



Incorporation of Masons of Glasgow
Newsletter
December 2023/January 2024





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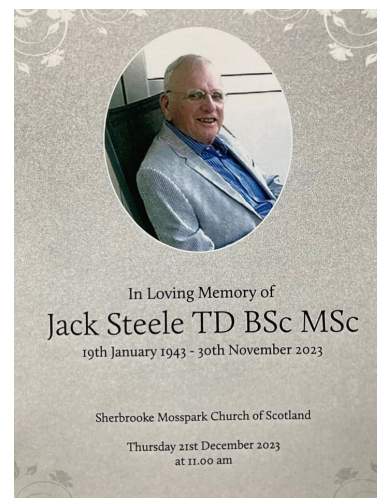
December 2023

Christmas has well and truly past, but the Grand Hall looked splendid especially at night.

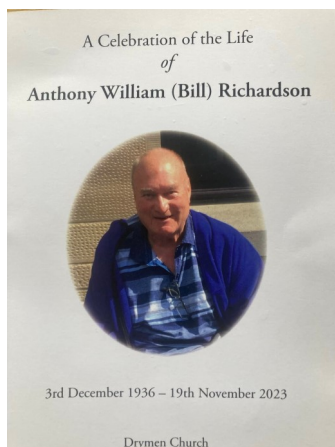


On a much sadder note, we lost a stalwart of the Incorporation – Jack Steele Past Deacon and Ex Convener of the House. Jack was an inspirational character and one of the Craftsmen I was lucky enough to see advice form on many topics.

Plans afoot re Pollokshields Burgh Hall – watch this space.



Great turnout of Past Deacons and the Master Court for Bill Richardson PD. It was also good to see a RM Guard of Honour at the graveside.



School Visit to the Trades Hall

I brought my Primary 3 class to The Trades Hall of Glasgow last week for a school trip as part of our History Inquiry and to answer the question 'How can something that happened in the past help us in the future?'

Firstly, my appreciation to The Trades Hall of Glasgow for accommodating the trip and, secondly, our sincere thanks to the President of the Association of Deacons, Jan Dobson; Deacon of the Barbers, Dave King and Deacon of the Masons, Grant Macleod for making the tour wonderful and so very informative for us.



The children loved the artefacts and especially trying on Jan's chain of office. They answered the history question with the fact the Incorporations still grant monies to needy causes as they have for hundreds of years.

Janet Macleod, J3 Teacher
Lomond School
Queen of the Masons 2023/24



Trades House of Glasgow Heritage Newsletter



The latest Heritage Newsletter No.4 arrived in December, again packed with loads of fascinating information and I recommend to everyone – all editions can be viewed here:

[heritage_newsletter_no_4 ~ december 2023 b.pdf \(tradeshouselibrary.org\)](https://tradeshouselibrary.org/heritage_newsletter_no_4_sim_december_2023_b.pdf)

The House Heritage Committee which includes the Honorary Archivist, Honorary Librarian, Honorary Curator and leader of the House Guides and the Heritage Newsletter is now a regular feature.

Traditions of the Trades House

The dispute between the Merchants and the Craftsmen of 1604 probably reached a crisis by reason of the repeated requests made by the Convention of Royal Burghs to the Glasgow Merchants to form a Guild. This was opposed strenuously by the non-federated Incorporated Trades on every occasion when it was mooted. The disputes became so serious that arbitration was resorted to, and in the arbitration the Chirurgeons of Glasgow bore a considerable part. Being a separate corporate body, they ranged themselves with the Craft Corporations, and out of twelve Craft Commissioners two were Chirurgeons (Mr. Peter Lowe, the Quarter Master or Treasurer, and Mr. Robert Hamilton, the Visitor or Deacon of the Chirurgeons at that time).

Moreover, Mr. Lowe's father-in-law, the Rev. David Weems, Parson and Dean of Glasgow, was one of the four Oversmen who drew up the Decree Arbitral. In a little less than four months there was issued the famous document now known as the " Letter of Guildry." It created a Guildry for the first time in Glasgow, and gave Burghal sanction to a new combination among the Merchants, from which eventually arose the Merchants House, and to a federation of the Trades, from which arose a Convenery, with a Deacon Convenier at its head, now known as the Trades House. But in Glasgow alone there was this important distinction which the Craftsmen had fought for

and won, both Merchants and Craftsmen formed component parts of one Guildry, while their own Trade organisations were separate and distinct from it; in other Burghs the Guildry was composed entirely of Merchants.

Nevertheless, the old legal distinction between the two classes was peculiarly emphasised. Once entered as Burgesses and Guild Brethren, the Freeman became associated with one or other of the two great sections, and these sections never came together for any purpose, except through their representatives, in the Dean of Guild's Council or Court. A Freeman who did not make his choice remained a simple Burgess, and was not accounted a Guild Brother at all. We therefore see three classes of inhabitants:

- (1) Non-Burgess (with no trade rights);
- (2) Simple Burgess (with only such Trade rights as did not infringe those of the Merchant and Craft Guild Brethren);
- (3) Burgess and Guild Brother (a) of Merchant Rank, or (b) of Trades Rank.

Link for full article:

[traditions of the trade houses of glasgow.pdf](http://traditions_of_the_trade_houses_of_glasgow.pdf)
(tradeshouselibrary.org)



Sir Thomas Mason

In 1876, Thomas entered a partnership with fellow mason John Morrison and Deacon, forming Morrison & Mason, which became a major civil engineering and building firm. The rapid execution of two large contracts for the Clyde Trustees made the firm's reputation.

He joined the Incorporation of Masons in Glasgow on the 20th September 1877. Sir Thomas Mason's sons Thomas Mason junior, who was his eldest son and his younger son Robert Wyle Mason both became members of the Incorporation of Masons on the 5th of February 1902. In September 1883 he was appointed to become Deacon, the highest position in his Incorporation. At the time he became Deacon, Thomas was residing at 21 Clyde Place, Glasgow.

On 9th October 1889, Thomas was elected to the position of Deacon Convener for his first year on the motion of Deacon Convener Tullis who's name is seen on the stained glassed windows on the stairway. In 1912, he

was knighted for his commitment to public service. During his seven years' service on the Platform, he was instrumental in attaining the reconstruction of the Hall Buildings and in introducing several much-needed reforms in House affairs.

His later record of service to the community is probably unique. He was the first Deacon Convener of the Trades who ever became, in after years, Lord Dean of Guild and Head of the Merchant Rank. But it is perhaps in connection with Clyde Trust affairs that Sir Thomas will be best remembered. Elected to the Board in 1891, he became Chairman in 1908 and remained so until his retirement in 1919.

Sir Thomas Mason died aged 79 at Craigie Hall, 6 Rowan Road, Dumbreck on 26th April 1924.

More info at:



Sir Thomas Mason
Deacon Convener 1889-1900

[sir thomas mason story.pdf](#)
[\(tradeshouselibrary.org\)](#)



Except from Lumsden's Guilds

Another composite Craft was erected on 14th October, 1551, by a grant from the Provost and Bailies of Glasgow in favour of the Masons, Coopers, Slaters, Sawyers and Quarriers within the Burgh and City. This was after the time of Gavin Dunbar, who died in 1547, and before the consecration of Archbishop James Beaton (the second of that name), who was appointed in September 1551. The Archbishop's Seal is therefore wanting, and was never appended. The Coopers disassociated themselves from the union in 1559, and the Sawyers or Wrights in 1600, leaving the Masons, Slaters and Quarriers combined together, as they are to this day.



Crawfurd tells us that the Masons were incorporated by King Malcolm III under Royal Charter given at the Court at Fordie on 5th October, 1057,

following upon a Petition from the Operative Masons of the City of Glasgow. Mr. Crawfurd does not say much about this Charter except that the original, "An old musty paper," was "discovered about the commencement of the 19th Century in the Charter Chest of the Glasgow Freeman Operative St. John's Lodge and translated" and that under it this Lodge claims precedence of all the Lodges of Scotland except the Grand Lodge. A document 459 years older than the first extant Glasgow Craft Charter of 1516 surely deserved a little more attention than he gave it. The alleged original has been exhibited often among collections of old Glasgow relics, and wary antiquarians have always passed it by.

Full article: [guilds of glasgow 001.pdf](#)
[\(tradeshouselibrary.org\)](#)

The Title of Deacon

The head of the Incorporation has not always been called the Deacon. The Statute of James I in 1425 is the first recorded time that “Deakons” or “Maister men”, handicraftsmen in their different branches in every town of the realm being thereby being empowered to elect a Preses, who was called a “Deakon or Maister man over the laife for the time” so that the lieges be not be defrauded in time to come as they have been in time bygone through untrue men of crafts. Here we also find reference to the Deacon ensuring that the craftsmen behave in a fair and honest manner. Other terms for the Deacon have been Kirk Maister.

In 1426 another statute from James I also required that “Deacons of ilk craft” to be elected.

Strangely in, 1426 in another statute, the office of Deacon was totally prohibited as being of general prejudice to the kingdom and all licence to elect Deacons was revoked, and the former meetings of the Deacons condemned as the assemblies of conspirators.

In 1483 James III again permitted the crafts to have Deacons.

In 1493, under James IV, the office of Deacon was again banned as being dangerous and the cause of great trouble in boroughs – “and because it is clearly understandin to the King’s Hieness and his three estates that the using of Deacons of men of crafts in Boroughs is ticht dangerous, it is therefore ordained that all Deacons shall cease for a year at least (especially masons and wrights), except to examine works.”

Disturbances in the kingdom had become frequent between the merchants and craftsmen. In 1553, there had been a disturbance in Edinburgh, having an origin in a dispute between Tradesmen and Merchants, the envy of the crafts excited by the power of electing magistrates exclusively for a long time in the hands of

the merchants, of whom alone the Town Council was originally composed.

In 1555, Queen Mary (Mary of Guise, Regent), the office of Deacon was abolished as being the cause of commotion and unlawful combinations amongst the Crafts themselves, and betwixt Burgh and Burgh, deserving of grater punishment. This statute ordains “that there be NA DEACKONS chosen in tymes cumming within the Burgh,” and the Provost, Bailies and Council of the Burgh, “are to chuse the maist honest man of craft, of gude conscience, ane of every Craft to visie their craft that they labour sufficiently, and thir persons to be called *Visitours* of their craft, and to be elected an chosen yearly at Michaelmas, and thir Visitours chosen, sworn and admitted to have choosing of officers and other things, as the Deacons voted before.

Na craftsman to bruik office in the Burgh Council except two of the most honest and famous persons to be chosen yearly”.

On 16th April 1556, the Queen Regent granted a general charter in favour of all the craftsmen in the Burghs and Cities within the Realm which rescinded her previous Act of 1555. This gave the Crafts new powers and favour.

In December 1675 the House reviewed the old rule that no Deacon should hold office for more than one year without the approval of the house as this had been ignored by a number of Deacons. It was decided to fine anyone who continued in Deaconship without this approval would be fined £100 scots.

In October 1751, the House ruled that if a person elected as Deacon, refused to take up office he would be fined £5 sterling and the Incorporation would then have to select a new Deacon.

Thanks to PD Craig Bryce Hon. Archivist



Visit to the Plaisterer's Company

On 9th January, 2024, Deacon Grant had the pleasure of attending the Master and Wardens' Dinner of the Worshipful Company of Plaisterers. This unique building is only dated from 1972 due to a rebuild after the London bombing during WW2 although interestingly much of the interior is modelled using, in some cases, the original plaster moulds of Robert Adam who designed Trades Hall. It is the largest Livery Hall in London. The hall's address is One London Wall and backs onto the walls of the 3rd Century Roman fort.



Incorporation Event:

THE INCORPORATION OF MASONS OF GLASGOW is pleased to invite all Members of the Incorporation to the Candlemas Court Social Evening on Tuesday 6th of February 2024 at 19.15 for 19.30. The cost of this event is £25

Musical entertainment, wine, and a finger buffet, donations of raffle prizes would be greatly appreciated.

Please reply to: Alex M McNamee, 23 Invergarry Place, Deaconsbank Glasgow G53 8UT

Telephone: 07734 802306

e-mail: alexmcn903@sky.com

Please make cheques payable to 'Monteith Solicitors Client Account' or by bank transfer with reference <SURNAME> CSE to: Sort code – 80-22-60 Account – 17825363 Account name – *Monteith Solicitors Ltd Client Account*

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

