

Dyers Notes

Dyer's Close

Property owned by the Dyer Craft as far back as 1514, possibly because it was near the Meadow Burn. The Murraygate was the centre of the Waulker or Dyer Craft for many years. In the Dundee Register of 1783, the Deacon, Boxmaster and Officer of the Trade, together with all their craftsmen had their premises in this area.

In the Laws of the Trade, after the payment of his dues the apprentice "Shall immediately receive the word, with tokens sufficient to answer that he is lawfully brothered to the trade professeth". Later in the Laws a fine of sixpence was to be imposed on anyone who revealed the "Word, Chap or Whistle" to any person, apprentice or journeyman before he was entered a brother. These references have obvious overtones of Masonic practices which all of the trades were reputed to be associated with, although there is no reference to Free Masonry in any documents which have yet come to light.

Approach to the Council by the Waker Trade against women dying cloath in their own houses.

24th April 1707.

The same day anent ane petition given in David Niccoll presentation of ye Waker Trade of Dundie shewing the seal shewing why yt heall of the inhabitants- the women parl- doe encroach ye liberties of the said trade not only by taking in all sorts of cloath, worsett and dying ye same tae ye inhabitants and others wtne yer own houses but also hey goe from house to house and dye ye said cloth and worsett qrby the said trade is verry near ruined wtout remeadie mead to be had for that effect and for ye craving to ye effect aftersped which petition being at lenth seen and considered by ye said Provost, Bailies and remnant members of the councell they being weil and rightly-advised granted and hereby grants full power warrand and commission to ye said petitioner and his successors, Deacons to ye said Waker Trade to search for and apprehend such as incroatch on ye said liberties by dying of cloath and worsett more than serve themselves: and ordained ye said Deacon and his successors to make application to ye magrats, ane or maer agst any such who shall encroach on ye said liberties to ye effect they may be punished, conform to ye common acts of this Burgh declaring all wys yt ye said petitioner and heall members of ye said Waker Trade and yr successors shall be personally lyable for ye value of worsett or yern shall be split be them in ye dying shall be summarly ordained to make payment yt yr after ye person conserved

Fuller or Walker Craft and the Lister Craft united to form the Dyer Craft. The Walker Craft was one of the Nine Ancient Trade Incorporations of Dundee, whose early history is long lost. The Listers may also be as old but their first formation into a Craft appears to have been by an Act of the Town Council of Dundee, passed on 27th April 1590. The Listers appear to have originally been a Pendicle of the Guildry in the same way as the Maltmen,, Wrights, Masons, Slaters, Barbers (wigmakers) etc.

The oldest document belonging to the Walker Craft is dated 27th January 1514.

Form of oath taken by entrants to the Craft and dated 9th April 1529.

I shall obey the eternal Lord my God, creatour of heaven an earth. I shall maintaine,fortifie, and defend his holy gospell presently profest amongst us, so far as lies in me. I shall declin at no time therefra, I shall be loyall to our soueragin the king and his successors, to Prouest and bailies of this brough, and to the deacone and members of the Incorporation - I shall make concord among the brethern where discord is - I shall fortifie the commonweall - I shall us myself cristianly in my calling , and shall us no fraudfull dealing in my craft - I shall relieu the poore and neide, and help and support th widows and orphans according to my pouer - I shall assist my brethern of the Craft in all respects that tends to the welfar thereof. I shall com to oney plac apointed for conuientione and giu my best aduice to my grethern. - I shall neur contrawen directly or indirectly my saids brethern of craft - I shall be na mutineir nor raiser of tumult, and shall obey all Laus and

Saitutis made and to be made for the wellfoir of the said craft - And this I promise, God helping me.

The Walker & Lister Crafts United.

The two crafts had led individual lives until the time came when they could see that it was to their mutual advantage to unite.

This contract of union was prepared and signed on 2nd may 1693; and the union completed by a Charter signed by William & Mary, signed at Kensington 28th February 1694 and ratified by the King and Estates on 17th July 1695. Thus the whole body of Listers was absorbed into the Lister Craft, and the united Craft was known as the Walker Craft and Incorporation. (see separate File for the Act in full)

The Dyers as a Trade were always struggling to find enough members to keep active and indeed in 1823 there was only one member of the Craft left. The Nine Trades could not let the Trade fall for lack of numbers and therefore appointed three managers to the Waulker Incorporation of Dundee, inter alia, for the purpose of giving admission on the usual terms to apprentices and others applying to become members. These managers on 12 October 1840 admitted: Alex J. Warden, manufacturer and dyer; Chas. Norrie, merchant and dyer; and David Halley, merchant and dyer, in Dundee, to be free members of the Incorporation. Because none of the three was a practical dyer, although they were dyers on an extensive scale, by employing many men in the Trade of Dying there were objections made to their admission. This was tested in The Court of Session, who found against the three, who were repaid their dues and renounced their interest in the Trade. Shortly after this several new practising dyers were admitted into the Craft, thus keeping it alive.

Extracted from Maxwell's Old Dundee Prior to the Reformation

There is a record of the various marks, which were given to the fullers for stamping their cloth in verification of its quality. It seems to have been a lead seal with a hole in it where a small part of the end of the cloth would be put through and a mould top and bottom were then pressed into the lead blanks and there were two trade marks, one was the mans initials and the other his trade mark which was formed from an arrangement of straight and curved lines. The lead blanks were cast in two discs one having a little central projection in the middle of it and the other a hole, and in using them the projection was passed through the cloth at the end of the web, then through the washer and riveted. After which the one die having been placed in the upper blank and the other on the lower a stroke of a hammer produced the impression on both sides.

The Waulker Marks are available in the Town Books held by Dundee City Archives. They are the only known recorded set of marks for any town in Britain.

Lockit Book 1693

David Morgan, visitor of ye Lister, Patrick Smith. Late Lister, Samuell Morison, Gilbert John Cook, James Crichton, James Stewart, Thomas Rodger, Andrew Smal and William Steill, Listers in Dundee were made free Masters of the Walker Craft.

The Walker Craft admitted a Mariner in 1675, a Maltman and a Meason in 1677 as Free Masters of the Craft.

Walker Accounts Book

This book is in the city Archives and runs from 1685 – 1753 The first entry reads :-

Ane Accompt of my Desbursments from Michaelmass 1689 to Michaelmas 1690

Item for meowing the seat Wm Ornchen	00.08.00
Item to the town oficer	00.12.00
Item of charitie to Elizebeth Symnant	01.00.00
Item of ane eightie pound Stent	02.00.00
Item for this book	00.14.00

Item for men to go with Coyja Dryeker	02.02.00
Item ye 6 of october of an hundred pound Stent	2.10.00
Item that Day for the conveeners oficer his fie	01.04.00
Item to James Dick at your Desire	<u>00.14.00</u>
	11.04.00

Coundje ye 6 of Desember Jaivs four scor ten
 Seang the members of the warker Craft having
 Sein & Aproven both the Charge & Discharge
 Of James Mitchell present Deacon & in
 Testimony wherof we hav subsribed the samen Day & Dat forsd

Wm Mitchell
 Jo West
 David Miokll
 Tho Day

And five other marks of members

Educational charity was supported. In 1690/91 Accounts there is an item "on charitie to a young man at the Coledge 14/-."

Strange entries do appear from time to time. For example in 1716 i.e.

In Earnest to David Yeaman Millwright £5.10/-
 To Thomas Yeaman for workmanship per Rtt £40
 To David Grahame for Ale to Da. Yeaman per Rtt £2
 To David Yeamans men in drink money 12/-

11 July 1521 Special care was taken to preserve the purity of this water. A Dyer, "Will Wilson, with his awn grant, is [bound] that an he or any of his servants cast wad paist¹ in the burn or dam to pay forty shillings to our Lady werk."

Again "whair tha John Bennatt's servants has washen bonnets in the burn, the Bailies [resolve] to seek their acts [regarding this offence], and put them to execution."

At a later time "the Bailies decern Robert Bartie to pay to the common werks the soum of eight shillings, and that because his servant wes convict for washing of pensches² in the Castle burn."

From Maxwell's Dundee Prior to the Reformation

1552. A method was devised whereby run-away servants were starved back into their places. Mege Sellar having left the service of David Lyall, walker, is amerciate for non-compearance before the Bailies; and they decern "George Ramsay, merchant and his wife to deliver the said servant to David's service, and nocht to give her meat nor service unto the time sho compears in judgment and declares when sho wes feeit, and wha withal first and last." This soon caused her to appear in Court, when "sho is adjudgit to enter David Lyall's service, or else pay nine shillings for her fee to David."

1558-9 drawing or stretching cloth so as to make it measure longer was an offence which always met with severe punishment. William Clapen, merchant, and William Quhite, walker, "being accusit be William Carmichell that he had seen them at the East port draw ane [web] of claith pertaining to Clapen, they, compearing in judgment confessit that they wer drawing schethis³ furth of the claith whilk it had gotten at the mill; but naither were of mind nor purpose to draw the samin aither in length or breid for defraud of ony man; and Clapen offerit himself ready to bring the claith to be wet, or to suffer what trial anent the drawing thereof the law wald mak." Subsequently the Bailies found the charge proved "be Clapen's awn confession that he hes drawn and causit to be drawn ane stick of couor-de-roy pertaining to him, contrair to the acts; whairfore they ordain the pains to be execute upon him – that is to

¹ Noxious refuse from dye-stuff.

² Animal intestines.

³ This literally means shut places, that is folds or creases.

say, to tyne his freedom for year and day, and the stick of couor-de-roy to be escheatit – the ane half to our Soverane Lady’s use and the other half to the use of this burgh.”

At a later time, William Mylne is decerned “to pay the common gude the soum of sixteen pound for the just avail of ane stick of russat claith sauld be him; because it wes sufficiently proved that he drew and gave command to draw the claith;” and John Smyth, walker, who had aided him in the fraud, is “ordainit to tyne and to have tint his freedom of burgh for the space of ane year.”

1560-1. The large shears with which the fullers cropped the surface of cloth, were costly. Hew Nesbit, burgess of Edinburgh, pursued Andro Smyth and Patrik Henderson “for the soum of thirty-four shillings for ilk pair of nine pair of walker’s shears, coft and receivit be them frae Hew.” This payment they were decerned to make; and besides, Hew “protestit for costs, skaiths, dampnages, and interest sustein it be him in the action.” These shears required frequent sharpening, and a house was provided with necessary implements for doing this. In 1560, payment “is made in name of the brethren of the walker craft, of certain mail foe ane house wherein they grand their shears.” The records of the Hammermen show that about a century later, that craft took charge of the sharpening, and “furnishit and maintained ane grindstone for the grounding of walker’s shears, the price of ilk pair to pat two shillings;” and they protested against any others “setting up a stone attour the town” for that purpose.

1522-3 Master dyers could be capable of doing bad work. When “David Carmano pursuit Rob Huchon for the soum of three pound three shillings for litting ane stick of green claith, and ane stane of blue wool, Rob grantit the debt, but allegit his claith and wool spilt in David’s default, and he take to prove the same.”

The use of injurious colours was strictly prohibited. The Bailies, along with “others of honest neighbours, hes convictit Katrine Duncan, relict of Robert Greif, and Walter Jameson, lister, for using false colours and birdselding⁴ of wool, and he decernit them to have incurrit the pains; and that Katrine sall pay to the common gude the soum of four pound, and Walter sall be dischargit frae all wirking within the burgh till he compone anent his freedom.”

A lister having got a goodwife’s mantle to dye, he kept possession of it till he should be paid for his labour. “It is fundin that Robert Butter’s wife suld mak payment to David Shakmontane, lister, for his handling and expense, extending to five shillings one penny, and outred and mak free the mantle halden be him for the debt.” An officer with the money, was then sent to her to get the mantle redeemed, when David, irritated at having to part with his pledge, threw it into the mill lade among some wool which she had been washing. On this, the Bailies ordered the money to remain in the officer’s hands until “sho prove the skaith sustein it be her, and done be David to her wool, in the mantle casting in the lade amang it.”

The word comes from the Old English “Wealcan”, to roll; whence we get “wealcare”, a fuller of cloth, and thus the surname “Walker” has the same origin as “Fuller”.

She cursed the Weaver and the walker
The clothe that they wrought.
Percy: *Reliques (The boy and the mantle)*
Brewer’s Dictiona ry.

From Maxwell’s Dundee Prior to the reformation we read, regarding runaway servants: Mege Sellar having left the service of David Lyall, walker is amerciate for non-compearance before the Bailies and they decern “George Ramsay, merchant and his wife to deliver the said servant to David’s service, and noch to give her meat nor service unto the time sho compears in judgment and declares when sho wa feeit, and who withal first and last”. This soon caused her to appear in Court, when “sho is adjudgit to enter David Lyall’s service, or else pay nine shillings for her fee to David”.

⁴ Birsell was reckoned an injurious dye.

Council Records

Lamb, John

- David Donaldsone and William Muresone testify against John Lamb (29 May 1604).
- John Lamb found guilty of calling John Sym (the Deacon of the Walkers) a thief and threatening to hang him (29 May 1604).