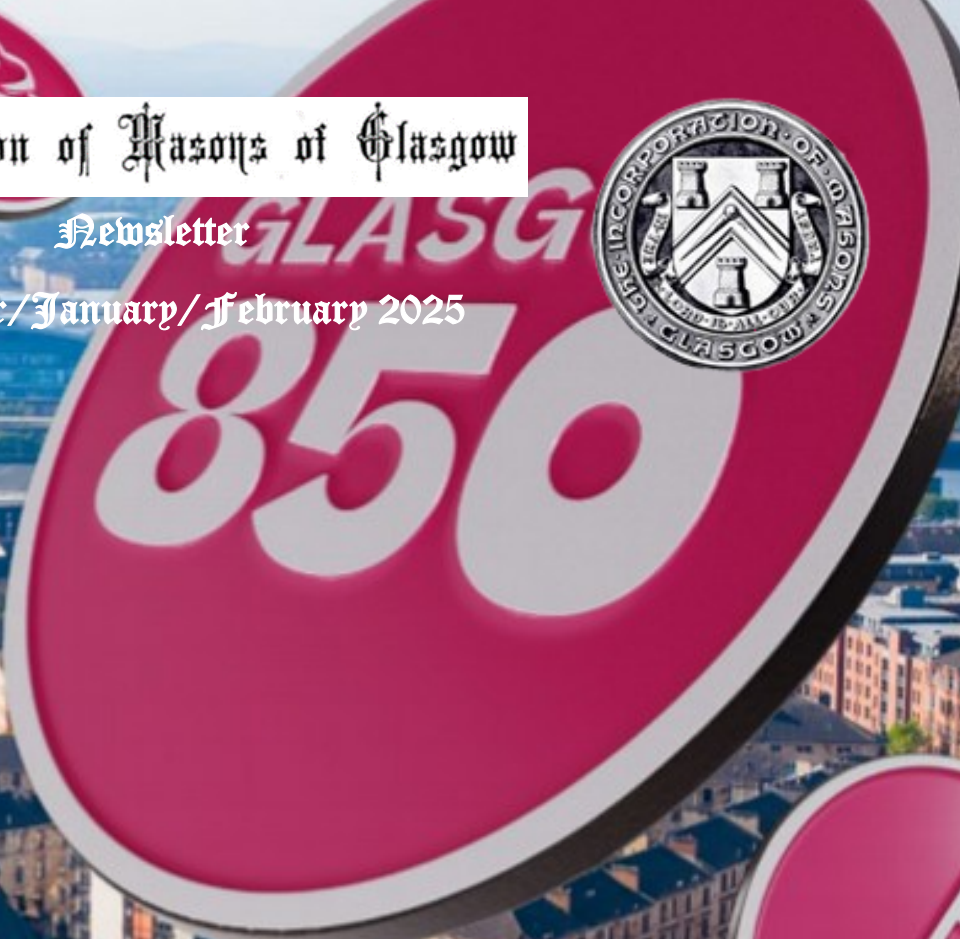




Incorporation of Masons of Glasgow

Newsletter

December/January/February 2025



Programme

Get involved throughout 2025



Incorporation of Masons of Glasgow



December 2024—February 2025

Front Cover

Glasgow celebrates its 850th Anniversary as a burgh this year—to see some events go to [Glasgow 850 programme 2025](#) or [Glasgow 850 - Glasgow City Council](#)

Glasgow's journey to becoming the vibrant city we know today took a major step in 1175 when it was granted the status of a burgh. But what exactly does that mean?

In medieval Scotland, towns that were made burghs had special privileges. This included the right to trade, hold markets, and govern themselves to some extent. It was a significant recognition from the King, as it helped boost a town's economy and attract more people, traders, and businesses.

Glasgow of course existed before this date, as a diocese and small township, however, in 1175, a significant change occurred when King William I of Scotland, granted Glasgow the right to establish a burgh, marking a turning point in its history. This laid the foundation for Glasgow to evolve from a small religious settlement into an important economic centre.



Burgh Charter

The royal charter that established Glasgow as a burgh honoured St. Mungo, the city's patron saint. King William's grant of the burgh was given "for God, St. Kentigern (another name for St. Mungo), and to Jocelyn, bishop of Glasgow, and to each of his successors, forever."

In the 1190s, Glasgow's economy grew even further when it was granted the right to hold an annual fair in July. This tradition is still known (Glasgow Fair) to this day and helped solidify Glasgow as a hub of trade, attracting merchants and visitors from far and wide.

As the burgh grew, so did its governance. By the early 14th century, Glasgow had its own community seal, an important symbol of its civic identity. Citizens began gaining more independence in the 1440s, acquiring rights over common land and appointing a town clerk in 1444. By the early 1450s, the office of provost was established to lead the city, and by 1454, Glasgow had its own Tolbooth, a building used for municipal administration.

These early developments set the foundation for the thriving city Glasgow would become, with a legacy of trade, governance, and community that continues to shape it today. Building on the celebrations 50 years ago, when Glasgow was 800 years old, 2025 will see the city once again, remember its past, mark its present and look forward to its future.

The Baillie 30th September 1891

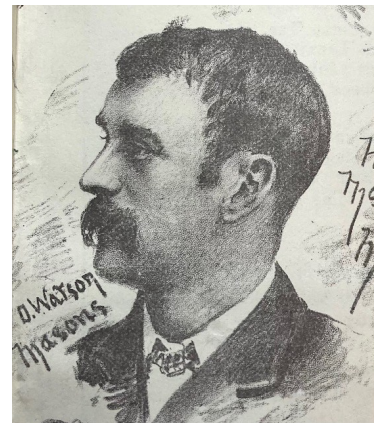
The Trades House of Glasgow, consisting, as it does, of the fourteen Incorporated Trades of the City, is interesting both in regard to its position today as a living, prospering institution, and because of its history, and the influence it has exercised in creating, out of the miserable little hamlet of eight centuries ago, the Second City of the Empire - the Second City by right of its population, its wealth, the intelligence of its citizens, and its well-defined and excellent system of local government. In the fourteenth century, when Rutherglen and Renfrew were royal burghs, with individual corporations and privileges, Glasgow was still a burgh of barony, and a hundred years later it was still no more than a burgh of regality, inhabited by the Bishop's men who were divided into natives and serfs.

It was not until 1636 that Glasgow took its place among the royal burghs, and even then the old privilege, pertaining to its archbishops, of appointing the provost and magistrates, was claimed and exercised by a temporal baron. Long, however, before the granting, by Charles I., of the charter which placed Glasgow on an equality with, say, Rutherglen, the trades' corporations

had fostered an eager, busy spirit among its inhabitants, such a spirit, indeed, as we are reaping the fruits of to-day.

As every "first Friday that shall happen after the 15th day of September annually" comes round, the members of the different incorporations proceed to choose a Deacon and a Collector for each, these officials to hold office for the ensuing twelve months.

Deacon Watson, of the Masons, who is a native of Glasgow, and was educated at the High School and the University, is a partner of the firm of James Watson & Son, Railway Contractors, 112 Bath Street.



Pettigrew & Stephens

In 1888, Andrew Hislop Pettigrew (1857-1942) and William Henry Stephens formed a partnership and opened a shop at 191-193 Sauchiehall Street (known as Manchester House) in Glasgow which Stephens already owned. However, by 1896, William Henry Stephens had died, leaving Andrew Hislop Pettigrew in sole charge.

By 1901, the store was rebuilt in a design by architects John Honeyman and **Past Deacon John Keppie**, with a gilt dome designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and sold a wide range of goods, including clothes, millinery, confectionery, carpets, furniture, ironmongery and china. In 1904, Pettigrew incorporated the company, and leased the Fine Art Institute building at 171-179 Sauchiehall Street, using it as a furniture department.

During 1914, the store was extended, making it one of the biggest in Scotland, with a further extension being added in 1923 to incorporate a specialist men's department.

In 1925, Pettigrew retired and sold his shares to Austin Friars Investment Trust Ltd, of London (a Clarence Hatry company), which in turn sold the business in 1926 to the Scottish Drapery Corporation. The business was continued to be run as a separate company by the SDC until 1952, when the Corporation and all of its subsidiaries were purchased by House of Fraser.

The store continued to trade as Pettigrew & Stephens within the House of Fraser group, but its company status was wound up in 1955. In 1970, the store was moved from its location at 171-193 Sauchiehall Street to the site of Alexander Henderson, another department store recently bought by House of Fraser, as their site was earmarked for demolition (it was demolished in 1971 to make way for Sauchiehall Shopping Centre).



John Alston

Alston Street, now swallowed up in Central Station, was named for John Alston, the grandson of Mr. Miller of Westerton, who created Miller Street. John Alston lived in Miller Street and is better known for developing a system of raised letters, known as Alston type which, with appropriate teaching, allowed them to read. This was a precursor of the system developed by Louis Braille which ultimately was preferred. He was a Deacon in the Incorporation of Weavers and his snuff box is shown.

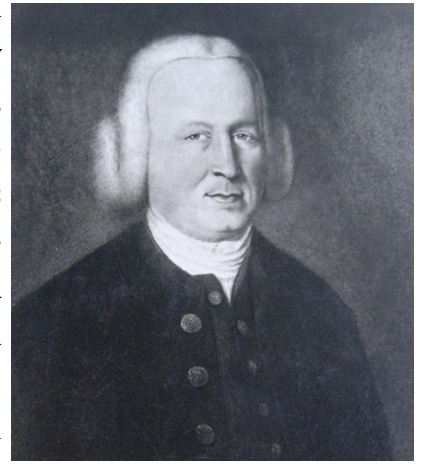
See: [john alston and the blind asylum.pdf](#)



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 on 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. The portrait shows Francis Crawford about the time that he was Deacon Convener of the Trades of Glasgow in 1765.



Mason Street

Mason Street was originally the site of the manse of Andrew Hay, the Rector of Renfrew (post about a stone to follow). It was acquired in 1598 by John Rankyne [sic], a mason, and named it after his trade. He joined the Incorporation in 1574 gratis, possibly due to him having named the street which was round the corner from the original Trades House prior to 1794. Notice the names of the other streets in close proximity - Weaver Street (owned by the Incorporation of Weavers and feued in 1792) and Taylor Street (connected

to the Incorporation of Tailors).

On the front of the page on which the first Minute of the Incorporation is engrossed, there is given a list, presumably for the year 1600, of "the names of ye Masonis: . . . John Rankine." His son joined the Incorporation in 1629. It would appear his brother, James, joined in 1609 and was also a stonemason. Both were deacons although it is difficult to tell which is which as there were a number of John and James as deacons.



The Old Home

At the back of St. Nicholas Hospital there existed a small hospital called the "Back Alms House" for the reception of four poor men. the Trades' House, were erected in Glassford Street in 1791.

The time and circumstances of its erection are not known, but it seems to have been in existence long prior to 1600, when it became ruinous. Macleod Street and the buildings of the new Barony Church now occupy the greater part of the ground on which the old hospital and chapel, dedicated to St Nicholas, stood (Renwick 1908). The hospital was founded by Andrew de Durisdere, bishop of Glasgow, for a priest and twelve old men, in 1471. Although the "back almshouse" was deserted before 1600, the hospital continued till the 18th century (Easson 1957), its ruins being removed in 1798. The chapel was removed in 1808.

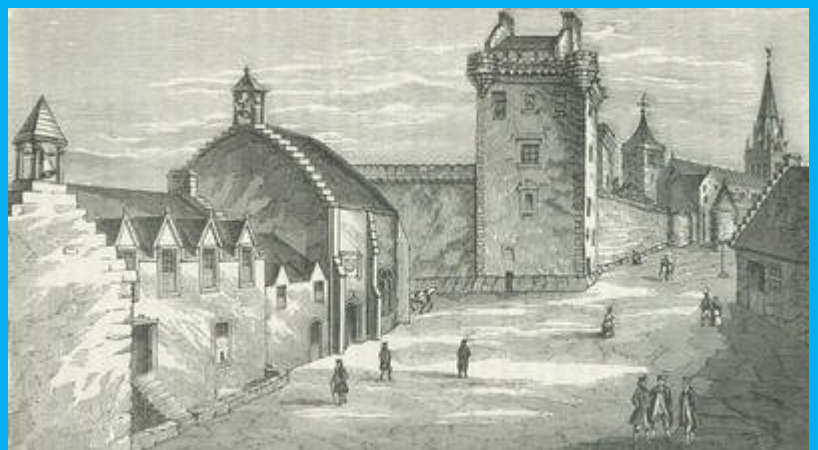
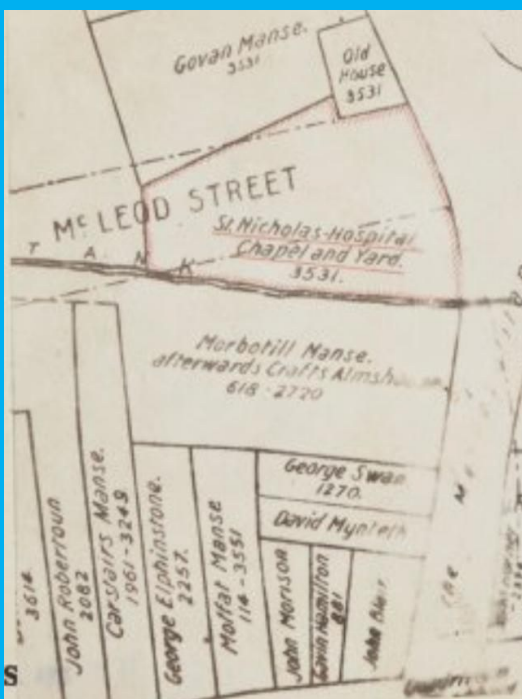
The Magistrates and Town Council were patrons of the "Back Alms House" in the early 1600s. About this time, the buildings were removed and the site given to the four poor men as a garden. Shortly after this the merchants and craftsmen, in accordance with the letter of guildry, made provision for then respective poor, and in 1611 the Town Council divided the revenues of the Back Almshouse between these two bodies. The Cathedral is straight across the road.

The Craftsmen of Glasgow in 1605 erected a hospital, called the Crafts' Hospital, Alms House or Old Trades' Hospital, on the site of the Parson of Morebattle's manse, adjoining the Hospital of St. Nicholas. The woodcut on the right shows how this part of Kirk Street would have looked in 1747. In the centre is the Great Tower of the Bishop's Castle. To the right is Lord Darnley's Cottage and behind it, Glasgow Cathedral.

It lodged at first five and afterwards thirteen poor freemen of trades rank. St Nicholas' Chapel and Hospital are on the left, next to the tower. The Hospital was founded in either 1456 or 1471 by Bishop Andrew Muirhead as a hospice for twelve old men. It was removed in 1808 to allow the formation of St Nicholas Place and St Nicholas Street.

The buildings existed till about the beginning of last century, the ground which they occupied having been sold to the first Glasgow Gaslight Company, which was formed in 1817. In place of the hall at the Old Trades' Hospital, new buildings, now known as

To the extreme left is the gable end of the Alms House.



Various



Barnardo's Easterhouse popped by Trades Hall today to collect the gift bags... all 50 of them! Along with the sacks, we've donated Amazon Fire tablets, wearable hoodies and gift vouchers.

Another lost street is Malta Street , originally called Malt Street until about 1900, due to the number of maltmen who made malt and brewed ale in the area. The image shows the Main Street (Gorbals Street) close to where Malt Street would be and on the right is the Old Gorbals Wine, Spirits, & Malt Liquor Vaults.



In 1551, a seal of cause was granted by Andrew Hamilton of Ceuchtnock, provost, and the two bailies of that year, to the masons, coopers, slaters, sawyers, and quarriers dwelling within the burgh. This document, which is dated 14th October in that year, bears to have been issued on the supplication of the headsmen and masters of these crafts, and ratified and approved of articles similar to those contained in the seal of cause granted to the hammermen in 1536 with the following additions:—that each freeman of the craft should pay to the altar of St. Thomas 20s. for his upset, and 10s. for each apprentice; that each craftsman should have only

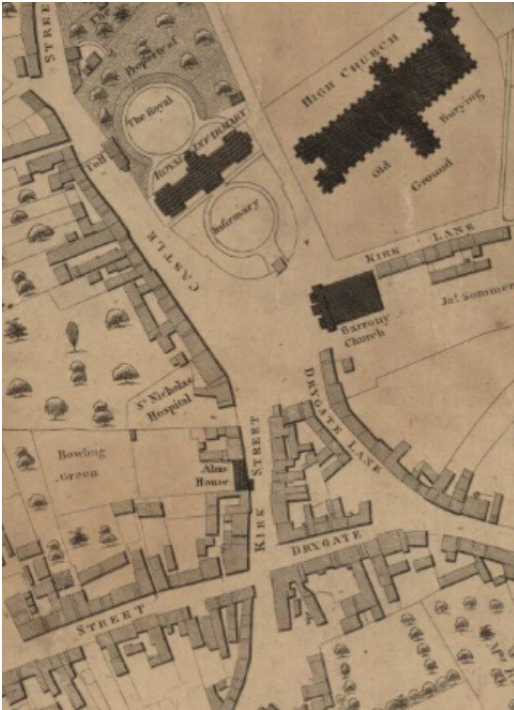
one apprentice at a time, and not license him before his term of apprenticeship had expired, and that there should be no interchange of apprentices; that each master should pay a penny weekly to the altar; that the deacon and kirk masters should have power to poind at their own hand and by their own officers for the duties and fines thereof unpaid; that every person who disobeyed his deacon in the execution of his office should pay a pound of wax to the altar, be thereafter punished by the magistrate with all rigour, pay a new upset, "recounsel" (renew) his oath and faith, and do the penance enjoined on him; and that apprentices should serve for seven years.

Charters and Documents Relating To the City of Glasgow 1175-1649

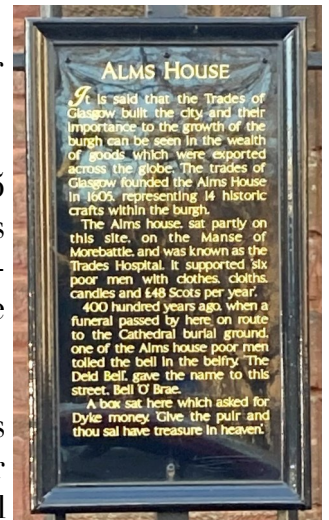
Old Meeting Places

It is interesting to see the various places the Incorporation met before our current home in [Trades Hall](#) in 1794:

Master Courts were mainly held in the 'Hie Kirk' of Glasgow before 1615 while other meetings were held in "St Tanous" Kirkyard (St. Enoch's church), the Blackfriar Kirk, the new Kirk of Glasgow (possibly the old barony Church originally opened for Presbyterian worship in 1595) and the "Hospital" {the old Almshouse where the current Barony/Strath Uni hall is).



Between 1615 and 1659, the minutes rarely mention meeting places. After 1659, it is the Trades Hospital (Almshouse) except for two occasions in the "Belshous."



Plaisterers' Hall

Deacon Craig at the visit to Plaisterers' Hall in London in January, 2025.



The Bell

On Wednesday 29th January, 2025 the Trades Hall bell was rung to celebrate 850 years of Glasgow. Normally, the bell is rung once a year to denote a new Deacon Convener, but our DC Richard has deemed this such an important event as to have our bell ringing out in celebration.



Candlemas Social



Deacon Craig with new members Bill Dorian, Alex Craib and Aidan Ball

Another excellent Candlemas Social with Deacon Craig presenting three new members with certificates.

The raffle initially drawn by Collector Ben who drew out not only his ticket but the Deacon's with a resounding "fix" being heard all around. Needless to say they excluded themselves from the raffle after that. I would never suggest anything untoward but....

We were superbly entertained by Frank & Iona Reid playing the accordion and keyboard respectively. Iona also has an album available at: <https://beathafolk.bandcamp.com/album/bloom>



Trades House of Glasgow

Heritage Newsletter



The latest Heritage Newsletter No. 8 can be accessed at:

[heritage_newsletter_no_8.pdf](#)

The last five Bailies have now been uploaded and can be seen at:

[Baillie Volume 38 1891](#)

[Baillie Volume 39 \(1\) 1891](#)

[Baillie Volume 39 \(2\) 1892](#)

[Baillie Volume 40 1892](#)

[Baillie Volume 41 1892 to 1893](#)

Past editions of this newsletter can be accessed at:

[Archives - The Trades House Digital Library](#)



Forthcoming House Events

Craftex—5—7th June (all day)

School Craft awards Ceremony – 2nd June 2.30pm

Citizenship Awards Ceremony – 2nd June 5.00pm

Apprenticeship Awards – 12th June 6.00pm

Incorporation Events

Box Opening—22nd May at 6.30pm

Pear Eating – 19th September, 2024 at 7pm

Choosing Dinner—20th September at 6.30pm

General Information

Incorporation Website:

[Incorporation of Masons of Glasgow: Supporting Stonemasonry and Allied Trades - Home](#)

Trades House Website:

[The Trades House of Glasgow](#)

Trades House Digital Library:

[The Trades House Digital Library - Home \(tradeshouselibrary.org\)](#)

Should you have any information, points of interest, photos, etc. about our Incorporation, please email:

masons.trades1551@gmail.com

