

TRANSLATION OF ACTS

With regard to Keeping the Sabbath Day. 11th May 1665

I, William Craig, present Deacon of the Bonnetmakers of Dundee, with the advice and consent of my fellow Masters, meeting in the Howff, considering that the Lord's Day is not kept Holy, as it should be, ordain that if any Master of the said Trade is found transgressing on a Sunday, in any manner they shall be liable to a fine of Forty Shillings on each occasion. This particularly applies to any found drinking in a public house during the Sunday Service. If any of the Council of the Trade is found in this manner he shall immediately demit office. Signed by the Deacon and five other members.

The Collector and Deacon to be obeyed 31st October 1668

This day Deacon Edward Spence, Deacon of the Bonnetmakers, along with the following councillors of the Craft viz.; Thomas Miller, George Spence, John Hog, Thomas Langlands, James Hog, William Craig, William Garning, David Hog, Patrick Gibson, and George Duncan Statute and Ordain That if a message is received from the Deacon or Collector (Convener) asking for their assistance, they shall carry out these requirements promptly. This shall apply from this time forward.

Signed by the above named.

A Tax Imposed to Pay the Trades Debts 31st December 1673

On 31st December 1673. The Deacon and Council of the Craft met to consider the debts owed by the Trade to several people.

The Trade unanimously Statute and ordained that every Master and Employee shall share the debt as follows: Every Master and widow shall pay Four Shillings and Four Pence. Every Employee, who can make a Bonnet, shall pay Two Shillings and Two Pence, each quarter, until the debts are cleared.

This Statute will remain in force for as long as the debt remains.

The Deacon and council confirms that this Act is Valid and we append our names in confirmation.

Signed by the Deacon and 14 other members. Several of them signed by their initials only.

The Use of the Mortcloth 8 April 1682

This day, the Masters of the Bonnetmaker Craft met in the Howff under their Deacon John Hog.

The purpose of the meeting was to show the Masters the Mortcloth. They accepted the Mortcloth shown as suitable for the Craft.

Firstly: We hereby Statute and Ordain that no one may have the use of it 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. Any one who has not properly obeyed the ordinances of the Craft will be debarred from its use.

Penalties for Breaking the Lord's day 28th May 1684

The Bonnetmakers met this day to consider several urgent matters concerning the Craft. They were shown a copy of an Act of 26th May 1684 with regard to the Keeping of the Sabbath. Those present were: Robert Philip, present Deacon, John Hog, William, Gib, elder, William Garner, William Gib, David Hog, James Gibson, William Gib, younger, David Watt, younger, and George Bailie.

It was stated that there were many among the Craft who are abusing and profaning the Sabbath. Some of those ungodly people are working on that day and are setting out their Bonnets and laying materials out to dry.

They are also carrying water and washing their meat at the well during the time of the service, as well as gathering together with friends to drink during the time of the service. This shows how ungodly they have become and unless they correct these errors they will provoke great anger and for the sin of unbelief will be punished with 'strokes', in public, to show that they are sinners.

It is therefore Statute and Ordained that anyone setting out their Bonnets or their clothes to dry, or hang out their fish to dry, or carry water from the well, or clean their meat, during the time of the service, unless with good cause, (for example when a woman is pregnant, or a child or elderly person is sick), they shall be considered Drunkards and Sabbath breakers and so punished as the Craft shall decide.

First: For setting out the Bonnets, Four shillings and Eight pence fine, without remission.

Second: For laying out their clothes to dry, on the first occasion Four shillings, without remission.

Third: For curing and drying of fish, Three shillings, without remission.

Fourth: For carrying water from the well or of washing their meat during the time of the service, Eight shillings, without remission.

Fifth: For washing their hair, during the time of the sermon, Five shillings, without remission.

Six: For visiting during the time of the sermon Twelve shillings, without remission on the first occasion, to pay twice that and be brought before the Craft to be sharply rebuked, the second time, and the third time to be brought before the Kirk Session to be treated rigorously and brought before the congregation for a public rebuke.

By this Act we hope to be looked upon favourably by God and bring peace amongst ourselves and in order to conform better, we the above, will do our utmost to enforce the same.

A Sinner Repentant – 28th January 1686

This day the Bonnetmakers of Dundee convened together to hear William Craig, late Deacon, one of our elder and well-respected Brothers. He humbly presented his supplication against David Barclay, one of our most ill disposed and badly behaved Brothers. Over the years, for most of his lifetime, he has often been censored, fined and rebuked for his scandalous behaviour and most recently for his calumny against the aforesaid William Craig.

We, Brothers, being fully advised of the circumstances, do Statute and Ordain that from this day the said David Barclay must live peaceably, for all time coming.

And I, David, admit all these faults, injuries and miscarriages, both formerly and of late, that are laid to my charge. And I do hereby bind and oblige, for my family, and myself to live peaceably and quietly towards my Brothers for all time, and if I offend a Deacon, either in his discipline or good name, I shall pay Forty Shillings without argument. If I offend an ex-Deacon Twenty Shillings a Councillor, Thirteen shillings and four pence and an ordinary Member, Ten shillings, on the first occasion and if it happens again I will be banned and for one year no longer be a member of the Craft.

In witness thereof I am content and subscribe this present Act with my hand at Dundee, day, and date as aforesaid, before the Craft.

Subscribed as follows: This is Dawid DB Barklys mark.

No one to Leave the Trade, - 22nd April 1694

This day the Bonnetmakers of Dundee convened in their usual place. They considered that no Master, Man nor Servant should leave the Trade unless they cannot get work from the rest of the Trade. It is enacted by the Craft that because some Masters and employees who have left the Craft, have brought it into disrepute, if any leave the Craft they and their employees, shall for ever lose their liberty of the Craft and not be allowed to return. In confirmation we subscribe James Carnegie, present deacon, Robert Philip, James Craig, John Hog, David White, younger, George Duncan, James Gibson, David Hog, elder, William Gib, William Garner, George Bailie, William Hog, Andrew Philip.

About Badly Dyed Bonnets. – 16th October, 1694.

This day the Masters of the Trade met in the presence of James Carnegie, Deacon to consider the great loss of their good name and the high regard in which it was held because of the type and quality of the Dyeing of the materials used, in order to increase profits, some of which are not acceptable to the Trade. The result has been that Bonnets made elsewhere being sought by people in the burgh.

To rectify this situation, it is Statute and Ordained that all sacks of bonnets are to be examined when they come from the Mill. None of the sacks will be opened except in the presence of the officials designated for that purpose. Any found not to dyed or in too light a dye are to shown to the Deacon, and will not be returned until a fine of half a merk has been levied. For the proper management of this Act we subscribe it on this day and date. Any official designated to carry out the search, who does not appear in person, or who sends someone in his place will pay a fine of Three shillings and Four pence, without remission. Signed by Eleven Members.

Deacons Term of Office. – 10th May, 1698

Deacon William Gib chaired a meeting of the Craft at four p.m. today.

Several particularly honest and conscientious Masters have held the post of Deacon. Because of their abilities they have been allowed to remain in office, a position which becomes a great strain upon them. There have also been some who have been remiss in their duties and have been less than exemplary with regard to the Trades money, particularly with the poor fund.

Therefore in order not to over burden the hard working and honest Deacons and also to ensure that the less scrupulous Deacons are controlled, we hereby Statute and declare that from this day onwards, no one shall hold the office of Deacon for more than two years and the Deacon shall be elected or re-elected annually. We also declare that the deacon shall produce his accounts for audit on the Wednesday immediately before the election, so that the members can decide whether or not the incumbent should be re-elected. Any Master, whether Deacon, Councillor or ordinary Master shall not break this Act. The penalty for so doing will be Ten Merks Scots, without remission, and to be discharged from the Craft until the fine is paid.

Signed by William Gib and 13 others.

A Member in Fife. – 17th September, 1700

The Trade met this day to consider the question of one James Forest who has contracted to marry Nancy Gibson. Although he is resident in Leslie, Fife, he is to pay regular quarterly dues to the Craft. Should he then become a resident of Dundee, he will then be a full member of the Trade.

Alun, &c., Prohibited – 30th June 1710

The Trade met this day to consider the dyeing of Bonnets. It has enacted that no master may use birsel or alum when making bonnets. Any member using these products will be liable to a fine of Twenty shillings Scots, for the first offence, thirty shillings for the second offence and Three Pounds Scots for the third offence. Widows are liable for the same fines as others.

This will take effect at Lamas and checks will be made from that date.

Subscribed to by 27 members.

A Son to Pay his Father's Debt to the Trade, &c., - 14th October, 1708

The Trade met this day and gave serious consideration to the loss to the Trade of debts incurred by the death of members. It has been decreed that a son, if he is a member of the Craft, will be liable for any debts to the Trade left by his father.

It is also decreed that any member who insults the Trade by banging on the table will be fined the sum of six Shillings and eight Pence, the first time, thirteen Shillings and four Pence the second time and one Pound Scots the third time.

Signed by the Ex-Deacons, councillors and 12 Members.

Payments to the Trade by Office Bearers. - 20th October 1721

The Trade met this day and voted on the following payments.

Every new Deacon shall pay the sum of three Pounds Scots to the Trade. Likewise every Boxmaster will pay twenty Shillings Scots., and every member standing as Deacon will pay twenty Shillings Scots. A Councillor will pay ten Shillings Scots and a member attending for the first time, ten Shillings Scots.

Signed by the Office Bearers.

Against Glasgow Made Bonnets being sold as Dundee Bonnets
13th October 1726

This day William Hog, Deacon and the members of the Bonnetmaker Trade met in their normal place to discuss the Trades affairs. In particular, the habit of some of the members, apart from their normal trading, to purchase bonnets made outside the burgh, particularly Glasgow, and sell them as their own, This is to the prejudice of employment within the burgh. It is Statute and Ordained that from today forward, no Member of the Trade, his widow or children will buy any bonnets made in Glasgow, or anywhere else, or from anyone else coming to the burgh from there. On the contrary, no member shall sell any goods which have not been made by his own employees and which are manufactured within the Burgh. The penalty for breaking this Statute will be three Pounds Scots on the first occasion, and double that amount on every other occasion. Further that no one may sell bonnets or caps to any merchant in the burgh convicted of this offence, under the same penalty.

Subscribed by the Deacon and 18 members.

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