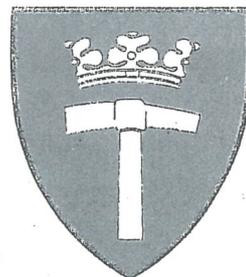


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The
Magdalen Chapel
COWGATE, EDINBURGH
AND THE
INCORPORATION OF
HAMMERMEN OF EDINBURGH



Charter granted—2nd May, 1483

MAGDALEN CHAPEL FOUNDED 1541

Proceeds of sales will go to the Restoration Fund

30p.

Arnot records that in early times there existed in the Cowgate an ancient *Mais in Dieu* which had fallen into decay; but it was re-founded in the reign of James IV., chiefly by the pious contributions of Michael Macqueen (or Macquhen), a wealthy citizen, and afterwards by his widow, Janet Rhynd.

The hospital—designed to accommodate a chaplain and seven poor men—and the chapel, the little square spire of which (with its gargoyles formed like cannon, each with a ball stuck in its mouth) is nearly lost amid the towering modern edifices which surround it—were dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene, and by the will of the founders were left in trust to the Corporation of Hammermen, by whom the latter was used as a hall for their meetings. The foundation was augmented in 1541 by two donations from Hugh Lord Somerville, who was taken prisoner by the English in the following year, and had to ransom himself for 1,000 merks.

If the edifice suffered in the general sack of the city during the invasion of 1544 it must have been quickly repaired, as the windows are still adorned with ancient painted glass—the only fragments in all Scotland which have survived the Reformation, and contain the royal arms of Scotland, encircled by a wreath of thistles, and those of the Queen Regent Mary of Guise, within a wreath of laurel, with the shields of the founder and foundress within ornamental borders. These probably date from 1556, in which year we find that “The baillies and counsaile ordainis the thesaurer to mak ane powpet to Maister Alexander Sym to reid in the Magdalene

Chapel, and quhat expensis he makis thaeron sal be allowit to him in his accomptis."

In one window, a Saint Bartholomew has strangely escaped the destructive mobs of 1559 and 1688; but its tints are far inferior to the deep crimson and gold of the royal arms. It is remarkable that one other feature has also escaped destruction, the tomb of Janet Rhynd, with the following inscription in ancient Gothic characters:—

Heir lvis anc honorabil woman, Janet Rhynd, ye
Spous of umquhil Micel Makquhen, burgess
of Ed. founder of vis place, and decessit ye
iiii day of Decemr., Ao dno M.c.vii.

Impaled in one shield, the arms of the husband and wife are in the centre of the sculptured stone, which is now level with a platform at the east end of the chapel for the accommodation of the officials of the Corporation.

The hospital was founded in 1504—nine years before Flodden; but the charter by which its permanent establishment is secured by Janet Rhynd, who gave personally £2,000 Scots, is supposed to have been dated about 1545 in the reign of Mary, and as one of the last deeds executed for a pious purpose, is now remarkable in its tenor.

The chapel is decorated at its east end with the royal arms, those of the city, and of the twenty-two corporations forming the ancient and honourable Incorporation of Hammermen, "the guardians of the sacred banner, the Blue Blanket, on the unfurling of which every liege burgher of the kingdom is bound to answer the summons."

On the walls are numerous tablets recording the

names and gifts of benefactors. The oldest of these is supposed to be a daughter of the founders, "Isabel Macquhane, spouse to Gilbert Lauder, merchant burgess of Edinburgh, who bigged ye cross-house, and mortified £50 out of the Causland, anno 1555." "John Spens, burgess of Edinburgh," tells another tablet, "bestowed 100 lods of Wesland lime for building the stipel of this chapell, anno 1621."

Eleven years after the quaint steeple was built a bell was hung in it, which bears round it, in large Roman characters,—

SOLI DEO GLORIA MICHAEL BURGERHUYS ME FECIT.
ANNO 1632.

And underneath, in letters about half the size, is the legend,

God blis the Hammermen of Magdalen Chapel.

The bell is still rung, though not for the objects detailed in the will of Janet Rhynd, and in 1641 it was used to summon the congregation of the Greyfriars, who paid for its use £40 Scots yearly.

When the distinguished Reformer John Craig returned to Scotland at the Reformation—escaping from Rome on the very day before he was to perish in a great *auto-da-fe*—after an absence of twenty-four years, he preached for some time in this chapel in the Latin language, to a select congregation of the learned, being unable from long disuse to hold forth in the Scottish tongue. He was subsequently appointed colleague to John Knox, and is distinguished in history for having defied even

Bothwell, by refusing to publish the banns of his marriage with Mary, and also for having written the National Covenant of 1589.

The General Assembly of 1578 met in the Magdalene Chapel, and on the 30th of June, 1685, the headless body of the Earl of Argyle—whose skull was placed on the north gable of the Tolbooth—was deposited here, prior to its conveyance to Kilmun—the tomb of the Campbells—in Argyleshire.

Among the sculpture above the door of the chapel there remains an excellent figure of an Edinburgh hammerman of 1555 in the costume of the period, in doublet and trunk-breeches, with peaked beard and moustache, with a hammer in his right hand. The arms of the corporation are *azure*, a hammer proper, ensigned with the imperial crown.

St. Eligius, Bishop and Confessor, was the patron of the Edinburgh hammermen; but, as the Scots always followed the French mode and terms, he has always been known as St. Eloi, whose altar in St. Giles's Church was the property of the corporation. It was the most eastern of the chapels in that ancient fane. The keystone of this chapel alone is preserved. It is a richly-sculptured boss formed of four dragons with distended wings, each different in design. The centre is formed by a large flower, in which is inserted the iron hook, whereat hung the votive lamp over the altar of St. Eloi, who is referred to in all the historical documents of the corporation.* According to the Bollandists, he had been a goldsmith early in life, and became master of the Mint

to Clotaire II., on some of whose gold coins his name appears. He died Bishop of Noyon about 659, and Kincaid in his history (1794) says that in the Hammermen's Hall a relic of him is shown, "called St. Eloi's gown." This was probably some garment which had clothed a statue.

The chapel proper has latterly become the property of the Protestant Institute of Scotland, whose chambers are close by at 17, George-IV. Bridge.

It is impossible to quit this locality without some reference to those trades which form the United Incorporation of Hammermen, and to the old city companies and trades in general.

"The Hammerer's Seill of Cause," was issued on the 2nd May, 1483, by Sir Patrick Baron of Spittalfield, Knight, Provost of the City, Patrick Balbirnie of that ilk, David Crawford of St. Giles's Grange, and Archibald Todrig, being bailies; and under the general name are included at that time, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, lorimers, saddlers, cutlers, buckler-makers, armourers, "and all others within the said burgh of Edinburgh." Pewterers were afterwards included, and a heckle-maker so lately as 1609. By the rule of the corporation it was statute and ordained, that "na hammerman, maister, feitman, servand, nor utheris, tak vpon hand fra this tyme furth, to exercise or use ony mair craftis but alanerly ane, and to live thairupon, sua that his brether craftismen be not hurt throu his large exercitation and exceeding of boundis," &c. And all the privileges of the hammermen were ratified by Act of Parliament so recently

as September, 1681, when shearsmiths appear as members of the corporation. In those days all the operations of industry were treated as secrets. Each trade was a *craft*, and those who followed it were called craftsmen; and skilled artisans were "cunning men." (Smiles.)

The Hammermen's seal bears the effigy of St. Eloi, in apostolical vestments, in a church porch surmounted by five pinnacles, holding in one hand a hammer, and in the other a key, with the legend, "*Sigillum commune artis tuidiatorum.*"

By the end of the 16th century the manufacture of offensive weapons predominated over all other trades in the city. The *essay-piece* of a cutler, prior to his admission to the corporation, was a well-finished "quhinzier," or sword; and there were gaird-makers, whose business consisted in fashioning the hilts; dalmascars, who gilded weapons and armour. In 1582 sword blades were damascened at Edinburgh; but "Hew Vans, dalmascar, was ordained not to buy blades to sell again," his business being confined to gilding steel. There were also the belt-makers, who wrought military girdles; dag-makers, who made hackbutts (short guns), and dags, or pistols; but all these various trades became associated in the general one of armourers or gunsmiths, as the wearing of weapons began to fall into desuetude, and other arts connected with civilisation and luxury began to take their places.

In 1586 a locksmith is first found in Edinburgh, where he was the only one, and could only make a "kist-lock." Tirling-pins, wooden latches, and

transom bars, were the appurtenances of doors before his time generally. But by 1609, "as the security of property increased," says Chambers, "the essay was a kist-lock and a hing and bois lock with ane double plate lock;" and, in 1644, "a key and sprent band were added to the essay." In 1682 "a cruik and cruik band" were further added; and in 1728, for the safety of the lieges, the locksmiths' essay was appointed to be "a cruik and cruik-band, a pass-lock with a round filled bridge, not cut or broke in the backside, with nobbs and jamb bound." The trade of a shearsmith appears first in 1595 in Edinburgh, and in 1613 Thomas Duncan, the first tinkler in the city was admitted a hammerman. The trade of a pewterer is found as far back as 1588; the first knock-maker (or clockmaker) appears in 1647, but his business was so limited that he added thereto the making of locks. ("Traditions of Edin.") In 1664 the first white iron smith was admitted a hammerman, and the first harness-maker, though lorimers—manufacturers of the iron-work used in saddlery—were members since 1483. The first maker of surgical instruments in Edinburgh was Paul Martin, a French Protestant refugee, in 1691. In 1720 the first pin-maker appears; and in 1764 the first edge-tool maker, and the first manufacturer of fish-hooks.

By the first charter of the hammermen all applicants for admission were examined by the deacons and masters of their respective arts, as to their qualifications; and any member found guilty of a breach of any one of the articles contained in

men charter, was fined eight shillings Scots towards the support of the corporation's altar of St. Eloi in St. Giles's Church and the chaplain thereof. The goldsmiths were separated from the hammermen in 1581; but since then many other crafts have joined them, including gunsmiths, watchmakers, founders, braziers, and coppersmiths.

The cordiners, or shoemakers, were first created into a society by the magistrates on the 28th of July, 1449 (according to Maitland), in terms of which each master of the trade who kept a booth within the town, paid one penny Scots, and their servants one halfpenny, towards the support of their altar of St. Crispin, in St. Giles's Church. A new seal of cause was granted to them in 1509, and another in 1586, which enacted that their shops were not to be open on Sundays after 9 A.M., and that no work was to be done on that day under pain of twenty shillings fine. It also regulated the days of the week on which leather boots and shoes could be sold by strangers in booths. This charter was confirmed on 6th March, 1598, by James VI., in consideration of "the goodwill and thankful service done to us by our servitor, Alexander Crawford, present deacon of the said cordiners and his brethren." We first hear of a kind of "strike," in the trade in 1768, when the cordiners entered into a combination not to work without an increase of wages, and reduction of hours. The masters prosecuted their men, many of whom were fined and imprisoned, for "entering into an unlawful combination," as the sheriff termed their trade union.

The skimmers would seem to have been created into a corporation in 1474, but references to the trade occur in the Burgh Records at an earlier date. Thus, in 1450, there is recorded an obligation by the skimmers, undertaken by William Skynner, in the name of the whole, to support the altar of St. Crispin in St. Giles's Church, "in the fourth year of the pontificate of Nicholas the Fifth;" and a seal of cause was issued to the skimmers and furriers conjointly in 1533, wherein they were bound to uphold the shrine of St. Christopher in St. Giles's, and several Acts of Parliament were passed for their protection. One, in 1592, prohibits "all transporting and carrying forth the realm, of calves-skinnes, huddrones, and kidskins, packing and peilling thereof, in time coming, under the paine of confiscation of the same for His Majesty's use." Edinburgh has always been the chief seat of the leather trade in Scotland, and the troops raised after the American War were entirely supplied with shoes from there.

In 1475 the wrights and masons were granted the aisle and chapel of St. John in the same church, when their seal of cause was issued. Their charter was confirmed in 1517 by the Archbishop of St. Andrews, in 1527 by James V., and in 1635 by Charles I. In 1703, by decree of the Court of Session, the bow-makers, plumbers, and glaziers, were added to the masons; and to the wrights were added the painters, slaters, sieve-wrights, and coopers. These incorporated trades held their meetings in St. Mary's Chapel, Niddry's Wynd, and

were known as "The United Incorporation of St. Mary's Chapel."

In 1476 the websters were incorporated, and bound to uphold the altar of St. Simon in St. Giles's, and it was specially stipulated that "the priest shall get his meat." Cloth was made in those days by the weavers much in the same fashion that is followed in the remote Highland districts, where the wool is carded and spun by the females of the household; but Edinburgh was one of the first places where woollen goods were made, and had, at one time, the most important wool market in Britain.

The hatmakers were formed into a corporation in 1473, when ten masters of the craft presented a petition to that effect; but the bonnet-makers did not receive their seal of cause till 1530, prior to which they had been united with the walkers and shearers, with whom they were bound to uphold the altar of St. Mark in St. Giles's Church. In 1685 an Act of Parliament confirmed all their privileges, together with those of the litsters, or dyers. About the middle of the seventeenth century, owing to the spread of the use of hats, instead of the national bonnet, among the upper classes, this society was reduced to so low a condition that its members could neither support their families or the expense of a society.

The fleshers were a very old corporation, but the precise date of their charter is not very clear. In 1483 regulations concerning the fleshers dealing in fish in Lent, &c., were issued by the magistrates, whom they petitioned in 1488 for a seal of

cause, which petition was taken into consideration by the Council, who ratified and confirmed the whole of the articles and conditions it contained; but it is said that a seal was issued. In 1508, Thomas Greg, "Kirk-master of the flescheour craft," on behalf of the same, brought before the Council a complaint, that certain persons, not freemen of the craft or the burgh, interfered with their privileges, and had them forbidden to sell meat, except on Sunday and Monday, the free market days, "quhill thai obtene thair fredome."

The coopers were incorporated in 1489, binding themselves to uphold the altar of St. John in St. Giles's Church.

The walkers obtained their seal of cause in August, 1500. They had an altar in the same church dedicated to SS. Mark, Philip, and Jacob, to which the following among other fees were paid:—

Each master, on taking an apprentice paid ten shillings Scots; and on any master taking into his service, either the apprentice or journeyman of any other master, he paid twenty shillings Scots; if any craftsman was found working with cards in the country, he was to forfeit the sum of fifteen shillings Scots, to be equally divided between the work of St. Giles's, their altar, and the informer. It is also provided by the said charter, that each person commencing business for himself shall be worth three pairs of shears, and of ability to pay for one stock of white cloth, whereby he may be in a condition to make good any damages to those who employ him.

In the same year (1500) the tailors were incorporated on the 26th August, prior to which, as a society, they possessed the altar of St. Anne in St. Giles's, and they only had their old rules and regulations embodied in their charter from the Council. Another seal of cause was issued to them thirty years afterwards, in the reign of James V.

The Corporation of Candlemakers first appears in 1517. They had no altar of their own in St. Giles's, but certain fines provided by their charter were to be paid towards the sustenance of any "misterfull alter within the College Kirk of Sanct Geils." The craftsmen were forbidden to send boys or servants to sell candles in the streets, under pain of forfeit, and paying "ane pund of walx to Our Lady altar, after the first fault;" two pounds of wax for the second, and such punishment as the magistrates may award for the third. No member was to take an apprentice for less than four years, and all women were to be "expellit the said craft, bot freemennis wyffes of the craft allanerlie."

The above charter was confirmed by James VI. in 1597, though the corporation lost the privilege in 1582 of sending a member to the Common Council, by failing to produce their charter, and signing the reference made in that year to the arbiters appointed by James, at the time the late constitution of the burgh was established, and remained unchanged till the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832.

We may here mention that a manufactory for soap is first mentioned, 23rd November, 1554,

when the magistrates granted a "license to Johnne Gaittis, Inglisman, to brew saip within the fredome of this burgh for the space of ane yeir nixt heir-after;" and to sell the same in lasts, half-lasts, barrels, half-barrels, and firkins. But after this, till about 1621, it was chiefly imported from Flanders.

The Baxters (or bakers) obtained their charter on the 20th of March, 1522, but the trade must have possessed one before, as it sets forth that in times of trouble the original document had been lost. By this seal of cause it appears that they had in St. Giles's an altar dedicated to "Sanct Cubart." But the chaplain thereof, instead of being supported by fines, as the priests of the other corporations were, obtained his food by going from house to house among the members of the guild in rotation. The sole privilege of baking bread within the city was vested in its members, but bread baked without the walls might be sold, the corporation having, however, control over it, or the power of examining the weight and quality of "the flour baiks and fadges that cumes fra landwart into this tounne to sell."

The city records contain many references to the Baxters before the date above given. Thus in 1443, the time when they might bake and sell "mayne breid," was only at "Whitsunday, St. Giles's Mass, Yule and Pasche." In 1482, in buying flour from beyond the sea they were to pay multure, as if from the common mills. In 1503 Baxters convicted of baking cakes that were under weight were threatened with penalties. In 1510 there was an agreement between the farmers of the

city mills and the Baxters as to grinding at the mills, with reference to the quantities to be ground when water was scarce. In 1523 the Baxters were ordained to "baik thair breid sufficientlie and weill dryit;" the twopenny loaf to weigh ten ounces from thenceforward, "under pain of tynsale of their fredome," and escheat of the bread, which is to be marked with their irons as heretofore. In April, 1548, the city Baxters were ordered to furnish bread for the army in the field at a given rate, and the corporation promised to do so, in the presence of the Lords Dunkeld, Rothes, Galloway, Dunfermline, and Seaton; but in July the troops would seem to have declined to receive the bread which the trade had on hand; thus "outland Baxters were charged not to bring any bread to market for three days."

We have elsewhere (Vol. I., 382-3) had occasion to refer to the Corporation of Barber-surgeons, whose charter, dated 1st July, 1505, binds them to "uphold ane altar in the College Kirk of Sanct Geill, in honour of God and Sanct Mongow." They were bound to know something of anatomy, the "nature and complexioun of every member of humanis (sic) body," and all the veins of the same, and "in quhilk member the *signe has domination for the time*," &c.

In 1542 we read of four surgeons sent from the city to the borders, for the care of those wounded by the English. ("Pitcairn's Trials," I.) And in 1558 the corporation sent twenty-five of their number, including apprentices, to join the force raised for the defence of Edinburgh against "our auld inemyes

of England." ("List of Fellows, R.C.S. Edin.") By Queen Mary they were exempted from serving on assizes.

The arms of this corporation were azure, on a fesse argent, a naked man fesse-ways, between a dexter hand palmed, and in its palm an eye. In the dexter canton, a saltire argent, under the imperial crown, surmounted by a thistle; and in base a castle argent, masoned sable, within a border, charged with instruments used by the society. To the surgeons were added the apothecaries.

James IV., one of the greatest patrons of art and science in his time, dabbled a little in surgery and chemistry, and had an assistant, John the Leech, whom he brought from the Continent. Pitscottie tells us that James was "ane singular guid chirurgione," and in his daily expense book, singular entries occur in 1491, of payments made to people to let him bleed them and pull their teeth:—

"Item, to ane fallow, because the King pullit furth his twtth, xviii shillings.

"Item, to Kynnard, ye barbour, for tua teith drawin furth of his hed be the King, xviii sh."

The barbers were frequently refractory, and brought the surgeons into the Court of Session to adjust rights, real or imagined. But after the union of the latter with the apothecaries, they gave up the barber craft, and were formed into one corporation by an Act of Council, on the 25th February, 1657, as already mentioned in the account of the old Royal College of Surgeons.

The first admitted after the change, was Chris--

topher Irving, recorded as "ane free chirurgone," without the usual words "*and* barber," after his name. He was physician to James VII., and from him the Irvings of Castle Irving, in Ireland, are descended.

OLD AND NEW EDINBURGH.

[The Cowgate.

MAGDALEN CHAPEL RESTORATION PROJECT

For a number of years the possibility of undertaking a programme of restoration and refurbishment of the Magdalen Chapel has been discussed by various groups desirous of seeing this lovely old building restored to its pristine beauty. It stands as a telling reminder of our rich heritage and it depicts many aspects of religious, social and cultural life in this rich pageant of history since it was built.

After careful consideration of what would be involved in such a project, and taking expert advice from our Architects, the Committee of the Scottish Reformation Society decided to undertake this work. It is a costly venture and we know a lot of hard work lies ahead before even the possibility of the work commencing. We have been assured of a grant from the Historic Buildings Council

A breakdown of the figures gives some idea of the scale of the project. Historic Scotland have given a grant of £101,000 for PHASE 1 of the work. This has left the Scottish Reformation Society responsible for £142,000. Phase 2 which involves the delicate restoration of the painwork in the Chapel will require at least a further £42,000.

WE NEED YOUR HELP AND WE WILL VALUE ALL SUPPORT GIVEN TO THIS PROJECT WHETHER LARGE OR SMALL.

A Special Fund has been set up for this purpose and gifts may be sent directly to the office or by Banker's Order directly to the Fund. The details are as follows:

Hon. Treasurer
Magdalen Chapel Appeal Fund
Scottish Reformation Society
41 COWGATE
Edinburgh EH1 1JR

OR THE ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND
14 George Street
EDINBURGH EH2 2YF

marking all gifts

MAGDALEN CHAPEL RENOVATION FUND
A/C No. 00256552 Scottish Reformation Society.

WILL YOU HELP US TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVE. YOUR GIFT WILL BE APPRECIATED AND ACKNOWLEDGED.