

THE THREE UNITED TRADES OF DUNDEE

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The Three United Trades of Dundee are the building trades of Masons, Wrights, and Slaters. Dundee was unusual in separating the Trades who made the goods to sustain life in a Burgh from the building trades. In most burghs the building trades are included with the others. I have already spoken to you about the Nine Incorporated Trades, the Bakers, Cordiners, Glovers, Tailors, Bonnetmakers, Fleshers, Hammermen, Weavers and Dyers. Now it is the turn of the Three United Trades.

From the records of the Privy Council of Scotland and the Burgh records of Dundee it seems that the building trades generally were held in very low esteem. Apart from the Master Masons who, as you well know, were part Architect, part Clerk of Works the rest were looked down upon as being in the lowest rank of all tradesmen. Whether this was because of the peripatetic nature of their work or the nature of the men who carried it out is not recorded.

For example, in 1480, James I ruled “Of wrichtes and masons - for quhy it is complained that these trades take on hand monie warke whilkis they will not fulfil at the time they hecht. Therefore it is ordained that nane tak mair wark on hand than they can do, under paine of tinsell of the price of what he cannot fulfil. And other men of the Craft may do the wark, and if they refuse they shall be punished at the King’s will.” Can you imagine a builder today taking on more work than he can do and not finishing on time? What a pity that law was not still in force when the new Scottish Parliament building was put built?

Later, in 1592, James VI gave liberty, freedom and power to all Masons, Wrights, Slaters and other Craftsmen in Dundee “that wirkis by the square reule, lyne, or compass under the airt of geometrie” to elect courts and assemblies as freely as any other Craft. This was unusual, being a Royal Warrant, but it was not implemented, and it seems to have been completely forgotten by the trades. Like so many things in the Three Trades’ history their record keeping was very poor.

Much later, in 1629, the three building trades in Dundee petitioned the King to give them a Charter. John Myln, a mason and Hendrie Kinros, an advocate, argued the case for the Crafts. The King passed it to his Privy Council for a decision. The Commissioner from Dundee duly presented a petition by the Council and Magistrates against it. The Privy Council chickened out and the request was refused on the grounds that the Burgh Council was the only body with authority to give Charters to trades'. There must have been some serious dispute between the burgh council and the trades because the Burgh had already turned down the request on the grounds that it would be a likely cause of riots and disturbance among the populace. Was this because they were not good tradesmen or because of the behaviour of the men doing the work? Nothing in the Burgh records gives a clue to the reason. None the less it would seem that the building trades were not held in good standing in Dundee. Their members were certainly considered to be too poor and untrustworthy to be given a charter.

The John Myln who argued the case for the trades was appointed King's Master Mason only two years later. We will hear more of the Myln family.

As a result of all this they did not receive their Charter until 1741, when they adopted the motto 'Three joined in one', although of course they had been in existence for hundreds of years.

One important reason given for incorporating the Three Trades in 1741, was to let them group together to buy meal in bulk. This was common in all the trades and was of great benefit to them. A deal would be done with a local laird to buy a fixed amount of meal for the year. This suited the laird, and, especially in the frequent years of poor harvests, was very much to the advantage of the trade. It also helped the trade to take care of its sick and infirm members. Half the meal was to be divided among the Wrights and the other half equally between the two other trades. This gives some idea of how large the Wrights were compared to the other two.

Obtaining a Charter also gave them the right to elect their own officials, control their own affairs, including the training of apprentices, and gave them rights to keep non-members of their Incorporation from working in the burgh without paying

dues to the trades. The Three Trades, despite sharing a Lawyer as Scriviner or Clerk, were very poor record keepers. The Lockit books are there to record the names of every one who was entered as a Master of the Trade. In the case of the Masons, only 256 names appear.

Simply looking over the Minutes and counting the signatures of members attending brings up a number of over 350. There would be even more, especially when you consider that at one time no names could be entered because the holder of the key to the Book was working out of town for some months. Much the same happens with the Wrights and Slaters. Perhaps because of their small number they all knew one another and particularly in the case of the Masons, they would also belong to a Masonic Lodge and everyone would know that they were in good standing.

So why, apart from buying meal, were the three so anxious to get a charter from the burgh. The explanation is simple. By getting a charter they could also become Burgesses of the burgh. Only burgesses were allowed to set up their own business, become employers in the burgh and register apprentices. They were also legally given the right to make their own Rules and Regulations and govern their trade. A Burgess ticket was also the equivalent of a passport today, and in addition it showed that you were in good standing in the burgh and could therefore be trusted with work. However, showing that poverty may well have been the reason for not being held in regard in the burgh, member of the Three Trades were allowed to pay up their Burgess dues by instalments.

The Three United Trades were always anxious to play their full part in advancing the burgh. Any time a new public body was being set up, when the Harbour was being rebuilt, when the Hospital, the Watt Institute or the Asylum were endowed, in fact in any and every development in Dundee, the Three Trades requested and indeed sometimes demanded that they be involved. They gave funds for these developments and had seats on the various Boards of Governance. Much of this was done in conjunction with the Nine Trades and the two were always on friendly terms.

As the burgh grew and needed a fourth Church, the council refused to build one. The Nine Trades got together with the Kirk Session and the Three Trades to build the Trade's Kirk, St. Andrew's Church beside what is now the Wellgate Centre. The Three Trades paid a quarter of the Nine Trades share. This was a fair representation of the numbers in the various Trades in 1774. The work was carried out by members of the Trades.

During the Crimean War, the Three Trades subscribed towards the "Patriotic Fund" for the widows and children of the men who died in the war.

In 1840 St Mary's Church, the City Church beside the old steeple in the City Centre, the largest parish church in Europe, was destroyed by fire. William Burns, an Architect from Edinburgh, planned the rebuilding, dividing it into three separate churches. These plans were submitted to all the trades. The Three Trades were highly critical of his proposals damning them as being "a miserable and patched piece of work". They gave their detailed reasons, and demanded that Mr Burns be told to prepare new plans without delay. The town duly complied with this demand.

Slaters

The smallest of the three is the Slater or Sclaiter Trade. The total number of Masters is only 102 although there are nearer 200 recorded as being present at meetings.

Slates would have come from the Howe of Strathmore and the Stannergate. This was a slate quarry about a mile from the town centre towards Broughty Ferry. It was quite small however and was soon worked out. Also, the road from the burgh over the Sidlaw Hills to the Strathmore quarry, was nothing more than a track along which only pack horses could travel in the 1600's. Consequently it was cheaper to ship slates from Ballachulish in Argyll than the 10 or so miles by pack horse. The lane leading from the south side of Nethergate to the shore, later called Sea Wynd, was earlier known as the "Sklaitt Wynd".

The original word for the trade was "Sclaiter". This bothered me because in earlier times houses were roofed with either thatch or shingles. Thinking about this one day I remembered that you and I call wood lice "sclaters". Shingles are made of

wood, and the old French name for a shingle is “esclait”, hence Sclaiter. It takes very little imagination to corrupt the word Sclaiter into Slater as the use of shingles declined.

There is an entry in the Exchequer Rolls of 1427 recording that 20lib. was paid to William de Law of Dundee and his partners “sclaiters” for stone tiles used to repair Linlithgow Palace.

In 1555 the Edinburgh Burgh Records have an entry under the repairs to St Giles Cathedral “item for 3,900 Dundie Sklaytts to the body of the Kirk, fra the Stepill west to the West Kirk dor, price of the 1000, 19lib. Item for the carriage of the same to the town ilk thousand 13/8d”.

David Cockburne a Master Slater, who exported slates, died prior to 1608, leaving his business in the hands of his widow Marjorie Forrester. The Trade objected to her acting as a “Master Slater”, but the Provost, and Council, found that she had done “gude and rede seruice” to the burgh in supplying slates for repairing public buildings, especially for “the reparatione and thack and ruif of the tolbuith.” They allowed her freely to use “hir tred in bying, selling and transporting of sklettis to and fra the burgh.” This implies that she was a business woman. Whilst her husband was out of town, perhaps for months buying and transporting slates, she would have been the person dealing with the Council and looking after the workmen and the business. There was nothing unusual in a wife playing such an important part in her husband’s trade.

Before this, houses had been covered with thatch or shingles - materials which were such a fire hazard that Parliament eventually prohibited them from being used in burghs. Partly because of this Act, there was “an inconvenient dearth of sclates, quhilk for sometime had been caused through forestallers buying them without the town, and transporting the samin till Leith and Edinburgh, and all other places, to the grite hurt of the common weill”. Forestalling was buying goods and selling them on without bringing them into the burgh as the law required.

There were careless workmen in those days as well as now. “David Quhyt and Robert Meill are sworn to bide deliverance of arbiters anent the distance between them - that is the insufficiency of a kiln theiking, theiket be David to Robert, and faults thereof, and of the silver resting awing to David thairfor”. David White had apparently done a poor job and Robert Meill refused to pay for it.

“Henry Broun, serurgian, hes tane to prove that David Hay, sklaiter, pointit nocht his houses sufficiently, but put twa or three lads to the lawbour, whilk left them waur nor they enterit with them.” On hearing evidence, the Bailies “decernit David to mend the drops in Broun’s ludging.”

Someone using an apprentice instead of a tradesman wouldn’t happen today, would it? In 1667 the entry fee for Masters included the obligatory dinner given to the whole trade or £4 plus a pint of wine to each master.

Slater’s, like Masons, also worked outside the Burgh. In 1754 they decreed that anyone taking on more work than he himself could do had to offer it to other members of the Trade. They could only use Journeymen or unfreemen with permission from the Deacon.

There were always problems to the population by having to quarter soldiers in times of trouble. In 1762 the Slaters petitioned the council to be relieved of this burden claiming “the Sclaiters were always very assisting with ladders for extinguishing fires when kindled in this Burgh” and had never accepted payment for this service. The appeal worked and the Council agreed to the petition.

Initially a Slater paid into the poor fund at the rate of one penny Sterling per Rood of Work. The Slater’s also used the term ‘Operative’ in 1831. When fixing the dues it allows sons-in-law who were Operative Slaters’ to enter for the reduced fee of £5. Slaters were not wealthy people. The trade even allowed entry money to be paid by instalments. In 1840 James Stewart was entered on paying five pounds of his £30 entry money and granting a bill for the balance, including interest with security, due in twelve months time. Shortage of the poor fund money was a problem and in 1846

“the custom of sitting down to supper on St. Stephen’s night, the expense of which being paid from the Trades funds” came to an end.

The Slaters shared their Clerk with the other Two Trades and they lost most of their money when Mr Haggard, a solicitor and their Clerk, became bankrupt. They agreed to accept payment of only 2/- in the pound. They tried to claim against the Scottish Provident Investment Company where Mr Haggard had invested their money. This Company had been put in liquidation and all its Books destroyed by order of the Court of Session.

By 1926 after a break in the entries of 57 years there was only one member left in the Trade. His name was James Fyffe and he met with himself regularly and re-elected himself Deacon. But there was something strange about the good Deacon Fyffe. In 1917, David Law, a Slater, had applied to join the trade. He qualified, his application was accepted, and various dates and times were set for his entry into the trade. For a variety of petty reasons Deacon Fyffe was always unable to attend at the last minute. Deacon Fyffe was sadly killed in an accident, leaving the trade with no living members.

However in 1926, some 9 years after his first application, Mr Law took the Three Trades to the Court of Session, when he was formally declared a member of the Slater Trade. The Trade had to pay the costs of the case. Two days later David Law signed the lockit book as the only remaining member and at the same time he entered Charles Brand, allowing the trade to be up and running again.

Wrights

The Wrights had at least twice the membership of each of the others. The Wright Trade was made up of three different groups of men, the joiners, squarewrights (cabinetmakers) and glaziers. Within the trade there was no discord among the groups. Cabinetmakers, for example, did not appear to hold themselves as of a higher status than glaziers.

Much of the history of the Wrights runs parallel with the rest of the trades and there is little need to repeat the details of raising cash for the poor and needy, or detail their Acts and Statutes.

The Trade did record some of the essays given to tradesmen wishing to qualify as Masters. Diverse items such as a carpenter's toolbox, a sofa table, a six panelled bound door, a breakfast table, a rudder case for a ship, a mahogany dressing table, an elbow chair of laburnum, a Pembroke table, a clock case, a sash window and a pair of mahogany bed pillars. A Guilder and Carver was asked to make a Dressing box. And glaziers were asked to glaze a window. Glazing a window was not the simple job it is today. Most windows were made up of diamond shaped pieces of glass held in place by 'comes', the lead seals and strips holding the glass in place. It was highly skilled work.

The building trades fell on hard times and in 1808, the Masters reduced the journeymen's wages by 2/- per week. This brought the pay down to 15/- per week. Times must have been hard because there were no complaints. Two years later, in June 1810, things improved and the Journeymen asked for an increase of 2d per shilling to their wages. The Trade wrote to the Wrights in Edinburgh, Perth, Arbroath and Montrose asking their rates of pay. Finding that they paid less than in Dundee, they told their Journeymen that only the Justices of the Peace could increase pay.

Squarewrights

Squarewrights or cabinetmakers were also the members of the trade responsible for making "deidkists" or coffins.

Mortcloths, the elaborate velvet covers for coffins, were of particular value to the Wright Trade. They owned up to seven at any one time, all at various prices. This of course makes sense, bearing in mind that the Wrights were the original undertakers. The Wrights carried out the burials in the burgh.

Problems arose with the charges made by the town. In 1804 they asked the Town to give them a proper price list for grave diggers, bearers, Dineguild Officer

and Town Officer as the present mode of paying them was open to fraud and imposition.

In 1821 the charges for coffins were:

<i>Covered Coffin Hospital dues</i>	<i>4/6d.</i>
<i>Covered Coffin where little ornament is used</i>	<i>2/6d.</i>

All coffins made for persons under 12 Years of age were considered small coffins and were charged at half dues. These were exclusive of the Sextons dues.

Charges for the Mort Cloths in 1823 varied from 4/6d. for Cloth No 1. to 1/6d for No 7. These were the charges for both the use of the Cloth and the Trade's Officer for his work. The Officers gown and the gowns for the bearers were included in the price of the cloth. The Trade was to furnish no ribbons except black ones for the No 1 cloth. Bearers dues were set at 2/3d. each. The Officer was paid 2/- for delivering any number of letters of invitation up to 60, and 6/- per score above that number.

The Trade also employed "Sallies". They were older or unfit members. The trade does not describe exactly what the Sallies were. However, they were dressed in a top coat, with gloves supplied by the trade. I feel sure that this was a nickname derived from the old Scots word for the willow tree. The Sally was the tree of mourning and there is mention elsewhere in history of professional mourners carrying branches of willow.

Personal feelings between the sallies came to the fore from time to time. In 1828 there was a complaint from one Sally about another, claiming that he kicked him up the backside, whilst attending a funeral. It is just possible that the good John Barleycorn had a hand in this complaint.

In 1816 A proposal was laid before the Meeting "to procure six gowans with Bands, Crapes & Gloves for six men to be employed as Bearers, when the Meeting were of opinion that it would be for the good of the Trades funds to have the same and ordered the Deacon & Boxmaster to take estimates for them from at least three taylors. The flannel not to be under two shillings & six pence per Yd."

In 1825 new Regulations for the dues payable at the burial ground were read to the Meeting. The Meeting decided to publish the fact that they disagreed with this increase so that the public would know that the price increase was not down to them. It seems that undertakers have never had a good press.

Prices for work were strictly governed. In 1802 the charges are interesting. There are 87 prices listed. Here is a sample although I will leave a full copy with you.

Cabinet Work

1. *A Pillar & Claw Table of Mahogany 3ft diameter in the top - £2 or 4/6 per foot - Workmanship 6/6d*
2. *A Side board 6ft 6" by 2ft 6" - two seallerets - two centre drawers - @10/- per foot. Workmanship £2. - If with a double or stage Top @ 12/- Workmanship £2. 10/-*
3. *A Dresser for a kitchen of fir 6ft long - from 2ft to 30" in breadth, with three drawers, two doors plain bound in the front, £2. 10/-, workmanship 12/6.*
4. *A Chest of Circular Front Mahogany Drawers 3ft 7" length of the top - 2ft 8" by 1ft 9" size of the ends - Solid fronts veneered outside & in on deall wainscot boxes @ 12/6 per foot. - Workmanship £1.10/-.*
5. *A Bed 6ft 6" long by 5ft in breadth, mahogany foot posts carved double screwed - plain sweep for the cornice from £6 to £6.15/-. Workmanship 12/-.*
6. *A Mahogany Clock Case from £3 to £5.5/-. Workmanship from £1.4/- to £2.6/-.*
7. *A Cabreal Sofa 6ft long 2ft 3" broad - mahogeny legs, socket castors, all hair stuffing from £5.5/- to £6.6/-. Workmanship 14/-.*
8. *Glass per foot when sold in panes. First crown @ 1/5d per foot. Second @ 1/3d. per foot. Third 1/3d per foot and fourth @ 1/- per foot superficial.*

Joiner Work

There were just as many prices for joiner work:

1. *Joists laying in a house 40ft wide @ 2d. per sq. yd.*
2. *Window shutters & ingetts @ 3/- per Yd.*
3. *3. Architraves double facia @ 4d. per lin. foot.*
4. *Lathing ceillings if not above 12 feet high @ 2 1/2 per yd. below or @ 7ft high @ 2d. 5. Standarts with lath on stone walls @ 5d. per yd.*
5. *Deafening @ 4d. per yd. sq.*
6. *A Chimnie pice with pillasters @ 8d. per foot.*
7. *A Mahogany Hand Raill @ 5/- per foot.*

Problems inevitably arose with men of three trades working on the same property. In 1803 the Masons wrote to the Wrights asking if they condoned a Master from either Incorporation employing journeymen from the other trades working on his own building. It transpired that the Wright Trade's Deacon was caught employing two masons after six o'clock at his own house in Tay Street. Obviously the problems of 'homers' was well established. This problem did not go away however and in 1815 James Herald accused James Smith of clandestinely employing one of his men to work for him after hours on his own house.

Later, it was represented to a Meeting that Messers Kewans & Horn & Mr Jas. Smart all ship Carpenters in Dundee were employing unfreemen & Journeymen to do the Joiner work of their ships. Action was taken to stop this practice.

In February 1825, the Sawyers demanded an increase in prices for sawing. The Meeting considered this and their prices were proposed:

American Yellow pine under 16 inches @ 2/4d. per 100 Baltic battens, or planks, superficial measure @ 2/6d. per 100 Birch timber @ 5/-per 100

Wainscot, American Ash and Cedar @ 4/- per 100

Honduras mahogany @ 5/6d. per 100

Spanish do do @ 6/- per 100

In 1841, the Timber Merchants of Dundee started selling their American Timber by Calliper instead of by String Measure. This was unjust in principle in so far as it charged the buyer with more than the free contents on logs not fully square. Calliper measure of a tree was taken as the diameter at shoulder height from the ground. String Measure was the length of the squared off logs. They checked at the principal ports of Scotland and found that string measure was universally used and the merchants here had therefore no precedent for this. The trade therefore put a stop to this practice.

In 1842 they considered that the charge to enter the Trade was too high for many of the entrants and they adopted a system of licensing unfreemen. They also empowered their Committee “to consider the circumstances of such applicants as are poor and carry on a small business, to reduce their ordinary license to any sum they think proper not less than One Pound one shilling”.

Members of the Trade to this day must show that they are involved in working with wood exactly as laid down since the beginning. The only difference being that an applicant is not required to perform an essay.

Masons

Although the Lockit Book does not start until 11th March 1659. Records of the existence of Masons are easier to find than the others.

In 1491 the king decided that the Trade was abusing its position by restrictive practices. He therefore banned the Deacons from having any authority for one year other than examining of the quality of workmanship. He also decreed “That Maisons and Wrichtes and uther men of Craft wha statutis that they sall have fee, alsweill for the halie daie as for the wark day, sall be indicted as common oppressors and punished accordingly”.

In 1540 another act of the crown stated- “Because it is heavlie murmured that all Craftesmen of this Realme uses extortion upon uthers by reason of their craftes and

pruivie acts made among themselves contrair to ye common weill. It is statute and hereafter any who has building or repairs to make, that they may chuse gude Craftesmen, free men or uthers as they think best to do the same, and that no impediment be made to such Craftesmen by uthers of the said Craft in the kingdom, under pain of losing their freedom.”

The opening of the lockit Book book dated 11th March 1659, reads in translation, “this day we of the lodge of Dundee Masters and free men having met and taking into consideration the great damage we sustain in not having had a recognised body of our number, now with the blessing of God herby Statute and Ordain that for an entered apprentice he will pay for his entry 8 pounds Scots along with the rest of his dues as the Trade shall decide. Every fellow Craft will pay 10 pounds and his dues and any apprentice coming into the Trade to pay 10 groats.

In the same way any Master or Fellow within the Lodge who takes his brother’s work, provided his brother is willing and able to do the work, will be fined 40/- Scots”.

From the very earliest entry, there is a mixture of Masonic and non-Masonic terms. The masons used ‘Fellow Craft’ where all the other trades referred to Journeymen.

“Every man shall give to the poor box, as he is able. John West, Master of the Lodge will give 13/4d quarterly. Andrew West, Warden of the same Lodge for the same, John Mustard, Thomas Norrie. John Young and William Randell, 6/8d. Walter Robertson half a mark per quarter”, and so on.

The unusual thing about this is that in no other Trade do the members pay different sums to the poor fund. All the other Trades lay down the booking fee, and a given sum per piece of work, i.e. the Bakers for every Baking and so on. This recognises the comparative poverty of many masons.

Next comes a brief invocation or prayer. The Invocation comes from the opening of a copy of the Masonic “Old Charges”. It reads “The Might of the father of

Heaven with the Wisdome of the Glorious sone and the Grace and Goodness of the Holie Ghost be with us at our beginning and give us grace so to goweren us heir in our lyffe that we may come to his bliss that never shall have ending Amene”.

Among the records of the Dundee Mason Trade is a rare 17th century text of the ‘Old Charges’. It looks very much as if the trade is an Incorporation made official by the Burgh which has been grafted on to an existing Lodge, but there are no Masonic Lodge details in the archives of the Mason Trade. I have here, courtesy of Dundee City Archives, a copy in this document along with my modern translation which I will leave with you.

When the Tron Kirk was built in Edinburgh the first structure was 4 Great lodges for the masons. It is quite easy to see and speculate on how easy it is for someone without specialised knowledge to confuse the two bodies.

There is a rare copy of an Indenture dated 1536, in Dundee City Archives, between the Council and George Boiss, mason appointing him

“as his daily work in the labour in the craft of mason, using the best and most perfect workmanship that he can perform at the work of the Kirk or the day to day work of the said burgh, or any other work within the burgh that the town require of him at any time... and to exercise the highest standard of workmanship, exclusively, daily and hourly for this work by the standards of ‘old use and customs of our Lady Lodge of Dundee’ as performed in times past”.

In summer he was to work from 5 am, until 8 am, and after a half hour break, to carry on until a two hour rest from 11.30 am till 1.30 pm. Finally to work until 4 pm. before taking a half-hour break and continuing until 7 pm. During winter, when the light was to poor to see at 5 am or 7 pm he was to start as soon as the light permitted and work until the light failed, without a meal break or exercise. Apart from festival days, he was to work all other evenings until the time of preaching. George was granted, for life, a fee of twenty four pounds Scots paid every half quarter as in the ‘old practise of our Lady Lodge’. Also if George was asked, and the town agreed, he could carry out

work for the Crown, or any other Lord or Gentleman. However, when George was absent from the town work, he would have no fee from the town. On the other hand, if George was injured or fell ill for the space of forty days continually his fees were to be paid during that period. He was allowed an apprentice for seven years, and as that apprenticeship finished, to take another apprentice, ensuring that he was not too young. The apprentice was to receive no pay during his first year and then ten pounds, paid to George in the same way as he was paid. And if the apprentice is taken ill the same conditions apply as to his master. This contract would have been written in Latin and torn in two. The council would have the part with George's signature and George the part with the Burgh Seal attached. Again this extract is courtesy of Dundee City Archives.

An entry in 1560 does refer to a Masonic Lodge in Dundee. It reads: "There were no houses along the north side of Our Lady Gait in front of the Church, excepting at its west end where stood the Mason Lodge, a building of considerable size, and at the East Kirk Stile - now Tally Street - where there were two houses". A note adding to this states: "This lodge stood in the Nethergate at the bottom of what was later School Wynd. After the Reformation its name was changed from "Our Lady Luge" to "Ye Mason Luge.""

The Mercat Cross

The Mercat Cross had been built by a member of the Myln family by the name of John Mylne. On the lower part of the pillar is inscribed the initials I. M., being John Mylne, the King's master-mason. He was admitted a burghess. John was of a family who belonged hereditarily to the craft, and has produced famous masons and architects, who erected important buildings throughout the kingdom. He constructed the bridge at Perth, which was destroyed in 1621, almost before it had been finished. He lies in the Grayfriar's burying-ground, and the inscription on his tomb-stone records that:

*"His learned art did lay
The spacious arches of the bridge of Tay
Which [w]as demolish'd by a mighty spate."
and concludes –*

*“That in his sonne,
And sonne’s sonne, he lives for two for one;
Who to advance Miln’s art and fame,
Make stocks and stones speak out his name.”*

An inscription over the door of Mary’s Chapel Mason Lodge in Edinburgh, commemorates his son’s son, who died in 1667, as:

*“John Mylne, who maketh the fou[r]th John,
And by descent from father unto son,
Sixth master-mason to a royal race
Of seven successive kings.”*

St. Mary’s Tower, the Old Steeple Dundee

After the turret head was strengthened in 1607, there is no further mention of its defects; but trouble did come again, and the Council having looked to their defences, “concludit that the turne-pyk upon the steeple be presently repaired - and that with stone-work; and for that effect” they gave “commission to the Bailies and the treasurer to agree with John Mylne, master-mason; and instructed them to report next Council day.” Nothing was done until the following year, when the Marquis of Montrose was threatening the covenanting borrows and was almost at the gates.

The Burgh was raising levies of men, and strengthening the ports and walls. Then, they put the old tower in order. “The bailies declared that having upliftit from the brewers of ale within the burgh two hundred dollars,

They had resolved to employ the same upon two rounds to be built upon the steeple, and had for that effect agreeit with John Mylne to give him eight hundred merks for the same, for the quhilk he was to furnish all necessaries, scaffolding, and all except iron work; and for the ground and the sole of these rounds, the said John would refer himself to the Council’s discretion.”

John “compeired, and acknowledged the haill particulars, and acted himself for the performance of the same at the fardest before the second day of Februar,

1645". He also erected the small spire in such a manner as to harmonise with, and, as it were, complete, the building.

One of the family built Holyrood House. In 1763, another, William, erected the North Bridge at Edinburgh; and his brother Robert, after a distinguished career in Rome, built Blackfriar's bridge across the Thames about the same time. The Mylne family were still highly regarded in 1790 when one Thomas owned the quarry at Kingoodie, the principal source of much of the stone used in Dundee. The Crop Research Centre at Mylnfield today gets its name from land and property owned by the Mylnes.

On 17th May 1796 Deacon Samuel Hannah was found guilty of embezzling money paid to him for the use of the Mortcloth. He was prosecuted and suspended for all time coming from holding any office in the Trade. Strangely enough he was not banished the Trade, which was the usual punishment.

In many cases terms used by the trade itself has caused a great deal of confusion. Sometimes they referred to the Mason Trade of Dundee as a Lodge. They also used the expressions Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft when entering what the other Trades call apprentices and Journeymen. All these terms were interchangeable. Obviously they knew what they were talking about, but the mixture of Masonic and Trade terms makes understanding where and when the line was drawn between the two very obscure.

Early in the 18th century they entered over 40 gentlemen. The Duke of Perth, the valet de chambre of the Master of Gray and the minister of Edzell were entered along with a Mr. John Paterson. The title Mr. shows that he was a graduate. They are all recorded in the Minutes and accounts, but not entered in the Lockit Book of the Trade. Here we find 'Speculative Masons' being mixed up with the pure trade of 'Operative Masons'. Indeed one of them was even elected Deacon.

However cracks soon appeared in this apparent take over of the Trade. In 1734, the working Masons regained control of the Trade itself when the members

enacted that “every master, before being admitted to the craft, shall perform an Essay of hewn stone to the satisfaction of the Deacon and seven masters”.

It was also enacted that “if any free Master exercising the employment of masonry shall undertake any work that he cannot perfect without the cunning or assistance of another Craftsman, that he shall be obliged to employ one of the free Masters, and failzeing to finish and perfect any work so undertaken as ane artist in the Mason craft, he shall, after conviction, forfeit to the fund of the Craft one third part of the value of the undertaking, for the first fault. For the second fault he shall forfeit to the Craft’s fund such a sum as the Deacon and other members shall determine”.

An act in 1741 reads “The Trade agree to allow all Fellow Crafts and entered Apprentices to vote in election of Warden and Boxmaster, but not in election of Visitor. Visitor was the term used by the Guildry for the Deacon of a Pendicle Trade. However, the confusion regarding the Trade and Freemasonry continues through all the records. A Warden is mentioned as well as a Deacon, Visitor and Master. In 1757 there is reference to a Senior Master, a Visitor, a Senior and Junior Warden, an eldest and youngest Boxmaster. No explanation is given as to the duties or order of seniority of any of the holders of these offices. The entry on 27th December 1673 is of

“George Wardroper, Prentes to Andron West, to be Entered Prentes in this lowdge”.

“27th November 1679 John Robertson, Prentes to John Young, to be Entered Prentis in this lowdg”

However on 8th March 1755 comes the strangest of all the entries.

“Alexander Cheine, Robert Finlay, George Mudie, Alexander Peirie, Mariners in Dundee to be entered Free Apprentices, to be concerned in the operative part of Masonry”.

In 1694 the Trade declared that “every man when he gets (registers) his mark to pay 40/-“. A rare record of these marks is available. There are cases of the money being paid by instalments and caution being given. Caution is a form of written guarantee or bond from a respected citizen. In 1752 the entry money for strangers

entering the Craft was raised to £100. Strangers were fully qualified men from outside the burgh who were moving into the burgh to live and to work.

On 6th March 1782 the Trade agree that in future they would charge One shilling and six pence in summer and One Shilling in winter per day for their Journeyman's wages.

Prices of Mason Work as fixed by the Mason Trade:

30th April 1807

1	<i>Common hewn work, Ribbets, Soles & Lintels</i>	<i>P/foot</i>	<i>0 10 0</i>
2	<i>Broached corners, superficial measure</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>0 1 6</i>
4	<i>Droved, (using a broad chisel) stair steps & scale slopes 4ft long & 6in of bearing</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>0 2 0</i>
5	<i>A droved Chimney 3 feet high</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>0 15 0</i>
6	<i>Ruble work 2 feet thick</i>	<i>P/Rood</i>	<i>10 10 0</i>
7	<i>Laying Pavement p foot in sand, nothing afforded</i>	<i>P/foot</i>	<i>0 0 2</i>
8	<i>Squaring and Laying Carmyllie Pavement,</i>		<i>0 0 6</i>
9	<i>Whatever the Wage is for the time the masters profit on each man pay'd to be</i>		<i>0 0 6</i>
10	<i>Ditto on Labourers p/man p/ day</i>		<i>0 0 4</i>

There is also a list showing how building work was to be measured, showing the precursor of today's quantity surveyor. Both these items I leave with you in full.

On 3rd January 1811, David Archer and Thomas Cant were ordered "to perform an Essay Piece being an Outband Rybat and that against Tomorrow at noon." The trade agreed to admit John Smith for Twenty Five Pounds sterling on Bill with Caution to the satisfaction of the Trade payable at Twelve months after Date. His Essay being to Hew a Piece of Pavement Two feet ten Inches by Two feet. The Essay Masters Inspected the Outband Rybat and Piece of Pavement and found them 'not altogether sufficient'. The Trade Fined David Archer, Thomas Cant and John Smith in the sum of Five shillings sterling each for behoof of the Poor of the Trade. And they appoint the said David Archer, Thomas Cant and John Smith to be entered Freemasters in the Trade Locked Book. Every reference to the examination of the

Essay of a would-be Master finds that the work was 'not altogether sufficient'. In one entry it even comments 'as usual'. A fine of 5/- was imposed for the poor and the person invariably admitted to the Trade. It has been suggested that this was this simply a way of enhancing the poor fund, and the 'as usual' comment a reference to some kind of in joke. You will know better than me, but did it not have a Masonic meaning in that only the 'Supreme Governor of the Universe' could make anything that is perfect?

The Wrights were not the only trade to have problems with the demon drink. 15th January 1811, The Mason Trade "Resolved unanimously That any Member the worse of drink at the Meeting shall in future be put out of the Meeting if thought incapable to act by the Members of the Committee for the time and shall for the first Fault be also fined in Five Shillings sterling for behoof of the Poor of the Trade; and the same shall take place as to disorderly people of all descriptions altho' sober at the time".

In 1820 the Trade was only 28 strong. This may have been due to their poor record keeping. For example: Any person who was the son or son-in-law of a Master had the right to be a member of the trade by right of his father. To show how poor the Trade was in keeping records one John Smart, an accountant, had applied to become a member by right of his father. The trade asked him to justify this. His reply, by letter, included:

"That his Great Grand-father Andrew Smart, Mason & Architect in Dundee who died in 1736 was a Member of the Incorporation. That Subsequently his Grand-father Thomas Smart also Mason & Architect in Dundee who died in 1801 was a Member of the Incorporation and for some years its Chief Office Bearer - That his Brother the late Convener David Smart, Baker, his Grand-Uncle was also a Member of the Incorporation. And that latterly Thomas Smart, Writer in Dundee the Petitioner's Father, was also a Member of the Incorporation and for near half a Century held the Situation of Clerk to the Trade."

If they were unaware of that history there was not much chance of keeping accurate records. Even then John was refused entry as he was not a practising mason.

Books and documents regularly went missing through carelessness. In 1840 the Deacon from 1834 told the trade that he had the Trade's Flag and a box containing Sederunt books, cash books and documents referring to the founding of the Three Trades, along with a brass Compass and Rule. Where these are now is anyone's guess. Today each of the three trades is very low in numbers. They still require that new masters are employed in their respective trade. They are involved in charitable work and caring for their poor and infirm. They give educational grants to young students in the colleges. They do help to maintain the Trades Kirk in St Andrew's Street. This church sits back from the road next to the Wellgate Shopping Centre. It is open to the public every Tuesday and Thursday morning. The building was started in 1774 and is well worth a visit when you are in Dundee. The Trades' stained glass windows are quite magnificent and the carved high backed Deacon's chairs in the gallery are a credit to the trades and are used at the 'Kirkin of the Trades' service on the Sunday nearest St Andrew's day, shortly after the office-bearers are appointed

Currently the proud members of the Three Trades are trying hard to boost their numbers so that they can keep up their activities in the City of Dundee. As you would expect from such a proud group, the Members who do remain are as staunch and true as they ever were in the past.