

Around the Archives

Trades House of Glasgow Archives

Craig Bryce

During the early seventeenth century, the members of the various Crafts in Glasgow were often in dispute with the Merchants over rights and privileges. This eventually went to arbitration where it was agreed to form a Merchants House and a Trades House in the city to resolve disagreements in a more gentlemanly manner. This agreement was formalised by a Letter of Guildry granted in February 1605. The Trades House was headed by a Deacon Convener and the individual Crafts within the House consisted of: Hammermen, Tailors, Cordiners, Maltmen and Mealmen, Weavers, Baxters (Bakers), Skinners, Wrights, Coopers, Fleshers, Masons, Gardeners, Surgeons and Barbers and Bonnetmakers. The Mariners and Fishers appear as a Craft in the early minutes of the Trades House but disappear from record around 1607.¹ Seven of the Crafts had received legal confirmation of their status by Seals of Cause in pre-Reformation times, the earliest being the Skinners in 1516.² The other Crafts were incorporated after the Reformation, the last being the Gardeners who lost their original charter and received a new one in 1690³ (Plate 1).

The Trades House no longer mediates between the Merchants and Crafts but now carries on its charitable work based on the Crafts' three ancient charitable activities:

1. To support their decrepit tradesmen in an almshouse
2. To support the education of their children, apprentices and craftsmen
3. To support the common weal of Glasgow

The Trades House and the fourteen Incorporations still carry out the above (although the almshouse no longer exists) and donate approximately £750,000 annually to those good causes.

The Trades House has records from a few Incorporations from the 1500s, alongside material dating from 1605 to the present day. In the 1960s the Trades House and most of the Incorporations deposited their archives in the City

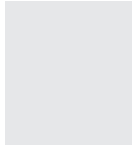
¹ (ed.) H. Lumsden, *The Records of the Trades House of Glasgow A.D. 1605–1678* (Glasgow, 1910).

² H. Lumsden, *History of the Skinners, Furriers and Glovers of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1937), 7–8.

³ The second charter granted to the Gardeners stated that the Craft had been incorporated 'near these 100 years bygone': quoted in H. Lumsden, *Bibliography of the Guilds of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1928), 11.

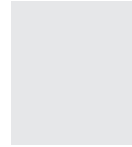
**Incorporation of Bakers
Incorporated 1556**

Now includes bakers,
cooks and chefs.



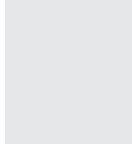
**Incorporation of Barbers
Incorporated 1599**

At one time also
included Surgeons.



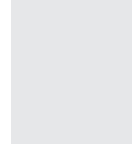
**Incorporation of
Bonnetmakers and Dyers
Incorporated 1597**

Dyers were invited to join the
Bonnetmakers to improve the
quality of dyeing in Glasgow.



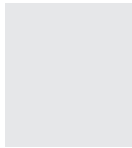
**Incorporation of Coopers
Incorporated 1569**

Makers of barrels and casks.



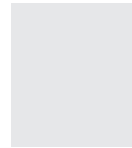
**Incorporation of
Cordiners
Incorporated 1558**

Workers in leather including
souters (i.e. shoemakers).



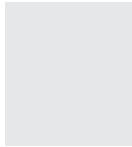
**Incorporation of Flishers
Incorporated 1580**

Flishers are butchers and
also sold hides and tallow.



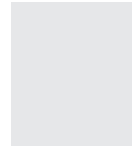
**Incorporation of
Gardeners
Incorporated 1690**

As Glasgow expanded the
Gardeners had to have the
rule changed to allow them
to work and live outside
the limits of the town.



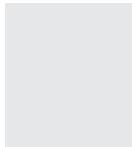
**Incorporation of
Hammermen
Incorporated 1536**

Hammermen work with metal
(i.e. goldsmiths, silversmiths,
pewterers, armourers, clock-
and watchmakers, cutlers, etc.)



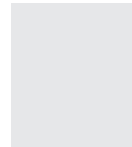
**Incorporation of Maltmen
Incorporated 1605**

Brewers of beer and
makers of spirits.



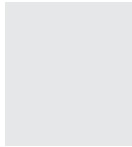
**Incorporation of Masons
Incorporated 1551**

Includes stonemasons,
quarrymen, bricklayers, roof
slaters and tilers, plasterers etc.



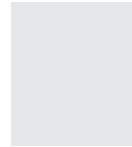
**Incorporation of
Skinners and Glovers
Incorporated 1516**

Originally also
included Furriers.



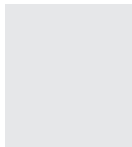
**Incorporation of Tailors
Incorporated 1527**

Made both menswear
and ladies' clothes.



**Incorporation of Weavers
Incorporated 1528**

At one time the largest
trade in Scotland.



**Incorporation of Wrights
Incorporated 1600**

The Wrights cover all of the
wood trades as well as painters
and decorators and glaziers.

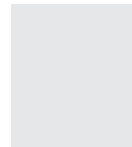


Plate 1 The Fourteen Incorporated Trades of Glasgow.

Archives at the Mitchell Library to ensure that they would not become lost and to make them available to members and the general public.⁴ However, many items were not deposited in the Mitchell and have remained in the Trades Hall, probably because the location of all the material was not known at the time.

It is important at this stage to differentiate between the Trades House and the Trades Hall. The House came into being in 1605 and consists of the trustees of the corporate body, whereas the Trades Hall, built between 1791 and 1795, is the building that is the home to the Trades House. Effectively then, the House is the people and the Hall is the building.

In 2012, former Deacon Convener Jack Steel established a museum committee to investigate ways of displaying some of the numerous historic possessions of the Trades House and the Incorporations. At the end of this process it was decided that the best approach was to create a website where the possessions of the Incorporations could be displayed and viewed by anyone, at any time and from anywhere in the world. It was at this stage that it became clear that the House did not know exactly what each Incorporation and the House possessed. We were fortunate in having a friend of the Trades House in the form of photographer George Mahoney who agreed to photograph the possessions of the House and the Incorporations. He also agreed that these could be uploaded onto our yet-to-be-created website at no charge.

In 2014, former Deacon Convener Ruth Maltman asked Ken Gibb of the Incorporation of Tailors, former Visitor Murray Blair of the Incorporation of Maltmen and Craig R. Bryce of the Incorporation of Masons to search the Trades Hall and find all artefacts relevant to the museum or archives, and to record them. The search took over a year: every nook and cranny in our beloved Trades Hall was looked into, and every item of interest discovered had its location, description and condition recorded. Early on in the search, the team were amazed when Robert Adam's receipt of 50 guineas in payment of his plans for the Trades Hall in 1791 was found (Plate 2).⁵ The receipts from the other two architects who had submitted plans but failed to win the contract, James Jaffray and John Craig, were also found. Each of the architects had signed the receipts as proof of receiving their payment. Surprisingly Jaffray and Craig were only paid 30 guineas each for their efforts.⁶ It took a few years to discover why

⁴ Glasgow City Archives, T-TH1 Records of the Trades House of Glasgow, 1597–1962; T-TH2 Incorporation of Hammermen, 1616–1936; T-TH3 Incorporation of Tailors, 1527–1974; T-TH4 Incorporation of Cordiners, 1558–1957; T-TH5 Incorporation of Weavers, 1537–1960; T-TH6 Incorporation of Maltmen, 1615–1979; T-TH7 Incorporation of Bakers, 1608–1961; T-TH8 Incorporation of Skinners, 1516–1976; T-TH9 Incorporation of Wrights, 1650–1977; T-TH10 Incorporation of Coopers, 1588–1910; T-TH11 Incorporation of Fleshers, 1664–1961; T-TH12 Incorporation of Masons, 1551–1928; T-TH13 Incorporation of Gardeners, 1626–1986; T-TH14 Incorporation of Barbers, 1707–1966; T-TH15 Bonnetmakers and Dyers, 1592–1957.

⁵ Trades House of Glasgow (hereafter THG), Collector's Account 1794.

⁶ *Ibid.*

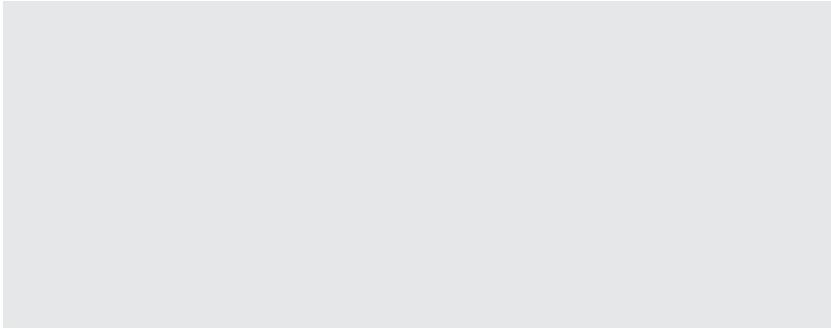


Plate 2 Robert Adam's receipt of 50 guineas in payment of his plans for the Trades Hall, 1791. © Trades House of Glasgow.

there was a difference in payment but further research in the minute books of the Trades House revealed that after Robert Adam's death in 1792, his brother James returned the extra 20 guineas which had been given to Robert to oversee the building of the Trades Hall which, due to his demise, he was unable to do.⁷ Due to this and other finds it became clear that the Trades House would need to create their own archives to safeguard their priceless records, many of which are unique to the House.

In September 2015, at a meeting of the Trustees of the House, Ken Gibb was appointed Honorary Curator of the Trades House Museum and Craig R. Bryce was appointed Honorary Archivist. Murray Blair was at this time the Honorary Trades House Librarian, a post which he gave up about a year later, to be replaced by Carol Parry.

It was agreed that the team could not do all that was needed at once. We therefore prioritised the Library as requiring addressing as the books had been left in a muddle after a let when they had all been removed and then, seemingly, shuffled prior to their return to the Library. This took about two years to complete and re-catalogue. During this time many of the minute books of the Trades House and other materials were being digitised and put onto the Trades House website at <http://www.tradeshouselibrary.org> where they are freely available to download for private use.

A new archives area was created in the basement of the Trades Hall, shelving purchased and erected, and items such as archival boxes purchased in preparation for the gathering together of all our archival material. Volumes were the initial focus and it took some time to transfer them from their various places and record their new locations in the newly built archives in the bowels of the Trades Hall.

⁷ THG, Minutes of the Trades House of Glasgow, 11 May 1792.

An Archive Team, consisting of ten volunteers and the Archivist, meet one day each week to search through the boxes and record their contents onto a series of spreadsheets to create an accessible database. We were fortunate in finding the Trades House minute books from 1876 to the present day.⁸ These are invaluable as they hold a fantastic amount of information concerning the lives of not only the wealthy but also the poor. The following examples give an insight into some of their contents:

- Detailed records of widows and unmarried daughters of Burgesses of Craft rank applying to the House for financial assistance due to straightened circumstance
- Records of children applying for bursaries to attend further or higher education with details of their parents, their home address, academic achievements, where they wished to study and the amount granted to them by the Trades House
- Details of a charity created after the First World War to support soldiers who had returned home and required financial assistance

The minute books from 1876 to 1950 have been digitised and placed online at <http://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/trades-house.html>.

The Archive Team believe that there is no point in having an archive unless we can disseminate to the members of the Incorporations and the general public what we have and empower them to access the information easily as required. For this reason a major emphasis has been placed on transcribing and digitising much of what we possess and placing it on the Digital Library website.⁹ The Archivist and the Librarian also write articles for the Trades House magazine, *The Craftsman*, to ensure that House members are aware of new information as we discover it.¹⁰ Talks, both in-house and at other venues for those interested in the archives, are given free of charge by the Archivist. The talks are tailored to suit the interests of audience members and vary from genealogical to information that is held on a particular Incorporation or the archives in general. Another way of reaching a larger audience has been in the discussions that are presently under way with a family history website who wish to pay for access to and permission to host some of our archival material on their website. This should be a win-win position with the Trades House Archives gaining access to a wider group of people and the company increasing their database of information sought by the public.

Research is a vital part of the Archives Team's work, as is the recording of the information discovered. Making the new data accessible has been one of the important parts of the work carried out and numerous small booklets have

⁸ THG, Minutes of the Trades House of Glasgow, 1876–current.

⁹ <http://www.tradeshouselibrary.org>.

¹⁰ Past copies of *The Craftsman* are available online at <http://www.tradeshouse.org.uk/craftsman/>.

been created to enable anyone who is interested to find out about the Trades House, the Trades Hall and the history of both. To date the following booklets have been published online for anyone to download for free for personal use:

- Guide to the Burgess Roll¹¹
- Burgess Roll from 1846 to 1955, available in three sorted orders: date, surname and Incorporation¹²
- Occurrences of disputes in and among Incorporations¹³
- Information concerning the House and Hall¹⁴
- Trades House of Glasgow military connections¹⁵
- Index to obituaries in the Trades House Minutes¹⁶
- Trades House Free School¹⁷
- Female Burgesses in Glasgow¹⁸
- Paintings in the Trades Hall of Glasgow¹⁹
- Glasgow Trades House Order Confirmation Act 1920²⁰
- Cathcart Cemetery Monument Report²¹
- Trades House Insignia of Office²²

An illustrated history of the Trades Hall building, *Glasgow's Best-Kept Secret: The History of the Trades Hall* by Craig Bryce, was published in November 2019 and is available to purchase from the Trades House.

The Trades House School was a very important part of the work of the Trades House and was founded in 1808 when the Chaplain to the House

¹¹ https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/guide_to_roll_of_burgesses_2nd_edition.pdf.

¹² <http://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/trades-house.html>.

¹³ https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/final_craft_disagreements.pdf.

¹⁴ https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/final_factoids_small.pdf.

¹⁵ https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/final_trades_house_military_story_small.pdf.

¹⁶ https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/final_index_to_th_obituaries_small.pdf.

¹⁷ https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/trades_house_school_story.pdf.

¹⁸ https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/female_members_of_the_trades.pdf.

¹⁹ https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/trades_hall_paintings.pdf.

²⁰ https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/trades_house_1920_act.pdf.

²¹ https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/cathcart_cemetery_report.pdf.

²² https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/insignia_of_office_story.pdf.

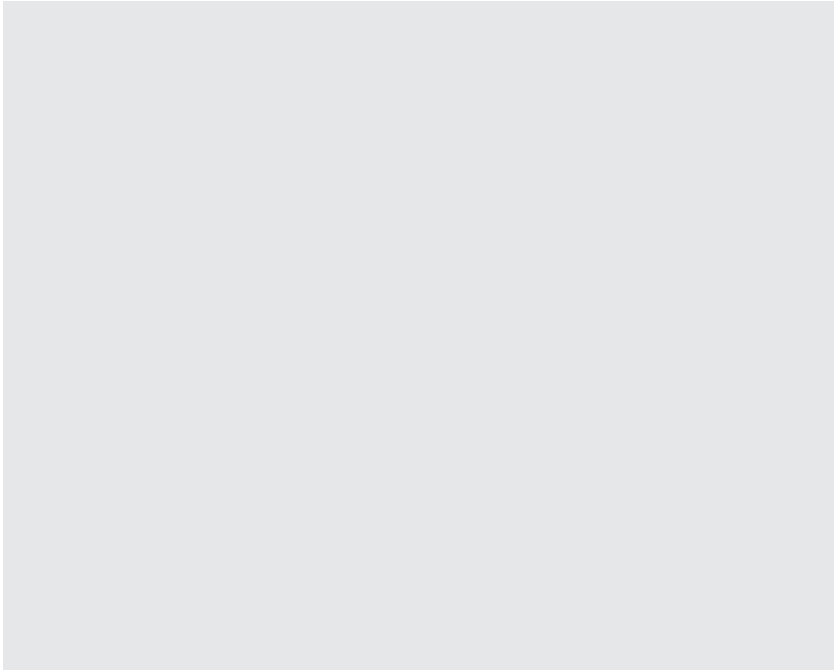


Plate 3 Tapestry created by one of the schoolchildren at the Trades House School, illustrating the quality of work achieved. © Trades House of Glasgow.

was given the extra duty of teaching the children of Craftsmen.²³ The School developed over the years to become a fine example of a Trade educational establishment (Plate 3). The School closed in 1876 after it became unnecessary due to the Scottish Education Act which made free schooling available to all. The Trades House has not forgotten the importance of education and the House and Incorporations give prizes to school pupils, college and university students to this day.

Another discovered treasure was the Trades House Burgess Roll from 1846 to 2014 which list the names, Incorporations, dates of joining and relationship to the Incorporation, i.e. whether the son or daughter of a member, etc.²⁴ Many of these were transcribed during the period that the Library was being reorganised. This long and difficult job has now been completed and the archives hold electronic and printed records of the Burgess Roll for readily responding to public or Incorporation enquiries. The Burgess Roll from 1846 to 1950

²³ C. Bryce, *The Trades House School History* (2018), https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/trades_house_school_story.pdf.

²⁴ THG, Burgess Rolls, 1846–2014.

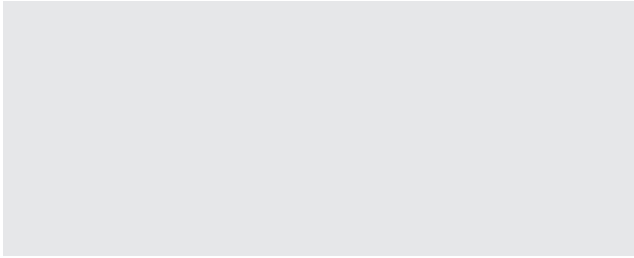


Plate 4 Signature of Prince Philip in Trades House Visitors' Book. © Trades House of Glasgow.

has been digitised and placed on the Digital Library website.²⁵ Interestingly, all Glaswegians who volunteered to fight in the South African War became Burgesses of Glasgow and, as the Merchants House had ceased to issue Burgess Tickets since 1860, all the soldiers and sailors had their Burgess Tickets issued through the Trades House. Because of this the Trades House has the names and home addresses of all who received their Burgess Tickets in Glasgow who volunteered to fight in the conflict and these can be accessed via the Digital Library website.²⁶

Visitors' books were also found and these give a view of the people who came to the Trades Hall and left a record, and occasionally their opinion of, their visit. Nearly all of the Lord Provosts in Glasgow have visited the House, as have many Prime Ministers and we have a lovely set of Clement Attlee and his wife Violet's autographs in one of our visitors' books. Unfortunately, neither they nor Edward Heath or Harold Wilson left their views of the Trades House. Prince Philip is a member of the Incorporation of Hammermen and he has visited the House on several occasions and signed the visitors' book (Plate 4). Many more royal, famous and less well-kent people have visited and left their autographs.²⁷

The Association of Deacons was formed in the mid-1800s to financially support past Deacons (heads of individual Crafts) who fell on hard times. The names and addresses of the past Deacons and the dates of their demise are recorded in the Association of Deacons annual reports, of which we have nearly a complete run.²⁸ One of the other important duties that the Association undertook was the collation of a photographic record of as many Deacons as they could. As the fourteen Incorporations each had a Deacon per year, we literally have well over 2,000 images. The earliest Deacon's image that we

²⁵ <http://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/trades-house.html>.

²⁶ https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/burgess_roll_1855_to_1902_~_sa_volunteers_small.pdf and https://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/uploads/4/7/7/2/47723681/rifle_and_yeomanry_vols_001.pdf.

²⁷ THG, Visitors' Book, 1951–1996.

²⁸ THG, Association of Deacons' Annual Reports, 1856–2013.

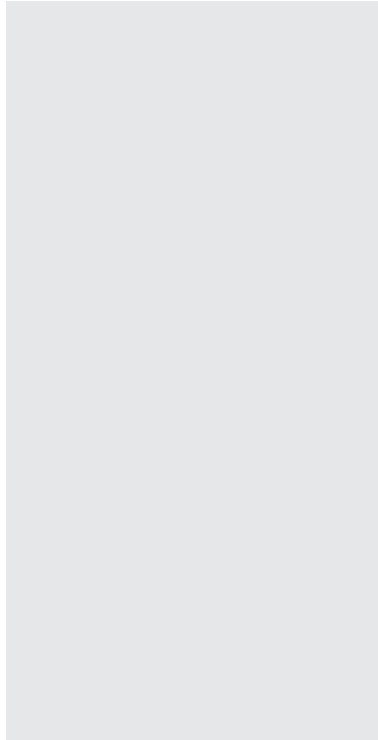


Plate 5 Deacon William McLean, Bonnetmaker and Dyer.
© Trades House of Glasgow.

have is that of William McLean, who was Deacon of the Bonnetmakers and Dyers in 1815 (Plate 5).²⁹ This superb photographic record is accessed today by people carrying out research in genealogy and finding an image of a relative can bring to life a dull reference to a long dead relation. The images of the Past Deacons can be accessed online at <http://www.tradeshousemuseum.org>³⁰ and, by contacting the webmaster, large copies can be supplied free of charge for personal use.

The Sir John Soane Museum in London holds the originals of Robert Adam's drawings of the Trades Hall and copies of these have been acquired and also the drawings made by James Jaffray (the original Jaffray drawing can be accessed in the Mitchell Library). The archives also has numerous original

²⁹ THG, Association of Deacons' Photograph Albums, 1856–2013.

³⁰ Images for past deacons can be found by following links to the individual Incorporations/past deacons.

drawings created to record alterations to the building and it is enlightening to note the changes that have occurred over time.

A wonderful find in our searches was a set of drawings for the building proposed for a complete rebuild of the Trades Hall in 1882 (Plate 6).³¹ This would have made the building look similar to the old Ingram Hotel, in Ingram Street, Glasgow. Fortunately, the scheme was prevented by the Incorporation of Bonnetmakers and Dyers objecting and the case going to the Court of Session in 1884 where the Bonnetmakers and Dyers' objection was upheld.³² A set of drawings of eight electroliers dating from circa 1929 was also discovered and these throw light onto what the Building Committee were considering for the Saloon which had recently been refurbished. In the end, due to the cost of some of the more ornate designs, the House purchased rather plain light fittings for this room.³³ Plans of the houses and streets owned by the Trades House have also been discovered which show clearly that the House was involved in the building of affordable homes for the citizens of Glasgow.³⁴

To date we have found extracts of minutes of the fourteen Incorporations on various topics such as the feuing of the Gorbals Lands,³⁵ with proposals from various Incorporations suggesting how they could maximise on their investments and what should be done to ensure that the buildings and streets would be safe and welcoming to the new householders. For example, candle works or other businesses who worked with flammable materials were not allowed to occupy any site in the Gorbals Lands. The use of thatch for roofing purposes was banned and the cost of the land was converted into feuing charges to ensure a long-term return on the investment.³⁶

A spotlight has been shone on the House's opinion of the proposed Police Bill in 1790 and how Visitor Montgomery of the Incorporation of Maltmen, disagreed with the House and the Incorporations' objection to the Police Bill. In the extract of the Maltmen's minutes it is clear that Visitor Montgomery was constrained by his Master Court to vote the way that they wished which clearly bothered him and he attempted to alter the powers of the House by encouraging the Corporation of Glasgow to try to appropriate the funds of the House for objecting to their proposed Bill. Fortunately, the Councillors and Magistrates failed in their attempt.³⁷

There are also details of Deacons being charged with behaving badly. In 1798, for example, David Mirrlees of the Incorporation of Hammermen appealed against being prevented to vote in an election, as it was alleged that he owed money to the Incorporation of Hammermen due to a drinking session

³¹ THG, Proposed Plans of Trades Halls, 1882.

³² THG, Minutes of the Building Committee, 21 September 1885.

³³ THG, Minutes of the Building Committee, 2 August 1915.

³⁴ THG, Plans for Sandiford, nineteenth century.

³⁵ THG, Vouchers, 1732–1889.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

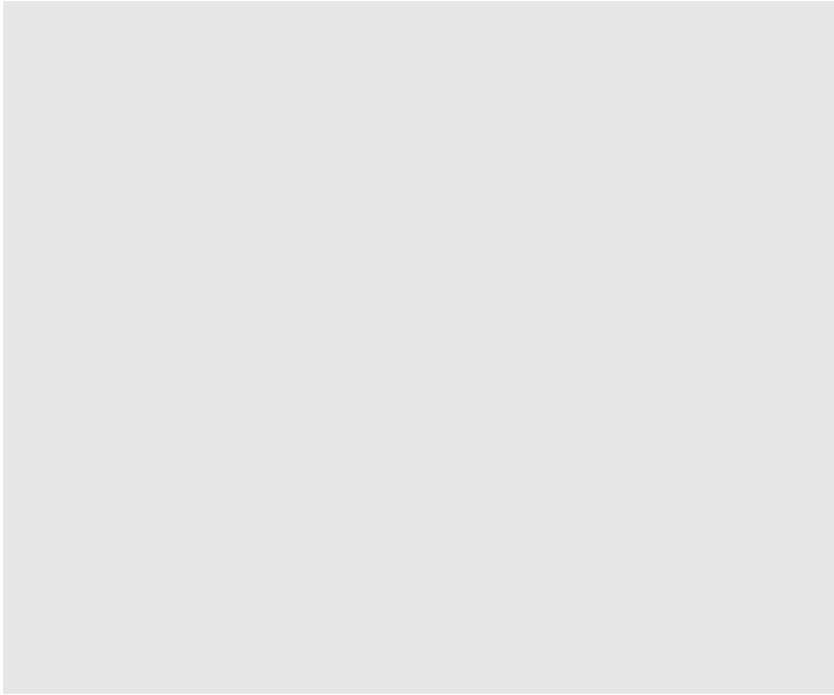


Plate 6 Front elevation of the proposed 1882 development of the Trades House.
© Trades House of Glasgow.

which lasted into the wee small hours after a Lammas Court meeting of the Incorporation. There are also many good news stories such as ‘Poor Men’ being appointed to receive funds from the Trades House to support them in their ‘Decrepitude’.³⁸

Other documents reflect in detail the various Incorporations’ views on topics ranging from increasing the salary of the Teacher in the Trades School³⁹ to what level of support to give to the building of the Blind Asylum, Lunatic Asylum, the Royal Infirmary, etc.⁴⁰ Details of the Trades House and Incorporations fighting what they saw as injustices and laws that would be bad for the citizens of Glasgow appear in detail. High on the list is the fight against the Corn Laws and votes to purchase food for sale at no profit to the citizens of Glasgow when there were food shortages.⁴¹

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ THG, Records of the Old Glasgow Club.

Receipts form a large part of the collection and some make very interesting reading, one such example is the receipt from the Black Bull Inn and Hotel in Portland Street, Kilmarnock where 7s. 6d. was charged for breakfast, 12s. 6d. for dinner 10s. for wine, 6d. for whisky, 4d. for beer, 1s. 4d. for carriage hire and 1s. 4d. for toddy (Plate 7). The reason for the bill was due to a visitation to see a potential schoolmaster teach a lesson in his home school. Incidentally, the chambermaid received a tip of 6d.⁴²

One of the most recent discoveries among the collection of vouchers is a large set of applications and testimonials for the position of female teacher of the girls in the Trades School.⁴³ Two receipt books have also been discovered which gives details of what the Trades Hall was used for, who rented it and at what cost.⁴⁴ The one from December 1840 to December 1843 makes fascinating reading. Soirees by churches and other organisations are a large feature, also balls, concerts and lectures. A few examples of this type of entertainment are a Tee Total Soiree and a separate Tee Total Concert, a Sabbath School Teachers' Soiree, an East Regent Street Church Soiree, a Catholic Soiree and a Journeyman Baker's Soiree. Organisations such as the Thistle and Rose Society (a Masonic Lodge) also held meetings in the Hall. The Corn Law Association, the Female Anti-Slavery Association and the Sheriff Appeal Court all used the Hall. Transcribed copies of both receipt books can be found on the Trades House Digital Library website at <http://www.tradeshouselibrary.org>.

The Trades House Archives also hold the archives of the Old Glasgow Club and, in addition to the administrative records of the Club itself, hold archival material donated to the Club including: the minute books of the Glasgow Polytechnic Association Ltd from 1857 to 1858; minute book of the Tenth Municipal Ward in Glasgow from 1868 to 1881; Printers and Bookbinders Society list of members from 1827 to 1836 and minutes from the same period; business book of Robert Miller, Wright and Trunk Maker, Glasgow, from 1802 to 1803; and the letter book of the Annual International Exhibition 1870 to 1872.

The work of the Archives Team is ongoing and material is uploaded to <http://www.tradeshouselibrary.org> on a regular basis.

The Trades House Library holds many antiquarian and modern books related to the Trades House, industries that the House and Incorporations have been or are involved with, and books of a general nature on Glasgow. A list of all the books in the Library can be accessed at <http://www.tradeshouselibrary.org>. The Library is not a lending library and books are available only for reference but access is open to all by arrangement.

Frequent requests for information are received from all over the world. Many are of a genealogical nature but there are also requests for explanations of Burgess membership, information about different trades and also requests from

⁴² THG, Vouchers, 1732–1889.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ THG, Hall Rentals, December 1840–December 1843 and November 1844–January 1847 (transcription available at <http://www.tradeshouselibrary.org>).

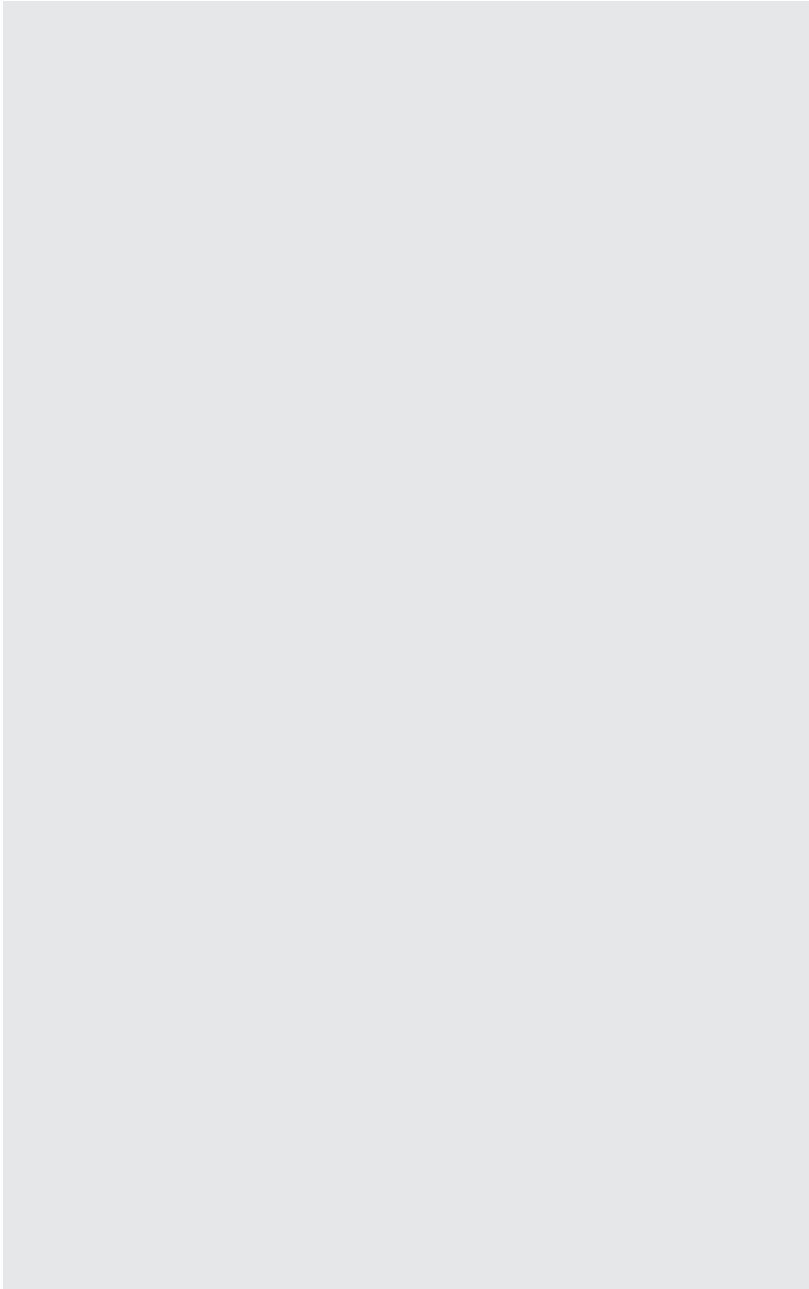


Plate 7 Black Bull Inn receipt. © Trades House of Glasgow.

members of Incorporations wishing to understand in more detail the history of their Craft. These requests are a delight and often stretch our ability to research and find the answers, increasing the knowledge of both those who made the enquiry and the researcher. Enquiries relating to our collections including requests for access to the archives and books can be made via the online form at <http://www.tradeshouselibrary.org/contact-us>.