

**OLD GLASGOW WEAVERS:
BEING RECORDS OF THE
INCORPORATION OF
WEAVERS**

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Old Glasgow Weavers: Being Records of the Incorporation of Weavers by Robert D. M'Ewan

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ROBERT D. M'EWAN

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FOREWORD.

The present Deacon has shown the great interest he takes in the affairs of the Incorporation, not only by the attention he has given to the ordinary work of his office, but by his researches among the old records of the craft. As the handwriting of these records is in the characters to be found in ancient Scottish documents, and now difficult to decipher, their contents were necessarily available to very few, and to these only after much labour. With the aid of an expert in such writings the Deacon had a number of the old documents transcribed, and on the results being shown to the Master Court it was resolved that it was in the interests of the Incorporation that the transcriptions should be printed in book form.

The Deacon kindly consented to see the proposed volume through the press, classifying the transcriptions and writing explanatory and connecting notes, but without attempting to produce a formal history of the Incorporation.

In placing the result before the Incorporation, the Master Court trust that this glimpse of its past history will stimulate an interest in its present affairs, and that the members of to-day will emulate their predecessors in doing what they can to promote the continued prosperity of this old Incorporation.

IN NAME AND BY AUTHORITY OF THE MASTER COURT.

C. J. MACLEAN,
Clerk.

115 ST. VINCENT STREET,
GLASGOW, 1st September, 1905.

P R E F A C E.

The matter available has not been such as to make a continuous record possible. For facility of reference it has been thought advisable to classify the extracts, necessarily somewhat arbitrarily, in Chapters, and to dispense with a detailed Index. With few exceptions the extracts have, in each chapter, been arranged chronologically.

The Minute and other Books now wanting were first missed in 1849, as is shown in an acknowledgment then granted by a new clerk for other books.

It may add to the reader's interest to have the following Chronological Table for reference:—

- 1488—James IV., King of Scotland.
- 1513—Flodden. James V. succeeds to the throne.
- 1542—Queen Mary.
- 1550-60—Reformation.
- 1567—James VI.
- 1603—James succeeds to English throne.
- 1611—Glasgow made a Royal Burgh.
- 1625—Charles I.
- 1649—Commonwealth in England.
- 1651—Charles II. crowned in Scotland.
Scotland United to English Commonwealth by Cromwell.
- 1660—Charles II. restored and Episcopacy revived.
- 1685—James II. and VII.
- 1689—William of Orange. Re-establishment of Presbyterianism.
- 1702—Queen Anne.
- 1707—Legislative Union of England and Scotland.
- 1714—George I.
- 1715—First Newspaper published in Glasgow. First Jacobite rising.
- 1727—George II.
- 1745—Second Jacobite rising.
- 1746—Culloden.
- 1760—George III.
- 1820—George IV.
- 1830—William IV.
- 1837—Queen Victoria.

The writer desires to acknowledge much kindly help received, especially from the Clerk, Mr. C. J. MacLean; and from Mr. Robert Renwick, Depute Town Clerk of the City.

There were many documents and articles available for illustration, of which comparatively few members were able to examine the originals. Such of them have been chosen for reproduction as are most likely to be interesting to the wider circle which this book is intended to reach.

If any apology is needed for including the plate of the present members of the Master Court, it has been done entirely on the writer's responsibility, believing that had portraits been available of those who were in a similar position fifty or a hundred years back it would now have been of surpassing interest, and that, should this volume survive, our sons and grandsons will have a similar interest. Every effort has been made to avoid errors; it is however hardly possible but that some have been made and that others have escaped the eye of one who is not only an amateur, but a novice, at such work.

ROBERT D. M'EWAN.

22 MONTROSE STREET,
GLASGOW, 1st Sept., 1903.

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OLD GLASGOW WEAVERS:

BEING

RECORDS OF THE INCORPORATION OF WEAVERS.

I.

ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY.

The records of the Incorporation have had a varied fate, some of the earliest having survived while the history of the middle age of the craft is a complete blank. All records for sixty to seventy years in the middle of the eighteenth century have disappeared, and from 1683 till 1793 there are no minute books extant. It has always been believed that the Incorporation owes its existence to a "Gift or Seal of Cause by the Magistrates and Town Council of Glasgow, with concurrence of the Archbishop, dated 4th June, 1528." Mr. Crawford so states in "A Sketch of the Trades' House of Glasgow," published in 1856, and in a small pamphlet published by this Incorporation in 1888, the preamble of the Act of Parliament passed in 1681 (given on a later page), is quoted as the actual wording of the Seal of Cause granted by the Magistrates of Glasgow, on 4th June, 1528. No copy of that document has been preserved.

A small minute book, commencing in 1591 and concluding in 1611, and a larger minute book, dated from 1611 till 1683, have

been preserved. In this letter, on 8th February, 1658, the following appears:—

Octavo Februarij 1658.

The hail old actis extractit out of the buikis for the yeir 1514, and sen syne, war red and allowit and approve and farder it is statut and ordanit, with consent of the hail bodie of the calling, that quhat prenteis sall be himself heirefter to serve his maister on his awin meit, sall have no benefit of the calling thairefter, and the maister to pay in to the calling twentie pundis Scottis; as also that ilk brother quhais stalkis sall be fund wrang, sall pay in to the craft twa markis ane half, extending to xxxij s. iij d. for ilk fault.

The page of minute book from which above is extracted is given as Plate I. There is every reason to regard the date as genuine, because were it supposed to be a blunder for 1614, the same book has within itself the records for 1614 and would not be referred to as 'old actis extractit out of the buikis.' The Incorporation has therefore had an existence of nearly four hundred years. The Provost and Magistrates granted a Seal of Cause on 16th February, 1605, which document exists in a good state of preservation and is reproduced as Plate II. The wording of it is as follows:—

SEAL OF CAUSE by the Provost, Bailles, and community of Glasgow to the Incorporation of Weavers, dated 16 February, 1605.

To ALL and sundrie To quhome it effeiris To quhais knowledge thir presentis sall com. The proveist, baillies, counsall and communitie of the burght and citie of Glasgow greiting in God swirlasting. Witis yowr Wniverstie that the day and dait of thir presentis comperit befor us the deikin, heidismen and maisteris of Wobstercraft and presentit to us sitand in judgement our counsall gadderit, thair petitionne and supplicatiounes makand mentionne. That quhair they had grantit wnto thame ane Lettere of deikinheid for the weill of thair craft and commoune weill of this burght and all and sindrie our soverane lordis leidis duelland and repairand within the samine haveing to do withe thame in thair calling and occupatiounes. In the quhilk thair Lettere of deikinheid was containit certane liberties and priviledgis of certane penulties and wnlawis applyit of auld to certane superstitious usis quhilkis now cannot be applyit thairto be resounne of the reformatioun thairof. Thairfoir desyring that thair said Lettere of deikinheid may be reformit and renewit keipand the effect and substance of thair said former Lettere of deikinheid and the saidis penulties applyit to the said former superstitious usis to be applyit to sick guid and godlie usis as ar underarritin. Quhilk thair desyre and petitionne We the proveist, baillies, counsall, and communitie of the said burght findand expedient and reasonable hes grantit and consentit lyk as be the tennour heirof, grantis and consentis that the