

THE NINE TRADES OF DUNDEE

Innes A. Duffus
Archivist to The Nine Incorporated Trades of Dundee

I used to think that an archivist was a broken down, senile, ancient old fart with thick glasses and long white hair who, would bore the pants off you at the drop of a hat. Well I was at the barber's this week. Mind you six out of seven can't be bad.

I am intensely proud of the fact that as a Hammerman, I am part of a Trade which has been around in Scotland for over 800 years and who have written records going back to the year when Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded.

The story of the Dundee Trades is very much the same as that of the Trades in the other burghs.

Dundee was the second most important burgh in Scotland and was very wealthy indeed. Just before General Monck sacked the burgh, in 1651, for being loyal to the Crown, its population was over 6,000 souls. Shortly after, the population was only some 4,000 odd and the burgh never recovered

St. Mary's Tower, which is still standing, held out against Monck for several weeks. When it fell it is recorded that two Battalions of Lord Duffus' Regiment were taken out and slaughtered. They had come down from Moray as supporters of the King.

Monck loaded all the wealth of the burgh on to 27 vessels, which sailed off down the Tay. None of them even crossed the bar of the river. They were caught in a storm and foundered. Dundee's treasure still lies in the silt of the river.

Cromwell's Parliament, who had sacked the burgh, later spoke of "Poor Dundee" and raised a tax on imported wine to help the burgh.

Before Monck sacked the burgh there would be over 40 ships in the harbour, including 'big ships', but by the time the Monarchy was restored there were only 5 little ships in the harbour. Dundee never recovered.

The only old records of the Trades to be found are those held in the Lockit Books. These books, so named, because they had hasps with a lock, are priceless. They record everyone who was admitted as a Master to that Trade, from the opening

of the book to the present day. Also included are the Rules, Acts and Statutes of the Craft. Some of the Trades include their apprentices and some have a second book for their apprentices and journeymen only.

Whether any minute books were kept is unknown. Account Books were certainly kept, but with the exception of the Glovers accounts none of them have survived. Most of the losses were due to carelessness and negligence.

In the last 10 years the Dyers' Lads' Book has disappeared. I still have great hopes of tracing it, having been appointed as the first Archivist to the Trades, for that very reason only two years ago.

So who were and are the Trades, what is their purpose and how did it all begin?

In 1124, King David I, encouraged the Royal Burghs to frame laws for their own protection and it is likely that the craftsmen started working as a constitutional body any time after that.

Robert I, James I, James IV and Mary Queen of Scots all passed Acts acknowledging the Trades.

The Crafts authority came from a Seal of Cause, or Charter granted by the burgh with consent from the Crown and giving the Trades the right to elect their own Deacons and formulate Acts, Statutes and Ordinances.

The earliest Bonnetmakers Seal of Cause is dated 1496, the Weavers 1512, the Glovers 1516, and the Dyers 1525.

These Seals of Cause are almost identical to those given to all the Trades, not only in Dundee but in the rest of the country.

Several of the books start with a list of earlier members of the Trade from the memories of the members at that time.

It is my belief that until then, the Trades had not found it necessary to have any written records. Whatever the reason, and within a few years of one another, each Trade started a 'Lockit Book' and employed a 'Scrivener' or lawyer as their Clerk. This may have been because only the work of a Scrivener would be recognised by all the authorities, or it may have been that they were the only ones trusted to write in a form recognised by all. They tended to spell as they heard a sound. On different days they

appear to have heard the same sound differently. For example some of the names which recur regularly can be spelled in as many as ten or twelve ways.

Another problem is that within an entry a phrase is often repeated in different ways and in particularly flowery language. The fact that the Scriveners were paid by the inch may have had something to do with this.

The meeting place referred to from the beginning of all the Lockit Books is the Howff. The Howff was gifted to the burgh, as a burial ground, by Mary Queen of Scots and was part of the gardens of the Grey Friars' Monastery. Where the Trades met before this is not known. The Trades even paid the council a rent for the privilege of holding their meetings in the Howff.

The form was that each of the Trades met at the grave of one of their older and most respected members. All the Trades met at the same time, as there was business to be conducted, which concerned them individually and as a body.

Because they had realised that there was a need to act as a body the Trades formed 'The Nine Incorporated Trades of Dundee' as early as 1581, headed by a Convener and Boxmaster. The duties of the Boxmaster, was that of Treasurer. He kept the main keys to the Trades Box, in which all its monies and important documents were stored.

He also administered the Rules of the Craft and was in many ways at least as important as the Deacon himself

The Convener's Court had no direct authority over an individual Trade. The Convener's Court was for the purpose of ensuring that the Trades all acted for the benefit of the whole, and could only make decisions by the agreement of each individual Trade. In that way they carried a great deal of authority and employed the motto "Nine in One".

Each Trade would meet at its own gravestone in the Howff, to conduct its business. The Deacon would then go to the stone where the Convener's Court met. If a decision had to be made the Deacons would all go back to their own Trade meeting where they would decide on their response. The Deacon would then return to the Convener's Court where a formal agreement would be arranged.

This Court also decided, from a leet, which of the council members would be Bailies of the burgh.

So how and why were the Trades formed? It has been suggested that members of a Trade would get together, because they realised that they would be better served if they formed a body for their own protection, and in order to control prices.

This may well be the case, but here is another argument. The King wanted his dues and taxes collected, and to do this himself was very costly. He therefore decided that if he gave a Charter to his Royal Burghs, he could lumber them with the job in their burgh. He only had to collect the monies from the burgh.

Equally the burghs were no fools and quickly decided that it was in their best interest to control the various Craftsmen working in their area, and so, often through the Crown, gave a 'Charter' or 'Seal of Cause' to the Craftsmen working at any particular Trade. That way the burgh had the Trades collect their taxes for them, which they in turn passed on to the Crown.

The truth is probably a mixture of the two.

Another advantage was that through regulation of the Trades, the town could have some control over the quality of goods and the prices to be charged. This was particularly important in the case of people like the Bakers. There were many years of famine and the problem of starvation was very great. By keeping control over a) the price of a loaf, b) the weight of a loaf and c) the quality of the ingredients, they could help ensure that fewer people starved.

Because of the heavy penalties if a loaf was not up to weight, we find the beginning of the "Baker's Dozen". The quality of the bread was also important, not only because of the grade of flour used, but because it was not unknown for a few handfuls of sawdust to find its way into the mix. By the taste of some of the bread baked today, nothing much has changed.

Through the Trades the burgh was also able to keep out Tradesmen from other areas and so ensure that all the Tradesmen in the burgh had work to do.

In order to be a Master, as the members of a Trade were known, you had to have served an apprenticeship, which varied in length of around seven years plus one year 'for meet and fee'. You had produced an 'Essay', or 'Masterpiece'. This meant that you were required to carry out some work to prove that you were competent in your Trade. Sadly only the Glovers, in one part of their book, kept a record of just what that entailed.

I have translated the details into Modern English. This is dated 17th February 1607:

'Item Each test piece of every entrant Master will be shown to the Deacon and four fellow Masters appointed by him. Firstly he shall make one dozen watered and tanned quality leathers with the material given him. He will also make one pair of Double Gloves, one pair of single gloves, one shooting glove with a purse wholly of leather and a Satchel. Also one dozen leather points (leather used as ties), sufficiently hardened.'

In order to carry out this work he would be locked in a room until he had completed the task. This ensured that there was no cheating, because the Deacon would keep the key. The resulting essay would be approved or otherwise by a panel of Masters.

If you wished to become a Master, who were the only employers, and which allowed you to have your own buith in the market place, you also had to own all your own tools and equipment, have a wife and a house in which to house your apprentice. Remember that your apprentice was legally indentured to his Master, who had to care for him, house and feed him and act in loco parentis.

You also had to be a burges of the burgh.

This was not easy. To become a burges required not only money and authority, but influence. No one is quite sure of the full qualifications required to be a burges.

The only people who automatically qualified as burgeses were the sons and sons-in-law of existing burgeses. Other than that one of the qualifications appears to be that you had to hold a "Toft" or "Rood" of land and be paying a rent in the burgh of around ten pounds per annum, and have your own pike or other approved weapon for the defence of the burgh.

Burgeses could be called out at any time for the defence of the burgh and they were the standing army (a kind of home guard which was required to drill and practice manoeuvres), which could be called upon at a moment's notice. How effective they were is not certain, but the fact that they were there certainly stopped much of the raiding which was common at that time.

No one could become a Master in the Trades until they had their burges ticket. At the same time they could not become a burges unless they were a member of either

the Guildry or the Trades, and as only the existing burgeses could elect new burgeses, the whole system was not only self perpetuating, but was no doubt corrupt. Naturally the same family names keep cropping up with monotonous regularity .

Bear in mind that in a population varying from four to six thousand there were only around 230 burgeses and you can realise just how valuable a burges ticket was.

For someone who had served their apprenticeship and could not qualify as a burges the way forward was difficult. These men would become Journeymen.

There is a false impression that this had something to do with Craftsmen moving from one place to another. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The word Journey comes from the French Jour meaning day, therefore Journeiman easily corrupted into Journeyman. It simply means that these men were paid by the day. It was most likely that they stayed in the same employment all their working lives.

From there on they could husband their small pittance and over a long period of time, qualify as Masters and burgeses. Very few made this transition.

This was one reason for marrying the Master's daughter and suited both parties. The Master kept the business within the family and the new son-in-law automatically qualified for his burges ticket.

On 25th January 1581, the Nine Incorporated Trades of Dundee came into being. The Deacons of all the Trades met and declared their agreement.

An incredibly long and detailed document was drawn up and agreed to by all the nine Trades. It detailed how and when it would elect its Convener, Collector and Council. It specified every aim and objective possible, including one that ensured that it had no power to act without consulting each individual Trade and obtaining its consent to a course of action - a clause which is obeyed to the letter today. It asserted that each Trade would remain autonomous in the running of its own business and stipulated severe financial punishment if any of the officers broke these rules.

Various fees and charges for each apprentice taken into a Trade and particularly the penalties for committing adultery (very keen on punishing adultery). There may have been a good reason for this. The apprentice was accommodated by

the Master in his own household. Having it off with his Master's daughter might seem like a good idea to an apprentice, but society would break down if that happened.

Is this not part of the your own way of life, and for much the same reason?

Fees were also to be paid for each Master when he was entered in the Lockit Book and when he got married. Every possible excuse was made to extract money and impose fines. Someone making a complaint against another Master which was not upheld was fined 'twentie shillings'. That was probably a full years income in 1603. It must have reduced complaints.

Any delay by the Boxmaster or Deacon in collecting or handing over the dues, or refusing to present the books for verification quarterly merited a fine of 'fourtie shillings'.

The Trades concern for their poor and decayed brethren was paramount in all their actions. Bear in mind that there was no pension, sick pay or social service. Starvation was the only alternative to being unable to work.

Discipline, order and control of the number of Masters and therefore the guarantee of plenty of work and the highest possible prices were the top priority .Masters were restricted to having only one apprentice at a time.

This was self protection, but for the common folk who lived in the vennels and who literally starved to death in the many years when for example, there were crop failures life must have been pure hell.

Just how many people were in the Trades?

The total at anyone time in the early days has not been ascertained but there would certainly be fewer than 80. From the first entry until the present day there are only 6,000 names of Masters in all the books.

The Trades agreed to furnish men for Military Service. The Crown would require a number of men from the burgh and the Trades supplied their share.

In 1757 they supplied 3 men 'in order to prevent a promiscuous press'.

They were furnished by the Cordiners, the Tailors and Weavers. These men were paid by their own Trade at an agreed rate and their Trade reimbursed by the Nine Trades and paid to the spouse. It was also agreed that qualified ex-servicemen should be admitted to their Trade as Masters.

Enlisting soldiers for Rochallzie January 1760 (General Fund Court)

The Convener mentioned that Charles Farquharson watchmaker, begged as a favour that the General Fund would publicly advertise an offer of two guineas over and above the King's bounty money, to any man that would enlist in Dundee in the company raising by Mr Farquharson of Rochallzie, in respect he had a promise of getting his son to be surgeon in said Regiment. The Court agreed on the Fund being indemnified as to any charges over and above the two men.

The Trades should not be confused with the Guildry.

The Trades are often referred to as Trade Guilds, or as Trade Incorporations, or simply the Trades. Even in their own documents they refer to themselves by one or all of these titles. They all mean the same thing.

The Guildry on the other hand was a totally separate body.

The Guildry meant the Merchant Guilds. These were the merchants who dealt in the goods made by the Trades. By Charter, only the merchants were allowed to Import goods into the burgh or Export them from the burgh. Import and Export did not necessarily mean to other countries. Any goods brought into the burgh, even from the Hilltown, Ninewells or Broughty Ferry was 'Imported' into the burgh.

The sole job of the Trades Masters was to make the goods. They could sell them in their own burgh from 'buihs' at the market, but anything else had to be done through the Guild members. This naturally led to a great deal of ill feeling from time to time, and the two were often at one another's throats. On the other hand, when it was in their own interest, they would act together in a somewhat formal, but none the less amicable way.

The Guildry, by right, had four seats on the council and the Trades three. However the Dyers were never allowed to fill one of these posts. Because of their work, the Dyers were unable to get the dye colour out of their skin, and quite frankly they stank to high heaven, It was not considered that they should represent the Trades on the council, and probably no one could be close to them for very long.

The Trades also had an order of precedence, agreed to by the Crown. Again, this was common throughout the country .In London, for example, which has twelve

Trades, the Tailors and Coppersmiths could not agree who was sixth and who was seventh in order of precedence. Neither would give way. The final solution was that they would take it in turn to be sixth one year and seventh the next. This is the origin of the phrase "to be at sixes and sevens."

In Dundee the order of precedence was:

The Baxters, now called the Bakers.

Cordiners, or Shoemakers

Skinners or Glovers

Tailors

Bonnetmakers

Fleshers or Butchers

Hammermen

Brabeners (from the Gaelic Breabadair, meaning Weaver) or Websters or Weavers

Waulkers or Fullers of cloth. In 1693 they united with the Listers or Dyers to become the Dyers.

The oaths taken by men entering as Masters of a Trade are all in very much the same form, and indeed the wording is very similar, suggesting that they were almost a standard form, possibly supplied by either the Church or the Crown. Each was modified to suit its own Craft, but the basic structure remains.

The Hammerman oath dates to 1587, and I will quote it in a moment. The only reason I have taken the Hammerman oath is that the Craft still uses it to this day. The other Trades have all modified their oath several times over the years. For example the Cordiner Oath today is now:

"I promise and declare as an honest man that I shall be a peaceable member of society and of this Craft, that I shall promote the interests of the Craft and of the widows and orphans thereof, and endeavour to promote concord where discord is."

The early oath of the Hammerman states:

'I shall be leall and true to our Sovereign and to the Provost, Bailies and Council of Dundee and to my Deacon of the Hammerman Craft thereof, present and to come. I shall maintain and defend the word of God and his Evangel which is presently professed amongst us, so far as lies in me, and shall never decline therefrom. I shall obey my Deacon of Craft. I shall obtemper and fulfil all laws and statutes made, or to be made, for the liberty of my said Craft, and welfare thereof. I shall make concord among my brethren where discord is. I shall fortifie the common weil. I shall use myself uprightly in my calling. I shall relieve the poor and needy, and help support the widow and orphan to my power. I shall use no fraudulent dealing. I shall also use no unfreeman's goods under colour of my own. I shall assist the Deacon and brethren of Craft in all respects that tend to the liberty of our said craft and, as far as possible, I shall attend all the meetings when called thereto. I shall never contravene, directly nor indirectly, all just and lawful statutes made for the welfare of the said Craft. I shall be no mutineer, nor raiser of tumults nor discords among my said brethren. So help me God' .

The oath was to maintain the word of God and his Evangel 'as is presently expressed amongst us'. This apparently vague phrase covers all the religious changes made from the Reformation onwards. Eventually, in 1775, the Trades built their own Church, St Andrew's Church, next to what is now the Wellgate Centre, they hold their annual Kirkin there. The Kirkin is held there each year on the Sunday nearest St. Andrew's Day.

As I have already said the keeping of the Sabbath was probably the most important of the Statutes of the Crafts.

In 1684 for example the Bonnetmakers were obviously concerned that their members were not attending the Kirk as they should (nothing changes) and passed an Act punishing recalcitrant Craftsmen.

The fines were;

'For displaying bonnets 6/8d. For laying clothes out to dry 4/-, For curing their fish 3/-, Carrying water from the well or washing their meat in time of sermon, 8/-, For going to their neighbours house in time of sermon 12/- for the first fault, double that for the second and if

it happened a third time, to be brought before the Session and receive a public rebuke before the congregation.'

'This Act may be a means to bring us in favour with God and peace amongst ourselves.'

In September 1797 Alexander Robertson, refused to take the Bonnetmakers' oath. The entry in the Lockit book states 'The oath commonly administered being dispensed with, he, having positively refused to take the same, and in place thereof, only promising and declaring as an honest man to be a peaceable member of society , and of his Craft, to promote the interests of this Craft, and of the widows and orphans belonging thereto, and to do nothing prejudicial thereto, and to endeavour to make concord where discord is' This was accepted as sufficient. The old oath was never used again and the promise given by new members today is virtually that given by Alexander Robertson in 1797.

The fact that the Hammermen Trade was particularly important and wealthy is easily explained. Sir Michael Moncur 1220/1245, founders of the Moncurs of that ilk were known for centuries as the King's Armourers in Dundee. Prior to this armour worn by noblemen and men-at-arms was made in Italy, Spain and Palestine. The armour made in these countries was probably made by Craftsmen working under the orders of the Knights Templar.

Later, after the introduction of portable firearms, the Craft of Armourer was divided into separate sections; Sword Slippers, Guardmakers, Lorimers and Gunmakers .

In the mid 16th century these were mainly carried out by separate families. The Smyths were the principal sword slippers, the Faits were the guard makers, and the Alysouns and Ramsays were the leading gunmakers.

Dundee Pistols are hugely valuable. There are Dundee pistols in the Museum of Scotland, and in the Kelvin Museum, Glasgow. The Glasgow pistols, one a fish tail and one a lemon-but, were made by I. & L. Low.

The Ramsay and Ivory families were famous Clockmakers, and a Ramsay went to London with James VI as Clockmaker to the King.

However the Craftsmen were not always well behaved. In the 1550's two Cutlers were brought before the Burgh Court 'for invading Deacon Sylvester Ram say with a winger'.

In 1653 Alexander Guthrie, a saddler, was expelled from the Craft for striking the Deacon and 'other causes not to be publish'. In fact he had been guilty of 'filthie carriage to his brethren by lying daily to the English commander'. This was not the result of anti-English feeling because the Craft had two Englishmen in their ranks at that time. Discipline, however, was sharp and swift. It also shows that the English were not unwelcome and had support in the town.

In 1686 the Bonnetmakers convened to discipline David Barclay, their most misbehaved and ill disposed brother. He had already been censored, fined and rebuked for scandalous behaviour and ill neighbourhood for most of his life. He was ordered to behave peaceably. He confessed his faults and agreed that he and his family be bound to good behaviour. If he offended the Deacon he would pay 40/- without debate. If an ex-Deacon 20/-, a Councillor, 13/4d, and an ordinary member, 10/- for the first fault and for the second fault to be laid aside from the Craft for a year.

The name of most Crafts is self explanatory. However many more separate crafts figure in the Hammerman records such as:

Armourer, Bucklemaker, Blacksmith, Gunsmith, Goldsmith, Silversmith, Jeweller, Clocksmith, Watchmaker, Knocksmith, Cutler, Sword Slipper, Locksmith, Farrier, Saddler, Lorimer, Brass founder, Plumber, Pewterer, Guardmaker White Ironsmith and Potter.

In keeping with historical precedent, latter years of course members also come from the Motor Trade and there are many Electricians. Keeping up to date in Engineering we have now agreed to extend our membership to Computer Engineers and workers.

In 1601 the convention of Royal Burghs arranged that 12 Flemings be sent from Leydon to Scotland so that they might teach the natives the art of weaving. Three of them, Claus Lossier (shearer), Cornelius Dermis (weaver), and Henry Turk (spinner and Weaver) were sent to Dundee. The intention was to avoid having to export Scottish wool to Flanders, and then import it back to Scotland in the form of

woven cloth. It was supposed that by creating a new manufacture 'ample employment would be provided for idle men'.

This was not new. In 1538, James IV recruited skilled Tradesmen from England, France, Spain and Holland to train his own people. These men were Gunners, Wrights, Carvers, Painters, Masons, Smiths, Harness-makers, Tapesters, Broudsters (Embroiderers), Tailors, Cunning Chirurgeons (Surgeons), Apothecaries, and so on. Although this did cause some initial jealousy and friction, they were a great asset and soon became assimilated into the population.

The weavers however were responsible for the opening up of the American wild west. The wagon trains which travelled from East to West were known as prairie schooners. All the covers for the covered wagons came from the looms in Dundee. They were made from a type of weave, which originated in the town of Nimes in France. The material was known as 'of Nime', or 'de Nime' When the wagons were no longer needed there was no waste. A clever Jewish gentleman by the name of Levi Strauss turned the fabric into trousers and "Denims" were launched on the world.

The Glovers must have been a very high class Trade as many sons of landowners and Lairds from all over the county became Apprentices.

The gavel presented to and used by the Bonnetmakers Deacon is made of walnut from a tree planted in the grounds of Balmerino Abbey around 1566 by Queen Mary, wife of James V, and mother of Mary Queen of Scots.

The last practising Bonnetmaker was entered into the Craft in 1790, which would fit in with the Act of Parliament passed in London after the Union banning the knitting and weaving of wool, in order to give the Craft in Lancashire more business. He died in 1848 on the verge of his 100th birthday.

In 1694 they were concerned at the quality of the bonnets 'taking into consideration the great loss and shame the Craft lies under by making light colours, usually by the use of alum, being a cheat to the country and encouraging the people to buy bonnets made in other places.' They therefore decreed that all sacks of bonnets coming from the mill could not be opened until they had been examined by the 'searchers' and any not up to the required standard would incur a fine of half a mark, and that any searcher who did not turn up for the search or send a deputy, to be fined

three shillings and four pence. These fines would also apply to widows as well as the rest of the Craft.

A Statute was passed by the burgh council forbidding the Fleshers to slaughter their beasts outside their buiths in the street. This was frowned upon because of the noise from the animals, the blood flowing down the street and of course the smell.

It should be borne in mind that it was quite common for the poorer people to drink a mixture of warm blood and milk.

The burgh eventually owned a slaughter house, by the back of what is now the Clydesdale Bank, in Commercial Street and the Fleshers paid a rent for it's use.

The use of the Mortcloth of each trade was a very valuable source of income. It was the practice of each Trade to purchase and keep in good condition a Mortcloth for covering a deceased Master's coffin. Here is a quote from the minutes of 1682.

'The purpose of the meeting was to show the Masters the new Mortcloth. Then they ordained that;

Firstly: we statute and ordain that no one may have the use of the Mortcloth other than on a hard coffin.

Secondly: the old cloth will be used at night time and the new cloth to be delivered and used from 8 a.m.

Thirdly: Only those who have paid the Craft dues regularly and on time may have the use of the cloth. Anyone who has not properly obeyed the ordinances of the Craft will be debarred from its use.'

You can see therefore that even when you died you could not escape from the Trades.

The Trades placed sons and sons-in-law on short term contracts with other Masters. In 1683, a Bonnetmaker, James Carnegie agreed with Elspeth Hog for one quarter years service, week about with James Gibson.

Her fee was two pounds scots, and her weekly task was '16 gryt bonets, working or spinning at 18 once the piece. If ye bonet be less working the yam is to be deliwrid bak wt the bonet, and if the bonet be more than 18 once working, so is to resawe spun yam to our wead it, two dosen of the six pound sort at twelf onc the pic (piece) and two dozn and eight of the four pound sort at 8 ounce the pic.'

As always the primary concern of the Trades was and is the care and welfare of their decayed and infirm members and their widows and children.

From the accounts of the Glovers we can see that their care extended beyond their own members. In 1720 the following entries appear;

'To ane Joirnie man Taylor in charitie 4/-. To a man in charitie qt had his corn yard burned 6/-. In charitie to Alex Rowoh weaver 12/-. In charitie to Alex Elder, weaver 6/-. To a minister in charitie 6/-. To a distressed man in charitie 6/- In charitie to one of the taylors poor 6/-. to William Lamb a shoemaker in charitie, 6/- , to a Glover in Aberbrothick of charity , 12/-. To a Taylior in Kirriemoor in charitie, 3/-. to a stranger in charitie 3/-.'

It was also quite common for the Trades to lend money to one another. In the same year the Glovers have an entry 'Payed to the Hammerman Trade of borrowed money £33.06.08.'

On balance, the Trades were very shrewd with their money. The Trades at one time or another owned much of the property in Dundee. They bought feus and collected the feu duties.

They also loaned money out to help others develop their property .There were no building societies in those days and so the Trades would take a bond on a property for a fixed sum to be paid over a fixed period and at an interest rate of usually around 7%. If payments fell behind or the borrower was unable to pay, the Bond was called in and in all probability the property would fall to the Trades.

The Convener's Court met every November to decide who qualified from each Trade as a pensioner and how much the year's pension would be. Thereafter the Court retired to a local hostelry for 'Division' and to enjoy a meal and a good drink. 'Division', was the handing out of the Money to the Deacons and Boxmasters of the annual pensions due to their Craft. This has gone on through the generations.

It still happens to this day, when the General Fund Court, as it is now called, meets in November. The meeting is then adjourned until the Friday evening when the members meet to enjoy "The Bridie Supper", which always includes a small Dundee Bridie as one of the starters. At the end of the Dinner the members go home with a couple of two handed Bridies. A member of the Baker Craft bakes these bridies and

the Fleshers supply the meat. One of the principal toasts is "The Donors of the Delicacies"

The Trades began to lose their way after the 1832 Reform Act. Reform was long overdue. The old self-perpetuating councils no longer fitted the needs of the people. In Dundee, we must add to that the forty year period of corruption and the behaviour of Provost Riddoch, who treated the town as his own personal fiefdom.

The Trades had warmly supported the Reform legislation and argued in Parliament in its favour, despite the fact that they would lose their right to their seats on the council and the burghs would lose their trading rights. This loss of power, along with the industrial revolution which meant factories instead of single tradesmen, affected the spirit and drive of the Trades, as they had lost a most important part of their purpose.

The importance of the Trades in a burgh cannot be over emphasised even in the 20th Century. The following is a list of the *ex officio* offices held by the Convener in the early 1900's:

Trustee and Governor of the Morgan Hospital.

Commissioner under the Dundee Gas Act.

Director of the Dundee Royal Orphan Institution.

Trustee of the Baxter Park. Trustee of "The Home".

Trustee of Pullar's Mortification.

Trustee of Webster, Speid Watt, and Johnston's Mortification.

Fund by James Guthrie Davidson. Trustee of Webster, Speid, Watt, and Johnston's Mortification for the Blind.

Trustee of Alexander Cameron's Mortification.

Trustee of Liliass Curran or Ogilvy's Mortification.

All the Deacons and Past Deacons are Trustees of Pullar's Mortification.

The Deacon of the Hammerman Trade is a Trustee of Liliass Curran or Ogilvy's Mortification.

In addition many of the other Deacons sat on similar bodies. Don't ask me when they found time to earn a living.

The Trades today are registered as a charitable organisation. They still maintain pensions for their own poor, although they have to be careful of the effect that they may have on other statutory benefits. In addition they make regular grants to St. Andrews Church, for which they still feel some responsibility.

More than that however are the Grants and bursaries they make towards education. They support Abertay University and some of its students, fund prizes and awards and still hold a seat on the board of Dundee High School.

They own property in Victoria Road Dundee and have recently spent over £1,250,000 converting it into high-class student accommodation. Much of this money has been borrowed, but with good financial advice the income will be such that even over the repayment period of 20 years they will soon be in a position to increase their charitable work to a figure near £100,000 per annum.

Over time, many of the Trades, in their original form, were in danger of dying out. We have heard of the Bonnetmakers. In the late 1700's they decided to "open" their Trade. This meant that they would admit suitable members who did not make Bonnets. As a result the Bonnetmakers Trade is by far the largest in Dundee. It is the home of the legal profession, accountancy and medicine, in fact all those who prey on the rest of us.

The Weavers have included masters working in polypropylene and others of Trades allied to weaving. In the 1990's the Dyers agreed to admit anyone whose work involved colours or colouring. Professional photographers are therefore admitted into the Dyer Craft. The Glovers, although very small in numbers remain closed, as do the Hammerman, Flesher and Baker Trades

Further, after some years in the background, they are finding a new voice in the City. They realise that, with no Political affiliation, and much of the business, medical and legal community among it's members, they have a potential to be a powerful force for good in the City.

The Trades go from strength to strength and whatever may have been in their past, they see the future stretching ahead of them with the sense of purpose that has kept them alive for over 800 years.