culzean Castle & Turnberry Hotel  
1990 St Andrews & Rusacks Hotel  
1992 Peebles  
1994 Ayr & Marine Highland Hotel  
1996 Largs & Hospitality Inn in Irvine  
1998 Gleneagles Hotel  
2000 Turnberry Hotel  
2002 Peebles Hydro  
2004 St Andrews  
2006 Crieff Hydro  
2008 Peebles Hydro  
2010 Crieff Hydro  
2012 Kinross — Green Hotel  
2014 Peebles Hydro  
2016 Ayr Race Course  
2018 Peebles Hydro  
2020 NO OUTING — COVID  
2022 NO OUTING — Post Covid

1974 Culzean Castle  
1976 Loch Katrine & Trossachs Hotel  
1978 Loch Lomond “Maid of the Loch”  
1980 Falkland Palace and Green Hotel  
1982/1 RSAC & Loch Lomond  
1983 New Lanark & Popinjay Hotel  
1985 Hopetoun House & Royal Scot Hotel  
1987 Blair castle & Dunkeld House Hotel  
1989 North Berwick & Open Arms Hotel  
1991 Dunblane Hydro  
1993 Pitlochry  
1995 St Andrews & Old Course Hotel  
1997 North Berwick  
1999 Gleneagles Hotel  
2001 Crieff Hydro  
2003 Dunkeld House Hotel  
2005 Troon Marine Highland Hotel  
2007 Turnberry Hotel  
2009 Dunkeld House Hotel  
2011 Peebles Hydro  
2013 Dunkeld House Hotel  
2015 St Andrews — Old College  
2017 St Andrews — Old College  
2019 Crieff Hydro  
2021 NO OUTING — COVID  
2023 Trades Hall — no coach tour

## 10.0 Pantomime (to 2012) / Theatre (from 2013) Outings

### Winter Pantomime Outings :

1974	Cinderella	1975	Robinson Crusoe
1976	Babes in the Wood	1977	Jack in the Beanstalk
1978	Sleeping Beauty	1979	Aladdin
1980	Sinbad the Sailor	1981	Cinderella
1982	OUTING CANCELLED — Weather	1983	Jack in the Beanstalk
1984	Mother Goose	1985	Sleeping Beauty
1986	Sinbad the Sailor	1987	Aladdin
1988	Cinderella	1989	Jack in the Beanstalk
1990	Mother Goose	1991	Babes in the Wood
1992	Cinderella	1993	Aladdin
1994	Dick Whittington	1995	Sleeping Beauty
1996	Babes in the Wood	1997	Cinderella
1998	Aladdin	1999	Sleeping Beauty
2000	Mother Goose	2001	Cinderella
2002	Babes in the Wood	2003	Aladdin
2004	Sleeping Beauty	2005	Mother Goose
2006	Cinderella	2007	Aladdin
2008	Sleeping Beauty	2009	Cinderella
2010	Aladdin	2011	Snow White
2012	Sleeping Beauty		

### Spring Musicals Outings:

2013	Fame	2014	Annie
2015	Crazy for You	2016	Dolly
2017	Buddy	2018	Cilla
2019	Ghostbuster	2020	NO OUTING — COVID
2021	NO OUTING — COVID	2022	NO OUTING — COVID
2023	NO OUTING — Post Covid		





