



FROM THE Deacon Convener's DESK

30th January 2017

Back to Business

January has been a month focussed on the business of the House. My Chain Gang met to plan future events and areas of further cooperation. The Education Committee met for the first time under my Chairmanship. It was extremely well attended by the Craft co-ordinators and other officers of the House. A real understanding of how the different groups operate will lead to greater co-ordination in the future and promotion of the various competitions as well as our heritage.

The Advisory Group met to review committee membership. I met with the Ex-Conveners to discuss the Strategy Paper. I chaired a meeting of the Sporting Conveners which is covered later in this letter. The Platform received an impressive document from the Chairman of the Charities Committee on the criteria for our charitable donations. I attended the Kinship Fundraising Committee which discussed future fundraising options. The Hall Committee met in my absence under the Chairmanship of the Collector. The heating system was the main item on the agenda.

This was interspersed by the very excellent and well attended Burns Night supper organised by the Late Collector, Alistair Dorward assisted by Adrian Pierotti of the Cordiners and Alasdair Beaton, RWM of the Trades House Lodge. We were entertained with music, pipes, poetry and speeches in a very full programme, but still time to enjoy the haggis!



St. Mungo Festival

The Annual Service to celebrate the founder and Patron Saint of the City of Glasgow was held on 15th January. Saint Kentigern alias St. Mungo, was a sixth century apostle of the Kingdom of Strathclyde. The service formed part of the week of prayer of Glasgow Churches Together. The Deacon Convener was part of the Civic party for an event which was part church service and part ceremonial embracing aspects of Glasgow City life. Depute Lord Provost Gerry Leonard welcomed the Lord Lyon who spoke on the historical aspect. He was accompanied by Late Deacon Liam Devlin of the Cordiners in his capacity of Unicorn Pursuivant an officer of the Arms of Scotland.

The Cathedral founded various institutions, the High School, the University and the College of Physicians all of whom had representatives who played a part. Dr Raja Madhok, a Deputy Lord Lieutenant, spoke of his life as the son of an immigrant but now a leading Doctor in the City.

The procession ended with a party of the dignitaries to visit the tomb of St. Mungo where flowers were laid to recognise him as the creator of the Bishopric of Glasgow and the founder of the original church near to the current Cathedral.

Dr. Laurence Whitley who orchestrated the Festival Service told me they had made changes this year to embrace much of the history and relationship between Cathedral and City – it certainly worked!



Sporting Conveners

The House has a long tradition of sporting competitions but in recent years interest has waned. With this background I called a meeting of all sporting conveners. I was supported by Ex-Deacon Dr Rose Mary Harley who is Chairman of the Fundraising Committee which also embraces sporting events.

I was rewarded with a full attendance covering golf, both ladies and gentlemen, bowls, curling and angling.

There will be greater promotion of our sporting competitions in 2017 and as soon as details are settled I will circulate to all Crafts.

Sporting events are part of the fellowship of the House which we all need to promote either by participation or support.

Burns in Nürnberg

Rita and I were privileged to be part of an official Civic visit to one of Glasgow's twin Cities last weekend. The weekend celebrates not only some 50 years of exchange visits but is part of the Nürnberg Burns Festival.

The Ceilidh on Friday had capacity participation of 250. The music by the Caulbums Ceilidh Band from Glasgow was enthusiastically joined in by everybody. Two rounds of 'stripping the willow' nearly finished me off for the weekend! Further entertainment was provided by the pipes and drums of The Neilson and District Pipe Band.

The main event of the weekend was the Burns Supper at the Grand Hotel which was filled to capacity. It had everything a Burns night could offer, particularly an excellent meal prepared by the chefs of the Grand Hotel with liberal servings of haggis, neeps and tatties. It was also a time for official speeches from the Oberbürgermeister (Lord Mayor) who gave a warm welcome speech, and Depute Lord Provost, Gerry Leonard. He summed up the importance of the partnership in just a few sentences:

'Our partnership extends now over half a century with its origins back in the 1950s when the very first youth exchange took place. We have worked together to develop a better understanding and awareness of our neighbours. 2016 has been another busy year. Project highlights include the very successful Erasmus project which looks at how we can improve the opportunities for young people moving from education to work. This is gaining praise in education circles and goes from strength to strength. Youth exchanges have featured strongly in the year including schools and those in care homes to learn more about life in each other's Cities. This is all bound together in strong personal relationships.'

My contribution was minor giving the Selkirk Grace in my best Glaswegian accent. The haggis was piped in and addressed by John Gahagan followed by a robust tradition of a Franconian version in German from local actress Sabinene Hollweck. Music was provided by the musicians, pipes and drums from Glasgow. Singing including 'My love is like red, red rose' by Sylvia Barnes, there was music from the harp of Rachel Hair and the guitar of Sandy Strange with dancing from Olivia Black. The very best of Glasgow and Scotland. House officer Fraser McIntosh ensured the appropriate protocol was followed. Heads and Tails provided funds for Parkhill Secondary School.

A demonstration of the importance of the twinning was seen by the visit of fashion students from Kelvin College. Their theme was 'A Tribute to the Bard', a romantic daywear collection. This exchange widens the knowledge of fashion. As part of the evening we were rewarded by a fashion show by both Nürnberg and Glasgow students demonstrating high quality of design and workmanship.

After a four course dinner, the formal part of the evening was concluded by the Toast to the Lassies by John MacLeod, Lord Dean of Guild who did not need an interpreter. The audience followed every word, verse and joke. The reply by his wife Mariella, Late Collector of the Bonnetmakers was also hugely appreciated which ended in a toast the Laddies. In all the proceedings went on for five hours and if this wasn't enough it was followed by a Ceilidh into the early hours of the morning.

For those who could not attend the Burns Night evening there was an afternoon tea on Sunday with a repeat of the excellent entertainment. However Auld Lang Syne did prove a little challenging but with some gentle instruction from the DC they got it!

Monday saw a tour of the local brewery which doubles up as a whisky distillery. A lunch with the Deputy Mayor Dr Klemens Gsell was an opportunity to understand a bit more about City Government. There were questions during the visit about Brexit and we assured our hosts that our partnership was even more important. After some presentations, including Trades House ties we made our farewells.

