

University of St Andrews

'Sons of Crispin':
The St Crispin Societies of Edinburgh and Scotland

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Degree: PhD in Museum and Gallery Studies
Date of submission: 26 May 2013

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Abstract

City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries hold a substantial collection of artefacts and record books donated in 1909 by the office bearers of the Royal Ancient Order of St Crispin. This organisation was the final reincarnation of the Royal St Crispin Society established around 1817. From 1932 the display of a selection of these objects erroneously attributed their provenance to the Incorporation of Cordiners of Canongate with no interpretation of the meaning and use of this regalia.

The association of shoemakers (cordiners in Scotland) with St Crispin their patron saint remained such that at least until the early twentieth century a shoemaker was popularly called a 'Crispin' and collectively 'sons of Crispin'. In medieval Scotland cordiners maintained altars to St Crispin and his brother St Crispianus and their cult can be traced to France in the sixth century. In the late sixteenth century an English rewriting of the legend achieved immediate popularity and St Crispin's Day continued to be remembered in England throughout the seventeenth century. Journeymen shoemakers in Scotland in the early eighteenth century commemorated their patron with processions; and the appellation 'St Crispin Society' appeared in 1763.

This thesis investigates the longevity of the shoemakers' attachment to St Crispin prior to the nineteenth century and analyses the origin, creation, organisation, development and demise of the Royal St Crispin Society and the network of lodges it created in Scotland in the period 1817-1909. Although showing the influence of freemasonry, the Royal St Crispin Society devised and practised rituals based on shoemaking legends and traditions. An interpretation of these rituals is given as well as an examination of the celebration of the saint's day and the organisation and significance of King Crispin processions. The interconnection of St Crispin artefacts and archival material held by Scottish museums and archives is demonstrated throughout the thesis.

Contents

Abstract	I
Contents	III
1: Why Crispin?.....	1
2: The Memorable Crispin	29
3: The Magnificent Pageant Of King Crispin	71
4: The Impulse Of An Awakened Spirit	105
5: A Crispin Led And Blind.....	140
6: Up Wi' Crown And Cutting Knife	172
7: Conclusion	200
Bibliography.....	208
Illustrations (only on CD)	234
Appendix 1: Inventory Of All Royal St Crispin Society Objects Located In Museum And Archives Collections (only on CD).....	254
Appendix 2: List Of Processions.....	270
Appendix 3: Main Characters In The Crispin Processions	274

1: Why Crispin?

The Gentle Craft.
A Discourse
Containing many matters of Delight, very pleasant to be read:
Shewing what famous men have been SHOOMAKERS
in time past in this land, with their worthy deeds; and
great Hospitality.
Set forth with Pictures; and variety of Wit and Mirth,
Declaring the cause why it is called THE GENTLE CRAFT;
and also how the proverb first grew:
A Shoemaker's Son is a Prince born. T. D.¹

Introduction

On 9 February 1909 Councillor W.W. Macfarlane, Convenor of the Museum Sub-Committee, reported to a meeting of the Town Council of Edinburgh that:

a letter had been received from the Honorary Secretary Royal Ancient Order of St Crispin offering the Regalia of this Order (now dissolved) so that it might be suitably housed in the Municipal Museum for all time coming.²

Contemporary newspaper accounts informed readers that the gift to the Museum consisted of crown, sceptre, sword of state, suit of armour, two very old heralds' tunics and hats and two old Trade flags.³ In reality the substantial collection of around seventy ritual objects and regalia included items such as ceremonial aprons, gilded skulls and bones, chests, shoemakers' tools, a velvet collar, a bible and two candlesticks – although the entry in the Accessions Register merely records the donor.⁴ Additional items – two aprons, a sash, a framed certificate and the charter chest of the St Crispin Society inscribed with the words 'founded 1763' – were gifted to the museum service by private individuals in later years.⁵

Accompanying the 1909 donation were record books spanning the years 1817 to 1904, but bearing the titles of three St Crispin organisations, namely the Royal St Crispin Society, the Grand Lodge Royal St Crispin

¹ Thomas Deloney, *The Gentle Craft*, frontispiece from the 1648 edition in Simon Barker (ed.) *The Gentle Craft* (Aldershot, 2007), p. xxxi.

² Edinburgh City Archives, SL1/1, *Minutes of the Town Council of Edinburgh*, 9 February 1909, Item 7.

³ *The Scotsman, Edinburgh Evening News*, 10 February 1909.

⁴ See Appendix 1.

⁵ Ibid.

(Edinburgh) and the Ancient Order of St Crispin of Scotland (City of Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge No 1 Friendly Society). It seems unlikely that the archive material was ever examined closely, and indeed it was not located in storage until 1996. According to the museum handbooks the artefacts were displayed in 1932 as items relating to the Order of St Crispin (Shoemakers) of the Canongate and in 1958 as regalia of the Incorporation of Shoemakers (Cordiners) of the Canongate.⁶ In 1958 also, reference was made to a trade procession of costumed figures on St Crispin's Day (wrongly designated as 27 instead of 25 October), the last of which was supposed to have occurred in 1820. Re-display in the 1970s corrected some of the errors, continued to feature the heralds' costumes but referred to the figure in armour as the Black Prince rather than the Champion. The case caption concluded by reiterating that 'all the items on display related to the ceremonials of the Incorporation of Cordiners of the Canongate, which finally ceased in 1852.' There was no interpretation of these ceremonials, no explanation of the significance of the objects, or any acknowledgement of related artefacts in other museums such as a depiction of a Dundee St Crispin parade captured in an oil-painted frieze, 35 feet in length, on display in the McManus.⁷

Preliminary research undertaken prior to the relocation of the St Crispin artefacts to the People's Story Museum in 1989, established that the provenance of the St Crispin collection was erroneous and based wholly on a paper by C. A. Malcolm published in 1932.⁸ Malcolm had been misinformed by the nineteenth-century antiquarian writings of Sir Daniel Wilson who, in the section on the Shoemakers' Lands in his *Memorials of Edinburgh*, concluded that the St Crispin processions were organised by the Incorporation of Cordiners of the Canongate.⁹ An examination however, of the minute books of both the Incorporation of Cordiners of the Canongate and of Edinburgh, a reading of the *Royal St Crispin Society Minute and Account Book 1823 -1831*

⁶ These guidebooks are in files held in the Museum of Edinburgh.

⁷ Dundee Art Gallery and Museums, 1994-1. See Appendix 1.

⁸ C. A. Malcolm, 'Incorporation of Cordiners of the Canongate, 1538-1773', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, XVIII (Edinburgh, 1932), pp. 100-150. I detailed this research in an extended essay submitted for the Graduate Diploma in Museum and Gallery Studies, University of St Andrews, 1996.

⁹ Sir Daniel Wilson, *Memorials of Edinburgh*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1891), p. 97.

(at that time the only known volume) and a search of Edinburgh newspapers established that the collection pertained to what seemed to be an Edinburgh friendly society which had organised an impressive 'King Crispin' procession through the streets of the capital in 1820, with subsequent events in following years. There remained, however, many unanswered questions and the subsequent rediscovery of further documents and artefacts provided new evidence for reassessing previous conclusions. This thesis will establish the ownership of the collection as being that of successive Edinburgh St Crispin societies or lodges with rituals shaped by centuries' old shoemaker legends and traditions. The study examines the antecedents of these societies which operated from 1817 until the early twentieth century; their purpose, structure, organisation and relationships with branch lodges; and attempts an interpretation of the processions and ritual associated with them.

Historiography

St Crispin is the patron saint of shoemakers – a fact still well known in the nineteenth century and frequent publications of almanacs and books of days reminded those who might have forgotten.¹⁰ The appellation 'sons of Crispin' was frequently applied by journalists when reporting an item of news concerning shoemakers; and the novelist Sir Walter Scott took his readers' knowledge for granted when one of his characters exclaimed about another's choice of apprenticeship - 'Why I should have thought the gentle craft, as it is called, of St Crispin would have suited him best.'¹¹ The fifteenth-century *Legenda aurea*, compiled by Jacobus de Voragine, includes the story of the saints Crispin and Crispinian and their martyrdom at Soissons, where they had exercised the craft of making shoes at the time of the emperors Maximian and Diocletian in the third century A.D.¹² The two brothers had been born in Rome of noble lineage but, being Christians, fled to France to escape persecution. Suffering various tortures at the hands of the governor Rictius

¹⁰ For example, Mrs Cupples, 'Talks about the Months', *Little Wide Awake: An Illustrated Magazine for Good Children* (1 October, 1879).

¹¹ Sir Walter Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, vol. XXII (Adam and Charles Black edition Edinburgh, 1853), p. 62.

¹² Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, ed. F. S. Ellis, vol. 6 (London, 1900), pp. 69-71.

Varius, they eventually perished; their bodies being retrieved by an old man who buried them where a great church was later built in their honour. This is the standard Catholic version of the legend which, as Sherry Reames has demonstrated, was translated into French, Spanish, Italian, Provençal, English, Dutch, High and Low German and Bohemian. A full English translation of around 1438 preceded Caxton's printed version of 1483, with nine subsequent editions between then and 1527.¹³ A variation of the tale not collected by Jacobus de Voragine has the bodies of the saints being washed ashore near Lydd in Kent where a heap of stones at Stone End was long regarded as the tomb of St Crispin and St Crispianus.¹⁴

In which historical period Scottish cordiners (shoemakers) adopted the saint and his brother Crispianus as their spiritual protectors is unknown – and they are absent from recent academic studies edited by Boardman and Williamson – but their cult must have been well established by 25 October 1506 when King James IV of Scotland made an offering of forty shillings for 'bred' and 'lichts' for 'Saints Crispine and Crispianes'.¹⁵ Veneration of the saints had, however, been established in France in the centuries following their supposed martyrdom, their earliest literary acknowledgement being traced to Geoffrey of Tours in the sixth century.¹⁶ Elizabeth Lalou has shown that in 1379 the shoemakers of Paris established a confraternity 'en l'honneur de Saint Crépin et Saint Crépinien dans l'église Notre Dame de Paris' and enacted *mystères* in 1458 and 1459, while Rouen shoemakers mounted a representation of the martyrdom of the saints in 1443 (**Fig.1**).¹⁷ Scholarly studies of medieval liturgical music and processional drama also demonstrate the presence of the two brothers in celebrations of saints' days and many European examples of shoemakers' chapels and commissioned artworks

¹³ Sherry L. Reames, *The Legenda aurea; a re-examination of its paradoxical history* (Wisconsin, 1985), p. 4.

¹⁴ Thomas Wright, *The Romance of the Shoe* (London, 1922), p. 52.

¹⁵ Steve Boardman and Eila Williamson (eds), *The Cult of the Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland* (Woodbridge, 2010); *Accounts of the Lord Treasurer of Scotland*, ed. Sir James Balfour Paul, vol. III (Edinburgh, 1901), p. 284; *Accounts*, vol. IV (Edinburgh 1902), p. 36.

¹⁶ Geoffrey of Tours, *History of the Franks*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London, 1974), p. 298.

¹⁷ Elisabeth Lalou, 'Les cordonniers metteure en scène des mystères de saint Crépin et saint Crépinien', *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, tome 143 (1985), pp. 104-5, <http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/bec_0376237_1985_nm_1_4503697>[June 2012].

featuring Crispin and Crispianus can be cited.¹⁸ In Antwerp Cathedral, for example, Ambrosius Franken depicted 'The martyrdom of Saints Crispin and Crispinian' as the new altarpiece for the shoemakers' altar, repaired after the Calvinist iconoclasm of 1581 (**Fig. 2**).¹⁹

The earliest dated mention of a Scottish shoemakers' altar to Crispin and Crispianus comes from a description of the Seal of Cause (a formal recognition of a guild or incorporation) granted by the Town Council of Edinburgh to the cordiners on 28 July 1449. Each master of the trade who kept a booth within the town was to pay one penny Scots, and their servants one halfpenny, towards the support of their altar of St Crispin and Crispianus in St Giles church.²⁰ There is no extant document to verify Maitland's citation of 1753, but the year 1449 is important as in later centuries specific Crispin traditions were said to date from then. On 21 November 1884, for example, at the soiree of the Royal St Crispin Lodge the Chairman:

briefly sketched the local history of the order, mentioning that it dated as far back as the year 1449, when the members paid a weekly sum for the maintenance of an altar within the collegiate church of St Giles.²¹

The nineteenth-century flag within the collection of City of Edinburgh Museums bears the date 1449 (**Fig. 3**). Documentary evidence exists of subsequent Seals of Cause granted in 1509/10, 1533 and 1536 with references to the saints' altar.²²

Cordiners in Leith, Aberdeen, Inverness, Perth, Glasgow, Linlithgow and Haddington also maintained altars to Crispin and Crispianus in the pre-

¹⁸ Anne Walters, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims Context and meaning in his musical works* (Cambridge, 2002), p.14; Allan Doig, *Liturgy and architecture from the early Church to the Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 109-133; Craig M. Wright, *Music and Ceremony at Notre Dame of Paris 500-1550* (Cambridge, 1989); Roger E. Reynolds, 'The Drama of Medieval Liturgical Processions', *Revue de Musicologie*, T. 86e, no. 1er (2000), pp. 127-142, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/947285>>[25 June 2012].

¹⁹ Myriam Serck Dewaide, *Painted Wood: History and Conservation Part 2*, p. 90; David Freeberg, 'Representations of Martyrdoms During the Early Counter-Reformation in Antwerp', *The Burlington Magazine*, vol.118, no.876, (Mar., 1976), pp. 128, 132.

²⁰ William Maitland, *The History of Edinburgh, from its foundation to the present time, Book IV* (Edinburgh, 1753), p. 305.

²¹ *The Scotsman*, 22 November 1884.

²² *Extracts from the Burgh Records of Edinburgh*, ed. James Marwick, vol. I (Edinburgh, 1869), p. 127; vol. II (Edinburgh, 1871), p. 65, 78-80.

Reformation period.²³ Other incorporated trades such as the tailors, goldsmiths, hammermen likewise cultivated patron saints and each incorporation zealously guarded its own monopolies, acquired property to raise funds and provided for its own poor. Lynch has highlighted the difficulties in constructing an occupational study of medieval Scottish towns but indicates that in general, trade masters exercised quality control over the products of the craftsmen and regulated the terms upon which they might or might not exercise their craft within the burgh.²⁴ An apprentice progressed after four to seven years, to journeyman working to a master for a wage with the prospect of himself becoming a master, should he be able to pay the entry fee and successfully execute his 'essay' or demonstration of his skills. Dingwall's demographic study of late seventeenth-century Edinburgh shows the location of the cordiners as being primarily in the area to the northwest of the High Street (39%) and in the separate burgh of Canongate (25%) with the remainder being in, or close to, the High Street.²⁵ In Dundee, cordiners and tanners became particularly associated with the Wooden Land in the Overgate.²⁶

The religious Reformation of the mid-sixteenth century abolished the commemoration of saints and maintenance of their altars but Hutton and Todd

²³ Duncan Anderson, *History of the abbey and palace of Holyrood* (Edinburgh, 1849), p. 14; Robert Lamond, 'The Scottish Craft Guild as a Religious Fraternity', *Scottish Historical Review*, vol. 16, no. 63 (April, 1919), p. 209; *Calendar of the Laing Charters Belonging to the University of Edinburgh*, ed. John Anderson, vol. I (Edinburgh, 1899), p. 146; National Archives of Scotland, GD103/1/11, GD103/1/27, B48/17/20; William Kennedy, *Annals of Aberdeen*, vol. I (Aberdeen, 1818), p. 97; Ebenezer Bain, *Merchant and Craft Guilds A History of the Aberdeen Incorporated Trades* (Aberdeen, 1887), pp. 65-6; *Records of Inverness*, eds William Mackay and Herbert Cameron Boyd, vol. 1 (Aberdeen, 1911), p. xcix; Samuel Cowan, *Perth, the Ancient Capital of Scotland*, vol. 2 (New York, 1904), p. 273; *The Shoemaker Incorporation of Perth 1545-1927*, ed. Peter Baxter (Perth, 1927), pp. 220-1; Colin A. Hunt, *The Perth Hammermen Book 1518-1568* (Perth, 1889), p. 78; William Campbell, *History of the Cordiners of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1883), pp. 248-55; Mackenzie Walcott, *Scoti-monasticon. The ancient church of Scotland, a history of the cathedrals, conventual foundations, collegiate churches, and hospitals of Scotland* (London, 1874), p. 68; John Martine, *Reminiscences of the royal burgh of Haddington and old east Lothian agriculturists* (Edinburgh, 1883), p. 194.

²⁴ Michael Lynch, 'The Social and Economic Structure of the Larger Towns, 1450-1600' in Michael Lynch, Michael Spearman and Geoffrey Stell, *The Scottish Medieval Town* (Edinburgh, 1988).

²⁵ Helen M. Dingwall, *Late Seventeenth-century Edinburgh a demographic study* (Aldershot, 1994), p. 290.

²⁶ Charles McKean, 'What kind of Renaissance Town was Dundee?' in Charles McKean, Bob Harris and Christopher A. Whatley (eds), *Dundee Renaissance to Enlightenment* (Dundee, 2009), pp. 18-19.

have argued that customs and traditions of the craft guilds and the ordinary people persisted into the seventeenth century in both England and Scotland.²⁷ Repeated actions by presbyterian kirk sessions and presbyteries attempted to suppress pilgrimages to sacred wells, midsummer bonfires, football and Yule carols in Elgin, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Stirling and Glasgow.²⁸ Aberdeen Kirk session records in particular provide evidence of cordiners, websters, tailors and baxters persisting in keeping holy day processions, saint days, festivities and rituals throughout the 1560s and 1570s, although there are no references to St Crispin.²⁹ There are none either in the minutes of the Incorporation of Cordiners of Edinburgh or Canongate but these records deal with the organisational and technical regulation of the craft. There is evidence, however, that the conviviality associated with medieval guilds continued. An Act of the Incorporation of Cordiners of Canongate in 1610 attempted to curb excessive drinking but had to be reiterated in 1648; followed the next year by the ending of the custom of making entrants pay for a dinner to the craft, though the custom of a master providing drink for the registration of apprentices continued.³⁰ Stirling cordiners decreed in 1698 that there was to be no spending either for meat or drink 'except their portions of the yearly dinner'.³¹ In Perth however, in 1679 the entry money for the cordiner craft, after completion of apprenticeship, included £8 Scots for a football and a dinner for the masters was expected.³² Almost 100 years later the Incorporation of Cordiners demonstrated knowledge of the Crispin tradition by claiming its right of seats in St John's East Church where its altar had been 'from time immemorial'.³³

While corresponding Scottish evidence is lacking, Thijs in his examination of religious rituals in pre-industrial trade associations in the Low Countries argues that in 1566 the forces of reform in the Low Countries swept

²⁷ Ronald Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford, 1990); Margo Todd, 'Profane Pastimes and the Reformed Community: The Persistence of Popular Festivals in Early Modern Scotland', *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 39, no. 2 (Apr., 2000), pp.123-156.

²⁸ Todd, 'Pastimes', p. 10.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 127.

³⁰ Malcolm, 'The Incorporation of Cordiners of the Canongate', p. 130; NAS, GD1/14.

³¹ David B. Morris, *The Incorporation of Shoemakers of Stirling* (Stirling, 1925), p. 32.

³² *The Shoemaker Incorporation of Perth 1545-1927*, ed. Peter Baxter (Perth, 1927), p 10.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

away altars, statues and paintings, but following the reestablishment of Spanish rule in the southern Netherlands, guild altars and chapels were rebuilt and rituals restored. In the North Netherlands religious brotherhoods and their trappings were not reinstated in Protestant churches, but patron saints survived.³⁴ Provision for sickness and death was later to become a main objective for journeymen societies but at this stage the traditions of processions and religious services remained paramount. In Middleburg the journeymen were allowed to assemble only on the festival of the patron saint, Corpus Christi, other procession days and for funerals.³⁵ Some craft-based religious organisations re-emerged in the Low Countries in the seventeenth century. Antwerp had a brotherhood for journeymen shoemakers in 1686 and for silk weavers in 1698; more followed in the eighteenth century. Each had its own patron saint and organised banquets, dances and other festivities. It was not until 1792 that the Antwerp journeymen brotherhood of shoemakers became an association for mutual aid.³⁶ In 1777 the Bishop of Antwerp complained about the excessive drinking and lascivious activities that accompanied feasts of patron saints, but dressing up as the saint and parading through the streets continued in Malines into the nineteenth century. Shoemakers in Anzegem, Belle, Sint-Niklaas and Tielt also seem to have been enthusiastic in presenting staged performances. Most of the plays performed were about Crispin and Crispinian.³⁷ Similar practices, private if not public, may have occurred in seventeenth-century Scotland but there is no extant evidence of the commemoration of Crispin until the eighteenth century.

Post Reformation British shoemakers however, had been given an alternative to the veneration of Catholic saints with the publication of Thomas Deloney's *The History of the Gentle Craft* in 1597. Simon Barker in his introduction to the 2007 edition of the text, describes *The Gentle Craft* as a celebration of shoemakers through three interwoven narratives demonstrating the 'rich mythology and folklore attached to shoemaking', and the nobility or

³⁴ Alfons K. L. Thijs, 'Religion and social structure: religious rituals in pre-industrial trade associations in the Low Countries' in Maarten Roy Prak (ed.), *Craft guilds in early modern Low Countries: work, power and representation* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 157, 165.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

'gentility' of the shoemaker.³⁸ He argues that the expression 'gentle craft' used to denote a definite social or moral standing, is a late sixteenth century double-edged term employed by Deloney in his rewriting of the legends and myths of early stories. The shoemakers are defined as 'gentle' by the nature of their craft in comparison with other more physically demanding work; but they are also 'gentle' in that their behaviour exhibits the features of those of good birth and breeding. In his analysis of the texts Barker highlights the emphasis placed upon tradition and continuity rather than change and innovation and the message that shoemakers demonstrate their noble qualities best when they act collectively as part of a specific community. This community, however, is not exclusive as strangers can be welcomed into the trade and providing they work hard and invest in the values of the community, they will enjoy its benefits and protection. Barker sets the texts within the context of a late sixteenth-century society rapidly becoming urban and class-conscious where issues of identity predominate in terms of gender, class and status.³⁹ Smallwood and Wells in the introduction to their edition of Thomas Dekker's play *The Shoemaker's Holiday* of 1599, demonstrate the influence of *The Gentle Craft*.⁴⁰ Two elements of the plot are drawn directly from Deloney and a third is based on his work, with the strap-line a 'shoemakers son is a Prince born' becoming a catch-phrase for the character of Simon Eyre whose rise to power in an urban context is the central theme. St Hugh's bones are alluded to at several points; there are jolly shoe-making songs and a reworking of the Crispin story provides one of the sub-plots, all set within a community of confident and independently-minded London shoemaker craftsmen. By the mid seventeenth century there had been five reprints of the play and the work has remained in the repertoire.⁴¹

Much of the ritual of the Royal St Crispin Societies was based on the stories related in *The Gentle Craft* in which Deloney explained the origin and meaning of expressions such as 'St Hugh's bones', the name given to a

³⁸ Deloney, *The Gentle Craft*, ed. Barker, introduction, p. xi.

³⁹ *Ibid*, pp. vii-xxix.

⁴⁰ Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (London, 1599), eds R. L. Smallwood and Stanley Wells (Manchester, 1999), pp. 1-70.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 47.

shoemaker's tools, and the shoemakers' celebration of Crispin on 25 October. The first story of Sir or St Hugh and Winifred fuses aspects of the account of St Winifred of Holywell with elements from the life of the Welsh St Keyna and possibly echoes of pagan mythical figures, although St Hugh was a Deloney creation.⁴² The second recounts the adventures of Crispin and Crispianus now transformed into British princes disguised as shoemakers in third-century Kent. Crispin secretly marries the daughter of the Emperor Maximinus while Crispianus achieves glory fighting against the Persian shoemaker General Iphicrates who declares that a 'Shoemakers son is a Prince born'.⁴³ After much subterfuge involving the shoemakers the story reaches a successful conclusion; the secret marriage being acknowledged with great joy and triumph on both sides:

..at which time the shoemakers in the same town made holiday: to whom Crispine and Crispianus sent most princely gifts for to maintain their merriment. And ever after upon that day at night, the shoemakers make great cheare and feasting, in remembrance of these two princely brethren: and because it might not be forgotten they caused their names to be placed in the kalendar for a yeerly remembrance, which you will find in the moneth of October about three dayes before the feast of Simon and Jude.⁴⁴

The third tale charts the rise of Simon Eyre, in reality a draper, to the position of Lord Mayor of London (1445). The popularity of these shoemaking stories is demonstrated by the number of reprints of Deloney's work produced throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – thirteen editions between 1627 and 1700, many adorned with woodcuts showing scenes from the narrative (**Fig. 4**).⁴⁵ In England seventeenth-century references to St Crispin occur frequently in poems, tracts, satires, pamphlets and epigrams:

I past this other day through Pauls Churchyard,
And heard some read a booke, and reading laught.
The title of the booke was gentle Craft.....
Great Princes midst their pomp to learn a trade,
Once in their lives to worke, to mend their soules.⁴⁶

Two statues of the brother saints flanked the arms of the Shrewsbury shoemakers' guild above the stone entrance to their 'harbour' built in 1679 ; and in 1688 Captain Walter Scot included a reference to Crispin and

⁴² Deloney, *The Gentle Craft*, ed. Alexis F. Lange (Berlin, 1903), pp. v-xliv. This introduction is useful for identifying the various sources.

⁴³ Deloney, *The Gentle Craft*, p. 35.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 40.

⁴⁵ *Early English books on line*, <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>>.

⁴⁶ Sir John Harington, *Epigrams both pleasant and serious*, no. 47 (London, 1615).

Crispianus, sons to the British king, in his history of several honourable families in the shire of Roxburgh and Selkirk **(Fig. 5)**.⁴⁷

The earliest mention of celebrations of St Crispin's Day in Edinburgh, found to date, is among the records of the Incorporation of Cordiners of Edinburgh where there is a receipt dated 1720, for payment of 'on guinie for the uz and behove of the jurneymen anent Crispians day'.⁴⁸ This would suggest a celebration of some kind but there is nothing further to say whether this is a contribution from the masters or a gift to the journeymen for a long-established custom or a new one. Expenditure of 18 shillings for 'airing the Crispeanes and the mortcloths' is entered in the accounts of the Stirling Incorporation of Shoemakers for 1726.⁴⁹ Morris speculates that the 'Crispeanes' were flags, sashes and similar material carried in Crispin processions. The word 'airing' certainly suggests an exposure of some kind whether public or private and that the cordiners had Crispin regalia. The 1720 Edinburgh receipt indicates a celebration of St Crispin's day by the journeymen shoemakers as a group distinct from their masters. Citing the example of the mason trade in late seventeenth-century Edinburgh, Stevenson argues that by this period the medieval craft ideal of progression from apprentice to journeyman and then eventually to master was increasingly less viable. For a variety of reasons – economic difficulties in a craft leading to stagnation or decline after a period of expansion; admission of too many apprentices or changes in structure leading to the craft being dominated by a few masters – meant that attitudes of journeymen changed. With little chance of becoming masters themselves they would spend their lives as wage earning employees. This often resulted in the emergence of fraternities composed exclusively of journeymen set up to represent their interests as these now conflicted with those of the masters of the traditional guilds.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Robert Chambers, (ed.), *Book of Days* (Edinburgh, 1869), pp. 707-8; Walter Scott, *A true history of the several honourable families of the right honourable name Scot in the shires of Roxburgh and Selkirk and others adjacent*, second part (Edinburgh, 1688), p. 39.

⁴⁸ NAS, GD348/122.

⁴⁹ Morris, *The Incorporation of Shoemakers of Stirling*, p. 17.

⁵⁰ David Stevenson, *The First Freemasons: Scotland's Early Lodges and their Members* (Aberdeen, 1989), p. 42.

Fraser concurs with this argument, stating that while there is no definite date when journeymen began identifying themselves as a group distinct from their employers, the recorded appearance of trade societies among Scottish urban craft journeymen and the occurrence of strikes in the eighteenth century can be cited as evidence of this.⁵¹ Fraser dates the formation of an Edinburgh journeymen shoemakers' society as 1727 but Houston argues that they did not achieve a charity box separate from that of the masters until ten years later, having been unsuccessful in their attempt in 1700.⁵² Whatley also testifies to the growth of journeymen organisations describing them as mainly:

mutual aid societies initially, as the pressures of competitive capitalism grew and relations between masters and men hardened, combinations for other purposes were formed. Wages were the main subject of collective discussion and action, with a widening pool of workers in different occupations learning to take advantage of favourable market conditions to demand increases.⁵³

Houston's work on eighteenth-century Edinburgh highlights the involvement of journeymen shoemakers in public protests and conflicts with the masters but he relies on Malcolm's paper in his discussion of Crispin commemoration and is unaware of the organisational complexity involved, as described in this thesis.

The first recorded appearance in 1739 of a procession featuring Crispin as 'King' could be interpreted as a statement by the journeymen of their separate identity and independence, a symbolic declaration that while they might not be masters they could elect a king from one of their number. There may also be political inferences to be drawn – the journeymen wielded no authority within the incorporation, they had no vote in the selection of deacon and they had no electoral power to influence governments but they could select their own monarch. The Crispin processions could also be seen in the context of clandestine Jacobitism, a reference to an alternative king, although the cancelation of the Crispin dinner in 1745 when the Jacobite forces were present in Edinburgh might indicate otherwise.⁵⁴ MacInnes discerns a distinct

⁵¹ W. Hamish Fraser, *Conflict and Class: Scottish Workers 1700-1838* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp.19-38, pp. 39-56.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 41; R. A. Houston, *Social Change in the Age of Enlightenment Edinburgh 1660-1760* (Oxford, 1994), p. 98.

⁵³ Christopher A. Whatley, *Scottish Society 1707-1830: Beyond Jacobitism, towards industrialisation* (Manchester, 2000), p. 210.

⁵⁴ *Minutes of the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge 1881-1890*.

lack of a dedicated organisation designed specifically to support Scottish Jacobitism at home and abroad, particularly between 1717 and 1739 and argues that purported Jacobite clubs served mainly as safety valves rather than action groups.⁵⁵ Conversely eighteenth-century processions could be seen as loyalist demonstrations, commemorations of a Protestant king rather than a Catholic saint. Harris and Whatley have shown that the celebration of royal anniversaries in early Hanoverian Britain was widespread, the king's birthday being the particular focus for demonstrating the loyal of the largely Presbyterian Scotland.⁵⁶

The eighteenth-century Crispin commemoration and the formation and operation of the Royal St Crispin Societies in the nineteenth century in Edinburgh and towns such as Montrose, Linlithgow, Dundee, Falkirk, Stirling, Greenock, Glasgow, Paisley and Airdrie have to be viewed in an urban context. Whatley calculates the rise in the total Scottish urban population as being from 11.9% in the 1690s to 17.3% in 1755; and estimates that the population of Dundee almost doubled in the years 1755-1801, as did that of Brechin, Montrose, Forfar and Arbroath.⁵⁷ Devine cites the trebling of the population of Greenock, Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock and Falkirk between 1750 and 1821.⁵⁸ He shows that in 1830 the biggest urban areas were all ancient places with concentration mainly in the narrow belt of land in western and eastern Lowlands, the highest density being in Glasgow and Edinburgh where by 1800, 60% of Scottish urban dwellers resided.⁵⁹ Against such a background Whatley sees identification with, and pride in, craft skills as playing their part in maintaining workers' identities and gives the example of journeymen cordiners parading 'in several places' each year on 25 October, St Crispin's day, their patron saint.⁶⁰ The dating of 1822 for the last Dundee St

⁵⁵ Allan I. MacInnes, 'Jacobitism in Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review*, vol. LXXXVI, 2, no. 222 (October, 2007), p. 248.

⁵⁶ Harris, Bob and Whatley, Christopher A., 'To Solemnize His Majesty's Birthday': New Perspectives on Loyalism in George II's Britain', *History*, vol. 8, no. 271 (July, 1998), pp. 397-419.

⁵⁷ Whatley, *Scottish Society*, p. 67; McKean, Harris and Whatley, *Dundee*, p. 135.

⁵⁸ T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000* (London, 1999), p. 152.

⁵⁹ T. M. Devine, 'Scotland' in Peter Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. II (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 158-9.

⁶⁰ Christopher A. Whatley, 'Work, Time and Pastimes' in Elizabeth Foyster and Christopher A. Whatley (eds), *A History of Everyday Life in Scotland 1600-1800* (Edinburgh, 2010), p. 297.

Crispin procession in *Life and Times of Dundee* is, however, incorrect as this thesis demonstrates.⁶¹

According to Rodger, the increase in Edinburgh's population in the period 1801-41 exceeded that of the entire city in 1800.⁶² His study of the transformation of the Edinburgh townscape in the nineteenth century – the result of economic growth and an expanding workforce – describes the redefinition of the old and the superimposition of a new built environment.⁶³ Following the financial collapse of 1825-6, however, little working class housing was built until the 1860s. An 1851 survey of urban employers established that firms employing one or two workers were the most common in Edinburgh and in Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Greenock, Inverness, Leith, Paisley and Perth; with more shoemakers than any other category of employer.⁶⁴ In the 1860s, however, new factories developed on urban fringes. In Edinburgh, areas such as Tollcross, Lothian Road and Fountainbridge burgeoned, new tenements were built to the south and north and industrial suburbs developed to the east in Abbeyhill and Jock's Lodge, to the west in Dalry and Gorgie.⁶⁵ Simultaneously small workshops and craft-based skills tended to be located in the older parts of the city where a simplified street plan was superimposed on the medieval warren of Old Town entries and closes.⁶⁶ The shoe-making factory of James Allan, for example, was located in Edinburgh city centre.⁶⁷ An analysis of the addresses of the Royal St Crispin Society members for 1817-1850 indicates that 85% came from the Old Town and adjacent areas with 7% from New Town streets.⁶⁸ The pattern remained relatively unaltered by the end of the century with only 7 of the 124 members

⁶¹ Christopher A. Whatley, David B. Swinfen and Annette M. Smith, *Life and Times of Dundee* (Dundee, 1993), p. 45.

⁶² Richard Rodger, 'The Scottish Cities' in T. M. Devine and Jenny Wormald, *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History* (Oxford, 2012), p. 455.

⁶³ Richard Rodger, *The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 12.

⁶⁴ Richard Rodger, 'Concentration and Fragmentation: Capital, Labor, and the Structure of Mid-Victorian Scottish Industry', *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 14, no 2 (February, 1988), pp. 88, 92.

⁶⁵ Rodger, *Transformation of Edinburgh*, p. 491-493.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 488.

⁶⁷ *Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directory 1900-1901* (Edinburgh, 1901), p. 7.

⁶⁸ COEC, *Royal St Crispin Contributions Book 1817-1850*.

residing in the new suburbs in 1891.⁶⁹ In 1817 the first lodges of the Crispins took place in taverns and meeting rooms in the High Street and adjacent closes; the last recorded meeting in the Typographical Hall, 98 High Street in 1904.

The St Crispin Society collections also have to be examined in the context of eighteenth-and nineteenth-century associational life. Clark and Houston calculate that during the eighteenth century 3000 clubs and societies flourished in Scottish towns, over 200 of which operated in Edinburgh. Largely masculine organisations, the 'kaleidoscope of different types' included debating, literary, gambling, drinking, benefit, masonic and pseudo masonic societies.⁷⁰ Increasingly the sphere of women's activity was perceived to be the home, the private and domestic environment.⁷¹ In common with other associations the exclusively male membership of the Royal St Crispin Society met in taverns, placed great emphasis on conviviality and invited female guests only when dancing followed the annual St Crispin's day dinner. By the end of the nineteenth century an annual soiree with tea, cake and family entertainment had replaced the whisky punch dinner. Thus, as Harrison has observed in the equivalent French context, women 'were occasionally invited as spectators into the world of male sociability: their carefully managed presence drew attention to their normal absence.'⁷² The disappearance of the social drinking aspect from the later Crispin societies reflects the work of temperance societies and middle class voluntary associations in the re-shaping of Scottish society. Knox highlights the efforts to refocus working-class leisure pursuits around the family, with the public parks initiative, organised sport, the growth of savings banks and cooperative societies a promoted alternative to a culture centred on the public house.⁷³

⁶⁹ CEOC, *Royal Ancient Order of St Crispin of Scotland Contribution Book 1891-1904*.

⁷⁰ Peter Clark and R. A. Houston, 'Culture and Leisure 1700-1840' in *Cambridge Urban History*, p. 587-8.

⁷¹ Stana Nenadic, 'Political Reform and the "Ordering" of Middle-Class protest' in T. M. Devine (ed.) *Conflict and Stability in Scottish Society 1700-1850* (Edinburgh, 1990), p. 75.

⁷² Carol E. Harrison, 'Bourgeois Citizenship and the Practice of Association in Post-revolutionary France' in Graeme Morton, Boudien de Vries, and R. J. Morris, *Civil Society, Associations and Urban Places: Class, Nation and Culture in Europe* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 183.

⁷³ W. W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present* (Edinburgh, 1999), pp. 96-98.

Of all eighteenth-century associations, freemasonry constituted the largest of the new 'quasi-secret, pseudo-mystical organisations'.⁷⁴ Stevenson in two books on the subject, has argued that the real origins of modern freemasonry lie in Scotland around 1600, when the system of lodges was created by stonemasons with rituals and secrets blending medieval mythology with Renaissance and seventeenth-century history.⁷⁵ According to Clark, while freemasonry shared many features of other Georgian societies, it was distinctive in developing a strongly federal organisation with emphasis on its role in fostering social harmony; along with the development and manipulation of publicity and self promotion.⁷⁶ Clark's observations relate mainly to the English context. Wallace has analysed the Scottish dimension in his examination of eighteenth-century Scottish lodge records, revealing the similarities and differences existing among freemasonry and other clubs and societies; and the ways in which the Scottish Grand Lodge was dissimilar to the Grand Lodge of England in its creation, operation and internal dissensions.⁷⁷ He concedes, however, that there are broad similarities between Clark's conclusions and the progress of eighteenth-century Scottish freemasonry, citing, for example, the desire to create a central Grand Lodge, a penchant for conviviality, adherence to a system of constitutionalism and a clear, recognisable presence in the community.⁷⁸ A key point for this thesis, however, is that although some lodges practised additional rituals created around legends of the operative masons, biblical themes or medieval legend, Scottish freemasonry generally had three progressing levels of membership or 'degrees' – apprentice, fellow craftsman and master, thus echoing the medieval guild organisation – and each degree had an initiation ceremony for

⁷⁴ Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2000), p. 76.

⁷⁵ David Stevenson, *The First Freemasons: Scotland's Early Lodges and their Members* (Aberdeen, 1989); *The Origins of Freemasonry* (Cambridge, 2005).

⁷⁶ Clark, *British Clubs*, pp. 312, 119, 325.

⁷⁷ Wallace, Mark Coleman, *Scottish Freemasonry 1725-1810: progress, power and Politics* (PhD dissertation, University of St Andrews, 2007), <<http://www.research-repository.sandrews.ac.uk/bitstream/.../MarkWallaceThesis.pdf>>[24 May 2009].

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 12.

entrants.⁷⁹ As this study will show, the Royal St Crispin Society was organised in a similar manner.

A category of association which exceeded freemasonry in terms of numbers and size of total membership was that of friendly or benefit society, the origins of which can be traced to the early seventeenth century.⁸⁰ *British Friendly Societies, 1750-1914* is the first major re-examination of the subject since the work of Gosden.⁸¹ Cordery's central argument concerns friendly societies' engagement in a political struggle to present themselves as respectable and defend the philosophy of voluntarism – the principle that people's needs are best met by self-help without state intervention. In this conflict the societies created a reputation for respectability against a background of tension between the convivial and financial requirements of their members. Cordery suggests that friendly societies originated in Scotland and emerged independently in England; the burgeoning after the middle of the eighteenth century being created by capitalist social relations followed by the slow and uneven development of the cash nexus, the collapse of traditions of reciprocity and the elimination of the guilds. These interrelated changes generated a search for new ways to protect the family income against sickness, accidental injury, unemployment and death along with a desire for sociable activities and a need for fellowship.⁸² A recurrent theme – the cost of benefits exceeding income with resultant insolvency – ran throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Friendly societies emerged in a world of urban and industrial growth, where meetings in public houses forged an ideology of exclusive masculinity thereby allowing men to control the chief locus of worker leisure.⁸³ During the nineteenth century, however, elite attacks on public-house sociability and a growing social approbation of friendly

⁷⁹ Andy Durr, 'Ritual of Association and the Organisations of the Common People', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, vol. 100 (1988), p. 92.

⁸⁰ Clark, *British Clubs*, p. 325, 47.

⁸¹ Simon Cordery, *British Friendly Societies, 1750-1914* (Basingstoke 2003); Peter Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England 1815-1875* (Manchester, 1961).

⁸² Cordery, *British Friendly Societies*, pp. 7-8.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 40.

societies as sober, rational and respectable institutions resulted in a minimising of the importance of conviviality.⁸⁴

The Royal St Crispin Society and its reincarnations were not created as friendly societies but there were at least three associated benefit functions in the period 1817-1904. The Society shares many of the characteristics of friendly societies as identified by Cordery – meeting in taverns in the early period, public halls in the later, sociability, ritual, emphasis on brotherhood, adoption of elements of freemasonry, a desire for continuity with the past, public ceremonies and celebrations, weakness of finances and a constant struggle to maintain membership. Yet there is no evidence that any of the Crispin lodges actively participated in the political promotion of voluntarism against state intervention which is the main thrust of Cordery's work. The only record of any national involvement is a minute noting the agreement of members to join an Association of Friendly Societies on 2 October 1827.⁸⁵

Cordery highlights a gap in the historiography of friendly societies caused by the lack of archival material, as even nineteenth-century societies rarely preserved their documents. Little exists beyond records of the affiliated orders such as the Oddfellows and Forresters on which historical studies therefore tend to focus. Examples of secret initiation ceremonies are rare and although friendly societies were central to working-class culture, 'their rituals have been given short shrift by historians and are the least studied aspect of a generally neglected subject'.⁸⁶ Similarly Clark, while acknowledging that 'several trade societies appear from the late seventeenth century, at Edinburgh, Dalkeith, Musselburgh and elsewhere', concludes that 'further research on Scottish benefit societies is patently necessary.'⁸⁷ Dennis also recognises that many unregistered friendly and small fraternal societies operated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but whose names are now wholly lost; and others whose existence is known in local archives and Friendly Society Registers but of whose myths, character and regalia nothing

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 151.

⁸⁵ COEC, *Royal St Crispin Society Minute and Account Book 1823-32*.

⁸⁶ Cordery, *British Friendly Societies*, p. 31.

⁸⁷ Clark, *British Clubs*, p. 385.

is known.⁸⁸ Consequently her illustrated examination of badges and regalia has concentrated on the larger societies such as the Freemasons, The Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, the Free Gardeners, the Oddfellows, the Druids, the Ancient Order of Foresters and the Ancient Order of Loyal Shepherds.

The first St Crispin Society comprised mostly, but not exclusively, cordiners. Shoemakers as a homogeneous group have been examined by antiquaries and in both literary and radical political contexts. In 1882 Ordish published a paper on St Crispin in *The Antiquary*.⁸⁹ He discussed the various legends and plays and cited the processions of 1741 in Edinburgh and 1814 in Falkirk and Stirling but made no mention of the lodges of the Royal St Crispin Society, although they were in operation at the time of his article. Wright in his book *The Romance of the Shoe* assembled an array of legends, stories and reminiscences associated with shoemaking but he too seemed unaware of the Scottish nineteenth-century context.⁹⁰ There is a substantial body of work from scholars concerning the significance of shoemakers in sixteenth- to eighteenth-century literature; and Chapman has re-examined the celebration of St Crispin's Day in the light of its appropriation by William Shakespeare to commemorate the victory at Agincourt in his play *Henry V*.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Victoria Solt Dennis, *Discovering Friendly and Fraternal Societies: Their Badges and Regalia* (Risborough, 2005), p. 155.

⁸⁹ T. Fairman Ordish, 'St Crispin', *The Antiquary*, vol. VI (October 1882), pp.138-143.

⁹⁰ Thomas Wright, *The Romance of the Shoe*, (London, 1922).

⁹¹ For example: W. K. Chandler, 'The Sources of the Characters in "The Shoemakers' Holiday"', *Modern Philology*, vol. 27, no. 2 (Nov., 1929), pp. 175-182; J. Booth, 'Meddling with Awl: reading Dekker's The Shoemaker's Holiday', *English*, 41 (171) (1992), pp. 193-21; David Scott Kastan, 'Workshop and/as Playhouse: Comedy and Commerce in "The Shoemaker's Holiday"', *Studies in Philology*, vol. 84, no.3 (summer, 1987), pp. 324-337; Bridget Keegan, 'Cobbling Verse: Shoemaker Poets of the Long Eighteenth Century', *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, vol. 42, issue 3 (2001), pp.195-217; Angela McShane, "'Ne sutor ultra crepidam" Political Cobblers and Broadside Ballads' in Patricia Fumerton, Anita Guerrini, and Kris McAbee, (eds), *Ballads and Broadsides in Britain 1500-1800* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 207-228; Peter Millington, 'The Truro Cordwainers' Play', *Folklore*, vol.11 4, no. 1 (April 2002), pp. 53-73; David Novarr, 'Dekker's Gentle Craft and the Lord Mayor of London', *Modern Philology*, vol. 57, no. 4 (May, 1960), pp. 233-239; Gerald Porter, 'Cobblers All: Occupation as Identity and Cultural Message', *Folk Music Journal*, vol.7, no.1 (1995), pp. 43-61; Margaret Spufford, 'Portraits of Society: Popular Literature in the Seventeenth Century', *History Today*, vol. 32, issue 2 (February, 1982), pp. 11-17; Marta Straznicky, 'The End(s) of Discord in The Shoemaker's Holiday', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 36, no. 2 (spring 1996), pp. 357-372; Alison A. Chapman, 'Whose Saint Crispin's day is it? : Shoemaking, holiday making, and the politics of memory in early modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 54 (winter, 2001), pp. 1467-1494.

Shoemakers have also been the focus of specific studies of radicalism. Hobsbawm and Scott discussed their reputation for militancy both on trade matters and in wider movements of social protest in a number of countries, as well as their reputation for intellectualism, but their only reference to Scotland is the comment that St Crispin survived the Calvinist reformation as 'King Crispin'.⁹² The 1833 Nantwich procession of shoemakers on St Crispin's day is used as an example of a strong union drawing on an old craft tradition for its protest, a view reiterated by Oakes and Price.⁹³ Henry Pelling cites it as evidence of the 'prevalence at this time of various mystic rites probably based on Masonic practice.'⁹⁴

What is lacking in the historiography is an examination of the associational life of shoemakers or analysis of their continued celebration of, and attachment to, St Crispin and the legends associated with the craft. There has been no interpretation of traditions, rituals, regalia and the processions, often dismissed as quaint relics of the past, examples of lingering traces of the more traditional guilds which are bracketed together to illustrate the point – 'journeymen celebrated them when they observed, with pomp and gusto, the shoemaker's feast of St Crispin, the jubilee of the Preston "Guilds", or the wool-comber's feast of Bishop Blaise'.⁹⁵ The existence of the Royal St Crispin Society network and its ritual remains unacknowledged and the extent and variety of processions unrecorded. Yet this is essential if any meaning is to be made of the Royal St Crispin Society museum and archive collections.

Methodology

This thesis aims to provide a context for the Royal St Crispin collections held by Edinburgh Museums and Galleries and related material located in the holdings of Dundee Art Galleries and Museum, Glasgow Museums, McLean Museum and Art Gallery, National Museums of Scotland

⁹² E. J. Hobsbawm and Joan Wallach Scott, 'Political Shoemakers', *Past and Present* (Nov., 1980), pp. 86-114; *ibid.*, p. 96.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 109; Tim Oakes and Patricia Lynne Price (eds), *The Cultural Geography Reader* (Oxford, 2008), p. 26.

⁹⁴ Henry Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (Middlesex, 1963), p. 40.

⁹⁵ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London 1963), p. 545.

and Smith Art Galleries and Museum.⁹⁶ The study seeks to effect an understanding of the organisations who originated these collections by establishing their antecedents, origins and background and their purpose, organisation and operation. There is a focus on public celebration as exemplified in processions and displays; and on the private celebration of rituals shaped by shoemaker legends and traditions. This thesis attempts a construction of ritual procedure and an interpretation of objects in terms of symbolism and meaning. Using a thematic, analytical methodology the narrative provides an exemplar of the type of small, secret association which is rare in the history of clubs, associations and friendly societies. References to relevant objects are included to illustrate points in the text. Set within a timescale which spans the middle of the eighteenth century to the early years of the twentieth century, the argument is made that in central Scotland there remained an attachment to practices which can be traced to medieval guilds but which were reshaped and reinvented as traditions to an extent not previously acknowledged. The organisations themselves reflected the changes in social attitudes which occurred throughout the nineteenth century but remained committed to their origins and ultimately failed to adapt successfully enough to enable their survival. The Crispin culture was more complex and long-lasting than has been credited in the historiography.

The exposition relies mainly on archival material previously unknown to historians and antiquaries or unpublished. The existence of the fourteen books of records of the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Society is unrecorded. The condition of the material is variable, shows signs of water damage and is incomplete, with several years unaccounted. There are no books of ritual. The existence of other St Crispin archival material and of the records pertaining to shoemakers was revealed by reading Ian MacDougall's catalogue of Scottish labour records and searching the digital catalogues of the National Archives of Scotland and the National Library of Scotland.⁹⁷ Further electronic searches of local authority archives discovered Crispin records in those of Angus and North Lanark – 8 documents of the Montrose St Crispin Lodge and one

⁹⁶ Appendix I.

⁹⁷ Ian MacDougall, *A Catalogue of some Labour Records in Scotland and some Scots records outside Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1978).

exercise book belonging to the Airdrie lodge.⁹⁸ Dundee Libraries also hold a collection of 18 items mainly from Dundee Lodge No 19.

An examination of this material held in national and local authority archives and libraries revealed something of the extent of the operation of the Royal St Crispin Society and its branch lodges. The records, however, are far from complete especially with regard to ritual and there may be more material as yet undetected. Many secrets were uncovered, however, by piecing together the extant handwritten fragments preserved in Angus Archives and Dundee Library. Such 'scripts' as remain are fragile and fragmentary, but by transcribing, comparing and amalgamating the disparate elements, some idea can be gained of initiation ceremonies, thereby confirming, on a small scale, Cordery's assertion that 'published and manuscript rituals will almost certainly become widely known once scholars deliberately work to unearth them in archives and libraries.'⁹⁹ Similarly, by comparing the benefit society rule books (mainly located in NAS) submitted to the designated authorities by various lodges throughout the nineteenth century, the development of what came to be called 'Crispianism' emerges, whereas this is hardly apparent in Edinburgh records.

Some of the narrative has been informed by a reading of eighteenth- and nineteenth- century newspapers and antiquarian texts which enabled the collation of numbers and physical locations of St Crispin processions and anniversary celebrations throughout Britain – far more than have been credited.¹⁰⁰ There may have been others given that the growth of newspapers in Scotland was slower than that of England in the eighteenth century; by 1789 there were 10 Scottish newspapers, 3 of which were published outside Glasgow and Edinburgh.¹⁰¹ Press accounts of processions and articles in almanacs such as Chambers' *The Book of Days* make no acknowledgement

⁹⁸ Scottish Archive Network, <<http://scan.org.uk>>.

⁹⁹ Cordery, *British Friendly Societies*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ Appendix 2. Works such as Samuel Tymms, *East Anglian, or Notes and Queries on subjects connected with the counties* (Lowestoft and London, 1864) and Charles Mackie, *Norfolk Annals: A Chronological Record of Remarkable Events in the 19th century 1801-1850*, vol. I (Norwich, 1901) have helped to identify English processions.

¹⁰¹ Whatley, *Scottish Society*, p. 170; Bob Harris, 'Scotland's Newspapers, the French Revolution and Domestic Radicalism (c. 1789-1794)', *The Scottish Historical Review*, vol. LXXXIV, 1, no. 217 (April, 2005), p. 39.

of the Royal St Crispin Societies and attribute them generally to shoemakers.¹⁰²

Identification of the existence and location of St Crispin artefacts came from communication with relevant curators and archivists in Scottish institutions. No previous work had been undertaken to establish the relevance of the artefacts and records to those in other collections. Nor has there been any interpretation of the significance of these objects which are generally classified simply as pertaining to the Order of St Crispin. Curatorial research in Dundee in the 1980s had uncovered newspaper accounts of the painting of the frieze, the mounting of some processions and the discovery in a shop cellar in 1954, of a chest containing objects and documents relating to the Lodge Royal St Crispin No 19; but nothing further beyond the apparent association with shoemakers.¹⁰³ In contrast no evidence of equivalent St Crispin Societies in England has emerged to date from searches of other electronic resources such as those of the National Archives or British newspapers.¹⁰⁴ Communication with Northampton Museums, holders of the largest collection of shoe heritage in the world, established their unawareness of any St Crispin Society, although they do possess a union banner of 1910 which features St Crispin.¹⁰⁵ What connection there might be between museum collections and those of local and national archives – minute and account books, friendly society rules and trade incorporation records – remained unexplored. This thesis aims to establish that connection through a series of thematic chapters which link archival and material evidence to demonstrate key stages in the history of the Royal St Crispin societies. Chapters 2, 4, 6 and 7 examine the origins, organisation, development and demise of the Edinburgh Society and its associated branches. Chapter 3 analyses the processions and chapter 5 interprets the ritual.

That the Edinburgh magistrates acknowledged an acceptance of the tradition of the Crispin procession was indicated in 1820 when they allowed

¹⁰² Robert Chambers, (ed.), *The Book of Days* (Edinburgh, 1869).

¹⁰³ *Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser*, 20 October 1822; *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 25 October 1866, *Dundee Courier*, 11 March 1954.

¹⁰⁴ <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>>; digital newspaper collections accessed through the University of St Andrews or the National Library of Scotland.

¹⁰⁵ Image in June Swann, *Shoemaking* (Risborough, 2003), p. 2003.

the event to take place even after a lapse of 44 years and against a background of the suppression of radical protests in the west of Scotland a few months earlier. Chapter 2 attests that the attachment of shoemakers to their patrons survived the religious Reformation of the mid-sixteenth century. This enduring legacy owed something to adaptation and invention as witness the metamorphosis of the image of the saint into the physical personage of 'King', with the recurring spectacle of King Crispin processions along eighteenth-century streets. The frequency and location of these parades is evidenced in a variety of towns ranging from Turriff to Bury St Edmunds. The eighteenth-century celebration of St Crispin's Day seems to have been the province of journeymen shoemakers, certainly in Edinburgh, and is an indication of their ability to organise a visual representation of their sense of identity and links with their cultural past. In examining the phenomena in Edinburgh, the presence of a St Crispin Society emerges as distinct from individual journeymen shoemaker societies. In turn, this organisation was unconnected to the Royal St Crispin Society created in 1817 as a fraternal and convivial lodge dedicated to the memorable Crispin. This society which should be viewed in the context of other associations founded earlier – for example the Freemasons and the Ancient Society of Gardeners – organised the 1820 Edinburgh procession, had a tripartite structure and was sufficiently charismatic to recruit shoemaker groups in other towns as branches.

As the Crispins deemed the procession to be of symbolic importance until the end of the nineteenth century, chapter 3 traces its origins and significance. Chambers' use of the word indicates a public presentation of historical or legendary characters which in the case of eighteenth-century shoemakers meant a procession. In the later medieval period a variety of dramatic forms could be employed and scholars debate the mechanisms whereby the craft guilds portrayed biblical stories or saints' legends either in tableau format or through plays with spoken dialogue.¹⁰⁶ In Withington's

¹⁰⁶ For example, Lawrence M. Clopper, *Drama, Play and Game* (Chicago, 2001); Carolyn Coulson-Grigsby 'Medieval Drama: Myths of Evolution, Pageant Wagons and (lack of) Entertainment Value' in Stephen J. Harris and Byron L. Grisby (eds), *Misconceptions about the Middle Ages*, <http://www.the-orb.net/non_spec/missteps/ch5.html>[21 June 2012]. Clifford Davidson, *Festivals and Plays in Late Medieval Britain* (Aldershot, 2007)

definition, technically the scaffoldings on which the mystery plays were performed were usually called pageants and loosely the term was also applied to the wooden stage, the text of the drama and the theatrical display.¹⁰⁷ Processions with the allegory or symbolism expressed by riders or marchers are really pageants. The chapter suggests reasons for the use of the procession by associational groups before presenting some interpretation for the main figures appearing in Scottish shoemaker processions and those organised by the St Crispin Societies. Reference is also made to such similar events as have been found to date elsewhere, although some nineteenth-century commentators seemed to consider the attachment to King Crispin as being particularly Scottish.¹⁰⁸ The compilation of characters and location of their appearances is given in appendix 3.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the Royal St Crispin Society appears to have suffered a decline especially after the failure of its friendly society function in 1851. The early enthusiasm generated by the founder members in Edinburgh and those of lodges such as Linlithgow and Montrose had waned. Although there is little evidence of the state of the branch lodges they seemed to have been experiencing difficulties in maintaining numbers and any public profile, perhaps reflecting the general economic situation. In Dundee, for example, signs of depression manifested themselves in the late 1830s with a downturn in the demand for linen and a consequent rise in unemployment.¹⁰⁹ Chapter 4 recounts the revival of what is designated in the records as 'the Grand Lodge' from around 1860. There followed two decades of recruitment and the holding of a number of annual conferences of the branch lodges where attempts were made to standardise ritual and regalia and evidence of dissatisfaction with the role of Edinburgh as the Grand Lodge began to emerge. Applications for charters came from towns in the west of Scotland such as Greenock, Wishaw and Glasgow which were experiencing an expansion in population and in an industrially-based economy.¹¹⁰ Usually

¹⁰⁷ Robert Withington, *English Pageantry; An Historical Outline*, vol.1 (Cambridge, Mass., 1918), pp. xvi-xvii.

¹⁰⁸ For example, John Timbs, *Something for everybody (and a garland for the year)* (London, 1866), p. 113.

¹⁰⁹ Whatley, Swinfen and Smith, *Life and Times of Dundee*, p. 140.

¹¹⁰ Knox, *Industrial Nation*, pp. 85-90.

these were preceded by requests for loans of costumes and regalia for processions –possibly an indication of a need to publicise a traditional craft identity within an increasingly industrialised environment. This period also witnessed the formation of another Edinburgh St Crispin friendly society and the propagation of the concept of Crispianism as brotherly love, unity of purpose and provision of support to the needy as apparently demonstrated by St Crispin himself. Within the limits of scarcity of archival evidence the operation of the individual branch lodges is examined in the years leading to the breakdown of the Grand Lodge in 1882.

The central part played by ritual and the importance of regalia to members is demonstrated in chapter 5. Much of the nature and format of ceremonies remains secret and there are no extant ritual books but it has been possible, by extracting and assembling all references to ritual from the Edinburgh record books, to attempt some description of what these might have been. Within the records of the Montrose Royal St Crispin Society and those relating to Dundee Lodge No 19 are handwritten, apparently unconnected lines of dialogue relating to the initiation rite of the second order, the Knights of St Hugh. By transcribing the notes and assembling them together, something of the ritual script has emerged. Some sense of the operation of the third order is gained from a condensed version of the ritual for initiation to the Court of Masters found among the Dundee manuscripts and a copy of the rules of the Masters of the Montrose lodge.¹¹¹ Many of the objects held within the Edinburgh and Dundee collections relate to the initiation rites of the second and third orders and their symbolism exhibits a knowledge of Celtic mythology and legend as well as shoemaking tradition on the part of their originators. There is also a borrowing from the iconography of freemasonry and much of the explanation offered in this chapter relies on interpretations by freemason writers of images and the use of alphabetical letters to convey messages.¹¹²

¹¹¹ DL, 418(7); AA, MS502/2.

¹¹² Albert G. Mackey, *An Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry and Kindred Sciences*, 2 vols (New York, 1929); C. Dyer, *Symbolism in Freemasonry* (London, 1976); Dan Weinbren, 'Beneath the All-Seeing Eye: Fraternal Order and Friendly Societies' Banners in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2006), pp. 167-191.

In the later nineteenth century the St Crispin Societies of Scotland placed great emphasis on the longevity of their 'Order', founded they claimed, in the third century A.D. by St Crispin. Chapter 6 looks at the changed ethos of the St Crispin network established after 1882 as an elected lodge following the financial insolvency of the Edinburgh society. During the decade the public profile highlighted the friendly society function and respectability of the family soiree and lodge lecture rather than tavern conviviality thus reflecting the social effects of the national temperance campaigns and the public virtues of thrift and sobriety, those 'foundations of the middle-and-"respectable" working-class culture'.¹¹³ The same problems remained, namely those of recruitment of new members, the collapse of many of the branch lodges and the reluctance of the survivors to play a more active role. By the 1890s the Grand Lodge no longer seemed to be functioning with only two branch lodges, Stirling and Falkirk, still in operation. Edinburgh itself struggled to continue but managed to revive and grow during the 1880s and to form another friendly society – that of the Edinburgh Royal Ancient Order of St Crispin – in 1891. By the beginning of the twentieth century the society had again declined and in 1904 declared the dissolution of its benefit function, there being insufficient funds to meet sickness payments. The analysis in this chapter of the declining years concludes with the donation of the society's artefacts and records to the Edinburgh Town Council Museum.

The Royal St Crispin Society in its various forms operated for more than 87 years and it seems to have carried on with lodge meetings after 1904 and even after its donation of artefacts and records to the city museum in 1909. Officially, however, it was dissolved and chapter 7 proposes some possible explanations for its final failure. In spite of the later emphasis on benefit society function, it remained what it had always been – a small fraternal 'secret' lodge with ritual and regalia relating to shoemaker custom and legend which operated within the same urban space throughout the period of its existence. Though at the end of its era this lodge met in public halls or a temperance hotel rather than the taverns and its own St Crispin Hall of the early years, the location of these remained the High Street of Edinburgh.

¹¹³ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, p. 291.

Similarly the Crispins themselves came from the central area in, and adjacent to, the Old Town. Few recruits domiciled in the expanding areas of nineteenth-century Edinburgh and no branches were established in the suburbs unlike other rival orders such as the Foresters or Oddfellows. Attached to a culture which had become increasingly remote to the shoemakers of the early twentieth century and by this time with a high proportion of members of other occupations, the Royal St Crispin organisation could not compete with other larger associational groups or with the increasing variety of other leisure pursuits available. As this thesis demonstrates, the association of shoemakers – the Sons of Crispin – with their patron saint was of centuries' long standing and this survived the religious changes of the mid sixteenth-century to emerge in the eighteenth century as a statement of identity and pride for journeymen shoemakers. The celebration of St Crispin's day continued in Scotland, England and Europe in the nineteenth century but in Edinburgh the cult was reshaped by the Royal St Crispin Society in the form of a 'secret' association with three orders. This proved to be attractive to other urban shoemakers who petitioned for grants of charters to enable them to practice the ritual. The St Crispin lodges functioned with varying degrees of success for most of the nineteenth century, mounting more processions than has been recognised, until the disappearance of all but Falkirk which survived until the 1960s.

2: The Memorable Crispin

It will be difficult to find a trader from the wealthiest merchant to the humblest Son of S. Crispin, who has not his club, his society or his incorporation, calculated to promote the interests of his calling, and create a spirit of union, intelligence and cooperation.¹

The Crispin Celebration of 1820

In October 1820 William Cameron, better known as Hawkie, a gangrel (vagrant) chapman, limped his way to Edinburgh, where he:

next published for a “Crispin” procession in Edinburgh the account of the “Ancient King Crispin” (patron saint of the shoemakers), in twelve pages of six-line poetry... I prohibited the printer from putting his name on the title page, for the criers not to find out where to get it. I went out, and started opposite Bank Street. I was getting twopence a copy, as fast as I could take in the money, for about an hour; when, on a sudden, the sale stopped, and I saw persons passing with copies in their hands. I turned round, and saw three criers selling them at the half of what I was crying. I put my books in my pocket and went to remonstrate with the printer. He said, “He could not help it”.....This circumstance brought Mr Menzies ten pounds that day, and the day of the procession.²

What Hawkie was selling might well have been an undated and anonymous poem entitled *History of King Crispin or The Royal Craftsman! A Poem*, printed by Mr Menzies who was in business in the Edinburgh Lawnmarket from 1812 to 1836.³ The epic tale recounts the legends of saints Hugh, Crispin and Crispianus and includes such gems as:

But let them keep one holiday,
Whereon no work is done
Though wi' the sun they rise to pray,
The night maun end wi' fun.
Let all invoke their saunts and swear
They never shall be sober,
While they ha'e either guid's or gear
To drink upon October
The twenty-fifth!⁴

The day's events caused great interest, no doubt due to the efforts of Hawkie and his rivals and to the posters advertising ‘The ancient and modern history of King Crispin, with a particular account of the plan and order of the grand procession, time of meeting etc’ (**Fig. 6**).⁵ One of these posters was sent in a letter by W. Kerr to F. Freeling in London with the news that:

¹ *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, 4 August 1823.

² *Hawkie The Autobiography of a Gangrel*, ed. John Strathesk (Glasgow, 1888), p. 100.

³ NLS, *Scottish Book Trade Index*, p. 948.

⁴ Anon., *History of King Crispin or The Royal Craftsman! A Poem* (Edinburgh, undated).

⁵ NLS, L.C.1268.

There has been an immense crowd thronging the streets all this day in consequence of the enclosed. The procession just ended but were blocked in the Exchange for an hour until liberated by a Guard of soldiers. All quiet hitherto but the populace ill-disposed. Conflict expected but trust not.⁶

Kerr was referring to the chaos that had ensued when due to the density of the spectators, the Crispin procession, en route from the Palace of Holyroodhouse, came to a halt at the Cross opposite the Exchange (now the City Chambers). The participants took refuge in the Exchange until 'a guard of the 13th. foot' was dispatched from the Castle to rescue King Crispin and his retinue and allow them to continue via the Mound and various New Town streets. When the procession ended at the Calton Convening-Room in Waterloo Place to partake of a sumptuous dinner, 'the multitude quietly dispersed, and we have heard of no accident having occurred.'⁷ Accounts of the day's events appeared in newspapers published in areas of the country as far apart as Aberdeen and Cornwall.⁸ *The Scotsman*, *Caledonian Mercury* and the *Scots Magazine* moreover reported this procession to be the first in Edinburgh for 44 years.⁹ As will be seen later, the day's events were to prove significant for the Crispin Societies of the period after 1860, but while Edinburgh may not have witnessed King Crispin in full splendour since 1776, this was not the case elsewhere.

The survival of St Crispin Day celebrations

There is no evidence in England in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the shoemakers' devotion to Crispin and Crispianus ceased, at least in displays of conviviality and in plays and poems celebrating shoemakers and St Crispin's Day; quite the reverse. As Henry V says in Shakespeare's play, circa 1599:

This day is call'd the feast of Crispian.....
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered.¹⁰

⁶ NAS, RH 2/4/227, *Home Office: Domestic Entry Books, Scotland*, 25 October 1820.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Aberdeen Journal*, 8 November 1820; *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 4 November 1820.

⁹ 28 October, 26 October and December 1820 respectively.

¹⁰ William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act IV, scene 3.

Chapman argues that the association of St Crispin with the iconic King Henry V was a reason for the continuing popularity of the feast day.¹¹ A play based on the saints' legend was performed before London shoemakers on 25 October each year during Elizabeth's reign.¹² The Lichfield Guild continued to appoint its two wardens on the feast day of the saints at least until 1617; and the Wells Cordwainers' Guild elected its office bearers on St. Crispin's Day.¹³ 25 October remains as a Black Letter Saints' Day in the Calendar of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer (1662). Although the forces of Puritanism denounced or banned festivities, pageants, Whitsun plays and midsummer shows, in Chester in 1600 the guilds prepared festival pageants according to traditional scripts: and St George's Day pageants, banished from the Anglican calendar after the Reformation, were reintroduced in 1610.¹⁴

In preparation for Queen Anne's visit to the city in 1613, the Mayor of Wells ordered the masters of every guild to prepare shows. The cordwainers

presented St Crispin and (sic) both of them sonnes to a kinge and the youngest a shoemaker who married his Masters daughter they alsoe presented a morrice daunce and a streamer with their armes.¹⁵

An entry in the Wells cordiners' accounts for 1642 states that:

the whole historie of Krispi and Krispianie was shoune of twelfe master shoemakers and thirtie and four Jurniemen.¹⁶

Props for the show included the shoemakers' arms, the streamer and the Gilley Laste and Staff, the Lady Ursula's crown, the master shoemaker's staff and arms, jackets for Crispin and his brother, one gorget and five jackets for five footmen.¹⁷ Gone is the French legend of martyrdom and enter two new characters in the form of the Lady Ursula and her child's nurse, both played by shoemakers' daughters. Either the cordiners of Wells were using a traditional

¹¹ A. A. Chapman, 'Whose St. Crispin's Day is it?: Shoemaking, holiday making and the politics of memory in early modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 54 (winter, 2001), pp. 1467-1494.

¹² C. H. Waterland Mander, *Descriptive and Historical Account of the Guild of Cordwainers of the City of London* (London, 1931), p. 11.

¹³ M. W. Greenslade (ed.), *A History of the County of Stafford: Lichfield*, vol.14 (Oxford, 1990), pp. 131-134; Stokes, 'The Wells Cordwainers Show', p. 340.

¹⁴ Carl B. Eastabrook, 'Ritual, Space and Authority in Seventeenth-Century English Cathedral Cities', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 32, no. 4 (spring, 2002), p. 610.

¹⁵ Stokes, 'The Wells Cordwainers Show', pp. 332-3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 337. The 'Gilley Laste' was a model of a shoe with no tongue and crossed laces carried on top of a staff.

English version of the Crispin story, perhaps of long standing; or they had been influenced by Deloney's alternative version in his *The Gentle Craft*.

Deloney's purpose in writing his stories was to celebrate 'the gentle craft' and to explain the origin and meaning of expressions such as 'St Hugh's bones' and 'a shoemaker's son is a prince born'.¹⁸ As shown in chapter 1 the term 'gentle craft' was certainly in use in the 1590s. Both Robert Greene and Thomas Nash employed it in 1592; and in 1594 Robert Wilson in *The Cobblers prophesie*, talked of his 'old trade of the gentle craft'.¹⁹ Deloney suggests that the sources for his narrative were 'ancient writers, our English chronicles and tradition or fame which liveth in the mouths of many men to this day'.²⁰ In the story of Sir Hugh and the Lady Winifred Sir Hugh becomes the son of a King of Powis (Welshpool) who falls in love with Winifred daughter of the King of Tegina (Flintshire). However Winifred is determined to devote herself to a religious life and she retreats to live beside a springing well. The rejected Sir Hugh then travels abroad and after several adventures returns to Britain where he becomes the companion of a journeyman cordwainer from whom he learns the craft of shoemaking. Rebuffed again by Winifred he is next imprisoned for being a Christian. Shoemakers look after him and in return for their kindness he calls them 'Gentlemen of the Gentle Craft', making for them a song which includes the lines:

The Gentle Craft is fittest then,
For poore distressed Gentlemen:²¹

The journeymen when they hear the song and the title bestowed on them, 'ingraued the same so deeply in their minds, that to this day it could neuer be razed out'.²²

Winifred, having also been incarcerated for being Christian, makes the choice to be bled to death. Her blood is caught in several basins, mixed with poison and given to Hugh to drink; which he does while toasting all the kind

¹⁸ Deloney, *The Gentle Craft*, Barker (ed.), p. xxix.

¹⁹ Robert Greene, *A quip for an upstart courtier* (London, 1592); Thomas Nash, *Pierce Penilesse his supplication to the diuell* (London, 1592); Robert Wilson, *The Cobblers prophesie* (London, 1594).

²⁰ Thomas Deloney, *The Gentle Craft* (London, 1637), pp. 3, 60, <<http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk>>[30 October 2010].

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Yeomen of the Gentle Craft. He also tells the spectator shoemakers that he has nothing to leave them but his bones.

There with the last draught he finished his life, whose dead carkasse after hanged up where the fowls devoured his flesh, and the young Princesse was contemptuously buried by the Well where she had so long lived. Then had he the title of Saint Hugh given him, and she of Saint Winifred, by which termes they are both so called to this day.²³

After a while some passing journeymen shoemakers steal his bones and convert them into tools.

My friends, I pray you list to me,
And marke what St. Hughs bones shall be.
First a Drawer and a Dresser,
two Wedges, a more and a lesser:
A pretty blocke three inches high,
in fashion sqared like a Die.....
Our Apron is the Shrine ,
to wrap these bones in:
Thus shrowd we Saint Hugh
in gentle Lambes skinne.
And never after did they travell without these tools on their backs: which ever since were called Saint Hughes bones.²⁴

In France, in contrast, a shoemaker called his kit his Saint-Crépin.²⁵ The St Hugh of *The Gentle Craft* is pure fiction. The canonised St Hugh was Bishop of Lincoln in the twelfth century, his saint day being 17 November, later replaced as a holiday by the accession of Elizabeth I. There was also a French saint of the same name living in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

An alternative version of the origin of the term 'the gentle craft' was given around the same time with the printing in 1599 of *A Pleasant Conseyted Comedie of George a Greene Pinnar of Wakefield*, a play by Robert Green. As well as shoemakers, characters include James King of Scotland and Edward, King of England. Here it is the monarch who bestows the title on the shoemakers. The crucial lines run:

Mary, because you have drunke with the king
And the king hath so graciously pledged you,
You shall no more be called shoemakers
But you and yours to the worlds ende

²³ Ibid., p. 20.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁵ William Shepard Walsh, *Curiosities of Popular Customs and of Rites, Ceremonies, Observances and miscellaneous antiquities* (Philadelphia, 1897), p. 294.

Shall be called the trade of the gentle craft.²⁶

As well as inspiring Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, Deloney's work also provided William Rowley with source material for his play *A Shoemaker a Gentleman* which may have been first performed in 1609 and of which only the 1638 edition seems to have survived.²⁷ The main plot is taken from the Crispin story, with that of St Hugh adding another strand, intermingled with miraculous incidents and the setting of ancient Britain. The 1638 printer, J. Okes dedicates the work to 'honest and High-spirited Gentlemen of the never decaying Art, called the Gentle Craft', knowing that although written many years since it still remains popular. He attests to the fact that the cordwainers celebrate the 'Feast of Crispine and Crispianus' with a great deal of ceremony, keeping it as a Holyday, feasting and entertaining friends and neighbours. As with Deloney Sir Hugh drinks the poisoned blood, calls the shoemakers 'gentlemen of the Gentle craft' and bequeaths them his bones. The shoemakers in turn call him not Sir but St Hugh: 'St George for England, and St Hugh for the Shoemakers'. The bones are named as tools such as drawer, dresser, wedges, rubbing-stone, pricking-awl, stirrups; and a journeyman will be fined a gallon of wine if he 'travel without these tooles, now call'd St. Hughs bones at his back'.²⁸

It would be interesting to know which version of the tales the villagers of Carlton in Yorkshire performed in 1662 when Sir Miles Stapelton paid them ten shillings for an enactment of 'The Gentle Craft'; and what the performances were like at London's Smithfield Fair which, by 1700, was no longer dealing 'in humble Stories of Crispin and Crispianus, of Whittington's Cat, with the merry conceits of King Edward the Fourth and the Tanner of Tamworth'.²⁹ Thomas Frost, describing the May fairs held on the field at the hospital of St James, in his *Old Showmen of London*, confesses that:

I have been able to trace only two shows to this fair in 1702, namely, Barnes and Finley's, and Miller's, which stood opposite to the former and presented 'an excellent

²⁶ Robert Green, *A Pleasant Conseyted Comedie of George a Greene Pinnar of Wakefield* (London, 1599), p. 22, <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com>>[30 October 2010].

²⁷ NLS, H.3.d.41; Mf.99, reel 936, no. 8.

²⁸ William Rowley, *A Shoemaker a Gentleman* (London, 1638), ed. Charles Wharton Stork (Philadelphia, 1910), pp. 243-4.

²⁹ Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun*, p. 60; Monsieur de Voiture, *Familiar and Courtly letters* (London, 1700), p. 187.

droll called Crispin and Crispianus, or a shoe-maker prince, with the best machines, singing and dancing ever yet in the fair.³⁰

William King writing in 1709 about strolling players suggested that performing Crispin and Crispianus might be troublesome for the actors. They could:

ever borrow their Tools from any Journey-Man Shoo-Maker, but then the Robes and decorations of the Queens and Nobles, were forc'd to be carry'd up and down in Knapsacks.³¹

Crispin was defined in 1699 as:

shoemaker, from the saint of that Name, their Patron; Crispin's Holy-day, ev'ry Monday in the Year, but more particularly the Twentyfifth of October, whereon the whole Fraternity fail not to lay their Hearts in soak³²

and an English dictionary of 1677 denoted 'St Crispin's lance' as an awl.³³

In fact the identification of St Crispin with the shoemaking craft continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in both England and Scotland. At Carlisle, for example, in 1833, 'a gallant son of St Crispin made his elopement, taking with him his neighbour's wife'.³⁴ In Crieff, in 1851, a 'worthy son of Crispin' had to be carried home by 'a number of its cross legged fraternity'; and an article on young people guising in the Canongate, Edinburgh, in 1888, suggested that 'Tradition seems to carry them back in their song to some local son of St Crispin designated *Blinkin'Johnnie the cobler*'.³⁵ Yet by the mid nineteenth century, as will be seen in chapter 4, an understanding of the legends and traditions of the shoemaking craft was fading fast as mass production revolutionised ways of working.

St. Crispin's Day amongst the old shoemakers was an occasion of much ceremony and festivity, but it is now scarcely more than a memory in the trade – a circumstance not to be regretted if the Scotch saying has good foundation, namely, "The twenty-fifth of October sees ne'er a souter sober."³⁶

Another indication of the continuing importance of the patron saints in the shoemaking culture is the number of songs and poems written in their honour and extolling the worth of shoemakers. At the end of his story of Crispin and Crispianus, Thomas Deloney provided shoemakers with a song for the celebration of their patrons on 25 October. This was subsequently printed

³⁰ Thomas Frost, *The Old Showmen and the old London Fairs* (London, 1875), p. 77.

³¹ William King, *Miscellanies in prose and verse* (London, 1709), p. 351.

³² *A new dictionary of the canting crew in its several tribes of gypsies, beggars, thieves, cheats etc.* (London, 1699), p. 25, <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com>>[15 December 2010].

³³ Elisha Coles, *An English Dictionary* (London, 1677), p. 35.

³⁴ *The Scotsman*, 6 March 1833.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 20 December 1851, 29 September 1888.

³⁶ *The Leeds Mercury*, 27 August 1881.

separately and it inspired numbers of other St Crispin night songs usually sung to well-known tunes. Richard Rigby, for example, composed *The Shoemaker's Triumph, shewing how Royal Princes, Sons of Kings, Lords and great Commanders have been Shoo-makers of old*, to the tune of *The Evening Ramble* for a General Assembly of Shoo-makers on 25 October 1695.³⁷ And Henry Playfair invited readers in 1709 to:

Celebrate Crispin with Bumpers and Songs,
And They that drink foul may it bitter their tongues:
Here's Two in a hand, and let no one deny 'em,
Since Crispin in youth was a Seat's-man as I am.³⁸

In Dublin Robert Ashton wrote a grandiose *Historical Poem in Honour of the Loyal Society of Journeymen Shoemakers* for their dinner at the Bull's Head on 25 October 1727, mingling ancient heroes with:

How CRISPIN won the daughter of a King
Or How the glorious Martyr brave St.HUGH,
Embrac'd the shining Art to make a shoe³⁹

ending in a loyal pledge to George II and Queen Caroline.

St Crispin's Day in Eighteenth-century Scotland

As referenced in chapter 1, the earliest mention of St Crispin's Day in Edinburgh is in 1720 and from the late 1720s onwards there are a number of Edinburgh references to St Crispin. A broadside ballad of 8 May 1729, purporting to be a petition from the apprentice shoemakers of the West-Port for drink money, addressed the cordiners as 'Ye Sons of Old Crispin, a Saint and a King', implying the best of both traditions.⁴⁰ Less complimentary, a broadside lampoon of a Jacobite officer trapped during the blockade of Edinburgh Castle in 1745 includes the lines:

Fam'd Crispin's tawny Sons, you swarthy Race,
Who whistle to the Awl in evr'y Place⁴¹

The following year on 25 October the journeymen shoemakers of Aberdeen made a grand procession in respect of St Crispin's Day, complete with the

³⁷ Richard Rigby, *The Shooe-maker's triumph* (London, 1695), <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com>>[30 October 2009].

³⁸ Henry Playford, *Wit and Mirth: or pills to purge melancholy*, (London, 1709), p. 17.

³⁹ Robert Ashton, *An Historical Poem in Honour of the Loyal Society of Journeymen Shoemakers*, (Dublin, 1727), <<http://callisto.ggsrv.com>>[29 January 2010].

⁴⁰ NLS, Ry.111.a.10(075), *Worshipful Cordners* (Edinburgh, 1729).

⁴¹ NLS, S. 302.b. 2(120), *The Blockade of Edinburgh Castle* (Edinburgh, 1745).

'King, Knights, Pages, Lords, drums and music and some of Brigadier Fleming's men'; all of which was followed by a grand entertainment and another procession.⁴² As no comment was made by the newspaper that this was an unusual event, or that the King was Crispin, there was an assumption that the readers would know this.

On 26 October 1739 the *Caledonian Mercury* had reported a similar event in Edinburgh. This appears to be the earliest newspaper record found of a Crispin procession in the city, although the newspaper collections of both the NLS and City of Edinburgh Libraries are incomplete.⁴³ Crispin processions will be analysed in more depth later, but there are some points to be made at this stage. As in Aberdeen, this was a procession of journeymen shoemakers who accompanied a richly dressed Crispin, preceded by wardens and hautboys, through the Canongate and suburbs. The journeymen wore 'a cockade with the Crown and Cutting knife on it'.⁴⁴ The crown and cutting knife logo seems unique to Scotland and appears on armorial bearings, minute books, banners, and insignia in many places. Examples include a loft plaque in Dalkeith, stone carvings in Pathhead, above Shoemakers' Land in Canongate, Edinburgh, St Crispin lodge regalia and a Turriff shoemakers' banner (**Figs 7-10**). Nineteenth-century collectors of traditions and customs commented on what they thought was the special royal emphasis of Scottish cordiners:

....there was a notion that Crispin was a Royal personage, and hence we find the shoemakers in Scotland at least, assuming for their arms a leather knife surmounted by a crown, and styling themselves the Royal craft.⁴⁵

No sign whatever of crown or cutting knife appears in the arms of the Worshipful Company of Cordwainers of London for example; only goats' heads, a reference to the soft leather for which Cordoba was famed.⁴⁶

Several thousands of the populace, according to the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, watched the shoemakers' parade in 'honour of their Tutelar St Crispin' on 26 October 1741. This seems to have been an altogether more

⁴² *General London Evening Mercury*, 13 November 1746.

⁴³ An online search of the British Library's newspaper collection has not revealed any earlier account.

⁴⁴ *Caledonian Mercury*, 26 October 1739.

⁴⁵ Timbs, *Something for everybody*, p. 113.

⁴⁶ For an image see <<http://www.cordwainers.org/history2.aspx>>.

elaborate affair with regard to King Crispin's costume, the number of his attendants and the accompanying band of music. 'The colours came after having the image of Crispin taking the measure of Princess Ursula's foot.'⁴⁷ This depiction appeared on later shoemaker banners, often with an adapted first line from chapter seven of the Song of Solomon in the King James translation of the Bible: 'How beautiful are thy feet with shoes O Prince's daughter!' A similar banner is depicted in the frieze of the shoemakers' procession in the McManus (**Fig.11**). The Souters' loft in the parish church of Selkirk also displayed this episode from *The Gentle Craft*.⁴⁸ The newspaper commented on its being 'one of the gayest Processions that had been seen here for a long Time'.⁴⁹ The scale of this celebration is no doubt due to the agreement that different groups of journeymen had made with each other for commemorating St Crispin's Day and this will be considered in the next chapter.

The press reported subsequent Edinburgh processions in 1742, 1743, 1745, 1754, 1760, 1763, 1771, 1772 and 1776, but no more until 1820. There is no report for 1757, the year in which, according to the biographical sketch accompanying a portrait of Orlando Hart, there was a disputed election. Hart, a future Deacon of the Incorporation of Cordiners of Edinburgh, was chosen to be King Crispin, but an opposing faction crowned its candidate also, and so two kings reputedly walked in the same procession.⁵⁰ In some years descriptions of processions are more fulsome than others. The 1772 *Courant*, for example, repeats the account of the previous year. Participants are usually described as 'the journeymen shoemakers of this city', but sometimes apprentices are added and they parade through the 'City' or 'City and Liberties', or 'City and suburbs' or 'neighbourhood'. In the press accounts of 1749 King Crispin is described as 'the Representative of the ancient and famous Patron of their Trade'. In 1754 the *Caledonian Mercury* reported that the procession had begun at 11 o'clock from the Abbey (surely an indication

⁴⁷ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 26 October 1741.

⁴⁸ Alison Hay Dunlop, *Anent Old Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1890), p. 121.

⁴⁹ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 27 October 1741.

⁵⁰ John Kay, *Original Portraits with biographical details by H. Paton*, vol. I (Edinburgh, 1838), p. 223.

of the Canongate shoemakers' link with their pre-Reformation past); and 'when they entered the city the music bells were tuned up and played their usual March'. The account concludes:

And at Night when the parade was over, the Edinburgh and Canongate Societies repaired to their respective places of entertainment and celebrated the evening in the usual manner.

In 1771, 1772 and 1776 the Palace of Holyroodhouse (rather than the Abbey) is cited as the starting point for the procession. In 1776 King Crispin and a number of his principal officers went in coaches to the Palace from where they set out to the accompaniment of a regiment band stationed in the Castle.

The first poem written in Edinburgh in honour of St Crispin's Day appears to be that for 25 October 1763, penned by 'Claudero, Son of Nimrod the Mighty Hunter', alias James Wilson.

We still bear in mind
And show to mankind,
Our loyalty by a procession,
To Crispin the great,
Who left kingly state,
And liv'd in a shoemaker's station.
Tyrannical vice,
In Royal disguise,
Did banish this Prince and his brother,
We received them fair,
And taught them with care,
And thus we became one another.⁵¹

There is more in this vain indicating a familiarity with the stories and sentiments of *The Gentle Craft*.

A poem written in Scots, however, appears to favour a distorted version of the French legend or may contain a veiled Jacobite reference. In a dialogue between *Taylor* and *Crispin*, the former exclaims:

King Crispin! – wale o' ilka loon,
That ever robb'd or rul'd a town:
I mind to hear, like some baboon
That apes its betters,
He claim'd pretentions to a crown,
And dee'd in fetters.⁵²

The Ayrshire poet David Sillar, on the other hand, writes *The Soutar's Prayer* in 1789 as if at the medieval altar of the saint:

O Great an' mighty King Crispianus,
Lang mayst thou live an' reign amang us;

⁵¹ Claudero, *Miscellanies in prose and verse, on several occasions* (Edinburgh, 1766), pp. 69-70.

⁵² Tim Broadgrin, *The Cabinet of Momus* (London, 1786), pp. 38-39.

An' we will faithful subjects prove,
 Whilst thou governs in peace an' love.
 Do thou unto us prove a father,
 An' mitigate the tax on leather:
 Provide us wi' guid working awls,
 Hemp, bristle, wax, lasts, tacks an' balls;
 But if that favour is deny'd us,
 Be pleas'd O Crispin, to provide us,
 Wi' health, food, strength, an sweet repose,
 Wi' sale and siller for our shoes.
 Wi' vain glory do thou thy sons comman':
 For without that thy kingdom canna stan'.⁵³

According to the nineteenth-century history of Kilmarnock where the above poem was published, there was a procession of shoemakers in the town in 1773 for which robes and other items were purchased. As well as King Crispin, a Lord Mayor, and Alderman, an Indian King and a Champion encased in a coat of mail appeared in the display although this might be the author's assumption gained from reading accounts of much later processions in Kilmarnock.⁵⁴ Novelist John Galt also recounts a King Crispin procession 'got up' by the Kilmarnock shoemakers for the gratification of the future Duchess of Portland and her sister when they were girls. This dates the event to before 1795 when the Duchess married.⁵⁵

The newspaper accounts of the processions in Edinburgh make no mention of a Champion which raises the question as to whether this is an omission or that no Champion was present. Journalists reporting the Crispin processions in future years made much of the appearance of the Champion. A satire on Archibald Cockburn, Sheriff of Mid Lothian in 1784, describes him on horseback bearing down on a mob at Canonmills, Edinburgh, 'brandishing like the champion of King Crispin on the 25th of October, his sword, instead of a whip'.⁵⁶ The 1777 St Crispin's Day horseback procession of shoemakers in Bury St Edmunds, however, included a character in 'coat of Mail', but this purported to be Crispianus attended by his troops.⁵⁷ The *Yorkshire Magazine* made no mention of a Champion in its account of the Gentle Craft's

⁵³ David Sillar, 'The Souter's Prayer to King Crispin' in *Poems* (Kilmarnock, 1789), p. 36.

⁵⁴ Archibald McKay, *The History of Kilmarnock* (Kilmarnock, 1858), p. 105.

⁵⁵ John Galt, *Autobiography*, vol.1 (London, 1833), p. 7.

⁵⁶ Jeremiah Jobson, *Historical Narrative of the Exploits of the Sheriff of Mid Lothian* (London, 1784), pp. 6-7.

⁵⁷ *MS Common Place Book*, quoted in Samuel Tymms, *East Anglian, or Notes and queries* (Lowestoft, 1864), p. 31; John Glyde, *The New Suffolk garland* (Ipswich, 1866), p. 280.

procession in 1786, but did include a queen.⁵⁸ Some nineteenth-century English and Irish sources mention Crispiana, sister of Crispin, but no Scottish references to this name have been found.

The celebration of St Crispin's Day, with or without processions, continued in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, notwithstanding the wars with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France.⁵⁹ In 1787 Mr Methven, a house painter, began recording a Dundee St Crispin procession in the form of a frieze completed around 1825 by Mr Harwood for the Cordiners' Room in the Trades Hall.⁶⁰ This is the earliest image of the pageant (**Fig. 12**). In Glasgow the unfortunate champion of King Crispin in the 1790 procession hired the 'armour' of William Wallace from Dumbarton Castle and was 'so chilled and overburdened' in the wearing of it through the streets of the city that he died soon afterwards.⁶¹ John Galt satirically compared the coronation of George IV most unfavourably with the Glasgow procession of 1818:

But this is not to be wondered at, considering how much more experience the craft have: they being in the practice of crowning and processing with King Crispin, according to law, every year... There was no Champion in the presence of his Sacred Majesty. Surely it was a great omission to leave him out. ... King George IV had but six pages – King Crispin had nine, bearing up his train....⁶²

Falkirk shoemakers had a garland of songs composed after their procession in 1796 and one of their number continued the St Crispin Day song tradition by producing a new composition for the 1814 parade:

King Crispin he did next come forth
In all his fine array
Attended by his royal court
Which grandeur did display;
The noble crown upon his brow
And robe with a long train;
Supported by a few young crafts
That it might not get a stain.⁶³

The Turriff Shoemakers Friendly Society celebrated St Crispin's day in 1808 with a march through the town, followed by dining and dancing. The fact that St Crispin's Day also coincided with the anniversary of the accession of

⁵⁸ *Yorkshire Magazine*, vol. 1 (1786), p. 395.

⁵⁹ See Appendix 2.

⁶⁰ *Dundee Courier and Argos*, 25 October 1866, 5 May 1874, 9 October 1875.

⁶¹ John D. Garrick, *Life of Sir William Wallace of Elderslie* (Edinburgh, 1830), p. 144.

⁶² John Galt, *The Steamboat* (Edinburgh, 1822), pp. 208-9.

⁶³ T. Fairman Ordish, 'St Crispin', *The Antiquary*, vol. VI (October, 1882), p. 142.

George III did not escape notice; the *Leeds Mercury*, for example, commenting in 1809 that 'the shoemakers will have a double holiday on the ensuing Jubilee'.⁶⁴ In Norwich in 1813 the journeymen shoemakers apparently revived their patron saint's festival by parading the streets and celebrating, due to the 'liberality of their masters'.⁶⁵ Employer contribution is also suggested by an information panel in Northampton Shoe Museum which states that 'Every shoemaker who took part in the procession was given one shilling and sixpence on Saint Crispin's Day.'⁶⁶

The shoemakers had to exert considerable effort and ingenuity in the mounting of these spectacles, as was suggested by a spectator of the Stirling event in 1815:

The Champion was in mail, but most untastefully had a long coat under it, like the French Cuiraseurs. The mail was too tight at the neck and as his horse stared at the drawbridge of the Castle the shaking throatled him so much that he almost fainted – but he got on...The Ensigns and Officers had in general nothing about them, but a sash, gorget and any sword they could find – all the local Militia ones being in requisition....⁶⁷

The absence of Crispin processions in Edinburgh after 1776 – surprising given the examples of displays in other towns – may be due to the level of sustained cooperation required among the several distinct journeymen societies in the capital to organise such public events. Not until 1818 was an Edinburgh St Crispin's Day celebration reported in the press. The commemoration took the form of a dinner partaken in Waldie's Cross Keys Tavern, High Street, not by journeymen shoemakers but by 'the ancient Society of the Sons of St Crispin of Edinburgh and Leith'. The reporter was impressed with the apparent originality of the toast – 'May the manufactures of the sons of St Crispin be trod upon all over the world'.⁶⁸ He did not elaborate as to the identity of those proposing it. A mini procession in 1819, a foretaste of what was to come, did not warrant a mention in any newspaper. As described by a participant, his companions:

⁶⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, 14 October 1809; *Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser*, 21 October 1809. George III was the first British monarch to celebrate a Jubilee. Linda Coley has an account of this in *Britons* (London, 1992), pp. 222-3.

⁶⁵ Charles Mackie, *Norfolk Annals*, vol. 1 (Norwich, 1901), p. 110.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Albert V. Eason, "*Saint Crispin's Men*": *History of Northampton Shoemakers* (Northampton, 1994), p. 4.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Morris, *The Incorporation of Shoemakers of Stirling*, p. 20.

⁶⁸ *Caledonian Mercury*, 29 October 1818.

assembled in Br Stewarts Carrubers Close for the purpose of consecrating the new standards after which the Lodge walked in a procession with a display of colours to the Thistle lodge room where they partook of a plentiful dinner... When the cloth was removed and several appropriate toasts(sic) given from the chair...the Brethren as usual commenced their vocal(sic) performances which was exceedingly enlivened by the addition of instrumental musick provided by the occasion. The lodge was not shut till near 2 AM Oct 26 after which the Brethren concluded the meeting by joining in a hearty dance then broke up.⁶⁹

The organisation of St Crispin celebrations in Edinburgh

Notice of the forthcoming Edinburgh St Crispin procession of 1820 informed readers that a very grand parade would be mounted by the St Crispin Society.⁷⁰ What was this organisation and what role did it play in continuing the tradition of commemorating St Crispin? According to newspaper accounts from 1739 to 1776, cited earlier, the journeymen shoemakers of the city and suburbs mounted these processions in Edinburgh. This indicates a degree of coordination and unity of purpose among the craftsmen of the town, the burgh of Canongate and 'suburbs' of West Port, Portsburgh, Potterrow and Calton. In his paper on the Canongate cordiners Malcolm asserts that on 25 October they met in their Convening House where they elected one of their number as King Crispin, before marching through the bounds.⁷¹ However he cites no evidence for this. As he wrongly attributes Edinburgh City's collection of St Crispin regalia to the Canongate cordiners and incorrectly describes the champion's armour as that of the Black Prince, it appears that he has presented his assumptions as facts.

A report in the *Caledonian Mercury* for 2 April 1827 however, provides an insight into the kind of cooperation required for celebratory events. The description is of a centenary dinner held in Edinburgh in the Cordiners Hall, Potterrow, by the members of the 'Old Society of Journeymen Shoemakers of Edinburgh' and those of the 'Old Society of Journeymen Shoemakers of the Borough of Canongate'. Both societies claimed an institution date of 13 February 1727. Moreover:

The Old Regalia of Crispin, which used in former times to be so proudly displayed through the principal parts of our ancient city are the joint property of both societies (although each society's funds are independently its own) and these old ensigns of

⁶⁹ COEM, *Minutes of the Royal St Crispin Society 1817-1824*.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 5 October 1820.

⁷¹ Malcolm, 'Incorporation of Cordiners of the Canongate', pp. 135-6.

royalty, although completely worn out are still preserved as relics of former times. An exchange takes place once every year of these relics, one society keeping the robes and crown, while the other keeps the flags and so on alternatively.

13 February 1727 was the foundation date claimed by 'The Journeymen Shoemakers of the city of Edinburgh' when they printed a new edition of their 'Articles' in 1778.⁷² Among the list of regulations is the stipulation that the accounts be supervised by the 'Keymasters and Committee, together with two members of the Incorporation of Shoemakers of Edinburgh, whom the Incorporation may appoint'.⁷³ The date of institution is ten years before the first record in the Minutes of the Incorporation of Cordiners of Edinburgh of the appointment of two masters 'to attend the Journeymen Shoemakers in the Management of the box for the year ensuing'.⁷⁴ Houston credits the journeymen shoemakers with the achievement, on 5 May 1737, of their goal of establishing their own 'poor box' separate from that of the masters, having been unsuccessful in their attempt in 1700.⁷⁵ As the Incorporation was inconsistent in noting the appointment of masters to attend the journeymen (no record for the years 1739 and 1740-2 for example) and as the journeymen had to request attendance from the Incorporation in 1758, it looks as though they might indeed have been operating a benefit society from 1727 as they stated. The society submitted its rules for ratification according to Act of Parliament in 1832, but gave notice of its impending dissolution in *The Scotsman* on 19 November 1836.⁷⁶

The *Articles of the Journey-men Cordiners and others Benefit Society of Canongate*, ratified by the Advocate Depute on 2 January 1834, also state that the society had been established on 13 February 1727:

for the purpose of giving a weekly allowance to members when unable to follow their usual employment from accident or disease, and for granting an allowance at the Death of the Members.⁷⁷

⁷² A copy on microfilm (1135) is held by the Goldsmiths' Library University of London and can be accessed through <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/MOME?>>.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷⁴ NAS, GD 348/207, *Minutes of the Incorporation of Cordiners of Edinburgh 1730-1764*, 5 May 1737.

⁷⁵ R. A. Houston, *Social Change in the Age of Enlightenment Edinburgh 1660-1760* (Oxford, 1994), p. 98; NAS, GD348/206, *Minutes of the Incorporation of Cordiners of Edinburgh 1613-1708*, 2 December 1700.

⁷⁶ *Caledonian Mercury*, 2 June 1832.

⁷⁷ NAS, FS1/17/86.

The first entry in the Minute Book of the Incorporation of Cordiners of Canongate regarding the journeymen's society is on 3 May 1731 when two members were appointed to attend the 'Jurneymens' meeting'.⁷⁸ The journeymen met in the Incorporation's Convening House, but by 1834 were holding quarterly meetings in the City School room, Niddry Street and in St Crispin's Hall, Todrick's Wynd.⁷⁹ There is no record of the dissolution of the society. Other journeymen shoemaker societies presenting their friendly society articles to the Advocate Depute did not claim an institution date earlier than the late eighteenth century; 3 June 1793 for the *Journeymen Shoemakers Society of Wester Portsburgh*.⁸⁰ *The Young Journeymen Shoemakers Society of Edinburgh*, meeting in St Crispin's Hall and other venues in 1830, was established on 26 March 1796, a date also cited in articles handwritten in 1806 for the *Journeymen Shoe:maker Society for City and Suburbs*.⁸¹ These dates do not relate to the formation of journeymen societies in eighteenth-century Edinburgh, but to the establishment of benefit functions associated with them. Following payment of entry money and regular contributions, members could draw allowances during periods of sickness and save for funeral costs. Membership was usually open to able-bodied men between specified ages (generally 18-45 years).

The earliest indication of how the various groups of journeymen cordiners in Edinburgh cooperated with regard to the celebration of St Crispin's day comes from a transcription of a 'Copy of Old Papers (in frame) in Lodge' at the end of the *Minutes of the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge 1881-1890*.⁸² No explanation is given for copying these papers into the lodge's minute book or any indication that it was a random selection but, as the papers were framed, presumably what was copied was what was there. Stated to be minutes, the first entry is for 20 October 1740:

The Society being fully met and convened within their convening house and taking to their consideration the article and contract with the Town Society for commemorating the day of the memorable Crispin as the scroll of the proposals now laid before them and underwritten bears do unanimously agree and authorize the present Stewards.

⁷⁸ NAS, GD1/14/1, *Minutes of the Incorporation of Cordiners of Canongate 1584-1773*.

⁷⁹ The Royal St Crispin Society owned the St Crispin Hall at this time.

⁸⁰ NAS, FS1/17/88.

⁸¹ NAS, FS1/17/143; FS3/30.

⁸² COEM, *Minutes of the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge 1881-1890*.

Expenditure for the commemoration included £3 10s for 'Crispin Robes', £2 4s 6d for 'Beef and Mutton for Crispin dinner', and 4s 6d for 'shoes and stockings for John Colville'. Cash received at 'Crispin dinner' amounted to £3 10s.

Assuming that the information given by the *Caledonian Mercury* in 1827 is correct, this must be a record made by the Canongate journeymen, or another body responsible for arranging the St Crispin Day celebrations, and the 'Town Society' is the journeymen cordiners of Edinburgh.

The copied entries marked 'Minutes' are selective from 1740-1758 while those for expenditure and income range from 1740-1775.⁸³ The last entries are concerned with money received from lending the 'Crispin Robes'; ten shillings for sending them to Dundee in 1770, 3s 9d 'for our part of the Robes lent out' in 1772 and ten shillings in 1775. An entry of 1755 accredited 13s 6d as being 'the half of £1 7s lending the robes to the Journeymen of Glasgow'. These loans are particularly interesting in light of what happened in the next century. A cross-referencing of the above entries with newspaper accounts of processions from 1740 to 1776 shows five years when the latter are recorded while entries are lacking, namely for 1754, 1760, 1762, 1763 and 1776. This is probably not of consequence as there are no entries for a total of fourteen years within this period.

More significant might be the sign of lack of mutual harmony first indicated on 14 October 1742 when:

some regular members would not attend and the other members of the two Societies of Journeymen Cordoners(sic) on Crispin day notwithstanding of the express obligation formerly contained in the mutual contract of agreement Ordains a fine of 1s in case of absence of Society benefit until paid. This Act to be inviolably observed in time coming and read to the Society yearly, after the election of the person chosen to represent Crispin.

Further, on 20 September 1757, the minutes state that no proxy should be allowed at the election of King Crispin and recommend the Crispin committee to meet with the Edinburgh Committee. This sounds as if both societies have separate Crispin committees. Two weeks later a disagreement occurred with the Edinburgh Society over the issue of having a separate house to meet in. This was the year of the disputed election cited earlier when two King Crispins

⁸³ Ibid. Minutes are dated 1740, 1741, 1742, 1745, 1757 and 1758: expenditure is dated 1740, 1741, 1742, 1743, 1744, 1750, 1754, 1757, 1758, 1763, 1765: income relates to 1740, 1742, 1743, 1749, 1750, 1754, 1755, 1757, 1761, 1763, 1765, 1770, 1771, 1772 and 1775.

apparently walked in procession. Peace must have been restored as 1s was expended in the following year for 'Writing Crispin Agreement' and 6d was paid in 1763 as 'Dues of Crispin committee'. As cited above, money earned from hiring the robes was divided between the two groups. Cash collected at the Crispin election in 1757 and the balance of Crispin money 'received at the decease of Daniel Campbell' in 1758 was 'immediately lodged in the box'; 2s 6d having been paid to the 'town box' in 1742. Clearly Crispin commemoration was an effective method of supplementing the sick and funeral funds deposited in 'the box', a chest with several locks, equivalent of a security safe. Another insight into the convivial aspect of all this is an entry in 1741:

The Society taking into their consideration that by Act of the Society of the date the 29th Nov 1727 ordaining the 30th day of Nov being St Andrew's Day to be kept and a dinner to be made on that day and each member is thereby ordained to make payment of 1s sterling for defraying the charge of that day and that now the Society taking into their consideration that they doe keep up the 25th Oct being the day of the memorable Crispin doe therefore and herby enact that in all tyme coming the dinner which used to be kept formerly on St Andrew's Day be kept on the 25th October if a lawfull and no fast day and if so the next following being lawful and on which the Crispain day shall be kept.

However in 1744 the cost of £1 16s 10d was attributed to 'flesh to St Andrew Dinner'; although in the previous year the entry of £1 2s 4d is for 'meat for Crispin'. Either participants reverted to former practice in 1744 or the clerk erred in naming the occasion. Whatever the case, expenditure on music is a constant throughout the accounts but whether this included St Crispin Day songs is unknown. Campin attributes the march 'The Fourteenth of October', to the shoemakers' procession (this being the old calendar date for St Crispin's day) as well as 'The Cordwainers March' first published in 1781; he gives the music for the latter though not his sources for the former.⁸⁴

There is no information for the years 1766-1769 and no reports of processions either. Shortage of funds and a dispute with the masters might account for this. On 12 August 1766 the Canongate journeymen petitioned to have a delay of their next payment for use of the 'Conveninghouse on accompt that their funds are much decayed'. In 1743 the Incorporation of Cordiners of Canongate had found itself to be insolvent and the subject of

⁸⁴ Jack Campin, *Embroidered the hidden history of Edinburgh in its music*, <<http://www.campin.me.uk/Embroidered/Webrelease/Embroidered/07work/07work.htm>>[14 May 2012].

legal proceedings in the Court of Session in 1744.⁸⁵ Consequently the Incorporation was forced to sell its heritable property and rent its former Convening Hall instead, presumably recouping some of the cost of this by charging the journeymen for the use of the property. The Incorporation agreed to the journeymen's request for deferred payment and in 1773, when the minute book ends, was still appointing two members to attend their meetings.⁸⁶ From late 1768 to 1770 a contentious dispute absorbed both journeymen and masters throughout Edinburgh, Canongate, Potterow, Portsburgh and Calton. The issues involved wage rates, journeymen working in their own homes instead of those of their masters and whether they could instruct apprentices or employ others to work with them. The conflict escalated from a decision by the sheriff in favour of the masters (30 December 1768) to the Court of Session in January 1770. While there is no record of the outcome, the confrontation might account for the lack of a Crispin entry in 1769, though the Robes were lent to Dundee in 1770.⁸⁷

The Societies of Journeymen Cordiners of Canongate and Edinburgh appear, therefore, to have undertaken the organisation of Crispin celebrations in the eighteenth century, but the references to 'Crispin' committees and the issue of having a separate house to meet in might indicate the formation of a more formal group exclusively for 'Crispin' activity. This would account for the existence of the 'Society of St Crispin' instituted in 1763 or 1764. In 1802 this institution submitted its handwritten new rules for ratification under the Friendly Societies Act of 1793, stating that the 'Society of St Crispin (sic) in Edinburgh' had been established in 1764.⁸⁸ Within the collection of City of Edinburgh Museums is a 'Charter Chest of the Society of St Crispin', with an inscription of 23 April 1763. Gifted in 1957, there is no information other than the donor's name and address. The 1802 friendly society rules give no clues as to the reasons for forming the society beyond the standard mantra of

⁸⁵ NAS, GD1/14/1, *Minute Book 1584-1773*, 10 February 1743, 5 October 1744.

⁸⁶ NAS, GD1/14/2. The next and last minute book is for 1843-1852.

⁸⁷ *Scots Magazine*, vol. 30, p. 668; *Information for the Masters and Freemen of the Incorporations of Shoemakers in Edinburgh, Canongate, Potterow, Portsburgh and Calton*, 31 January 1770.

⁸⁸ NAS, FS3/27.

'rendering that relief that is necessary to members in distress by taking a decent and friendly care of their sick and burying their dead'.⁸⁹ Eligible candidates for admission had to be 'between 18 and 40 years' and of 'sound and healthy constitution', but included men of all lawful employment. It seems unlikely, however, that a group not principally composed of shoemakers or associated with the leather trade would give itself a St Crispin title. Possible explanations for the formation of the society could be dissatisfaction with the benefit provisions of the existing journeymen shoemaker societies; the inability to agree over such matters as elections and meeting places; or the wish to establish a lodge or club devoted to St Crispin activities and conviviality with sickness and funeral benefits but independent of operational matters to do with the trade. Or perhaps, as suggested earlier, the St Crispin Society was already operating as a convivial commemorative club to which sickness relief and funeral benefits were added in 1763/4.

Whatever the reason for its formation, the 'St Crispin Society' was a separate organisation from the other journeymen shoemaker societies and claimed to have 140 members on 26 January 1779 when it joined with a range of institutions around Scotland in opposition to the 'popish bill' brought before Parliament in late 1778 to repeal the penal laws operating against Catholics: no sign here of the later debarring of religious and political discussion from friendly society meetings.⁹⁰ Signatories included the Society of Journeymen Shoemakers in Canongate, the Friendly Society of Journeymen Shoemakers in Edinburgh and suburbs which claimed to have 56 members, as well as the Incorporations of Shoemakers in Portsburgh, Potterow and Canongate, but not Edinburgh.⁹¹ The other organisations of shoemakers protesting against the bill were the 400 members of the Society of Journeymen Shoemakers in Kilmarnock and 500 journeymen shoemakers in Glasgow who claimed to be 'distinguished by the name of St Crispin's Society'.⁹² This statement about their name by the Glasgow journeymen might indicate a different arrangement from that in Edinburgh, or could be their generic name for journeymen

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ David Paterson, *Scotland opposition to the popish bill* (Edinburgh, 1780), p. 149.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 148.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 84, 257.

shoemakers. The only other (to date) non-Edinburgh reference to a St Crispin Society prior to 1820 is for Kilmarnock. A notice of 21 November 1786 concerning a scheme for the alteration of the law for grain importation into Scotland was signed by 'Alex. Petrie, St Crispin's Society' and the Incorporated Trades, Universal Friendship and Journeymen Weavers societies.⁹³ Again there is no thought of non-interference in politics.

The St Crispin Society in Edinburgh was still in existence in 1833 when handwritten revised articles were submitted for ratification by the Advocate Depute. The society at this time held its quarterly meetings in St Andrews Lodge, Brodies Close and was governed by a Committee of Preses, Treasurer, two Keymasters, ten Assistants, the old Preses and Treasurer along with a Clerk.⁹⁴ The articles are standard friendly society ones with funds being lodged in a box with locks and keys, presumably the one in the Edinburgh collection. There is no record of the dissolution of the society, but the fact that it submitted handwritten rules at a time when so many other friendly societies produced printed copies is either a sign of extreme frugality or that funds were too low to warrant the expenditure.

The descriptions of the 'King Crispin' processions of 1821 and 1824 in Edinburgh and the costumed representation at the visit of George IV to the city in August 1822, attribute these to the 'St Crispin Society', but the above organisation was not responsible for these public displays.⁹⁵ The Royal St Crispin Society was in existence by this time and in full flow of reviving or reinventing the St Crispin Day celebrations, as well as introducing new traditions and ritual later to be embraced enthusiastically by cordiners in other Scottish towns.

The creation of the Royal St Crispin Society

In common with many friendly societies the Royal St Crispin Society submitted its printed rules in 1830 for sanction according to the 1829 Act of

⁹³ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 20 November 1786.

⁹⁴ Preses is the Scots word for president.

⁹⁵ *Caledonian Mercury*, 27 October 1821, 24 August 1822; *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, 27 October 1824.

Parliament 10 Geo IV c.56.⁹⁶ The Society, a member of an Association of Friendly Societies since December 1827, stated that it had been instituted in June 1817 and remodelled in March 1830. The rules sanctioned on 18 May 1830 relate to sick, annuity and funeral allowances: 'the laws of this Institution have thus secured to all its members benefits in proportion to their individual contributions'. However the Society had not been established to provide for sickness and death and the early entries in the first minute book give no indication of this whatever.

This first volume in the collection of City of Edinburgh Museums covers the years 1817-1824 and is water damaged, as is the other archive material. The early pages are missing and the record begins:

The meeting then proceeded to the election of office bearers which the following were chosen Thomas Hume Master, John Henry, David Young Supporters, William Bruce and John Leitch Guardians, John Chalmers Treasurer, John Noble Secretary, Hugh Anderson Chaplen

Immediately there is an indication of a deviation from the nomenclature of the other shoemaker friendly societies with the offices of 'Master, Supporters, Guardians, Chaplen' (sic). The next entry is dated 21 July 1817. A week later the office bearers met, and after admitting four new members, the 'Lodge spent the evening in conviviality', before proceeding to the election of office bearers which included two 'Heralds'. 'Lodge' rather than 'Society' is the preferred name used to describe meetings of members. Elections continued to be monthly, after conviviality, until 16 February 1818 when it was agreed to hold the election at 'one half ten o'clock' on the first Monday of April and thereafter quarterly.

It is difficult to determine for how long quarterly elections remained the practice as the secretaries for this minute book are inconsistent in their reporting, and there is a gap for example, between 25 October 1819 and 4 June 1820 (an election date), neatly summarised by the words; 'several meetings of the office bearers of which the particulars were neglected or mislaid'. However charters granted to Leith and Montrose brethren on 18 April 1822 (to be examined later), state that officer bearers should be elected on St Crispin's day or the next Monday following. The Royal St Crispin Society

⁹⁶ NAS, FS1/17/116.

scribes did devote much space to noting the great harmony and conviviality of evenings and to recording the admission of new members. By 5 July 1819 there were 103 of these, mostly shoemakers, but also including other trades (for example, an upholsterer, vintner and watchmaker in 1817) all of whom paid 1s as entry money.

Not until 29 November 1820 is there any suggestion of a friendly society function. On that date 'Mr Stott mentioned to the Brethren the propriety of erecting the Lodge into a Benefit Society'. As was to be a recurring pattern when a decision had to be made, the meeting appointed a committee. On 2 April 1821 the brethren approved the articles concerning 'Sick' and 'Annuity' provision for 'submission to the Magistrates'. The date of June 1817 cited on the 'Rules' sanctioned in 1830 refers, therefore, to the foundation of the Royal St Crispin Society and not to the establishment of its friendly society function. The *Contributions Book 1817-1850* confirms that the Society was not originally formed for a benefit purpose, as, until 1821, only payments for entry to the Society are listed. Thereafter contributions include amounts paid into the annuity and benefit or 'sick' funds. By 1825 there were 70 members paying annuity money and 105 paying sick money. Money for funerals seems to have been collected when necessary.

In these early years members met in a variety of venues from Mr Stewart's house (probably a tavern), to Brother Wardie's (the Cross Keys Tavern) or Wightman's School room, the Journeymen Masons Lodge and the City's Free school. St Crispin Day celebrations were held in taverns such as the Ship Tavern on Leith Walk (1817), the Cross Keys in Stamp Office Close (1818), Thistle Lodge Room in Thistle Street (1819); with 'convivials' enjoyed in venues which included the Royal Coffee Room at 7 James Square, thus spreading custom around Edinburgh Old and New Towns. However the Society was more than a social or drinking club. Some idea of its primary function emerges from the appearance of new types of office bearers. On 16 February 1818 a 'Standard Bearer' appears in the list and in July two 'Ushers'. In the following year the roll of office bearers includes two Lords, a Wardrobe Keeper and an Officer. On 4 June 1820 Brother Stott was elected as his 'Majesty', probably an alternative title for Master, as the name is not used again (except in connection with processions) after 18 September 1820. From

the Society's *Account Book 1817-1850*, it emerges that at least from 1819 the clerk and the officer received quarterly payments for their labours which, for the officer, rose from 4s in 1819 to 6s 4d in 1831 with periodic extras such as ale. A significant reference to a more sophisticated association than that of the average society of journeymen shoemakers comes in an entry for 3 March 1823 in the *Minute and Account Book* of 1823-1831, of a payment of £1 11s 6d against 'Knights of Sir Hugh'. A passing reference to a meeting of Knights in Millers Tavern had been made in September 1821 but the Knights appear more officially in April 1822. The Royal Lodge of St Crispin with the Royal Knights of St Hugh received deputations from their Brethren of Leith and Montrose and empowered:

the worthy Brethren Knights of St Hugh of the Respective places aforesaid to hold a Lodge of St Crispin and Encampment of the Royal Knights of Sir Hugh....with full powers to Elect Officebearers and initiate Candidates into the Secrets and Mysteries of the Ancient Order of St Crispin and Exalt such as may appear worthy thereto to the Dignity of Knights of Sir Hugh.

Leith (previously part of the Royal St Crispin Society) and Montrose received charters affirmed by the seals of the Orders of St Crispin and St Hugh, and became Lodges 1 and 2 with a list of rules to obey.

Reasons for the creation of the Royal St Crispin Society

Why would a group of working men, most of whom were shoemakers, create the Royal St Crispin Society in Edinburgh in 1817 when a St Crispin Society and several journeymen shoemaker societies already existed; and what distinguished this new organisation from the others and from similar societies in Scotland or elsewhere? In France in 1789, for example, the Revolution swept away craft guilds and confraternities along with altars to St Crépin, only for them to re-emerge in the nineteenth century in places such as Troyes. There the confraternity of St Crispin was reorganised in 1820 and its annual festival revived on the Monday following 25 October.⁹⁷ But this was not the case in Edinburgh and other parts of Britain where periodic

⁹⁷ Walsh, *Curiosities of Popular Customs and of Rites*, p. 294. An early nineteenth-century Breton version of a St Crispin mystery play is cited by Victor Tourneur, *Revue Celtique* 25 (1904), pp. 299-343.

commemoration of St Crispin or his day continued, notwithstanding the wars with revolutionary and Napoleonic France.

In the years from 1787 to 1819 at least seven towns witnessed St Crispin processions (some more than one), recorded as being organised by the shoemaker trade (Dundee 1787), the followers of King Crispin (Glasgow 1790 and 1818), shoemakers (Falkirk 1796), the Craft (Sunderland 1809, Falkirk 1814), the journeymen shoemakers (Norwich 1813), the Incorporation of Shoemakers (Dumfries 1813), boot-shoemakers (Stirling 1815), Crispins (Crieff c.1820).⁹⁸ Nowhere is a St Crispin Society mentioned and it looks as though shoemakers were continuing, albeit intermittently in public display, their devotion to 'the memorable Crispin'. The Dumfries reference to the Incorporation is curious, being the only one relating to the masters' involvement. Possibly the Incorporation walked as part of the procession as did the Incorporation of Cordiners of Edinburgh in the 1820 parade, rather than initiating it.⁹⁹ These examples of the public celebration of St Crispin in other towns may have highlighted the lack of similar events in Edinburgh; but there is no indication of this being the motivation for forming the Royal St Crispin Society.

Many friendly societies held feast days, acquired banners and regalia, created ritual and invented histories for themselves subsequent to establishment.¹⁰⁰ The Royal St Crispin Society or Lodge, however, functioned for several years before adding sickness and funeral benefits to its offer to prospective members. The provision of such assistance, therefore, was not the reason for its existence. It seems more likely that the creation of the Society resulted from the desire to have a more formal and dramatic celebration of St Crispin and the traditions of the craft and perhaps to augment these. In addition to a devotion to the patron and the legends, the Crispins maintained rituals and rites of passage among apprentices and

⁹⁸ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 25 October 1866; *Caledonian Mercury*, 14 November 1818; *King Crispin's Garland*, (Philadelphia, 1805); *Tyne Mercury*, 31 October 1809; Mackie, *Norfolk Annals*, p. 110; *Caledonian Mercury*, 7 October 1813, 9 January 1815; D. Macara, printer, *Crieff: Its Traditions and Characters* (Edinburgh, 1881), pp. 139-145.

⁹⁹ The shoemakers' procession in Turriff on 25 October 1808 is attributed by the *Aberdeen Journal*, 9 November 1808, to the Shoemakers Friendly Society. There is no mention of King Crispin.

¹⁰⁰ Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, pp. 261-7.

journeymen – what Hobsbawm calls emotional furniture – devised by them to reinforce a sense of belonging and often in imitation of religious ceremonies.¹⁰¹ The members of other crafts did likewise. Farr draws attention to the theory that ritual practices sanctioned the stages of a journeyman's life as the sacraments did those of the Christian; the feast in the tavern a secular mimicking of the communion ceremony.¹⁰² James Stirling, apprenticed in 1788 to a Paisley shoemaker, had to undergo the ritual 'baptism'.

Before a week passed it was decreed by the laws of the shop that my block should be paid on the Monday following. This was the sum of money which all new-comers had to pay for the purpose of getting a 'grand spree' at drinking. The master had to pay a shilling, the journeymen fourpence each at every block, and thus a sum was raised which produced large supply when the real 'Eolbagie' was sold at little more than a penny per gill.¹⁰³

On going to a new master a shoemaker had to provide another 'heel-block' for his comrades and occasions such as the first lighting of candles guaranteed drinking.¹⁰⁴ As will be seen in chapter 6, initiation rituals and rites of passage formed part of the ceremonies of the Royal St Crispin Society but this organisation created a structure and format unlike those of the St Crispin or journeymen societies. There are new names for officer bearers, an Encampment of the Royal Knights of Sir Hugh and the granting of charters to other shoemaker groups.

Hobsbawm has argued that the process of creating ritual and symbolic complexes occurs more frequently 'when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed'.¹⁰⁵ Despite the erosion of the old craft systems however, shoemaking was still at this time unaffected by industrialisation and mass production; and while the practice of living in the master's house was largely in decline, in Edinburgh this was as much to do with the journeymen's fight for independence as the masters' avoidance of paying their employees' living

¹⁰¹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester, 1959), p. 153.

¹⁰² James R. Farr, *Artisans in Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 252.

¹⁰³ Alexander Wallace, publisher, *The gloaming of life: a memoir of James Stirling* (Scottish Temperance League, 1876), p. 55. Eolbagie was whisky.

¹⁰⁴ Gavin Wilson, *A Collection of Masonic Songs and Entertaining Anecdotes for the use of all the Lodges* (Edinburgh, 1778); John Dunlop, *The Philosophy of Drinking Usage in Great Britain* (London, 1839), pp. 130, 220.

¹⁰⁵ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 5.

expenses. The mounting of processions in the early nineteenth century may have been a tactic to prevent traditions from dying, but, with the exception of Edinburgh, there is no indication that in places where this occurred, Stirling, for example, the impetus came from a new organisation.

A persuasive explanation for the structure, if not the creation, of the Royal St Crispin Society is the example of freemasonry. A major influence on seventeenth and eighteenth-century British clubs and societies, freemasonry was a development in Scotland from around 1600, of the brotherhood rituals of stone masons.¹⁰⁶ Between the years 1736 and 1754, 31 masonic lodges were chartered, with another eight for Edinburgh and one for Leith and Portobello recorded between 1754 and 1820.¹⁰⁷ In common with other clubs and societies such as the Noble Order of Bucks in England or the Fraternity of Free Gardeners in East Lothian, freemasons met in taverns, enjoyed convivial evenings, organised processions, rivalled the shoemakers in their devotion to song and possessed secret rites and oaths. McElroy suggests that the pantomime-style rituals of the Cape Club were a burlesque of masonic rites.¹⁰⁸ The latter were periodically publicised in exposés such as the account written by disgruntled former freemason Samuel Prichard for the Edinburgh readers of the *Echo or Edinburgh Weekly Journal* of 28 October 1730. Prichard describes the questions and answers intoned for each of the three degrees of apprentice, fellow-craft and master, in spite of having taken an oath never to:

Write them, Print them, Mark them, Carve them or Engrave them...under no less penalty than to have my Throat cut, my Tongue taken from the Roof of my Mouth, my Heart pluck'd from under my left Breast, them to be buried in the Sands of the Sea the Length of a Cable-rope from Shore, where the Tide ebbs and flows twice in 24 Hours, my Body to be burnt to Ashes, my Ashes to be scattered upon the face of the Earth so that there shall be no more remembrance of me among Masons.

All this appears to have had an influence on the practices of the St Crispin lodges at least in the later nineteenth century, as will become clearer when these are examined; as did the development of freemasonry as a strongly

¹⁰⁶ Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry*.

¹⁰⁷ George S. Draffen, *Scottish Masonic Records* (Coupar Angus, 1950).

¹⁰⁸ Davis D. McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement: A Survey of Eighteenth Century Literary Clubs and Societies* (Washington, 1969), p. 147.

federal organisation (in spite of schisms) following the establishment of a Grand Lodge in England in 1717 and in Scotland and Ireland in 1736.

Simon Cordery has argued that friendly societies adopted elements of freemasonry and that in particular the Oddfellows seem to have originated in England around 1745 as an alternative to the Freemasons, though this is still debated by historians of fraternalism. Certainly by the end of the eighteenth century Oddfellows had lodges in London operating under a Grand Lodge which issued dispensations for lodges to be formed in the south of England, Sheffield, Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Liverpool.¹⁰⁹ However the earliest evidence of the operation of a lodge in Edinburgh is from 1840 with the opening of the City of Edinburgh Lodge, a branch of the Independent Order of Oddfellows. The Oddfellows were ridiculed in 1811 as a 'convivial society: the introduction of the noble grands arrayed in royal robes, is well worth seeing at the price of becoming a member.'¹¹⁰ An illustration of a club meeting in 1789 shows the Grand, Grand-elect and Past Grand Masters sitting on a dais under a canopy surrounded by members enjoying a convivial evening.¹¹¹

Garner in his study of fraternal groups in nineteenth-century America also attributes the growth of societies such as the 'Odd Fellows' and 'Red Men' to late eighteenth-century alternative movements to freemasonry. Usually meeting in taverns, 'members became intrigued with the ritualistic possibilities of Freemasonry....American ritualists invented their own Masonic rituals or variants.'¹¹² Schisms occurred between those who wanted convivial evenings and those who advocated ritual and a moral purpose. Perhaps this is the key to the origin and purpose of the Royal St Crispin Society.

The Royal St Crispin Society was a different organisation from the St Crispin Society whose office-bearers submitted friendly society rules in 1802 and 1834 and who joined the petitioners opposing the 'popish bill' in 1779. Glasgow shoemaker opponents to the bill claimed to be called the St Crispin's

¹⁰⁹ Andy Durr, 'For the Support of Brothers', *Freemasonry Today*, Issue 25 (Summer 2003), p. 7.

¹¹⁰ Cordery, *British Friendly Societies*, p. 17.

¹¹¹ The image from the Guildhall Library, Corporation of London is used in Clark, *British Clubs and Societies* but this is available at <http://exc.images-amazon.com/images/1/61SxT4eAWvL._SS500_.jpg>.

¹¹² Mark Garner, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New York, 1989), pp. 22-4.

Society. The only other reference to a society of this name is in 1780 in Kilmarnock, scene of many St Crispin processions. It may be that the St Crispin Society was the journeymen's organisation in both these places, but that was not true for Edinburgh where it is more likely that the St Crispin Society was a journeymen cordiners' conglomerate devoted to conviviality and commemoration of the patron saint, while the various separate societies of journeymen shoemakers concerned themselves with craft matters and relationships with masters. Identifying individuals is hindered by the paucity of names and the signatories to the above documents have not been uncovered elsewhere. Only Peter Arnott emerges briefly from obscurity. One of several shoemakers tried in the High Court in February 1799 for unlawful conspiracy to raise the rate of journeymen shoemakers' wages, he is listed as a member of the Journeymen Shoemakers Society of Wester Portsburgh in 1793 (assuming he is the same person).¹¹³ There is no way either of establishing whether the James Paterson, clerk to the Journeymen Shoemakers of Edinburgh in 1827, is the cordiner who appeared in the list of Royal St Crispin members but paid no contributions.¹¹⁴

The founder members of the Royal St Crispin Society possibly were never members of the St Crispin Society; or more likely, as with other fraternal groups, broke away to form an organisation with a more ritualistic ethos, incorporating the old St Crispin customs but remodelling them in a fashionable format influenced by the ceremonies of their contemporary freemason fellow citizens. Some may even have been practising or former freemasons.¹¹⁵ Certainly when the Gardeners' societies in the Lothians and Fife, earliest surviving records of which are dated 1676 (Haddington) and 1715 (Dunfermline), gave charters in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century to new lodges, these lodges adopted legends, rituals and craft practices in imitation of freemasonry. The older lodges of Gardeners

¹¹³ NAS, FS1/17/88.

¹¹⁴ *The Scotsman*, 9 August 1827; COEM, *Royal St Crispin Society Contributions Book*, 1817-1850.

¹¹⁵ There would be a serious cost implication for low wage-earners of belonging to more than one organisation. The 'secrets' of freemasonry were also hardly 'secret'.

continued in the traditional ways until much later.¹¹⁶ In common with the Royal St Crispin Society, the Gardeners allowed non-practitioners to join; and they organised annual processions and dinners such as that of the Society of Caledonian Gardeners (instituted in 1792) in 1821, or of the St Cuthbert's Lodge of Free Gardeners in 1826 when emblems, devices, and choice collections of fruit and flowers were carried from Holyrood House through the streets of Edinburgh.¹¹⁷

Both Gosden and Cordery have emphasised the need of nineteenth-century fraternal societies for apparent continuity with the past; the desire for an ancient and hallowed pedigree.¹¹⁸ However, unlike organisations such as the Druids who traced ancestry to Moses or the Foresters who claimed Adam and the Garden of Eden, Royal St Crispin Society members did not have to invent a legend. They already had a choice: the genuinely ancient St Crispin legends of the two brothers martyred at Soissons, or the reworked sixteenth-century English stories of Deloney. They seem to have embraced both and especially to have elaborated on the theme of Sir Hugh. What distinguished their society and its procession in 1820 from its predecessors of 40 years earlier, or from more recent displays in Stirling, Glasgow and elsewhere, was the presence of Sir Hugh. In addition to their appearance in the charters granted to Leith and Montrose, the Knights of St or Sir Hugh are mentioned in June 1823 when Linlithgow shoemakers became Lodge No 3. Except for the representation and costuming of Sir Hugh in the processions of the 1820s, and the toast to the memory of St Crispin and Sir Hugh at the 1824 anniversary procession dinner, the Knights of St Hugh only feature once more in the five extant minute, accounts and check books prior to 1860. On 5 March 1832 the Society thanked the Lodge of St Hugh for the presentation of a chair and desk. Yet in spite of the lack of detail in the early records of the Royal St Crispin Society, the Order of the Knights of St Hugh emerges as a key

¹¹⁶ For a synopsis and images of the Gardeners' societies see <http://www.historyshelf.org/shelf/free>.

¹¹⁷ *The Scotsman*, 21 July 1821, 22 July 1826.

¹¹⁸ Peter Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England 1815-1875* (Manchester, 1961), p. 1; Cordery, *British Friendly Societies*, p. 18.

component of what is clearly a more complicated organisation than the St Crispin or other shoemaker societies.

Operation of the Royal St Crispin Society

Further clues as to the purpose of the Royal St Crispin Society come from early entries with regard to 'Regalia', towards the purchase of which the members paid 2s 6d each in July 1819. This was not an insubstantial sum at a time when a standard quarter wheaten loaf cost 11d.¹¹⁹ In addition to entry fees and convivial evening expenditure, the cost of commissioning new standards (consecrated on 25 October 1819) added to the financial demands on members, indicating a high level of commitment by the Crispins to their society. There is no record of the buying or acquisition of any regalia or the reasons for doing so, but a meeting in June 1820 revealed the existence of:

1 Vest and Robe, 1 Bonnet, 1 Crown and Cushion, 3 small Crowns, 3 long poles, 3 bottom, 3 knives, 2 Heralds rods, 1 Painted Making(sic) Piece, 1 Robe for the preist(sic), 1 Sett Band, 1 Lance.

The committee deemed this mixture of costume and artefacts inadequate for procession purposes and authorised 'His Majesty' to write to the lodges at Dumfries and Kilmarnock 'for a loan of their Regalia to have a procession'.¹²⁰

The minutes and accounts reveal the considerable outlay involved in mounting the 1820 procession, both in buying and hiring costumes, accessories and regalia items. For example, King Crispin's rich crimson silk-velvet coat trimmed with gold lace and rich crimson satin robe cost £22 12s 8½d while expenditure on the blue cotton short coats for the nine pages totalled £4 10s.¹²¹ Throughout the 1820s the society purchased various costumes including a dress for Sir Hugh and a robe for the Secretary of State and spent money on repairing the King's coat and the Champion's dress.¹²² Mr John Tilly of Birmingham made a crown for the 1821 celebration of St Crispin's Day and the society purchased this in the following year for a price of 10 guineas (reduced from 15).¹²³ By 1828 a substantial wardrobe had been

¹¹⁹ *Caledonian Mercury*, 1 June 1820.

¹²⁰ COEM, *Minutes*, 13 June 1820.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 3 November 1820.

¹²² *Ibid*, 8 October 1821: 18 October 1824.

¹²³ COEM, *Royal St Crispin Society Accounts*, 29 June 1822.

amassed and some money recouped by lending items to other shoemaker lodges and to societies such as the Wallace Youths.¹²⁴ Members agreed that 'a new Robe should be purchased for the Lord Mayor the present one being in a very bad state not fit to be seen on the street'.¹²⁵

The 1820 regalia inventory included three small crowns, three long poles, and three knives. The crowns would have been mounted on the poles as ceremonial items and there are examples of these and symbolic shoemakers' cutting knives in the collection of City of Edinburgh Museums, though whether they date to 1820 or are later purchases is undetermined (**Fig. 13**). Sufficient items existed in December 1820 for the society to purchase two chests to hold the regalia (£1 9s) and to have them painted a few months later. Two wooden chests with identical allegorical scenes (interpreted later) depicted on the inside of the lids are part of the Edinburgh collection. Each chest folds out to reveal a chequered floor into which poles fit to support a red fringed canopy (**Fig. 14**). A third much larger chest is equipped with drawers for storing the poles and canopies. The style of painting of the scenes would date the chests to the early nineteenth century. In the absence of any written evidence the most likely explanation for these portable display units is that at Society meetings symbolic items were arranged under the canopies perhaps facing each other in miniature imitation of a lodge room arrangement. For example, an illustration from Dr Willis's *Exposé of Odd Fellowship* (1846) in America depicts a lodge room set out with canopied daises at opposite ends of the room with officials sitting underneath and facing each other.¹²⁶

The St Crispin chests are substantial and transporting them to meetings and providing storage in between usage cannot have been easy in these early years. Finding a meeting hall 'that would answer to hold the ordinary meetings of the society and contain the Robes, Regalia and other furniture belonging to the society' became essential.¹²⁷ In February 1827 the members purchased the Barbers' Hall in Toddrick's Wynd. No doubt constant

¹²⁴ COEM, *Minutes and Accounts*, 19 June 1827.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 8 September 1828.

¹²⁶ Illustration in Garner, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*, p. 22.

¹²⁷ COEM, *Minutes*, 9 December 1826.

moving around caused the clerk to minute in June 1828, that some part of the regalia was out of repair and others needed to be replaced. The acquisition of permanent accommodation involved a sale price of £150 and the expense of alterations and improvements, including the installation of gas and sanitation, replastering, painting and roof repairs. The minutes also noted the allowance of a place for the Croupier's chair to be erected opposite to the Chairman and the purchase of a Canopy to be fixed to the ceiling.¹²⁸

No further information concerning the ritual enacted at society meetings can be gleaned from this minute book which ends in June 1832, but it is clear that a prospective member was initiated first as a 'Brother Crispin' with a payment of entry money, before being given the option, after 1821, of joining any of the benefit funds. After September 1824:

fees of entry to the Order of St Crispin shall be understood to include the entry money to the Society except the price of Regulations and Clerk and Officer fees and that in future in place of additional entry money a quarter's account shall be charged to the entrant at the time of his name being placed on the Role of the Society.

Thus a distinction is being drawn between the St Crispin Lodge with its ritual and convivial mysteries and its benefit society function. Throughout the 1820s organisation of the latter proved challenging, with the 'Box' remaining shut (that is no sick payments being given to members) for several years as funds were low. In 1828 the members agreed to organise the sick and annuity funds separately with the result that in the following year nineteen members: 'finding it inconvenient for us to continue longer members therein do hereby resign all claim, interest and right'.¹²⁹

In recognition of the more formal management of the benefit function as necessitated by the Act of Parliament, the Royal St Crispin Society, in September 1831, appointed Dr Drumbreak at 2 guineas annually, to visit sick applicants. The last minute is dated 4 June 1832, the clerk having received instructions for acquiring a new minute book in which to engrave the proceedings commencing at September 1830. Unfortunately this book is missing from the City of Edinburgh Museums' collection, but the *Account Book* (including Annuity, Funeral and Sick Funds entries), two *Sickness and Annuity*

¹²⁸ Ibid., 21 August 1827.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 22 June 1829.

Abstracts, a *Funeral Stock Book* and a *Contributions Book* record income and expenditure until the dissolution of the Sick and Funeral Funds in 1851.

The names of lodge members listed at the end of the *Contributions Book* 1817-1850, total 155 men, although the previous entries under the sick, annuity and funeral headings are muddled in many places. Names given in the minute books do not always appear here and members came and went or were expelled for non-payment of dues, as was the case with William Sawers, the King Crispin of the 1820 procession.¹³⁰ In 1826 for example, 66 paid annuity contributions and 137 contributed sick money but by 1841 it is not clear which of the 86 members are paying into which fund. Of the 155 names inscribed, 83 are shoemakers, 48 are recorded as being in related trades such as boot closer, last maker or tanner; the other 24 having miscellaneous occupations ranging from upholsterer to dentist or hairdresser. Addresses mostly range over Old and New Town streets, with Newhaven, Milnathort, Haddington and London added to the mix. The amount available to be divided proportionally among members at the dissolution of the Friendly Society was £159 13s 5d. However, as will be seen in chapter 4, the lodge continued to function.

The structure of the Royal St Crispin Society

At this early stage in the Royal St Crispin chronology it is difficult to elicit much information from the record books about the place and importance in the organisation of Sir Hugh, the Deloney-created saint who gave his name to shoemaker tools. His dress for the 1820 procession seems understated: 'Sir Hugh was elegantly dressed in a black velvet robe, embroidered with silver lace, and trimmed with ermine'.¹³¹ *The Scotsman and Edinburgh Observer* in 1824 added a Spanish hat and feathers, making his costume more like that of the seventeenth-century Crispin in the woodcuts of 1648 onwards: although the hat might have been a copy of the head attire worn by George IV at his coronation, or that of Sir Patrick Walker for the entry of the

¹³⁰ COEM, *Minutes*, 4 June 1827.

¹³¹ *Scots Magazine* (December 1820), p. 564; *Caledonian Mercury*, 26 October 1820.

King into Edinburgh in 1822.¹³² From the minutes it appears that a dress was made for Sir Hugh in 1821 (presumably the Theatre Royal loaned the costume in 1820 as they did others); and improvements rendered to the cloak in 1824, along with the purchase of a pair of breeches. Sir Hugh and his lady had the honour of opening the St Crispin Ball on 25 October 1821, and at the dinner in 1824 he acted as croupier with the King officiating as chairman.¹³³

When the wording of the charters granted respectively to the Worthy Brethren of Leith and Montrose is examined, however, it is clear that Sir Hugh headed one of two orders. All parties thought:

that it would be advantageous to the Craft in general and add to the comfort and conveniences of our aforesaid Brethren if they had the privilege of holding a Lodge of St Crispin within the said towns viz Leith and Montrose and of initiating candidates into the Secrets and mysteries of the Ancient Order of St Crispin with the power of raising such brethren as may appear worthy thereof to the Exalted dignity of Knights of St Hugh.¹³⁴

Consequently, 'The Royal Lodge of St Crispin of Edinburgh with the Royal Knights of St Hugh thereto belonging in full assembly':

did grant and empower our worthy Brethren Knights of St Hugh of the Respective places aforesaid to hold a Lodge of St Crispin and an Encampment of the Royal Knights of Sir Hugh within the Liberties and Suburbs of their respective places of residence viz Leith and Montrose as aforesaid with full powers to Elect Officebearers and initiate Candidates into the Secrets and Mysteries of the Ancient Order of St Crispin and Exalt such as may appear worthy thereto to the Dignity of Knights of Sir Hugh.....The Principal Officebearers of the Ancient Orders of the St Crispin and St Hugh with the consent of the brethren assembled did grant Charter¹³⁵

The list of conditions attached to the charter granted on 18 April 1822 include recognition of the Royal St Crispin Lodge of Edinburgh as the Parent Lodge with Leith No 1 and Montrose No 2 being branches thereof; non admittance of candidates under 18 years or not of good moral character; or of an apprentice without the consent of his master or other proper guardian; a ban on religious and political discussion at lodge meetings; and yearly election of office bearers on St Crispin's Day or Monday after, with the Master at all times being an operative shoemaker. The new branches had to submit a certified list of entrants with 6d sterling for the enrolment of each individual in the respective Orders.

¹³² For an image of the king see <<http://www.georgianindex.net/coronation/Coronation-GeorgeIV.html>>[18 May 2012]; *Morning Chronicle*, 19 August, 1822.

¹³³ *Caledonian Mercury, The Scotsman*, 27 October 1824.

¹³⁴ COEM, *Minutes*, 18 April 1822.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

Clearly the Royal St Crispin Society had a view to future profitable expansion; a quickly realised ambition, with Linlithgow, Arbroath, Dunfermline and Dundee (No 10) joining the branches in 1823, followed by Perth in 1824. It is not obvious from the minutes and numbering of lodges exactly when some charters were granted, but Stirling, Falkirk and Alloa received theirs before 1828 and most likely Kirkcaldy also, although it is numbered 15.¹³⁶ Charters cost £1 2s to print in 1822 and branches paid the parent lodge 10s 6d for their copies. The Royal St Crispin Society also collected monies periodically from hiring out robes and regalia.

In the Edinburgh museum collection is the charter granted to Dalkeith (No 14) on 25 September 1844, twenty years after its invitation to participate in the Edinburgh procession (**Fig. 15**). This is a home-made artefact, not one purchased from a regalia supplier, and it carries the 'Seals of St Crispin and St Hugh'. The wording is identical to that of the first charter of 1822. The signature of Robert Bisset Master is embellished with a red seal, white ribbon, crown, cutting knife and thistle and the legend 'Regi et Arti Fidelitas'. William Wilson as Sir Hugh has a black seal, red ribbon and a heart pierced with three spears, set within a Star of David. National Museums hold a similar charter issued to the Dundee lodge in 1822 (**Fig. 16**).¹³⁷ The Royal St Crispin Society minutes record that a Dundee delegation received a charter on 7 June 1823 but they may have applied for it the previous year.

The Encampment of Royal Knights is obviously the meeting of the second Order of the Society, but in the early Edinburgh minutes there is no indication of their activities, or meetings beyond those mentioned earlier. Some information, however, can be gleaned from the notes in a crumbling exercise book included in the papers of James Beveridge, local Linlithgow historian and editor of historical manuscripts.¹³⁸ Beveridge copied entries from the Minute Book of the Royal St Crispin Society of Linlithgow 1823-1851 as well as the 1843 St Crispin Friendly Society rules. He provides a synopsis of a procession held on 14 August 1863 and some details about the society's meetings in the Town Hall. The benefit society funds were divided shortly after

¹³⁶ COEC *Minutes*, 18 October 1824, 1 September 1828.

¹³⁷ National Museums of Scotland, Acc. H.of 74.

¹³⁸ NAS, GD215/1728.

1851 but the lodge continued. The location of the original documents is not stated and to date these have not been traced. However Beveridge's notes give some clues as to ritual.

The Linlithgow society held its processions in August but conventionally celebrated St Crispin's Day in October. Officer bearers consisted of the President, two Supporters, Sir Hugh, Crispianus, Knight and Secretary. This is the first appearance of Crispianus apart from his role in the processions. True to the charter, the lodge agreed in December 1823 to admit members of any trade provided they were also initiated to the Order of Knighthood; and to establish a benefit fund. Again the lodge came first, friendly-society function later. In the following year the President was also named as King and office bearers had increased to include twelve Masters and two Boxmaster/Keykeepers. In 1825 a Chaplain appeared and by 1827 the list of members totalled 38 Knights and 25 Crispins. At the dissolution of the friendly society members numbered 47. They had paid 5s 6d entry money respectively to the Crispin Order and the Order of Knighthood, along with 6d to the Clerk of each Order. Entry to the friendly society was an additional expense ranging from 11s to 20s depending on age.

Unfortunately when Beveridge recorded details of meetings his notes became very sketchy:

Meetings in the Town Hall; adjourned to the 'Hole in the Wall'; skull and crossbones. At initiation they say psalm 'Behold how good a thing it is'....
Skull and cross bones were dug from the church yard with flesh attached buried in Loch: initiated Crispins had to drink water from the skull.

It is frustrating that Beveridge made such an intriguing précis of the original. The meaning of the ghoulish ritual however, will become apparent in chapter 6. Three gilded skulls and four gilded bones are part of the City of Edinburgh collection; and whatever happened in Linlithgow must have originated in Edinburgh (**Fig. 17**).

The existence of a third order

The existence of a third order of the Royal St Crispin Society in this period only emerges from an examination of the Minutes of the Montrose Society. There is no mention in the Edinburgh records of an Order of Masters. A hint that there might be one comes from an account of the 1824 procession

when, after the Lords and Chaplain, there walked 'Masters in the Craft two and two'.¹³⁹ By the 1832 Reform parade these numbers had been increased to 'three by three'.¹⁴⁰ Among the Montrose lodge documents, however, are *Rules of the Masters of St Crispin* which include the statement:

This day Brother and Master John Henry from Edinburgh arrived. By appointment of the Mother Lodge for the express purpose of establishing the 3rd Order of the Crispins or Order of Masters in Montrose... using his authority he initiated (named brothers)... in the highest order of the Craft after which the Masters Order in Montrose constituted and office bearers chosen – Master General of the Order, Deputy, Treasurer....Master Henry delivered a suitable address – thanks given to him for the Great Trouble he had undergone in the Long Journey he had undertaken and the very able manner in which he supported the Masters of the Craft on this occasion.¹⁴¹

Little extra detail is given in the document of the activities of this Order beyond the information that, on 1 December 1825, several members of the Montrose lodge were made masters for the important services they had rendered the craft; and that the masters now numbered 14. Although the last entry is dated 7 October 1863, there are only intermittent recordings of admissions, elections and some income and expenditure.

The first of the seven rules states that the Order shall be known by the title of 'the Royal Order the 3rd Order of the Masters Degree and the Chiefs by the title of Master General and Depute Master General and the Members by the title of masters'.¹⁴² The second that 'it shall always be under the direction of the St Crispin Society of Edinburgh and its Regular Branches'; and thirdly that 'no person be admitted who is not a Crispin and Knight of St Hugh nor without a special vote of the St Crispin Lodge certified to the Lodge of Masters by the Master and secretary of St Crispin'.¹⁴³ There is an indication here of a hierarchy similar to that of freemasonry whereby membership of the Court of Masters is only attained after progression through the first two orders. In freemasonry an 'initiate' progresses through the three 'Degrees'.¹⁴⁴ The title of Master General explains some lettering on regalia in the City of Edinburgh Museums' collection. **(Fig. 18)** Masters had precedence in all lodge meetings

¹³⁹ *Edinburgh Observer*, 26 October, 1824.

¹⁴⁰ *Caledonian Mercury*, 11 August 1832.

¹⁴¹ Angus Archives, MS 502/2, *Rules of the Masters of St Crispin*, 10 June 1824.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ George Kenning, printer, *Scottish Craft Rituals* (Glasgow, undated).

provided they sported the badge of the Order, a gold or gilded crown worn above the Star of St Hugh.

Whether other Royal St Crispin lodges inaugurated the Third Order is unknown. Beveridge in his synopsis of the Linlithgow minutes gives no indication of this, although in his list of office-bearers elected on 17 Nov 1824 there are twelve masters. In 1827, however, the list of members comprised only Knights and Crispins.¹⁴⁵ Airdrie shoemakers sent a deputation to Edinburgh to obtain a charter for the Master Craft, but this was not until 1862. Nonetheless the conclusion to be drawn from the Edinburgh and Montrose evidence is that the Royal St Crispin Lodge comprised three Orders, most likely in imitation of the three degrees of freemasonry. The first two are 'the Ancient Orders of St Crispin and St Hugh' and these have 'Secrets and Mysteries' into which candidates are initiated. The society is therefore one of those which were categorised as 'secret orders', as were Freemasons, Oddfellows, Gardeners and other groups. Meeting together under the banner of Royal St Crispin, members enjoyed participation in ritual practice devised around shoemaking stories and traditions, as well as convivial evenings and celebratory dinners.

Building the Royal St Crispin network

How did shoemakers outside Edinburgh learn about what the Royal St Crispin Society had on offer and which made them enthusiastic to become branch lodges? The 1820 procession was highly publicised in both the local press and newspapers in other parts of Britain. But these accounts gave no indication of an alluring ritual beyond the symbolism of the procession itself. However as Leeson has pointed out, contact among craftsmen was not new; he traces this to the late fourteenth century with journeymen movements among the Bristol and London cordwainers.¹⁴⁶ Dekker in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* of 1599 also demonstrates the mobility of craftsmen when the journeymen shoemakers persuade their master to employ the play's hero who is disguised as a Flemish shoemaker. Having paid his drink money he is

¹⁴⁵ NAS, GD215/1728, 5 December 1827.

¹⁴⁶ R. A. Leeson, *Travelling Brothers* (London, 1979), p. 34.

admitted to the shop.¹⁴⁷ Leeson argues that by the eighteenth century a network of contacts among craftsmen connected the main towns.¹⁴⁸ Similarly Hobsbawm in his examination of the tramping system, whereby a worker in search of employment travelled around the country armed with a 'blank' or document showing him to be a bona fide craftsman, shows the system in operation among English shoemakers.¹⁴⁹ There are examples of informal tramping from memoirs such as those of the shoemaker John Brown.¹⁵⁰

In both Germany and France there is ample evidence of craftsmen tramping. A support system for travelling journeymen existed in the medieval and post-Reformation German states.¹⁵¹ The 'tour de France' in the seventeenth century seems to have been part of a journeyman's way of life.¹⁵² Compagnonnages, networks of associations, mainly to the south of a line running from Nantes to Troyes, sustained itinerant workmen, including shoemakers on the tramp. The French compagnonnages had their own vocabularies, rituals, legends of Solomon, Maître Jacques and Père Soubise and elaborate initiation ceremonies. In 1778, a 'tramp' was defined by an Edinburgh leather merchant as 'a journey'.¹⁵³ The existence of a tramping society in Scotland, albeit in connection with a conspiracy to raise wages, emerged in the 1799 trial of three Edinburgh shoemakers accused of unlawfully combining for this purpose. Peter Arnot, Alexander Hay and James Henderson pleaded guilty to having formed, in 1795, an illegal association called The Tramping Society or United Journeymen Shoemakers which kept up a correspondence with other societies of a similar kind in Scotland and England.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁷ Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, eds Smallwood and Wells, pp. 107-110.

¹⁴⁸ Leeson, *Travelling Brothers*, p. 92.

¹⁴⁹ E. J. Hobsbawm, 'The Tramping Artisan', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, vol. 3, no. 3 (1951), pp. 299-301.

¹⁵⁰ John Brown, *Sixty Years Gleanings from Life's Harvest* (Cambridge, 1858), pp. 23-25.

¹⁵¹ W. J. A., 'Journeymen's Clubs', *Political Science Quarterly*, vol.12, no.1 (March, 1897), pp. 128-140.

¹⁵² Cynthia M. Truant, 'Solidarity and Symbolism among Journeymen Artisans', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Apr., 1979), pp. 214-2226; David Garrioch and Michael Sonenscher, 'Compagnonnages, Confraternities and Associations of Journeymen in Eighteenth century Paris', *European History Quarterly*, vol.16 no.1 (1986), pp. 25-45.

¹⁵³ Wilson, *A Collection of Masonic Songs and Entertaining Anecdotes*.

¹⁵⁴ *Scots Magazine* (February 1799), p. 141.

Some evidence of communication amongst shoemakers with regard to St Crispin celebrations comes from the accounts relating to the Edinburgh 'Crispin committees' of the mid eighteenth century. In 1755 the Glasgow journeymen borrowed the robes while Kelso hired the colours in 1757. Further unnamed loans of the Crispin robes earned 10s in 1763, 1765 and 1772 and in 1770 robes were sent to Dundee. Thus the costumes featured in the frieze of the Dundee procession painted in the Trades Hall could have been borrowed from Edinburgh. Crieff shoemakers usually acquired their Crispin procession costumes from Kilmarnock but on the occasion of their last parade (undated) the robes came from Perth.¹⁵⁵ Chapmen such as 'Hawkie' spread news as did country shoemakers who travelled to towns to sell their wares.

The 1820 Edinburgh procession, however, must also have been effective in drawing attention to what was happening in the capital where an organisation, independent of the conventional societies of journeymen shoemakers, had been established three years earlier. The Royal St Crispin Society had something different to offer to shoemakers in Edinburgh and elsewhere, in that it was a 'secret society' composed of three 'Orders' with ritual and regalia which focussed on the traditional 'patrons' of the past, St Crispin and Sir Hugh and created new contexts for them. Members of this lodge therefore, had more to share than the enjoyment of convivial evenings and the annual celebration of St Crispin's Day, important as these remained. The 1820 procession provided an opportunity for a visual presentation of the cordiner heritage and for proclaiming the presence of the Royal St Crispin Society; and it inspired the mounting of similar parades in other towns. As shoemakers considered these demonstrations to be of importance, their significance has to be investigated. The next chapter will examine the nineteenth-century St Crispin processions and those of preceding years, to ascertain their origins, purpose and the symbolism.

¹⁵⁵ D. Macara, *Crieff*, p. 139.

3: The magnificent pageant of King Crispin

The most curious relics of the pageants of a past age, still exhibited in our streets in public processions, is that of King Crispin, and his gaudy retinue. Many of the beholders, however are ignorant of the origin of so remarkable an exhibition, which indeed, is referable to times exceedingly remote.¹

The ubiquity of processions

Thomas Carlyle, writing of Louis XVI's abortive escape attempt from the French Revolution in 1791, likened the king's escorted return to Paris to the 'Procession of King Crispin, with his Dukes of Sutormania and royal blazonry of Cordwainery'.² And regarding the 1848 revolution in France he wrote 'the old scoundrel Louis Philippe has been packed about his business. Sent flying, he and his, like a King Crispin and his shoemaker Dukes'.³ These satirical comparisons are not so surprising given that Carlyle was born in 1795 in Ecclefechan, a village near Dumfries which certainly witnessed a St Crispin procession in 1818; and where the shoemakers participated in the 1832 reform celebrations 'in all the splendour of their craft'.⁴ That writers such as Carlyle and John Galt included references to Crispin processions in their works presupposes a familiarity with them on the part of their readers, but as Robert Chambers recognised in 1832, it is unlikely that many contemporaries would have appreciated the meaning and symbolism of 'the magnificent pageant of St Crispin' beyond the recognition that it was part of the cordiners' traditions.⁵ For spectators the public procession was a source of free entertainment, regardless of its significance for participants. Throughout the eighteenth century, club or society processions had become once more a regular feature of public life.⁶

¹ *Chambers Edinburgh Journal*, no.37, Saturday 13 October 1832, p. 308.

² Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution*, vol. II (centenary edition, London, 1896), p. 187.

³ *The Carlyle Letters Online*, vol. 22, pp. 261-263, <<http://carlyleletters.dukejournals.org/cgi/serch?fulltext=Crispin&submit.x=20&subm>>[21 May 2012].

⁴ *Caledonian Mercury*, 8 October 1818; *The Scotsman*, 12 June 1832.

⁵ *Caledonian Mercury*, 11 August 1832.

⁶ Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, pp. 245-270.

The purpose of processions

The tone of Thomas Carlyle's Crispin reference to 'Sutormania' hints at disapproval, echoing the sentiments of early nineteenth-century reformers eager to banish such 'gaudy' displays from the streets.

We trust that this is the last time our civic authorities will grant permission for a parade of such fooleries. Independent of the loss of time to mechanics of every description, it puts an almost total stop to business of every kind for several hours, and acts as a sort of excitement to members of the working classes to spend the rest of the day in dissipation, and for what purpose, merely to gratify the vanity of some few dozens of persons to exhibit themselves before the public in robes of office, fools coats and varnished faces.⁷

In this tirade the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* simultaneously hit the mark and missed it. Exhibiting 'before the public in robes of office' had been a principal purpose of processions for centuries.

Confraternities and guilds which flourished in late medieval towns almost invariably staged an annual procession followed by a mass and communal meal on the feast day of their patron saint, as a public representation of their corporate identity.... Procession was, very simply, the privileged mode of public expression in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. For the guild members themselves, participation in the procession dressed in livery was intended to reinforce the fraternal bonds.⁸

Processions, pageants and displays in honour of saints proliferated in the medieval period. The texts of St. Crispin plays given in Aix-en-Provence in 1443 and Compiègne in 1488 have been lost but those relating to performances in Rouen in 1443 and Paris in 1458 and 1459 still exist.⁹ Other saints' plays dating from the tenth to the end of the fifteenth century are numerous in French, Italian and Spanish, but rare in English and German and unknown in Dutch.¹⁰ The pre-sixteenth century *Consueta de Sant Crespé y Sant Crespinie* dramatises the martyrdom using many characters, special effects and several scaffold stages.¹¹ A specific reference to a new play (though not necessarily about a saint) being performed every day in Christmas 1528 on Hoggin-green in Dublin was made by Walter Harris writing in 1776. He quotes from a manuscript of Robert Ware who tells us that:

⁷ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 28 October 1824.

⁸ Ashley, 'Moving Subjects', p. 9.

⁹ Elisabeth Lalou, *Bibliothèque*, p. 100.

¹⁰ Lynette R. Muir, *Love and Conflict in Medieval drama: The Plays and their Legacy* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 7.

¹¹ James Stokes, 'The Wells Cordwainers Show: New Evidence Concerning Guild Entertainments in Somerset', *Comparative Drama*, vol. 19, no. 4 (winter 1985-6), p. 337.

the taylor's acted the part of Adam and Eve, the shoemakers represented the story of Crispin and Crispianus, the vintners acted Bacchus and his story..¹²

Clifford Davidson has argued that while in England there are almost no extant saint plays, there are references which indicate that at least 38 different saints (including Crispin and Crispianus) had 66 different plays written about them and that in Scotland, both Edinburgh and Perth witnessed saint plays.¹³ As seen in chapter 1, whether these plays were scripted, dramatic tableaux or processions on saints' days is a matter of contention among historians of drama. It seems certain however, that by the late Middle Ages confraternities and guilds:

almost invariably staged an annual procession followed by a mass and communal meal on the feast day of their patron saint, as a public representation of their corporate identity.¹⁴

Craig in his examination of the Lincoln cordwainers' accounts of expenditure incurred by mounting the Pageant of Bethlehem for St Anne's Day, attributes a payment in 1528 for 'pypers in die a processionis' to the day of St Crispin and St Crispianus rather than that of St Anne.¹⁵

Productions of Corpus Christi plays were also widespread throughout Britain, being performed in Aberdeen, Bath, Beverley, Bristol, Canterbury, Dublin, Ipswich, Leicester, Worcester and possibly Lincoln and London.¹⁶ Corpus Christi was a feast established in 1264 by Pope Urban IV to celebrate the doctrine of transubstantiation and was first recorded in England in Ipswich in 1325.¹⁷ Celebration of a mass preceded the procession of clergy and laity including the town magistracy and crafts in carefully designated order of importance and accompanied by 'pageants' either on moving wagons or at predetermined stations.¹⁸ Music provided an important component in creating dramatic effect, as did dance, and there is evidence of the use of both across

¹² Walter Harris, *The History and Antiquities of the City of Dublin, from the earliest accounts* (Dublin, 1776), p. 143.

¹³ Clifford Davidson (ed.), *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe* (Michigan, 1986), p. 241.

¹⁴ Kathleen Ashley, 'The Moving Subjects of Processional Performance' in Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüskén (eds), *Moving Subjects in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Amsterdam, 2001), p. 9.

¹⁵ Hardin Craig, 'The Lincoln Cordwainers' Pageant', *PMLA*, vol. 32, no. 4 (1917), p. 607.

¹⁶ Robert T. Lambdin and Laura C. Lambdin, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature* (Westport, 2000), p. 156.

¹⁷ Mervyn James, 'Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town', *Past and Present*, no. 98 (Feb., 1983), p. 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Europe.¹⁹ Once the religious part was over, the celebration concluded with secular feasting and festivity.

By the fourteenth century the guilds or trades, including the cordiners, organised the Corpus Christi procession and competed with each other in the mounting of plays, usually with biblical themes in honour of the celebrations. At Newcastle-on-Tyne Corpus Christi was associated with 'good unity, concord and charity between the crafts'; sentiments echoed centuries later by friendly societies including those of St Crispin.²⁰ As with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century processions, especially those of the trades, the occasion of Corpus Christi offered a visible expression of fraternity, status and conviviality; and the ability to put on a play was a public display of success. In Aberdeen, where an 'Abbot of Bon-Accord' was appointed in 1440 to conduct the play of 'Halyblude', the craftsmen were also called to appear annually at the 'offerand of our Lady' at Candlemas and in 1442 the cordiners were instructed to undertake the enactment of the 'Messayagour' and 'Moyses'.²¹ In a pronouncement of 1 February 1486, all the craftsmen were to bear their 'takinis of thare craft upon thare beristis' on Candemas Day; a decree reiterated in 1531 when the bailies pronounced that every craft was to come to the Candemas procession with its own banner and arms of the craft.²² After 1531 the martyrdom and the exploits of saints Sebastian, Laurence, Stephen, Nicholas and John featured in presentations by Aberdeen craftsmen. The closest the city shoemakers seem to have come to performing a saint play was in 1532 when they represented St Martin, regarded in many places (for example Chester and Chartres) as patron of a wide range of leather-related guilds such as tanners and glovers.²³

¹⁹ Roger E. Reynolds, 'The Drama of Medieval Liturgical Processions', *Revue de Musicologie*, T.86e, No. 1er (2000), p. 139.

²⁰ James, 'Ritual, Drama and Social Body', p. 10.

²¹ Bain, *Merchant and Crafts Guilds*, p. 49.

²² Robb Lawson, *The Story of the Scots Stage* (Paisley, 1917), p. 46; Agnes Mure Mackenzie (ed.), *Scottish Pageant 1513-1625* (Edinburgh, 1948), p. 90.

²³ William Kennedy, *Annals of Aberdeen: from the reign of King William to the end of the year 1818*, vol. I (Aberdeen, 1818), p. 95; Martin W. Walsh, 'Medieval "Martinmesse": The Archaeology of a Forgotten Festival', *Folklore*, vol. III, no. 2 (Oct., 2000), p. 242.

In Perth St Eloy, patron of the hammermen, featured in their Corpus Christe play as minuted on 23 April 1518 and 23 May 1553.²⁴ In Edinburgh, while there is evidence of the hammermen portraying Herod and his knights in Corpus Christi processions in 1498 and 1504, there are no records indicating any part played by the cordiners; although at the feast of St Giles on 1 September, the crafts went in procession with the relics of the saint.²⁵ Edinburgh also had its 'Sant Innocentis beschop', 'Abbot of Narent', and 'Robin Hood' or 'King of the May' and the Perth baxters held an annual riding in honour of their patron saint on 10 December.²⁶ Clopper has argued that it is more likely that most processions on saints' feasts, church ales and other games were a group's way of celebrating an attachment to a saint rather than a performance of a vita play.²⁷ Saints 'were regarded both by an ample share of the population and by the members themselves as specific and consequently as typical of the occupation concerned'.²⁸

Processions, therefore, demonstrated the solidarity of participants, dressed as they were in distinguishing costumes and marching under their individual guild banners; and publicised what differentiated them from other crafts or organisations. A seal of cause granted to the Edinburgh masons and wrights on 15 October 1475 indicates an awareness beyond mere local self importance as their elected overseers were allowed to have 'their placis and rowmes in all general processions lyk as thai haf in the towne of Bruges or siclyke gud townes'.²⁹ When all the guilds in a town processed together, claims for precedence were hotly disputed as, for example, in Aberdeen in 1507 when the skimmers objected to being placed after the cordiners in processions at Candemas and other occasions.³⁰ Similarly, on 21 June 1530 the Edinburgh Town Council established that the shearers, waulkers and bonnet-makers should pass together between the fleshers and barbers and the websters between the bakers and tailors in 'all processions, conventions

²⁴ Anna Jean Mill, 'The Perth Hammermen's Play: A Scottish Garden of Eden', *The Scottish Historical Review*, vol. 49, no. 148, part 2 (Oct., 1970), pp. 146-7.

²⁵ Anna Jean Mill, *Medieval Plays in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1927), pp. 72-3, 74.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 74.

²⁷ Clopper, *Drama, Play and Game*, p. 132.

²⁸ Thijs, 'Religion and social structure', p. 166.

²⁹ James D. Marwick, *Edinburgh Guilds and Crafts* (Edinburgh, 1909), p. 48.

³⁰ Bain, *Merchant and Craft Guilds*, p. 57.

and councils'³¹. The pre-Reformation procession was undoubtedly a prestige event.

In the eighteenth century a public parade proved to be a valuable device for making an impressive impact. 'Crowds of spectators watched as the big society processions used their passage across town, entering key areas of public space, to identify themselves with the urban community'.³² In Edinburgh the Grand Lodge of Freemasons processed on St Andrew's day, but the shoemakers appear alone among the trades in publically commemorating their patron saint.³³ The St Crispin processions cited earlier certainly attracted press coverage. It is not surprising, therefore, that the newly formed Royal St Crispin Society would want to emulate the practices of its predecessors. Indeed it had planned to do so in 1819. Members agreed to have printed publicity cards indicating a procession placed 'in the principal Leather shops', but for unspecified reasons, probably financial, they substituted a simple march to the Thistle Lodge for the anniversary dinner.³⁴

The Royal St Crispin Society processions

In 1820 there was no lack of enthusiasm among the Edinburgh citizenry for the pageant of St Crispin, attracted as people were by the entertainment and novelty value of a spectacle last seen 44 years earlier. The excited press estimates reckoned that the event attracted 'a greater portion of the population than we have ever on any former occasion seen assembled on the streets.'³⁵ All the main Edinburgh newspapers printed reports, as did a range of provincial organs.

A repeat performance planned for 1821 had to be abandoned, 'the Magistrates having thought proper not to grant permission'.³⁶ No doubt they were unwilling to risk the narrowly avoided crowd-control disaster of the

³¹ Marwick, *Edinburgh Guilds*, p. 68.

³² Clark, *British Clubs*, pp. 266-7.

³³ William Alexander Laurie, *The history of freemasonry and the grand lodge of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1849), p. 116. The Grand Lodge held its first candlelit procession in 1754. The *Caledonian Mercury* reported these processions from 1800-1809.

³⁴ COEM, *Minutes*, 5 July, 27 September, 25 October 1819.

³⁵ *Caledonian Mercury*, 26 October 1820.

³⁶ COEM, *Minutes*, 25 October, 1821.

previous year. Not to be thwarted the Royal St Crispin Society resorted to a coach cavalcade to transport the King and his retinue from 'Holyrood-House to the Calton Convening Hall'.³⁷ The crowds turned out again in 1824 when they formed an 'immense concourse of persons beyond all expectation'; popular endorsement of the power of public pageantry.³⁸ A line in the *Edinburgh Observer* highlights another potent reason for going to the trouble and expense of organising such events, namely recruitment. 'It is said that the procession has been the means of exciting about fifty individuals to become members of the society.'

The potential of using spectacle as part of a marketing campaign had been demonstrated frequently by the freemasons who seized on the opportunities that ceremonies for the laying of foundation-stones afforded them for public display. Attendance, for example, at the inauguration of the Edinburgh North Bridge project in 1763, or of the University in 1789, provided the suitable theatricality for advertising the attractions of belonging to an organisation that dressed up and had 'secrets'.³⁹ Friendly societies such as the *Journeymen Bakers Friendly Society of Edinburgh and Leith* or the *Gilmerton Junior Friendly Society* paraded in distinguishing regalia, thereby visually demonstrating unity and sociability to spectators.⁴⁰ Thus it proved for the Royal St Crispin Society. Fourteen new members were recruited following the 1820 procession and forty-four, not the fifty of the newspaper report, in 1824.

The symbolic parade from Holyroodhouse, although impeded in 1820 and 1824 by the throng of spectators and lack of military guard, afforded the mainly shoemaker perambulators the opportunity of affirming both the solidarity of the craft and its historic links to the cordiner practices of the past. The Society had taken care to invite the Incorporation of Cordiners of Edinburgh and Leith to take part in 1820, as well as other Master Boot and Shoemakers and journeymen in the city.⁴¹ Not only did the Edinburgh

³⁷ NLS, L.C. 1268(039).

³⁸ *Edinburgh Observer*, 26 October 1824.

³⁹ Laurie, *Freemasonry*, pp.118-9, 141-145.

⁴⁰ NAS, FS1/17/85; Edinburgh City Libraries, YHS1508G4[648651].

⁴¹ COEM, *Minutes*, 18 September 1820.

Incorporation accept, but it also voted that five guineas should be paid to the St Crispin Society 'to be applied in purchasing a crown for King Crispin or for any other purpose they may think proper'.⁴² The deputation of shoemakers from Kirkcaldy donated a more modest 9s to the procession fund while the Musselburgh contingent gave £2.⁴³ It is a sign of the enthusiasm engendered for the event that the 'processionists' were prepared to pay for the privilege of walking; 1s 6d for members, 2s 6d for 'strangers' (non members) and 1s for apprentices who had to wear white aprons. An invitation 'to enter our Lodge' had been extended to both masters and journeymen shoemakers.⁴⁴ In 1824 the branches of Linlithgow, Dunfermline, Arbroath and Montrose were asked to participate, as well brethren in Kirkcaldy, Musselburgh and Dalkeith.⁴⁵

Both processions included characters present in eighteenth-century processions but also introduced new figures, all of which, as Chambers commented, would have been unfamiliar to many of the beholders. In an attempt to provide background information, the poster advertising the 1820 event gave prospective spectators a synopsis of both the original legend of the saints Crispin and Crispianus and a version of Thomas Deloney's late sixteenth-century English account. Less than one third of the poster narrative is devoted to the legend of the brothers' martyrdom at Soissons, with Bannatyne's *Key to the Almanack* cited as the source. The rest of the text, billed as a 'more modern legendary Biography of these two personages', recounts a condensed version of the Kent-based tale and is followed by the order of the procession which does not completely match some of the newspaper accounts in its list of participants or the entry for 17 October in the minute book.⁴⁶ An explanation of the Sir Hugh story might have been expected as the year 1820 marked his first appearance in a procession anywhere; and as seen in the previous chapter, the Royal St Crispin Society differed from other shoemaker societies in its creation of the Order of Sir Hugh.

⁴² NAS, GD348/209, 7 November 1820; GD348/220, 22 November 1820.

⁴³ COEM, *Minutes; Royal St Crispin Society Account Book*, 25 October 1820.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 16 October 1820.

⁴⁵ COEM, *Minutes*, 20 September 1824.

⁴⁶ NLS, L.C.1268(033).

Characters in early Scottish Crispin processions

It is difficult to determine if early nineteenth-century processions such as that of 1820 were more elaborate than those of the previous century. The accounts for Edinburgh found in newspapers from 1739 to 1776 cite only King Crispin, his pages, ushers, guards, members of the craft and bands of music.⁴⁷ If there were other characters, such as a Champion or Indian Prince, it seems strange that no mention was made even within the context of limited space in the contemporary press. The gallery interpretation of the frieze in the McManus depicts King Crispin's companions as a Champion, Indian Prince, Marshall, and Trumpeter all on horseback, as well as an Archbishop (more probably a Lord Mayor) and an array of pages, office-bearers, shoemakers and musicians in eighteenth-century costume (**Fig. 19**). As this painting was not completed until 1825, no definitive conclusion can be drawn as to whether all the figures actually processed in Dundee in the eighteenth century.

A similar problem arises with the descriptions of the Kilmarnock Crispin celebrations. Archibald McKay states the most imposing of the Trades' processions to be that of the St Crispin Society which chose a king who:

walked majestically in front, arrayed in royal robes, with a dazzling crown on his head, and several smart little pages bearing up his train....A Lord Mayor, an Alderman, an Indian King, and a Champion encased in a coat of mail were also distinguished in the parade.⁴⁸

However McKay's history was published in 1858 and he based his opinion that 'this custom of the shoemakers began about 1773' on the fact that an account for robes and other articles found in 'an old minute book' bore that date. An early memory of John Galt, born in 1779, relates to being taken to see the Kilmarnock procession specially mounted for the future Duchess of Portland, but he only states that:

It was certainly very grand; the only procession I ever saw in any degree comparable to it was the coronation of King George the Fourth....⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Caledonian Mercury, 26 October 1739, 27 October 1741, 26 October 1742, 25 October 1743, 26 October 1749, 28 October 1754, 25 October 1760, 26 October 1763, 26 October 1771, 26 October 1772; Edinburgh Evening Courant, 27 October 1741, 26 October 1749, 28 October 1754, 25 October 1760, 26 October 1763, 26 October 1771, 26 October 1772, 26 October 1776.

⁴⁸ McKay, *The History of Kilmarnock*, p. 105.

⁴⁹ Galt, *Autobiography*, p. 7.

Similarly James Robertson's 1839 narration of the New Year's Day pageant in Aberdeen merely describes the cordiners' participation as:

The shoemakers were preceded by their patron St Crispin, (whom they advanced to the dignity of a crown) attended by a number of pages becoming his high rank.⁵⁰

This account, with its lack of characters such as those portrayed in the Dundee frieze, accords with the description of the Aberdeen journeymen's St Crispin Day celebration in 1746 when King Crispin was accompanied by two knights, four pages, fifteen lords, members of the craft, musicians and grenadiers.⁵¹

The only eighteenth-century descriptions of English shoemaker processions found to date do not indicate a plethora of characters either. In 1777 the cordwainers of Bury St Edmunds processed on horseback to escort Crispin, styled as Prince, with Crispianus attired in a coat of mail.⁵² Their retinues wore outfits of green, blue, red, purple and white with morocco half boots and leather jackets and caps. Trumpeters and bands of music added to the festivity mocked by lines which appeared in the *Ipswich Journal* on 31 October:

The exhibition past; their tinsell'd show,
Is all exchang'd for penury and woe!
The Prince, who late in royal robes begirt,
Is now at work, alas without a shirt!
Crispianus too, had he his martial coat;
I really think, would pawn it for a groat!

When the festival was revived in 1813 the account of 3 November in the *Bury and Norwich Post* supplied no details of the participants.

Crispin and Crispianus are the only designated figures in the Shrewsbury show, an annual day of festivities with its origins in the feast of Corpus Christi in the sixteenth century (**Fig. 20**). At the head of the procession on 6 June 1825 came the shoemakers, preceded by

Crispianus dressed in the uniform of an officer "sixty years since," with sword and gorget; his cocked hat ornamented with a bouquet of blue and white ribbons; by his side Crispin in a leather surtout with his mace surmounted by the boot, their horses led by their squires, and preceded by a halberdier.⁵³

⁵⁰ Robertson, *The Book of Bon-Accord*, p. 244.

⁵¹ *The General London Evening Mercury*, 13 November 1746.

⁵² Tymms, *East Anglian Notes and Queries*, p. 31; John Glyde, *The New Suffolk garland* (Ipswich, 1866), p. 280.

⁵³ Thomas Phillips, *History and antiquities of Shrewsbury* (Providence Grove, Near Shrewsbury, 1837), p. 255.

In Selby there appear to have been just two principal characters in the King Crispin procession on 25 October 1786. However these are curiously described as the King and Queen on horseback attended by a noble train with colours flying, band of music, bells and firing of cannon.⁵⁴ Hexham shoemakers also seem to have had a King Crispin, queen, prince and princess, but the ladies and their attendants did not process.⁵⁵

John O’Keeffe, born in 1747, recalled seeing in his boyhood and youth the riding and walking of the trades of Dublin, when:

the shoemakers displayed a prince and princess Crispin and Crispiana, dressed in gold and silver robes and crowns, with two little pages carrying between them a crimson velvet cushion, and on it a gold slipper.⁵⁶

Yet there is no mention of this in *Sketches of Ireland Sixty Years Ago*, published in 1847. Here the shoemakers are relegated to being preceded by a person representing St Crispin with his last.⁵⁷ Some verification for the presence of a Crispiana comes from two identical newspaper reports for May 1843 of a demonstration at Cork in favour of repeal of the Union. The shoemakers’ representation included two persons dressed in the regalia of royalty, who were seated:

under a canopy, which was drawn up in a carriage frame. One of them represented the Queen Crispiana in robes of state; the other King Crispin with ermined mantle and sceptre in hand looking royalty itself. Behind the canopy stood two youths dressed as pages in light blue, with hats and feathers, à l’Henri Quatre, and sustaining their office with peculiar dignity.⁵⁸

Crispiana also featured in later trades’ processions in Canada, appearing in Toronto in 1882 and Saint John in 1883.⁵⁹ She may be a renaming of Princess Ursula from Deloney’s *The Gentle Craft*, or the transposition of St Crispina, a fourth-century saint martyred in Africa, into the Crispin legend just as Deloney himself had altered the legend of the Welsh St Winifred for his story of Sir Hugh. Whatever the explanation, there is no

⁵⁴ *The Yorkshire Magazine*, vol.1 (1786), p. 395.

⁵⁵ *Notes and Queries*, 1st Series, vol.VI (London, 1851), p. 243; *Newcastle Weekly Courant*, 7 November, 1884, 28 May 1892.

⁵⁶ John O’Keeffe, *Recollections of the life of John O’Keeffe* (London, 1826), p. 41.

⁵⁷ John Edward Walsh, *Sketches of Ireland Sixty Years Ago* (Dublin, 1847), p. 53. Walsh drew much of his information from his father Robert Walsh, born in 1772.

⁵⁸ *Belfast News-Letter*, 26 May 1843; *Derby Mercury*, 31 May 1843.

⁵⁹ *Toronto Globe*, 24 July 1882, *Saint John Globe*, 2 October 1883 quoted in Craig Heron and Steven Penfold, *The Craftsmen’s Spectacle: Labour Day Parades in Canada, The Early Years*, *Social History/Histoire Sociale*, vol. 29, no.58 (1996), p. 369.

<<http://www.pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/hssh/article/view/4760/3953>>[21 May 2012].

Crispiana in the all-male shoemaker processions in Scotland, notwithstanding references in both Daniel Wilson's *Memorials* and the *Dundee Courier* to a Queen or Princess.⁶⁰ These latter figures were the consorts (wives and sweethearts) who attended the ball or celebration after the procession and dinner and who, with their partner, led the first dance.

Her Majesty entered the ball-room a little after 8, and was led by her illustrious partner to a seat, under the royal canopy, the whole company standing uncovered, and the music playing God Save the King. The ball was then opened with a Scotch reel by the royal couple, joined by the Highland Chieftain and his partner.⁶¹

If, therefore, nineteenth-century reminiscences and accounts are to be believed, eighteenth-century Crispin processions included in addition to King Crispin and his pages, ushers and bands of music, a Champion, Indian Prince, Marshall, Crispianus, Crispiana (outwith Scotland), perhaps an Archbishop and a Lord Mayor. A Lord Mayor is mentioned accompanying King Crispin through Sunderland in 1809, but four years later a similar parade in Dumfries mustered in addition to the Champion and Indian King, the late King, Royal Mace, Aldermen and Generalissimo as well as eight pages, an array of captains, apprentices and members of the craft.⁶²

Additional figures made their appearance in Stirling and Glasgow in the years preceding the 1820 Edinburgh procession. Stirling shoemakers organised two processions, one in 1815, the other in 1819, as part of the New Year festivities. The *Caledonian Mercury* published a report on 9 January 1815, as did the *Star* (13 January), complete with King Crispin's speech in which he referred to the lapse of upwards of half a century since a procession had been held in Stirling. The 1819 parade was a more grandiose affair than its predecessor. In 1815 the figures represented were the King and his pages, Champion, Lord Mayor, Prime Minister, fifteen Lords, Indian Prince, a colonel and the obligatory colours, music bands and captains. In 1819, according to a poster preserved in the *Stirling Antiquary*, additional figures appeared, namely a Herald, Secretary of State, Privy Councillor, Lord Chancellor, British Prince,

⁶⁰ Wilson, *Memorials*, p. 292; Malcolm, *Incorporation of Cordiners*, p.136; *Dundee Courier*, 15 August 1871.

⁶¹ *Glasgow Herald*, 5 November 1821.

⁶² *Tyne Mercury*, 31 October 1809; *Caledonian Mercury*, 7 October 1813.

two Sheriffs, Macer, a party of Caledonians and a Don Cossack. Nine pages accompanied the King.⁶³

In his novel *The Steamboat* (1822), John Galt devotes considerable space to a Crispin theme, this time comparing George IV's coronation unfavourably with that of King Crispin in Glasgow in 1818. He produces a list of the order of the procession which accords with the report in the *Glasgow Herald*. With the exception of the Herald, all the figures present in Stirling also processed in Glasgow including the Cossack.⁶⁴ The one figure conspicuous by his absence from these processions is Sir Hugh.

Influences on the 1820 Edinburgh procession

The Royal St Crispin Society when making arrangements for its celebration in 1820, benefited from the assistance of both Lord Archibald Hamilton and Sir Patrick Walker. Lord Archibald Hamilton was the brother of the 10th Duke of Hamilton, hereditary Keeper of the Palace of Holyroodhouse; and both were eminent freemasons, the Duke being Scottish Grand Master in 1820-22.⁶⁵ On 21 October 1820 King Crispin, in the person of William Sawers, wrote to Lord Archibald Hamilton requesting permission for the 'Sons of Crispin' to have use of the Picture Gallery in the Palace. The favourable response instructed Sawers to take the enclosed reply to Mr Dickie the Baillie who wrote to Mrs Gelletry, custodian of the Picture Gallery:

In terms of the annexed order from Lord Archb Hamilton you will give the Sons of St Crispin the use of the Large Gallery at there (sic) procession today at the same time taking especial care that no injury be done to the Gallery itself or to the Pictures therein under your charge.⁶⁶

It was not unusual for rooms in the Palace to be used for entertainments such as those given at the election of Canongate bailies; and in the eighteenth century the journeymen shoemakers had assembled in the forecourt prior to the parade through the suburbs and city. By 1824, however, the permission granted to the Royal St Crispin Society had been translated

⁶³ Morris, *The Incorporation of Shoemakers of Stirling*, pp. 20-23.

⁶⁴ Galt, *The Steamboat*, pp. 209-213.

⁶⁵ John Philip Wood (ed.), *The Peerage of Scotland*, vol.1 (2nd. ed. Edinburgh, 1813), pp. 724-5; *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. v (London, 1908), p. 1164, vol. viii, p. 1023.

⁶⁶ COEM, Minutes, 29 November 1820.

into 'by permission of the Duke of Hamilton in accordance with their ancient privilege'.⁶⁷ By mid-century, as stated at the coronation of the Perth King Crispin in 1863, the privilege had achieved longevity of at least four centuries.⁶⁸ This reinvention of tradition was reinforced in 1884 at the soiree and concert of the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge when the Chairman (if accurately recorded):

briefly sketched the local history of the order, mentioning that it dated as far back as the year 1449 when the members paid a weekly sum for the maintenance of an altar within the collegiate church of St Giles. The Sons of Crispin had also the permission granted by King James II to meet within Holyrood Palace; and the last occasion was in the year 1820.⁶⁹

In fact the last time a Crispin procession began from the Palace was in 1824, as the Sons of Crispin would have known, had they read the minutes of their predecessors properly, rather than having, a few months previously, held:

Some conversations as to the Order and their having at one time had the use of Holyrood Palace for the formation of a Procession in the year 1820 when the Secy handed out a copy of the Letters giving said grant (a copy) which is posted on the front of this Minute Book which is extracted from the Old minute book of that date.⁷⁰

When the procession Committee met on 12 October 1820, it deferred entering its resolutions in this 'Old minute book' 'owing to Sir Patrick Walker knight wishing to help us make some alterations'; namely 'till after Monday 16th curr which night Sir P Walker sett apart to assist us in our undertaking'. Sir Patrick Walker of Coates, notable freemason, was Gentleman Usher of the White Rod, holder of an office originally hereditary but which, after 1758, became a purchasable honour. White Rod had been responsible for directing members of the Scottish Parliament on ceremonial occasions until the Union of the Parliaments in 1707.⁷¹

What advice Sir Patrick gave the Crispins is not recorded but at the post-procession dinner they both drank his health and accorded a vote of thanks to him, 'for so assisting with A Great number of articles for the furtherance of our Procession'.⁷² They had previously paid 7s 4½d for the 'carriage of armour from Sir Patk Walkers and postage of a letter to Lord

⁶⁷ *Caledonian Mercury*, 27 October 1824.

⁶⁸ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 31 October 1863.

⁶⁹ *The Scotsman*, 22 November 1884.

⁷⁰ COEM, *Minutes of the Grand Lodge (of Scotland) Royal St Crispin (Edinburgh) now the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge (Mother Lodge)*, 12 December 1883.

⁷¹ Laurie, *The history of freemasonry*, pp. 226, 223-227.

⁷² COEM, *Minutes*, 25 October 1820.

Archibald Hamilton'.⁷³ A noted antiquary, Sir Patrick had a collection of armour which he apparently loaned on occasions.⁷⁴ Editor of *Documents relative to the reception at Edinburgh of the Kings and Queens of Scotland*; and as White Rod, a participant in the coronation of George IV in 1821, he possessed the knowledge to assist the St Crispin Society with the 'authenticity' of its event. The figure of White Rod, if not present in the 1820 Edinburgh procession, was certainly represented in 1821, 1824 and 1832; but does not appear in any procession elsewhere, which suggests either Walker's influence or a compliment to him. He, along with 'a large party of ladies', witnessed the procession from 'a balcony in front of Messrs Duncan's shop Princes Street'.⁷⁵ Sir Patrick's involvement with the Crispins was sufficiently known for him to be lampooned in London for it. In a spoof account of 'pretended performances at the Royal Mohock Theatre', theatrical characters included Sir Oliver Surface played by Sir Walter Scott and 'Ambassador and Lyon King of Arms to the Court of King Crispin' acted by Sir Patrick Walker.⁷⁶

While the inclusion of White Rod is unique to Edinburgh processions, Black and Red Rods appear in processions in other towns as well as Edinburgh, though they are only mentioned after 1820.⁷⁷ This could be in imitation of the capital's shoemakers, or just an omission from published accounts. Whatever the significance of Sir Patrick's input in Edinburgh however, an examination of Crispin processions reveals much imitation of British coronation ceremonies by the shoemakers. This is most apparent in the impersonation of roles such as Marshal, Archbishop, Champion, and the presentation of the parade as part of the coronation ceremony – the showing of the king to his subjects.

The great officers of state, namely the Earl Marshall, the Lord Great Chamberlain, the Lords High Steward and High Constable had central roles in the organisation and performance of national coronation ceremonies; and in the bearing of regalia and ornaments such as crown, spurs, the four swords

⁷³ COEM, *Accounts*, 21 October 1820.

⁷⁴ *The Scotsman*, 13 January 1836.

⁷⁵ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 28 October 1820.

⁷⁶ *The Morning Chronicle*, 1 January 1821.

⁷⁷ The Usher of the Black Rod was and is a senior officer in the House of Lords; Scarlet or Red Rod is the Usher of the British Order of the Bath.

(including the Sword of State), sceptre, glove, orb, mace. The Scottish and Irish officers, namely the Hereditary Standard Bearer of Scotland, the Hereditary Usher of the White Rod and the Lord High Constable of Scotland along with the Hereditary Lord High Steward of Ireland also processed with the entire College of Arms of England and the Scottish and Irish Kings, Heralds and Pursuivants of Arms.

In the Crispin processions for which there are informative descriptions, numbers of these 'officers of state' are found. The Marshall, depicted in the Dundee frieze, is a consistent figure in processions throughout the nineteenth century, though sometimes his role is more 'military' (Marshall of the Camp at Kelso in 1821 for example) than 'ceremonial'. The Lord High Constable appears only in Edinburgh in the 1820s and in 1832, perhaps reflecting the advice of Sir Patrick Walker, and not until the 1860s elsewhere – Perth, Glasgow and Dumbarton. Ushers, Standard Bearers and Macers feature everywhere, with Black and Red Rods cited in Kelso, Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and Linlithgow as well as Edinburgh in the 1820s.

Peers of the realm and government ministers attended coronations and these are present in Crispin processions especially in the persons of Secretary of State and Treasurer and the figures described as lords and knights. Stirling (1819) and Dunfermline (1823) each produced a Lord Chancellor and a Prime Minister marched through Stirling in 1815. In 1819 he appeared 'powdered, in a black gown, with an opera hat under his arm'.⁷⁸ Crieff shoemakers included a Prime Minister and Lord Lyon King-at-Arms in their procession (c.1820) and in Dumbarton in 1865 the Prime Minister carried the Sword of State in company with a Purse-Bearer, Lord Advocate, Solicitor-General and Lord Lyon King-at-Arms.⁷⁹

English coronation ceremonies for monarchs after Charles II included a foot procession from Westminster Hall to Westminster Abbey. Before the Scottish coronation of Charles I at Edinburgh in 1633, the procession from the Castle to Holyrood Abbey was partially on horseback, as were nineteenth-

⁷⁸ Ebenezer Henderson, *Annals of Dunfermline* (Glasgow, 1879), pp. 614-616; Morris, *Incorporation of Shoemakers of Stirling*, p. 19. The Royal St Crispin Society paid 13s for an opera hat in 1821.

⁷⁹ Macara, *Crieff*, p. 140; *Glasgow Herald*, 24 June 1865.

century Crispin celebrations, although in Edinburgh these began from the Palace not the Castle. The retinue of King Charles comprised trumpeters, lords, the Archbishop of Glasgow, bishops, the Privy Seal, mace, heralds, pursuivants, spurs, sword, sceptre and crown. The Lord High Constable, Great Chamberlain and Earl Marshall preceded the mounted king whose train was borne by four pages.⁸⁰

Church dignitaries at English coronations include the Dean and Prebends of Westminster, but the Archbishop of Canterbury, who traditionally performs the crowning ritual, awaits the monarch in Westminster Abbey, as did the Archbishop of St Andrews in Holyrood Abbey in 1633. The coronation of a 'King Crispin' however, preceded his procession, and the role of the 'Archbishop' is unclear. In Kelso, Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline, for example, the Archbishop processed but in Linlithgow he only officiated. In Perth in 1863 the Bishop crowned the King but the Archbishop processed. When the Falkirk lodge undertook a 'Royal Ceremony' in 1872, 'the bishop of the order' performed the coronation ceremony. There is no mention of an Archbishop in Edinburgh in either the Royal St Crispin Minutes or the press reports. The only reference to the coronation ceremony states that:

The Earl Marshall in presenting the crown to his Majesty observed that it was more ancient than the Roman Eagle and he trusted that it would be of more duration than the Golden Bull.⁸¹

The figure which consistently attracted most attention in Crispin public displays was the Champion, usually clad in armour 'cap-a-pie' and always mounted (**Fig. 21**).⁸² However the champion was absent from national coronation processions. His role was enacted at the post-ceremony banquet when, in company with the Lord High Constable and the Earl Marshall, he rode into Westminster Hall to throw down his gauntlet as a challenge to anyone who would deny the new sovereign. (This 'charade' was discontinued after 1821.) While the most likely explanation for the presence of the Champion in Crispin processions is as 'King's Champion', yet there was a

⁸⁰ *Henry Bradshaw Society*, vol. 1 (London, 1892), pp. 94-106; James Grant, *Old and New Edinburgh*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1887), p. 5.

⁸¹ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 28 October 1820.

⁸² *Glasgow Herald*, 30 October 1820; *Caledonian Mercury*, 11 August 1832.

centuries' old tradition of champions or figures in armour appearing in varieties of parades where a king did not feature.

The best known pre-Reformation champion figure was that of St George, who, clad in armour, processed annually through Norwich, led by a sword bearer, standard bearer, musicians and dragon, with a princess added in 1530.⁸³ Mill cites a post-Reformation procession of St George in Lanark; and in Chester in 1610, the figure of St George 'in complete armour with his flag and buckle' participated in a civic parade along with allegorical figures and the Lord Mayor and Aldermen.⁸⁴ A man or men in armour featured regularly in the Lord Mayor of London's show which had become something of an annual civic event by 1585. The 1591 show included a Champion, with two in 1611 and eight men in armour 'cap a pee' on horseback in 1700.⁸⁵ By the mid-eighteenth century the number of figures in armour had been reduced to one, for whom Withington suggests a chivalric origin stimulated by his applicability to the Armourers' or Ironmongers' guilds. In 1761, for example, the Armourers and Braziers Company was preceded by a 'Man on Horseback in a complete Suit of Armour with a Plume of Feathers on his Head and proper Attendants'.⁸⁶

Accounts of the various trade processions celebrating the passing of the 1832 Reform Act include descriptions of similar armed participants. In Edinburgh the Goldsmiths marched with a mounted Champion in silver armour; the Tinsmiths had one habited in superbly burnished black tin armour complete with battle axe, while the Champion of the Leith Tin and Coppersmiths sported a coat of mail, baton, axe and shield.⁸⁷ The Wallace Youths also produced a Champion in 1832, preceded by a weighty battle axe and supported by two highland chiefs. By this time they must have acquired

⁸³ Muriel C. McClendon, 'A Moveable Feast: Saint George's Day', *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 38, no.1 (1999), p. 12. There may be some cross-over here with Crispin and Crispiana.

⁸⁴ Mill, *Medieval Plays*, p. 70; McClendon, *St George's Day*, p. 25.

⁸⁵ Robert Withington, *English Pageantry; An Historical Outline*, vol.1 (Cambridge, Mass., 1918), pp. 47, 60; vol. 2, pp. 26, 33, 68.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 91, 95.

⁸⁷ *The Scotsman*, 11 August 1832.

their own armour, having borrowed that of the Royal St Crispin Society in 1827.⁸⁸

Another splendid Champion, who greatly impressed the Edinburgh populace on numerous occasions, represented the Masonic Lodge Roman Eagle. At the laying of the foundation stone of Regent's Bridge in 1815, there appeared:

the gigantic figure mounted on horseback and decked out all in the majesty of "nodding plumes and mail romantic" who like the Ghost in Hamlet, marshalled the way to the Lodge Roman Eagle.⁸⁹

Repeat performances occurred throughout the nineteenth century including those of 1825 and 1827 when he was accompanied by two Indian supporters.⁹⁰

While the Royal St Crispin Society produced no more full-scale coronation processions after 1824, it did manage to present something akin for the 1832 Reform Parade. Apart from joining an Association of Friendly Societies in 1827 formed to comment on the proposed Friendly Society Act, appearances in reform processions were the only examples of the Edinburgh Crispins participating in politically motivated events. Their 1832 'imposing spectacle' was the royal pageant of King Crispin whereas the 'United Shoemakers' carried flags bearing images such as 'Britannia holding the cap of Liberty' and the legend 'the will of the People is the supreme law'.⁹¹ Friendly Society rules later in the century expressly forbade political or religious discussion in meetings. After 1832 costumed figures in public processions were limited to the Champion and Heralds as, for example, in 1876. The Grand Lodge of St Crispin was preceded by 'a couple of mounted heralds in dingy tabards and championed by a cavalier, armed cap-à-pie' in the Foresters' Demonstration in connection with the opening of the High Court of that Order.⁹² It remained for branch lodges such as Montrose (1856), Linlithgow (1861), Perth (1863) and Falkirk (1878) to reenact, in public, King Crispin's coronation procession.

⁸⁸ COEM, *Minutes*, 19 June 1827.

⁸⁹ *Caledonian Mercury*, 23 September 1815.

⁹⁰ Alfred Murray, *Historical Notes on the Lodge Roman Eagle* (Edinburgh 1908), pp. 21-4.

⁹¹ W. Millar, (ed.), *An Account of the Edinburgh Reform Jubilee* (Edinburgh, 1832), pp.35, 39.

⁹² *The Scotsman*, 8 August 1876.

The most likely explanation for the figure of the Champion is as chivalric defender of King Crispin. The toast proclaimed at the Kilmarnock dinner in 1821 to 'our distinguished Champion', hoped that 'he may always be ready to throw down the gauntlet in defence of our order.'⁹³ No office-bearer with this title (unlike Sir Hugh or Crispianus) existed within the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge, the Encampment of the Knights of Sir Hugh or the branch lodges. Yet having the ability to dress a member as Champion when the occasion arose (whether at public meetings or the annual dinner) seems to have been essential, as witness the amounts spent on repairs. In 1871 the Edinburgh brethren spent 3s 6d on the armour, £1 1s for a sword and gauntlet, with 8d for a plume for the helmet and 4s 6d for repairing the coat of mail.⁹⁴ Rejapanning the armour cost 10s in 1888. The Crispins recouped expenditure by loans to other lodges or shoemaker societies; to Falkirk in 1873 or Inverness and Nairn in 1884.⁹⁵ The Champion's costume is now part of Edinburgh Museums' collection, as are two Heralds' tabards bearing the Royal heraldic arms for the period 1714-1801 (**Fig. 22**).⁹⁶ It seems likely that the tabards were worn in the 1820 procession. *The Scotsman*, in describing the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge Benefit Society soiree and concert on 20 November 1886, said incorrectly that the Heralds' costumes were worn in 1820 when the members of the original lodge turned out to welcome King George IV –the king's visit was two years later.

The Champion always merited notice in the press. When the shoemakers of Sunderland and Wearmouth paraded for the Jubilee of George III in 1809, however, the figure of the Lord Mayor attracted most attention, as he did in Kilmarnock in 1821, where:

His portly paunch, and high and dignified bearing, shewed he had done the honours of many a civic FEAST ...He wore a full suit of black, under a long scarlet gown, with powdered wig, cocked hat, and every other appurtenance in the first style of civic fashion. A macer preceded his Lordship, and two aldermen supported him on the right and left, clad also in black, with gowns of the like hue.⁹⁷

⁹³ *Glasgow Herald*, 20 August, 1821.

⁹⁴ COEM, *Grand Lodge of Scotland Royal St Crispin Minute Book*, June 1871; *Minutes*, August 1888.

⁹⁵ COEM, *Minutes*, 14 July 1873, 8 June 1884.

⁹⁶ Malcolm, *Incorporation of Cordiners*, p. 136.

⁹⁷ *Tyne Mercury*, 31 October 1809; *Glasgow Herald*, 20 August 1821.

Having a Lord Mayor as part of a Crispin procession is another indication of imitating the 'real thing'. By custom dating to the fifteenth century, London coronation processions included the Lord Mayor of London and entourage; (the Lord Provost of Edinburgh for the 1633 procession of Charles I in the Scottish capital). In 1761 the Lord Mayor of London, in 'his Gown, Collar and Jewel, bearing the City Mace' processed in front of Lord Lyon King of Arms of Scotland.⁹⁸

By including the Lord Mayor and Aldermen in their public displays, the shoemakers not only imitated monarchical practice but also alluded, intentionally or otherwise, to their own legends. The third story in Thomas Deloney's *The History of the Gentle Craft* concerns Simon Eyre, whom Deloney makes a master shoemaker rather than the upholsterer and draper he was. Thomas Dekker concurs with this conceit in his play *The Shoemaker's Holiday* and both works chart Eyre's rise to fortune and the office of Lord Mayor. In reality Simon Eyre was Lord Mayor from 1445-6 as representative of the Drapers' Company. Whatever the reason for the inclusion of a Lord Mayor in the documented Crispin processions, his presence remained consistent until their disappearance from the streets. The figure in the Dundee frieze therefore is not the Archbishop but the Lord Mayor, especially as is wearing a fur-trimmed tippet and a gold chain (**Fig. 23**).

At the head of the Crispin processions in Kelso in 1821 and Dunfermline in 1823, but not recorded elsewhere, were girls strewing flowers.⁹⁹ 'The effect produced by these little innocents who were beautifully dressed, with chaplets of flowers', is a direct reference to seventeenth-and eighteenth-century coronations. For example, in 1761 the King's Herb Woman with her six Maids strewed the way with herbs, as their successors did for George IV in 1821 when the attendants wore white satin and dressed their hair with flowers.¹⁰⁰ With the exception of 'Dukes', there appear to be no further correlations with official coronation assemblies. Other Crispin

⁹⁸ *St James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post*, 19-22 September, *London Gazette*, 22 September.

⁹⁹ *Kelso Mail*, 29 October 1821; Henderson, *Annals of Dunfermline*, p. 614.

¹⁰⁰ *London Gazette*, 22 September 1761; *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, 23 July 1821

procession figures do not correspond to any in actual historical coronation processions and the most colourful of these are the Indian Prince and his attendants.

Two images exist of this personage. The first is the representation in the Dundee frieze where he is dressed in Persian costume complete with feathered turban and battle-axe (**Fig. 24**). The second is the depiction of him in an oil painting by William Turner (1789-1862) entitled *The procession of George IV entering Princes Street Edinburgh August 1822*.¹⁰¹ At the front of the crowd, beside a mounted Champion and a Herald on foot, is the Indian Prince astride a white horse. With blackened face underneath a large white and gold turban, he sports a matching jacket and sits on a red saddle cover (**Fig. 25**). While not captioned as such, this trio must surely be representing the Royal St Crispin Society whose members were earlier positioned on the north side of the High Street, a little below Morrison's Close, to view His Majesty's progress from Holyroodhouse to the Castle. After the King had passed, 'the Lodge marched along the North Bridge and took up a station at the end of it and had the pleasure of again seeing His Majesty pass before them along Princes Street' – exactly where Turner painted them.¹⁰²

The fullest verbal picture of the Indian Prince comes from the account in the *Kelso Mail* of 29 October 1821:

His turban was adorned with white plumes and jewels. His long flowing robe was of a pink colour; and he wore a brace of pistols in his girdle. His wide trousers reached his shoes, which were red, terminating in a narrow point, turned up towards the leg. He held a beautiful silver pipe in his hand. His Supporters, armed with bows and arrows, and his Page, with a battle-axe of fearful magnitude, formed altogether a most conspicuous and interesting group.

Other descriptions from Dumfries (1813), Stirling (1815 and 1819), Ayr and Kilmarnock (1821), Dunfermline (1823) and Perth (1863), have him similarly dressed, armed and accompanied by supporters, although in Stirling in 1815, the group lacked impact because 'unluckily they did not blacken their faces'.¹⁰³ The Crieff Indian Prince was similarly unauthentic as his family

¹⁰¹ COEM, HH694/1913.

¹⁰² COEM, *Minutes*, 22 August 1822.

¹⁰³ Morris, *Incorporation of Shoemakers of Stirling*, pp. 18-19.

objected to the prospect of his face being painted, but he did carry a scimitar and 'jewelled handled dagger'.¹⁰⁴

As a pageant participant, an Eastern personage was no novelty. The English mummer plays often had St George fighting against 'The Turkish Knight' with conventionally black face. Basque plays featured Turkish Kings battling with Charlemagne or Geoffrey of Boulogne.¹⁰⁵ A King of the Moors robed in red satin mantle and armed with a 'long sword' appeared in the London Midsummer show of 1521.¹⁰⁶ The Lord Mayor of London's show in 1585 also included a figure 'apparelled like a Moor', riding on a lynx; while two 'Moors' on unicorns rode for the Goldsmiths in 1611 and bestrode two leopards in 1656. A 'Persian' made an appearance in the show three years later, and in 1761 seven of the Skinners' company processed, dressed in furs, having their skins painted in the form of Indian Princes.¹⁰⁷ Often an 'Eastern' figure in pageants represented trading links. In Thomas Middleton's civic employments of the early seventeenth century, the Indian Chariot and the Continent of India celebrated the trade of the Grocers' Company with the East.¹⁰⁸

An argument can be made, however, for a more specific 'trade myth' explanation for the figure in the Crispin processions. In Deloney's *The Gentle Craft*, while Crispin is wooing the princess Ursula, his brother Crispianus is dispatched to Gaul to fight for the Emperor against the mighty force of the Persian General Iphicrates who just happens to be the son of a shoemaker. In the course of trading pre-battle insults, Iphicrates pronounces that a shoemaker's son is a prince born. After much fighting, in which Crispianus acquits himself nobly, Iphicrates has to concede that he 'a Shoemakers son was by a shoemaker foyled'.¹⁰⁹ Reconciliation and rejoicing follow, then the Persian general departs with his army, never to annoy them again.

¹⁰⁴ Macara, *Crieff*, p. 141.

¹⁰⁵ C. R. Baskerville, 'Some Evidence for Early Romantic Plays in England (concluded)', *Modern Philology*, vol. 14, no. 8 (December 1916), pp. 506-7.

¹⁰⁶ Clifford Davidson, *Festivals and Plays in late Medieval Britain* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 40.

¹⁰⁷ Withington, *English Pageantry*, vol. 2, pp. 23, 31, 46, 117.

¹⁰⁸ R. C. Bald, 'Middleton's Civic Employments', *Modern Philology*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Aug. 1933), p. 74.

¹⁰⁹ Deloney, *The Gentle Craft* (1637), p. 36, (1675), p. 23.

Crispianus, knighted for his heroic efforts, returns to Britain to be reunited with his brother and achieve a happy ending.

Curiously neither the broadsheet advertising the 1820 Edinburgh Crispin procession, nor the report of the 1821 Kelso Crispin coronation celebrations mention Iphicrates, though both narratives give a synopsis, albeit less than accurate, of Deloney's original tale.¹¹⁰ The Kilmarnock shoemakers toasted the Indian King as 'our Illustrious visitor', thereby also giving no indication of knowledge of the Iphicrates story.¹¹¹ One variation of Deloney's tale appears in the account of the 1824 Edinburgh procession which the *Edinburgh Observer* published on 26 October.¹¹² Here the writer has Crispin in Gaul fighting an Indian Prince who 'by certain signs known only to the craft' discovers Crispin's trade. The Indian Prince then accompanies Crispin to England where they are later joined by Crispianus who has assumed the name of Hugh! This version is more interesting for its references to secret signs and the recognition that Hugh might be important, than for its accuracy in reproducing the original story.

Although, like the Champion, the Indian Prince had no role as an office-bearer of the Royal St Crispin Lodge, nonetheless the members deemed it necessary to appoint a committee to oversee his dress cut.¹¹³ For the 1820 procession Mr Murray of the Theatre Royal had supplied costumes, including that of the Indian Prince. With the acquisition of their own outfit, the members demonstrated optimism about organising processions in the future but, unlike the Heralds' costumes, that of the Indian Prince has not survived.

What explanation can be given of the several remaining named figures in the Crispin pageants? 'Old Dukes' appear only in Kelso in 1821, a year when an 'Old King' processed in Kilmarnock and Ayr as he did in 1831 in Glasgow. The dates may be significant here, being years following the deaths of monarchs, but as newspaper accounts mention the length of time since the festivities were celebrated in these towns, a statement about continuity of tradition may be being made here by the shoemakers, especially as they did

¹¹⁰ NLS, LC.1268(033); Kelso Mail, 29 October 1821.

¹¹¹ *Glasgow Herald*, 20 August 1821.

¹¹² The proprietor of the *Observer* was Sir Patrick Walker.

¹¹³ COEC, Royal St Crispin Society, *Minutes*, 15 October 1821.

not belong to branch lodges of the Royal St Crispin Society at this period. Committees of many different organisations, however, often included the 'old praeses' or president in lists of office bearers, so it may have been the custom for former holders of offices to process.

Crispianus, as shown earlier, was the brother of Crispin both in the original legend and in Deloney's tale. He was not mentioned by name in an Edinburgh procession until 1824, but he appears a year earlier in Linlithgow and Dunfermline; shoemakers of both towns being among the first to receive charters from the mother lodge. Crispianus was present in the Edinburgh Reform Demonstration of 1832 and later in processions in Perth, Glasgow and Dumbarton in the years 1863-5. Although not mentioned as an office-bearer in the early incomplete minutes of the Royal St Crispin Society, his election is recorded in Linlithgow for the period 1823 to mid-century; and in Airdrie in 1861.¹¹⁴ As will be seen later, Crispianus belonged to the Encampment of the Knights of Sir Hugh.

References to a British Prince (Ayr 1821 and 1844, Glasgow 1831) could mean Crispianus, while the Prince Royal (Edinburgh 1824, 1832, Perth 1863, Glasgow 1864) might be interpreted as Crispin's son. If this is the case the shoemakers in their processions are making a double reference to their saying 'a shoemaker's son is a Prince born', as Princess Ursula, (Crispin's wife) pronounces this maxim on presenting her son to the Emperor at the end of the Crispin story. In 1824 in Edinburgh the Prince Royal wore a close doublet and mantel of silk brocade, a large ruff and round hat with three large white feathers.¹¹⁵

Highland chieftains or Highlanders appear in at least twelve processions throughout the nineteenth century, possibly reflecting the contemporary 'tartan romanticism' and influence of Sir Walter Scott. So keen were the members of the Airdrie lodge to have a Highland presence in their 1863 procession that they instructed their secretary to write to Mr Mowet of Denny, 'requesting him to come and walk as Highland chieftain and to bring

¹¹⁴ NAS, GD215/1728, 24 October 1823; North Lanarkshire Archives, U431, *Royal St Crispin Lodge Airdrie*, 28 October 1861.

¹¹⁵ *Edinburgh Observer*, 26 October 1824; *The Scotsman*, 27 October 1824.

all the Highland costumes he could'.¹¹⁶ On 20 May 1870 the Falkirk brethren wrote to the Grand Lodge in Edinburgh to see whether they could get any Highland uniforms or tunics and swords. They could, for payment of expenses and being responsible for any damage.

What meaning can be made of the Cossack? The earliest dated reference to him is in Ayr in 1821, although he also made an appearance in Crieff around this time.¹¹⁷ He was present in Glasgow in the celebrations for the coronation of William IV in 1831 and in 1864 and 1873 in similar public displays marking royal events. The only description of the Cossack comes from the press report of his attendance at King Crispin's coronation in Perth where:

with a fur mantilla and a wig like a weeping willow, (he) came on quite bold, as a fierce Cossack should do; but when he got in the full gaze of the king, he seemed to take stage fright, and bowed as if he could not help it, which to say the least, was undignified in a Cossack.¹¹⁸

His origin is something of a mystery as no evidence, so far, has been traced for such a figure in medieval pageants or the Lord Mayor's show. It is tempting therefore to regard the Cossack as an example of Chambers' conclusion that the pageants of Crispin, in modern times, 'vary in their characters in different places, according, perhaps, to the fancy of the members of the gentle craft'.¹¹⁹

The remaining figure of importance is that of Sir Hugh who, as indicated earlier, made his debut in the 1820 Edinburgh procession. The story of Sir Hugh in *The Gentle Craft* ends with Deloney's version of the origin of 'St Hugh's bones', the nickname for shoemakers' tools. It is likely that Deloney did not invent the explanation entirely but built on earlier tales. Whether or not a Sir Hugh character appeared in earlier processions, his named presence in 1820 signalled that the Royal St Crispin Society was offering something different to its current and prospective members.

Impressive though the characters in the Crispin processions might have been they were but supporting players to the leading actor King Crispin himself. Antiquaries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries struggled

¹¹⁶ NLA, U431, 19 September 1863.

¹¹⁷ Macara, *Crieff*, p. 145.

¹¹⁸ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 31 October 1863.

¹¹⁹ *Chambers Edinburgh Journal*, p. 308.

to supply an explanation as to the reason for St Crispin's metamorphosis into King Crispin, shrouded as it is in 'the thick dust of hoary antiquity'.¹²⁰ An anonymous writer in 1881 made no attempt at an explanation and took refuge in the statement:

The saint himself was always represented in the parade, either as a crowned king or on his way to coronation, there being a tradition in the trade that Crispin was a monarch as well as a saint. How this notion originated cannot be told, but from time immemorial the Scotch Shoemakers have called their occupation "the royal craft", and in their arms the royal crown has prominence.¹²¹

Morris on the other hand, suggests that the shoemakers' pageants were survivals of the mystery plays of pre-Reformation times.

A favourite play was that of King Herod and it occurs to me that the changing of Saint Crispin into King Crispin was due to a confusion of the two originally separate pageants of the Christian Saint and the Hebrew King.¹²²

There is no evidence that shoemakers presented any pageant of King Herod as this responsibility fell to other crafts such as the hammermen in Aberdeen or Edinburgh, the vintners and merchants in Chester or the shearmen and tailors in Coventry.¹²³

Baxter, in a bizarre justification for the post-Reformation commemoration of a Catholic saint in Perth opines:

It was a procession and play suited to the times and the innocent secularising of a saint. Under it was the desire to commemorate the preacher-shoemaker. It may have been a remembrance rather than a reverence – what if it was, it was free of guile and that justified it.¹²⁴

And in a lengthy letter to the *Glasgow Herald* in 1900, J.F.S. Gordon, amongst much inaccurate detail, recounts that the battle of Agincourt was won on St Crispin's Day. Henry V celebrated his victory with a triumphal entry into London. 'Probably this circumstance led to the transformation of St Crispin into King Crispin.'¹²⁵

As described earlier, post-Reformation shoemakers remained attached to their celebration of St Crispin's Day. Reluctant to abandon their cult of the patron saint, they might well have seized on the opportunity presented by the English version of the story of Crispin and Crispianus to transform a Catholic

¹²⁰ *Standard*, 29 October 1855.

¹²¹ *Leeds Mercury*, 27 August 1881.

¹²² Morris, *The Incorporation of Shoemakers of Stirling*, p. 17.

¹²³ Mill, *Medieval Plays*, pp. 27, 72-3; Hunt, *The Perth Hammermen Book*, p. lvi; William Tydeman, *The Medieval European Stage 500-1500* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 21.

¹²⁴ Baxter, *The Shoemaker Incorporation of Perth*, p. 221.

¹²⁵ *Glasgow Herald*, 25 October 1900.

saint into a Protestant monarch. The happy ending of Deloney's tale leaves the reader with a presumption that Prince Crispin and Princess Ursula will become king and queen. The *Kelso Mail* journalist subscribed to this view in his postscript to the report of the 1821 King Crispin procession, concluding his synopsis of both French and English legends with:

Crispin soon after ascended the throne, and his Coronation was attended by all the shoemakers in the city upon whom he conferred many important privileges. After a long and happy reign, he abdicated the throne, and retired to spend the remainder of his life in preparation for eternity. His piety procured him the title of Saint and gratitude led the Craft to adopt him for their Patron.¹²⁶

There are, however, instances of 'kings' being elected by craftsmen other than shoemakers. Farr, for example, cites the Parisian journeymen tailors who chose a 'king' of their company in 1505.¹²⁷ Journeymen in Catholic France, of course, had no reason to convert saints to kings. The best-known 'sovereign' was the King of the Bazoche. Carlyle drew on his local Scots knowledge when he compared the ignominious procession of Louis XVI to that of King Crispin; but Mercier used different experience to suggest that it resembled 'some Procession de Roi de Bazoche'.¹²⁸

The Bazoche or Basoche (the name of which first occurs in 1442) was the guild of clerks working for ministerial officials.¹²⁹ In Paris there were two basoches, one for the Paris Parlement and one for the Châtelet, but there were guilds in Toulouse, Dijon, Grenoble and Bordeaux. On 1 May the procurators and clerks elected the 'king' and officers of the 'kingdom' of the basoche which included, among many others, a chancellor, a grand maître, an admiral, constable, a number of marshals, peers, secretaries, a physician, and even an innkeeper. The king also 'faisait tous les ans, à Paris la montreu revue de ses sujets, sorte de carrousel où étaient conviés tous les clerks du Palais', estimated at around 6,000.¹³⁰ By the time of the French Revolution and Mercier's simile, all that survived of these reviews was an annual procession and setting up of a maypole.

¹²⁶ *Kelso Mail*, 19 October 1821.

¹²⁷ Farr, *Artisans in Europe*, p. 207.

¹²⁸ Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Nouveau Paris*, iii. 22, in Carlyle, *The French Revolution*, p. 187.

¹²⁹ Roland E. Mousnier, *The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy 1598-1789*, vol. II (Chicago, 1984), p. 322.

¹³⁰ Marius Audin, *La Bazoche et les clerks du palais* (Lyon, 1909), p. 7. Each year the king reviewed his subjects in Paris in a circular procession of all the clerks.

Whatever the European influence or medieval legacy, the evolutionary process from the cult of a saint to the celebration of King Crispin remains undocumented for Scottish cordiners. When the monarch emerges however, into the spotlight of media attention in the eighteenth century, he cuts a dazzling figure. While described merely as being richly dressed in ‘an antique Garb’ in Edinburgh in 1739, he merits a full description in 1741:

Their King was very richly drest, he had a fine crimson velvet suit, trimmed with Gold, a Train of crimson satin fac'd with Ermin and a collar round his shoulder with the Order of their Champion Crispianus; on his head was a rich coronet adorned with Jewels, a Gold Ribband was tied round his Left Leg, and he had a Baton in his Hand.¹³¹

This is much as he appears in the Dundee frieze and in other Crispin processions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though often more attention is paid to other figures (**Fig. 26**). Sometimes extra detailing is provided, such as gold embroidery on his coat, or red shoes. On two occasions in Edinburgh he sported a bonnet rather than a crown. Pages bearing the royal train varied from four to nine, the most common number.

Reports of Crispin in the later nineteenth century do not describe the monarch, but there is a photograph in Falkirk Archives of ‘King Duncan, his princes and retinue’, probably from 1883, the year of the last procession in Falkirk (**Fig. 27**). The image shows a consistency of approach by the shoemakers. Mr Duncan as King Crispin is attired in what appears to be a trimmed velvet jacket, knee breeches with ribands, an ermine-edged train born by nine pages and his outfit topped with a crown. One white-gloved hand holds a baton. His supporters are also clad in ‘antique garb’ and wear ducal coronets while the pages in eighteenth-century dress have tricorne hats.

By no stretch of the imagination can this Falkirk King be made to fit the view of nineteenth-century antiquaries like McKay who stated that the craftsmen chose one from their number ‘who was usually an individual of a somewhat dignified deportment’.¹³² Perhaps McKay was influenced by examples such as that of Mr John Shanks, reputedly the first person to walk as King in the Festival of King Crispin in Dumfries, and whose death notice in

¹³¹ *Caledonian Mercury*, 26 October 1739; *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 27 October 1741.

¹³² McKay, *History of Kilmarnock*, p. 105.

1807 credited him with being the handsomest man in the south of Scotland.¹³³ Another notable sovereign, William Sawers merited a newspaper paragraph on his death in 1847, being described as having a 'princely and majestic appearance' when he walked in the 1820 Edinburgh parade.¹³⁴ On the other hand, King Crispin in Paisley in 1822 lacked majesty, being 'a portly personage of about sixteen stone', although what he 'wanted in grace, he made up for in gravity.'¹³⁵

The full-scale Crispin coronation procession took place after the ceremony which was usually performed in a location with royal or civic connections, such as the Picture Gallery in the Place of Holyroodhouse (1820), the courtyard of Stirling Castle (1815 and 1819) and the Palace Yard at Linlithgow (1823); or the Dunfermline Town Hall (1823) and the Croft-Field of Kelso (1821) where a special tent was erected for the crowning ceremony. The Newcastle shoemakers assembled in the court of the Freeman's Hospital in 1824. Later in the century the Crispins used town or trade halls (Montrose 1825 and 1856, Perth 1863, Greenock 1864, Falkirk 1872) or rented the hall of another society such as the Oddfellows, as the Edinburgh brethren did in the 1880s.

The only descriptions of the Coronation ceremonies come from a few newspaper accounts and reminiscences. There are no details in minute books. Secretaries, when they record anything at all, are more interested in the procession, banquet and subsequent ball. With the exception of Edinburgh, where only the Earl Marshall is mentioned as presenting the crown, either the 'Archbishop' or 'Bishop' performed the crowning. Versions of the orations are given for Kelso in 1821 and Dunfermline (1823), and involved much blowing of trumpets and exhortations to the subjects to be loyal to their King. The Kelso 'dignitary' was conscious of his 'duty in placing on your sacred head this Crown, which I hope you will long wear in splendour and happiness'.¹³⁶ He also had the assistance of the 'High Chancellor' in putting the sword of state and sceptre into the monarch's hands. In Crieff crown and

¹³³ *Hull Packet and Original Commercial Literary and General Advertiser*, 27 October 1807.

¹³⁴ *The Scotsman*, 23 January 1847.

¹³⁵ *Glasgow Herald*, 6 September 1822.

¹³⁶ *Kelso Mail*, 29 October 1821.

sceptre were displayed on a table in the Masons' Lodge where the coronation took place. When the 'Archbishop of Canterbury' placed the crown on the king's head his subjects shouted 'Long live the king'. The band then 'struck up the Crispin March and the procession commenced to defile from the hall'.¹³⁷

Apart from Perth in 1863, reports later in the century for places such as Montrose, Greenock and Falkirk merely record the event or summarise the ceremony being performed with 'great pomp and solemnity'. Interestingly the Crispin throne in Montrose, 'with its canopy of state covered with the royal crimson and sparkling with gold ornaments', its flight of steps and 'chair of state' was dated as 1654.¹³⁸ Either this is evidence of seventeenth-century Crispin celebrations, or that the lodge had use of the Incorporation chair.

By far the most fulsome description of a Crispin coronation comes from the satirical pen of the *Dundee Courier* journalist who covered the Perth jubilations on 31 October 1863. This ceremony was lengthy, with the bishop's oration seemingly never-ending. Apart from the amusing comments of the writer, what is noteworthy here is the shift from merely crowning the King to an exposition of the myths of the saints Crispin, Hugh and Winifred, with an apparent continuity extending back for almost 1600 years. This was a celebration of the 'beautiful and most sublime order of St Crispin' which 'has now been handed down from generation to generation for such a length of time even to the present day'.¹³⁹ The emphasis on the Order having been founded by St Crispin in the fourth century is a theory propounded by the St Crispin lodges in the latter half of the nineteenth century, as will be examined in the next chapter.

Although at the annual festival of 1884, crown, sceptre and sword of state were displayed on the platform with the heralds positioned at either end, no public coronation of King Crispin is recorded for the Edinburgh lodge from 1824 until 1893. The Society, by this time entitled the Royal Ancient Order of St Crispin of Scotland (City of Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge No 1), had debated the question of the expense of getting up a coronation; and had

¹³⁷ Macara, *Crieff*, p. 145.

¹³⁸ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 5 November 1856.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 31 October 1863.

received a response from its secretary to the effect that it depended on the scale and the place chosen.

He did not think it could be done for under between £80 and £100 and gave a statement of some of the items of expenditure which he thought would be necessary if it was in the Waverley Market or the Music Hall.¹⁴⁰

In the end the brethren agreed to have a Festival and Soiree (Fruit and Cake), a concert and coronation ceremony. The press description of the latter estimated that nearly thirty members of the 'Court' and officers of 'State' dressed in 'gorgeous robes' participated. King Crispin's train was borne by eight pages, the main part of the ceremony devolved upon 'the Archbishop' and Mr James Clarke's choir 'sung the hymns and anthems'.¹⁴¹ *The Scotsman* account of the event informed readers that the annual soiree of the Royal St Crispin Society had included the crowning of Brother Milne; 'a similar ceremony had not taken place since October 1824 when performed in Holyrood Palace'.¹⁴²

By 1899 the Royal St Crispin Society had instituted yet another friendly society which held a soiree and concert in the Edinburgh Literary Institute on 15 December.¹⁴³ The second part of the programme consisted of:

a performance of an ancient ceremonial connected with the Order the crowning of King Crispin which was excellently conducted under the auspices of Brother R Brown. During the ceremony appropriate music was rendered by a choir of about twenty voices.¹⁴⁴

If the last evidenced King Crispin could not have his procession, he at least had some trappings of regality.

The Lingering Legacy

Throughout the nineteenth century, in addition to processions following coronations, the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge and its branch lodges mounted King Crispin pageants on varying scales for civic and national occasions. For Edinburgh the most imposing spectacles proved to be those for the visit of George IV in 1822 and the demonstration in 1832 which marked

¹⁴⁰ COEM, Minutes, 2 July 1883.

¹⁴¹ *Evening Dispatch*, 16 December 1893.

¹⁴² *The Scotsman*, 16 December 1893.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 16 December 1899.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

the passing of the first Reform Act. Thereafter costumed participation in other events seems to have been limited to the Champion and Heralds, as in the 1873 Edinburgh trades procession in favour of the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.¹⁴⁵

On the other hand, the Edinburgh society did lend robes and regalia to its brethren for various processions in Alloa, Linlithgow, Dalkeith, Dumbarton, Falkirk, Airdrie and Stirling and to shoemakers in Inverness and Nairn. A splendid King Crispin pageant formed part of the Burns commemoration in Ayr (1844); and King Crispin helped to celebrate royal weddings in 1863 and 1874 (Dumfries, Dundee, Airdrie and Perth), a royal baptism in 1864 (Perth, Glasgow and Greenock) and a variety of foundation-stone laying, trades demonstrations and statue inaugurations. Even Anstruther (apparently unlinked to the Edinburgh society), produced a King Crispin to celebrate the passing of the third Reform Act in 1884.

A King Crispin procession therefore was a deeply symbolic occasion; an opportunity for the participants to use a colourful and highly public means of demonstrating who they were and what was special to them and about them. Although the altar to the saints Crispin and Crispianus in St Giles Kirk Edinburgh was destroyed in the religious reformation of the mid sixteenth-century, as altars were elsewhere in Scotland and England, the cordiners remained devoted to, and identified by, their patron saint. The shoemakers' procession with the saint's image on the saint's day might have vanished in non-Catholic countries, but by the eighteenth century there is substantial evidence of its reincarnation in the form of King Crispin's pageant in Scotland and other areas of Britain. While the size of these parades is undetermined, they attracted the attention of writers and spectators. By the early nineteenth century however, the scale was considerable and in the case of the Royal St Crispin Society, its procession in 1820 acted as a powerful recruitment tool and advertisement for the recently formed lodge and its ritual.

The Society was sufficiently cognisant of the French St Crispin legend and the later English versions of the tale of the two brothers, to have them reproduced in the poster advertising the 1820 procession. They thus

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 25 August 1873.

emphasised the importance of a 'tradition' for which they could cite pre-Reformation evidence in the form of the sanctification of Crispin and Crispianus as their patrons. The presence of Sir Hugh (which attracted the attention of other lodges) and accompanying colourful figures in the procession, demonstrated the cultural richness of the 'society' to which they belonged, and presented an element of mystery and drama to the spectators, however this might be mocked by some commentators.

Throughout the nineteenth century, as evidenced in this chapter, Crispin processions, discussions about processions and costumed representation in other processions, remained an integral part of the activities of the St Crispin lodges. With or without a regal parade, brethren enacted coronation ceremonies at least until 1899, although by this time they formed part of the annual general meeting of the lodge constituted as a friendly society – the genteel soiree with fruit, cake and concert party replacing the sumptuous tavern banquet and loyal toasts given 'three times three' of earlier times. But however reduced in scale, the essential elements of the procession, with its visual proclamation of what set the St Crispin Society apart from other groups – the emphasis on the shoemaker's claim to be a 'Prince born' and the reworking of the St Hugh legend – remained and leaves its material evidence in Scottish museum collections.

4: The Impulse of an Awakened Spirit

During the greater proportion of the last thirty years the lodges throughout Scotland gradually languished and declined, and it is but very recently that under the impulse of an awakened spirit they again emerged from obscurity and took their place among the other brotherhoods of the land. I am glad to say that generally the new movement has been very successful, exceeding the most sanguine expectations and inspiring us all with heart and hope.¹

A new era

In a lengthy and euphemistic oration the 'Bishop' officiating at the coronation of King Crispin in Perth in 1863 expressed his hopes that a new era had dawned for the St Crispin brotherhood. This 'brotherhood', with its devotion to St Crispin, celebration of his feast day and the legends surrounding him, has been examined in previous chapters, as have the eighteenth-century St Crispin Societies and the formation of the Royal St Crispin Society in the early nineteenth century. This chapter will investigate the organisation of the first network of lodges established by the Edinburgh society; the 'Restoration' of the Royal St Crispin Society as the Grand Lodge and the ethos of 'Crispianism'; the relationship of the other lodges to the Grand Lodge, and its eventual breakdown and recreation as the first lodge of an elected body.

The first network of lodges

The presence of shoemaker groups from other areas in the Edinburgh Crispin procession of 1820 is an indication of a departure from the norm. In the eighteenth century, the Edinburgh cordiners had contact with their counterparts in Glasgow, Dundee and Kelso for the purpose of lending robes and colours, but there is no evidence that eighteenth-century processions were anything other than local. In 1820 however, deputations from Musselburgh and Kirkcaldy, if not other towns, walked with the Royal St Crispin Society. The first documentary evidence of a more formal association comes on 18 April 1822 when the Royal St Crispin Society met in Mr Johnston's Tavern to receive their 'Worthy Brethren' of Leith and Montrose to

¹ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 31 October 1863.

whom were granted charters. (Leith had previously been part of the Edinburgh Society.) The Edinburgh Society is named as the parent lodge with Leith and Montrose as 'Branches Nos.1 and 2', pledging to conform to the Rules and Regulations of their respective Charters. These include the stipulation that no alteration in the rules be permitted 'without consent of a Majority of all the regular Lodges of St Crispin of Scotland'.² Clearly the brethren anticipated expansion.

The element of control exercised by the parent lodge was demonstrated by the clause regarding the transmission within three months, to the Edinburgh secretary of the names of the 'Principal Officebearers and Secretary and a certificate list of Entrants', with 6d sterling for each Enrolment or 'entry'.³ Montrose dutifully complied in June and November and a return from Leith was recorded on 6 December 1824. The Linlithgow shoemakers received their charter, with similar conditions, in Alston's Tavern, West Register Street, Edinburgh. They paid one guinea, with 5s 6d for entry to each Order and £5 for the loan of robes.⁴ Other cordiner groups acquiring charters and paying dues in that year came from Arbroath, Dundee and Dunfermline. Perth brethren borrowed robes in 1822 but do not appear to have received a charter until 15 December 1824, two months after Alloa (18 October). There are, however, examples of inconsistencies and discrepancies in the minute and account books of this period. Thus Falkirk, first recorded as sending registration fees in September 1828, is numbered as Lodge No. 7, whereas Dundee, a charter recipient of 1823, is Lodge No.10.

Irregularities apart it is clear that there was considerable contact between Edinburgh and the branches in the 1820s over the issue of charters and the lending of robes and regalia. The Edinburgh brethren twice discussed the motion that 'this society shall receive all Crispins whether initiated in the Parent Lodge Edinburgh or the Lodges holding from it', but they recorded no decision.⁵ The parent lodge also took a lead over compliance with the Friendly Society Act of 1829, having joined an association of friendly societies in

² COEM, *Minutes 1817-1823*, 18 April 1822.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ COEM, *Minute and Account Book 1823-1831*, 9 June 1823 NAS, GD215/1728.

⁵ COEM, *Minutes* 4 September, 4 December 1826.

1827.⁶ Edinburgh amended its own regulations, sanctioned in May 1830, and sent copies to 'each lodge holding off the Royal St Crispin Society'.⁷ Both Montrose and Linlithgow had established benefit schemes in 1824.⁸ There is no record of any conference of lodges. A possible indication of a more formal organisational arrangement comes from Montrose where, on 8 November 1824, the secretary noted that no registration fees should be sent 'to the Grand Lodge till such time as the Lodge shall have emerged from all its own pecuniary embarrassments'.⁹ There is a degree of ambiguity here. Do the financial difficulties relate to Edinburgh or Montrose? That apart, the significant factor here is the use of the term 'Grand Lodge', the only example prior to 1862.

The title 'Grand Lodge' has a Masonic origin and was used to indicate the governing body of an organisation. The freemasons established a Grand Lodge in England in 1717 and similar bodies were created in Ireland in 1725 and Scotland in 1736. The example of freemasonry pervaded the club and society ethos of the period. Thus, by the end of the eighteenth century lodges of 'Odd Fellows' were operating in London under a Grand Lodge which issued dispensations for lodges to be formed around England in places such as Sheffield, Birmingham, Liverpool, Dover and Bath. As Durr has argued, the 'Odd Fellows' were not 'offshoots' from freemasonry, but as with other organisations, operated in imitation of freemasonry.¹⁰ Similarly the Royal Foresters Society in Yorkshire began opening branches or 'courts' around 1813 and grew into another of the large affiliated friendly societies of the nineteenth century, the Ancient Order of Foresters. They reached Edinburgh in 1868, later than the Oddfellows. A Grand Lodge of Free Gardeners grew from an initiative of the St Paul's Lodge, Lasswade, in 1849.¹¹ Unlike the village or town box club or friendly society, to these 'secret orders' self-help

⁶ COEM, *Minutes*, 3 December 1827.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 7 June 1830.

⁸ AA, MS502/1/1, 13 June 1824; NAS, FS1/26/11, GD215/1728, December 1824.

⁹ AA, MS502/1/1.

¹⁰ Durr, 'For the Support of Brothers', p. 19.

¹¹ For a summary of these orders in the Edinburgh area, <<http://www.historyshelf.org/shelf/friend/index.php>>[23 May 2012].

was secondary, as the 'primary purpose was to spread among their members ideas of benevolence, love and charity'.¹²

By authorising and, in theory controlling, branch lodges the Edinburgh parent is the 'Grand Lodge' while also operating as a lodge in its own right. Yet although the Royal St Crispin Society resembles other national affiliated orders in its imitation of freemasonry, what is different is that this organisation is not creating new branches or lodges where they do not exist. Rather it is offering something sufficiently novel to fellow shoemakers in other places for them to apply for a charter, pay for it and agree to send a proportion of new members' entry money to Edinburgh. What proved so attractive was a format based on a freemason 'template' but rooted firmly in, albeit re-worked, shoemaker legends. The Royal St Crispin Society and its branches could reaffirm their sense of identity, publicise their 'ancient origins' and partake in the 'mysteries' of the craft in tripartite format.

Minutes for the Royal St Crispin Society after 4 June 1832 and until 4 April 1862 have either been lost or destroyed. Some information can be gleaned, mostly from newspaper sources, about the operation of the parent body and its lodges, but there is no indication of the size of the network. Until 1851, however, there is little sign of languish and decline as described by the Perth 'Bishop'. The Edinburgh brethren, now established in their own property in Todrick's Wynd, celebrated the Festival of St Crispin in 1832 by enjoying a supper in Menzies' Regent Coffee-house, Waterloo Place. They joined other public bodies for the procession and soiree in honour of the laying of the foundation stone of 'Baths for the Working Classes' in July 1844.¹³ In August of that year shoemakers from Dalkeith obtained the charter, described in chapter three, allowing them to establish Branch No.14.¹⁴

The Linlithgow Royal St Crispin Lodge flourished in the decades following its acquisition of a charter, accumulating sufficient funds to loan £30 sterling to the Incorporation of Cordiners; and to contribute £20 to the Town Council towards the fitting and furnishing of the Town Hall where the society

¹² Andy Durr, 'Ritual of Association and Common People's Organisations', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, 100 (1987), p. 97.

¹³ *The Scotsman*, 13 July 1844.

¹⁴ COEM, HH535/09.

was to have 'equal privilege to meet as the Masons and Dyers'.¹⁵ On 20 January 1841 the society appeared at the launch from Limekilns of a schooner named Crispin, possibly so-called because the owners, captain and mate were said to be members of the lodge, although there is no trace of these occupations in the returns connected with the friendly society sent to the Depute Advocate.¹⁶ They may have been made lodge or honorary members only, as had happened with some 'sea-faring folk' in Montrose in 1824.¹⁷ The St Crispin Friendly Society, established in 1823 and ratified in 1843, foundered in 1851, but lodge meetings continued.

Dunfermline, another early charter recipient, warranted a mention in an account of the town published in 1844; and there is no reason to believe that the Montrose lodge failed to function in spite of the lack of minutes from 1828 to 1866 and the desultory entries in the masters' document.¹⁸ Benefit society rules were ratified in 1833 and the brethren organised a Crispin coronation and procession in 1856 when the 'throne' made a 'truly unique and imposing impression'.¹⁹

The first entry in the only record book for Airdrie Lodge No. 12 is on 28 October 1861.²⁰ Candidates are entered into the Order of St Crispin and the dignity of the Knights of St Hugh, thereby implying some longevity as well as a departure from procedure, judging from the Edinburgh practice. A new candidate should not have gained admittance to both Orders simultaneously. Two years earlier the *Glasgow Herald* reported a meeting of the Airdrie shoemakers belonging to the St Crispin Lodge. In a typical piece of shoemaker punning – 'giving their awl' and 'defending to the last' – the lodge put its case for being accepted as Volunteers by the War Secretary.²¹

A search of newspaper reports for England from 1820 to 1860, for evidence of similar activities, reveals numerous examples of the continuation

¹⁵ NLS, GB233/Acc9551/4, *Minutes of the Incorporation of Cordiners of Linlithgow*, 19 November 1830; NAS, GD215/1728, 6 December 1848.

¹⁶ *The Scotsman*.

¹⁷ NAS, FS1/26/11; AA, MS 502/1/1, 23 September 1824.

¹⁸ Peter Chalmers (ed.), *Historical and statistical account of Dunfermline*, vol. I (Edinburgh, 1844), p. 460.

¹⁹ NAS, FS1/112/35.

²⁰ North Lanarkshire Archives, U43.

²¹ *Glasgow Herald*, 29 December 1859.

of the celebration of St Crispin's Day, if not with a procession, certainly with a dinner. In 1826 and 1831, for example, the Friendly Society of Boot and Shoemakers of Liverpool enjoyed a dinner at which the traditional toasts to 'The Memory of St Crispin' and 'The King and the Craft' resounded three times three.²² The craft in Malton held a dinner in 1838, while Newcastle shoemakers celebrated in the following year and those of Warrington in 1844.²³ Messrs Shepherd and Co. of Portsmouth treated their employees to a supper every St Crispin's Day from the 1850s to 1875, as did other shoe manufacturers.²⁴ Shoemakers organised these festivities locally, however, there being no equivalent in England of a body such as the Royal St Crispin Society.

Something more akin is found in France, however, where the confraternity of St Crispin in Troyes was reorganised in 1820 and an annual festival established on the Monday after 25 October.²⁵ Dijon shoemakers celebrating St Crispin's Day processed to church with the shrine of the saint accompanying them in a carriage.²⁶ In 1840 the Lyon boot and shoemakers' society spent almost as much on the administrative costs associated with the St Crispin dinner as they did on relief.²⁷ As no links between Scottish and French societies have been found to date, this similarity probably reflects the determination of the latter to return to the customs abolished by the French revolution thereby demonstrating a link with their centuries' old traditions, albeit in modified form. The members of the Royal St Crispin Society did likewise when they formed a new organisation based on established legends.

By the 1850s, however, Scottish Crispin lodge enthusiasm had waned, according to the *Perthshire Courier*. After an account of mythical personages and customs associated with shoemakers, the writer pronounced:

The shoemakers of Perth have not displayed their pageant for many long years; and probably it will only be on the occasion of some great public rejoicing that the "regalia" of the craft will be brought from its dusty cobwebbed repositories and King Crispin and

²² *Liverpool Mercury*, 27 October 1826, 20 October 1831.

²³ *York Herald and General Advertiser*, 27 October 1838; *Northern Liberator*, 19 October 1839; *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 November 1844.

²⁴ *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, 30 October 1875.

²⁵ Walsh, *Curiosities of Popular Customs*, p. 294.

²⁶ *The Times*, 31 October 1834.

²⁷ I. J. Prothero, *Radical Artisans in England and France 1830-1870* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 57.

his trainbearers, with the Indian prince, Sir Hugh and the long line of worthies appear in the streets.²⁸

Within eight years the Perth citizens witnessed such a procession – a celebration of the ‘awakened spirit’.²⁹

‘Restauration’

Why and how a revival occurred at the end of the 1850s is unclear. The *Caledonian Mercury* report of the convivial meeting enjoyed in Linlithgow on 25 October 1859 claimed that:

thirty years ago the lodge numbered some hundreds of the brethren of all classes in Linlithgow; so much, however, has it since fallen into decay, that the word St Crispin has almost been forgotten.³⁰

The newspaper attributed the ‘reawakening’ to the young men of the town who:

have recently been clamorous to effect a revival of the order, and only a few weeks ago a number of them waited upon some of the old brethren and requested the old lodge to be reopened. This was complied with, and about forty have since been initiated.

The ensuing convivial evening included a toast to ‘The Prosperity of the Royal St Crispin Lodge of Falkirk’.³¹ This lodge organised a procession in November of the following year complete with ‘flaming flambeaux’ and deputations from Linlithgow and Denny.³²

A few months earlier the Linlithgow lodge had staged a procession preceded by the coronation of King Crispin by two craft bishops who ‘came all the way from Airdrie’.³³ The *Glasgow Herald* reported the presence of many of the brethren of the lodges at Falkirk, Airdrie, Stirling, Bathgate, Grangemouth and Bo’ness. Beveridge gives some information about this 1860 Linlithgow procession in his notes and says the robes were borrowed from Edinburgh.³⁴ Whatever the state of the mother lodge at this time it was also able to muster a deputation to be present at the laying of the foundation stone of the Wallace Monument on 24 June 1861. Brethren from Dundee, Linlithgow, Airdrie,

²⁸ Article from the *Perthshire Courier* published in *The Standard*, 29 October 1855.

²⁹ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 31 October 1863.

³⁰ In 1826 the Friendly Society had 33 members, FS1/26/11.

³¹ *Caledonian Mercury*, 28 October 1859.

³² *Glasgow Herald*, 26 November 1860; *Falkirk Herald*, 29 November 1860.

³³ *Ibid.*, 18 August 1860.

³⁴ GD215/1728.

Falkirk and Stirling processed also.³⁵ Some communication, doubtless aided by the rapid expansion of railway systems, must have been taking place at this time, if not before.³⁶

A clue that the renewed interest in reviving links might have come from the branch lodges rather than the parent is to be found in the minute of the Airdrie lodge for 6 January 1862. The members received a letter from the Royal St Crispin Lodge Dundee 'wishing to open a correspondence with them as they thought it would be for the benefit of the Order'.³⁷ The secretary was instructed to reply that 'they were quite willing to go along with them and all other St Crispin Lodges in any way that would forward the order of St Crispin'.³⁸ In addition he received authority to invite the Royal St Crispin Lodges of Falkirk, Dundee, Linlithgow and Stirling to participate with Airdrie in the jubilee procession of the Airdrie Free Gardeners' Lodge. Linlithgow and Stirling made their excuses but Falkirk loaned robes at a rate of one guinea and 'five pounds as security for safe return and expenses'.³⁹ The later nineteenth-century practice of the lodges of issuing mutual invitations to processions, annual celebrations or soirees perhaps indicates the desire to demonstrate the strength and solidarity of the organisation. Other 'secret orders' did likewise.

Nothing is explained by the first entry in the 'Grand Lodge of Scotland Royal St Crispins Minute Book':

Restoration of the Grand Lodge of Royal St Crispin's Edinburgh 4th April 1862 The Grand met in the house of Mr Thomas Currie 14 Market Street...

The minute is ambiguous regarding the numbers in attendance as only 'old members' are named, one of whom deemed it necessary to suggest advertising the next meeting in two Edinburgh newspapers. Recruitment took place throughout April and May but the lodge did not feel confident enough to hold an election of office bearers until 10 June, although an Encampment of Sir Hugh had meanwhile initiated six brothers into the Order of Knighthood (28 May). The named elected office bearers comprised the Master, two

³⁵ *Caledonian Mercury*, 25 June 1861.

³⁶ By the 1850s there were rail connections to the towns of the lodges cited in this paragraph.

³⁷ NLA, U431.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 February 1862.

Supporters, Sir Hugh, two Supporters, Crispianus, two Supporters, Treasurer, Secretary, Regalia Keeper, Inside Guardian, Outside Guardian and a committee of six. The duties of the Outside Guardian, as enumerated on 1 July, included attending the lodge at all meetings and delivering summonses to meetings for which he received ten shillings a quarter. The offices of Inside and Outside Guardians, important in initiation rituals to be discussed later, are also found in other Orders such as the Oddfellows; or in 'trade unions' like the United Society of Boiler Makers.⁴⁰ They resemble the role of the Tyler in freemasonry.

The 'restoration' seemed sufficiently successful for a hall to be engaged for the July meeting rather than the tavern in Market Street. At this meeting Brother Neish of lodge Montrose was affiliated, so Montrose was still part of the network in spite of its omission from the earlier discussions concerning the Wallace Monument. That the Grand Lodge was well aware of a lack of communication is evident from the minute of 1 July when the brethren examined the different lodges listed in an old Roll Book to trace which of them had been remiss in sending their dues. They agreed to dispatch a communication to the lodges requesting a complete statement of their rolls from the date of their last return, with the incentive of no charge for enrolments up to 25 October 1862. Meanwhile Falkirk was granted the use of regalia for a July procession to which the Grand Lodge would send a deputation.

By this time 'the impulse of an awakened spirit' had obviously inspired representatives of Greenock shoemakers to travel to Edinburgh to meet with the Treasurer and request of him a loan of crown, sceptre, sword of state and other regalia for a demonstration in Greenock. Brother Bisset refused as only a lodge of Crispins warranted a loan, but they agreed a compromise. Greenock paid two guineas for a charter, promising to be enrolled officially as a Crispin lodge at a later date.⁴¹ Bisset's unilateral decision had to be approved retrospectively and some tight timetabling ensued in order to

⁴⁰ Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England*, p. 128; Durr, 'Ritual of Association', p. 88.

⁴¹ Greenock received a charter to open three lodges – St Crispin, Sir Hugh and Masters on 20 September 1863.

transport regalia both to Greenock and Falkirk where an Edinburgh deputation was scheduled to open a Grand Lodge and attend the procession.

The brief report of this event is interesting for the glimpses given of what had been happening in the previous decades. Fifteen brothers of the Grand Lodge joined colleagues from Linlithgow, Perth, Falkirk and Airdrie (though there is no mention in the Airdrie minutes); and his 'Exlance' the Master General of the Craft (The Edinburgh Master) opened the Lodge in 'due and ancient form'.⁴² The agenda consisted of four main issues, the first being that of Leith No. 1 Lodge which had been out of working order for a number of years. The delegates decided that the Leith Charter which was now in the hands of a 'Dundee resident', should be 'immediately called up by the Grand Lodge and kept until Lodge Leith No 1 be in a fit and proper state to claim the same'.⁴³ Secondly it appeared that some irregularities had taken place in the branch lodges. These are not enumerated but presumably were in connection with ritual as the decision was taken to hold a meeting of lodge deputations in Edinburgh 'so as all Lodges may work on the one uniform principle', perhaps an oblique reference to Airdrie.⁴⁴ The Grand Lodge also declared its intention to recommend that all branch lodges 'form themselves into Societies for the relief of their brethren in sickness in their localities' and also to establish a 'General district funeral fund'.⁴⁵ Finally as a reward for the great expense of 'getting up the demonstration', Falkirk received the honour of crowning the King of the Craft.⁴⁶

The second point about 'irregularities' does not seem to have been quickly addressed. In his report on the 'great Crispen demonstration' held at Linlithgow, the Worthy Master stated that 'several of the daughter Lodges were using different signs and Grips from others in working out the Order of St Crispen'.⁴⁷ In spite of the request for a discussion of what uniform system should be adopted in all the lodges, Edinburgh peremptorily decreed that everyone should adhere to 'all the forms and ceremonies as hereto practised

⁴² COEM, *Minutes*, 2 September 1862.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* The Oddfellows instituted this in the 1820s.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* There is a report in the *Caledonian Mercury*, 20 August 1862.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 15 August 1863.

in the Grand Lodge Edinburgh and that any of the daughter Lodges requiring information must apply to the mother Lodge.⁴⁸

The Grand Lodge's intention of establishing a 'General district funeral fund' presumably formed part of the talks held with representatives from Montrose, Linlithgow, Perth, Stirling, Dundee, Airdrie and Dalkeith on 6 October 1862, though no outcomes are recorded. This is the only evidence of Montrose being involved in any meetings of the Grand Lodge and its branch lodges. Linlithgow, Stirling, Falkirk, Dundee, Dalkeith, Greenock and Wishaw attended a further meeting called expressly for the purpose of raising 'a United Funeral Fund'.⁴⁹ The Oddfellows had established this years earlier.⁵⁰ Little progress seems to have been made in this area, however, as three years later the daughter lodges sent a number of communications 'expressing the anxious desire that the general funeral scheme should be commenced without delay'.⁵¹ While Edinburgh had drafted byelaws for legal sanctioning before circulation to the lodges, nothing more is heard of the scheme. By this time the Grand Lodge had to cope with the perilous state of its own sick and funeral scheme, so was hardly in a position to progress the general one.

Notwithstanding these early signs of tension, the enthusiasm for the revival continued. Following Greenock's example, Wishaw shoemakers, through the good offices of Airdrie, approached the Grand Lodge. At a meeting on 2 January 1863 in Buchanan's Coffeehouse, the Grand Lodge, 'after the usual form of trying and testing the Brethren from Wishaw', granted them a charter. What form this 'trying and testing' took remains secret. Dumbarton became the next recruit to the St Crispin network on the recommendation of Greenock. Again participation in a public procession seems to have been the spur, as following the granting of a charter on 21 June 1865, the Dumbarton delegation borrowed the robes for the usual fee of fifteen shillings. Glasgow brethren followed suit on 24 September 1866. No further lodges received charters in the 1860s. The date of the Paisley charter

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 5 May 1863.

⁵⁰ Gosden, *Friendly Societies*, p. 27.

⁵¹ Ibid., 5 February 1866.

is unknown but must be before 25 March 1872 when the lodge wrote to Edinburgh requesting diplomas for members.⁵²

Thus, after a period of apparent decline, or at least withdrawal from high public profile to the extent that contemporary commentators could assign Crispin processions and traditions to customs of the past, the Royal St Crispin Society and its associated lodges reinvented the Crispin tradition and emerged with new commitment in the late 1850s and early 1860s. Shoemakers throughout Britain had remained faithful to the celebration of St Crispin's Day, mainly with dinners and the enactment of particular local customs in places such as Horsham.⁵³ The energy and activity generated in the 1820s, however, had evaporated by mid-century in Edinburgh and in other Scottish towns holding Royal St Crispin charters, as it had generally among other shoemaker societies. Between 1833 and 1855 King Crispin appears in only three processions; Nantwich in 1833 as part of a Trade Union demonstration; Cork in 1843 in a trades' demonstration in favour of repealing the Union; and Ayr in 1844 to commemorate Robert Burns.⁵⁴

Whatever the communication between the Edinburgh society (or Grand Lodge) and its branches during the 1850s, a revival was certainly in progress before 1862. The branch lodges may have been motivated to reforge links with Edinburgh by the example of the spectacular expansion of the Oddfellows since the opening of the first Scottish branch in Aberdeen in 1839.⁵⁵ By 1845 there were lodges in most Scottish towns with membership reaching 12,000.⁵⁶ The Edinburgh Oddfellows branch welcomed deputations from Aberdeen and Kirkcaldy to its anniversary dinner in 1841 and six years later the Leeds branch arranged with several railway companies for a trip to the Scottish capital.⁵⁷ Annual Moveable Conferences held around Britain encouraged the development of the society and this tactic might well have inspired the Crispins to reinvigorate their organisational structure at the end of

⁵² COEM, *Minutes*.

⁵³ Henry Burstow, *Reminiscences of Horsham* (Horsham, 1911), p. 76.

⁵⁴ Thomas Dunning, 'Reminiscences' in David Vincent (ed.), *Testaments of Radicalism* (London, 1977), p. 125; *Belfast News-Letter*, 26 May 1843; *Derby Mercury*, 31 May 1843; *Caledonian Mercury*, 8 August 1844; *The Scotsman*, 10 August 1844.

⁵⁵ Weinbren, *The Oddfellows*, p. 28.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Caledonian Mercury*, 15 April 1841, 5 July 1847.

the 1850s.⁵⁸ The decade was a period of revival and centralisation of many groups including earlier unions of craft workers.⁵⁹ The Scottish United Operative Masons, for example, reorganised in 1850 and appointed a full-time secretary in 1855 to serve the 31 lodges and 3000 members.⁶⁰ Long before the arrival of football as a spectator sport, the Grand Caledonian Curling Club, founded in 1838, supervised its association of clubs and began to organise 'Grand Matches' such as the one which attracted 6000 players and spectators to Linlithgow in 1848.⁶¹ Likewise a more formal approach appeared in cricket with match schedules and training; and while Stirling had a St Crispin lodge the number of cricket clubs in the area grew from five in the 1840s to 173 in the 1870s.⁶²

The mid-nineteenth century was also a time of resuscitation and reinvention of traditions. The 'politics of nostalgia' transformed May games, maypoles and Morris dances into a fictional version of Merry England paralleled by the revival and development of Christmas.⁶³ The successful encouragement of Highland Games gatherings came at a time 'when the ancient renown of Scotland needed to be more celebrated and maintained' – Stirling region hosted two in the 1840s, but 30 by the 1870s – while in Wales, the growth of the eisteddfod from the successful 1858 festival in Llangollen created the myth of the Welsh choral tradition.⁶⁴

The revitalised Royal St Crispin Society itself, while still holding to the format created decades earlier, was now a changing organisation. In the period from the restoration of the Grand Lodge in 1862 to the end of Edinburgh's domination in 1882, various strands emerge and although the evidence is sparse for the associated lodges some information can be gleaned as to what motivated the brethren at this time. Three themes emerge,

⁵⁸ Weinbren, *The Oddfellows*, p. 29.

⁵⁹ W.H. Marwick, *A Short History of Labour in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1967), p. 22.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁶¹ John Burnett, 'Sport in Scotland' in John Beech, Owen Hand, Mark A. Mulhern and Jeremy Weston (eds), *Scottish Life and Society*, vol. 9 (Edinburgh, 2005), pp. 230, 232.

⁶² Irene Maver, 'Leisure Time in Scotland during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries' in Beech, Mulhern and Weston (eds), *Scottish Life and Society*, vol. 9, p. 183.

⁶³ Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun*, pp.112-5, 295. Scottish newspapers carried advertisements for Christmas cards and gifts in the 1850s.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Neil Tranter, *Sport, economy and society in Britain 1750-1914* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 55, p. 24; Trefor M. Owen, *The Customs and Traditions of Wales* (Cardiff, 2006), p. 112.

namely the concept of 'Crispianism'; the individuality of the branch lodges; and the tensions between them and the Grand Lodge.

Crispianism

Signs that the restored Grand Lodge was less in touch with the traditions of the past than its predecessor are apparent at the beginning of 1863 when the Edinburgh brethren decided that they ought to know more about their patron saint. They appointed a committee to investigate as far as possible:

the date when our Patron Saint lived and by whom or in honour of whom the Order of St Crispin was instituted with the view to getting up a lecture of initiation into the Order in a proper and correct style and somewhat of the object.⁶⁵

There is no record of the outcome of any research and in the introduction to the *Rules of the Grand Lodge Royal St Crispin Benefit Society Edinburgh* dated March 1868, the writer skirts round the subject by stating:

It is not our intention to enter on a disquisition of the Order of St Crispin in this short Preface, as all who undertake to become members of the Lodge will be made acquainted with so much of the history that is known of our patron Saint, during the period in which he lived.⁶⁶

The 'Legend', copied at the end of the Minute Book of 1882-90 from 'an old Document dated October 1740', was read to the meeting on 7 November 1870. Whether the Grand Lodge had circulated the legend to its branches in earlier years, or whether these lodges did their own research, the Perth brethren produced a lengthy version of it for the coronation of King Crispin of 1863. What is interesting in the 'Bishop's' address is his emphasis on St Crispin's good works and martyrdom for the Christian faith. Crispin and Crispianus 'furnished the poor with shoes, it is said, at a very low price'; and were seen to be working industriously in the night time, 'earning their bread by the sweat of their brows, and going about in the day at seasonable times, preaching the Christian faith'. After their martyrdom 'the beautiful and most sublime order of St Crispin is handed down over the centuries to the present

⁶⁵ COEM, *Minutes*, 20 January 1863.

⁶⁶ NAS, FS4/845.

day' and 'these two most beloved brother martyrs' are 'the patrons of the confraternity of British shoemakers'.⁶⁷

According to the oration, in addition to the duties of the newly crowned King Crispin:

the brethren of the Perth Royal St Crispin Lodge stand in certain relations to each other, that they have their mutual duties to perform and it is only when these are conscientiously discharged that goodwill and harmony can obtain among them, and they be enabled to sing from the bottom of their hearts –

Behold how good a thing it is
And how becoming well,
Together such as brethren are,
In unity to dwell.⁶⁸

This quotation based on Psalm 133 appears on the property once owned by the Incorporation of Cordiners of West Port and often prefaced friendly society rules such as those of the *Caledonian Gardeners Lodge of Edinburgh* (1832) **(Fig. 28)**.⁶⁹ In his emphasis on harmony and goodwill the Perth 'Bishop' echoes sentiments of freemasonry, but he also augments the St Crispin story. Although the Order dated to the third century AD:

at least four centuries have rolled away since the first Crispin Lodge was instituted in this island. It was one of the early James's (sic) who granted the charter by which the first Scottish Lodge was formed and opened, and by which the Lodge obtained permission to use the Royal Palace at Holyrood for the purpose of crowning their King, which right the Edinburgh brethren hold to this very day'.⁷⁰

The affiliated orders of the late nineteenth century such as the Foresters or Gardeners also sought an 'ancient past', with the Foresters claiming Adam as the 'first Forester'.⁷¹ Shoemakers already had centuries' old traditions, but here the Perth Royal St Crispin Society invented another. The substance of this claimed 'ancient right' was repeated with variations at annual meetings or in newspaper articles until the end of the century. For example, a communication from the Glasgow lodge to the Advocate Depute on 14 October 1874 added the embellishment that:

during the commotions and troubles in Edinburgh more than three hundred years since they were the most popular Order of that time and did service to the State for which they received certain Grants that are now in Abeyance'.⁷²

⁶⁷ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 31 October 1863.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ ECA, SL135/4.

⁷⁰ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 31 October 1863.

⁷¹ Gosden, *Friendly Societies*, p. 1.

⁷² NAS, FS4/1249.

Thomas Barclay, in a letter to the *Glasgow Herald* of 25 October 1900, made even more extravagant claims, asserting that:

In the 15th century there was a fraternity or lodge of Souters in the city of York that maintained a fund for “feeble sons of the peg and awl who had gone to pigs and whistles”. A successful shoemaker in Edinburgh visited York in 1505, when he heard of this charity. On his return to his native city he procured from James IV a charter constituting the craft of Cordwainers, or dealers or workers in leather into a lodge. Moreover, there was granted thereto the royal privilege of crowning their King Crispin every seventh year in the Palace of Holyrood, still in force.

The Perth oration of 1863 is important, however, for the articulation not only of the antiquity of the Order but the beginnings of a definition of ‘Crispianism’. The first lodge secretaries recorded the anniversary of St Crispin as being celebrated with the greatest conviviality. By the second half of the nineteenth century the sentiments of unity and harmony were more prevalent. At the Grand Lodge’s celebration in 1864 the Worthy Master addressed the brethren ‘upon the necessity of Amity and brotherly love; and the secretary concluded his minute by reflecting that:

This was another Crispin year brought to a close. May we have such meetings yet in store for us and though it is numbered with the things that were, may it have left a mark to guid(sic) us in our future actions for the well being of our ancient (Order) of St Crispin then it will not have been spent in vain.⁷³

On 2 May 1865 the brethren agreed on the necessity of a conference:

for the cultivation of that brotherly love and unity of purpose in one uniform system throughout all the Lodges of the Unity which is so much to be desired by all the Crispins.⁷⁴

In 1869 the Secretary declared his minute:

to be a true and correct statement of all the proceedings in connection with the anniversary of St Crispin held October 25th 1869. And long may you all live to be witnesses of the Harmony and good fellowship displayed by Brethren meeting together in the bonds of friendship Love and Truth as was evinced on that occasion.⁷⁵

Such language and sentiments – ‘Friendship, Love and Truth’ being the Oddfellows’ motto – are absent from the records of half a century earlier, although they may well have been expressed. The word ‘Crispianism’ is not used in Grand Lodge minutes until 1879. The deputation who opened the new lodge in Dundee stated ‘that to judge from what they saw Crispianism was in a very flourishing condition in that town’.⁷⁶

⁷³ COEM, *Minutes*, 25 October 1864.

⁷⁴ COEM, *Minutes*.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 25 October 1869.

⁷⁶ COEM, *Minutes*, 24 March 1879.

The concept of 'Crispianism' was employed in the Grand Lodge Benefit Society Rules of 1879 to extol the benefits of making provision for the future:

Our desire is that Crispianism shall take deep root, spread and flourish wherever it may be planted; and to obtain so desirable an object, we have been led to establish a Sick and Funeral Fund in connection with the Grand Lodge, for the purpose of providing for emergencies that will inevitably sooner or later arrive...⁷⁷

The Stirling lodge added embellishment in its benefit society rules printed on 12 April 1875 which included the statement that Stirling Royal St Crispin Lodge (No 7) was 'instituted by Charter granted from Grand Lodge Edinburgh, tenth day of April Eighteen Hundred and Twenty Six'. A brief summary of the history of the Orders of St Crispin preceded the assertion that Crispin was kindly:

taken in by a poor shoemaker who fed and clothed him and taught him the rudiments of his humble art – hence the origin of Crispianism among shoemakers.⁷⁸

The local councillor who attended the 'Dundee Shoemakers' Festival' in 1873 had clearly received briefing on the concept. 'In a very eloquent manner' he:

narrated the history of the gentle craft, giving an account of the formation of the Order of St Crispin and bringing in a very forcible and intellectual style before his audience the end and aims of the lives of such men as Rounds and Bloomfield and many others who had immortalised their names by the good they had done.⁷⁹

Similarly at the celebration of St Crispin's Day in Montrose three years later, the brethren of the lodge enjoyed the evening: 'each and all vying to promote the spirit of the order, "Unity, honour and peace"'.⁸⁰

Ayr, a late recruit to the Order of St Crispin, replicated earlier Edinburgh text in the preface to the 1888 *Rules of the Ayr Royal St Crispin Lodge Friendly Society No. 21*, loftily concluding:

To meet together in the bands of brotherhood in the hall of St Crispin where all is harmony and peace is a matter of intense gratification. To make the Society what its name proclaims is the object of the promoters of a cause so good, so just and noble; to meet where each is vying with his brother in augmenting the benefits to be derived commends itself to all... to become a Crispin and to receive the benefits attached to the Order will be no degradation to the individual; but will tend to elevate him, not only in his own estimation, but in that of those with whom he will associate. By becoming a Crispin he will be benefited not only by the reception of the gifts provided for in the Laws by which he will be governed in the Lodge, but socially, morally and intellectually through taking part in discussions which have a tendency to elevate the

⁷⁷ NAS, FS4/845.

⁷⁸ NAS, FS/4/1094.

⁷⁹ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 1 March 1873; Winks, *Lives of Illustrious Shoemakers*, pp. 89-103. Robert Bloomfield was a Suffolk shoemaker poet.

⁸⁰ *Dundee Courier*, 2 November 1876.

mind to benevolence and Christian charity. Discussions in political and religious topics are never allowed; it will, therefore, become the duty of every Member to introduce subjects for the special advancement of the Order...That the following Rules may have a salutary tendency over all who may come under their influence, is the earnest and sincere desire of a true and faithful Crispin.

Is this concept of Crispianism unique to the Scottish Royal St Crispin Societies? The only other reference found to date for a St Crispin Society similar to the Scottish lodges, is for the St Crépin Society of Besançon. Harrison cites this French shoemakers' society of the 1860s as an example of sociability being as of equal or more importance than the benefits of *mutualité*.

The shoemakers held an annual ball in honour of their patron saint for which, in 1862, they spent 60 francs for lighting and 80 for music. The mass accompanying the ball cost 30 francs, plus 80 francs for the consecrated bread. Festival expenses thus consumed 250 francs in a year when payments to the sick added up to only 328 francs.⁸¹

This sounds very much like a nineteenth-century version of the medieval celebration of the saint's day rather than a nineteenth-century 'ancient order' of 'Crispianism'. However without first-hand access to the relevant documents it is difficult to judge whether the Besançon St Crépien Society claimed a high moral standing or whether it was holding out the prospect of an annual 'feast' as an incentive to members to contribute to a benefit fund, as Harrison claims. Nonetheless it does appear closer to the Royal St Crispin Society than anything found in England, where the memory of the patron saint seems confined to the annual dinner or in a name connected with trade union activity. For example, the York shoemakers of Mr Dale's establishment held an annual supper in 1863 when their employer presented each of them with the St Crispin's shilling; and the National Union of Boot and Shoe Riveters and Finishers, (a splinter group from the Amalgamated Association of Boot and Shoemakers of 1873) styled themselves 'The Sons of Crispin'.⁸²

Crispianism, as proclaimed by the Scottish brethren after 1862, entailed demonstrating their inheritance of the doctrine of faith and good works attributed to the patron saints Crispin and Crispianus. It was also about unity, brotherly love and making financial provision for bereaved dependents to 'relieve them of a difficulty that would have embarrassed the already

⁸¹ Carol Harrison, *The Bourgeois Citizen in Nineteenth Century France* (Oxford, 1999), p. 137.

⁸² *York Herald*, 31 October 1863; <<http://www.unionancestors.co.uk/bootmakers.htm>>[24 May 2012].

overloaded and sorrowing heart of a dear and affectionate parent, widow, relative or friend'.⁸³ Such sentiments showed the influence of the writings of Scots author Samuel Smiles who, in his books *Self Help* (1859) and *Thrift* (1875), popularised a provident, sober and thrifty attitude to life and extolled the virtues of cooperation and mutual aid.⁸⁴ The emphasis on the welfare activities of the Grand Lodge and its branches accorded with friendly society legislation, in particular the 1875 Act; and was increasingly emphasised at annual meetings in the late nineteenth century, as will be seen later. But while the brethren recognised the advantages of having sick and funeral funds and were anxious to establish them, these were not the main drivers. The lodge activities came first, which is why the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Society survived even when successive benefit societies associated with it foundered. Yet in spite of the fine rhetoric promoting unity, brotherly love and the sense of belonging to an Order with a ritual, there remained tensions and friction between the Grand Lodge and the branch lodges.

The branch lodges

Little archival material from the lodges has survived for the twenty years after 1862. There are minutes relating to Airdrie and Montrose and to Dundee No. 19 after its creation in 1878. Some friendly society rules exist. Yet enough information can be gleaned from sources such as newspapers, citations in local histories and from the records relating to Edinburgh to form a picture of the kinds of activities in which the Crispins were engaging.

After the Edinburgh meeting on 6 October 1862 Montrose is mentioned only once in the minutes of the Grand Lodge when a letter was received 'for an old Brother in Montrose Lodge who had been Sir Hugh for thirty years in that Lodge'.⁸⁵ The Edinburgh officers decided that:

considering the position in which Montrose stands in the present time we do not give a Subscription from the Lodge but allow a Subscription sheet to go round the members.

⁸³ NAS, FS4/1180.

⁸⁴ Geoffrey Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain 1830-1990* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 20-1.

⁸⁵ COEM, *Minutes*, 18 May 1876.

Presumably, as in 1824, Montrose had not sent dues to Edinburgh. No mention is made in the Montrose minutes of this appeal to the Grand Lodge.

A reading of the Montrose record for the 1860s gives the impression of a literary and convivial society more than one devoted to Crispianism. Early entries are given over to accounts of papers read by various members – an anecdote of a shoemaker in December 1866 and ‘The Duties of Young Men to the Community’ in the following month.⁸⁶ (The latter coincided with an appeal for younger members.) Much space is given to discussions and descriptions of convivial evenings and St Crispin anniversaries involving decisions about having ‘Braddies’ served for supper.⁸⁷ Interspersed are notes of regalia purchases and elections of office bearers, before which, on 7 October 1867 at least, the ‘Charter of the Lodge’ was read – a passing acknowledgement of theoretical allegiance to the Grand Lodge. The *Dundee Courier and Argus* reported elections and anniversaries periodically with descriptions of the brethren as ‘each and all vieing (sic) to promote the spirit of the order, “Unity, honour and peace”’.⁸⁸

Apart from this newspaper emphasis on ‘the spirit of the order’ there is little to distinguish the proceedings of the Montrose Royal St Crispin Society in this period from those of earlier years, although mention of friendly society activity is lacking. There are however, two entries which indicate some change. On 4 November 1867 the brethren abolished the bye-law stipulating that the Master had to be a handcraft shoemaker. They reasoned that this rule had been appropriate when few, if any, members were not shoemakers, ‘but now when the Lodge Members were composed of individuals from amongst the general public it was but fair and honest that every office in the Lodge be open to every member.’⁸⁹ In the following month the Master General of the Third Order, Masters of the Craft, agreed that the Treasurer, Secretary and Officer should act in these capacities in all three Orders in the interests of closer unity. This may also be a sign of declining membership, as by 11 October 1869 funds were low and two years later at the anniversary dinner on

⁸⁶ AA, MS 502/1/2, *Minute Book of the Montrose Royal St Crispin Lodge*.

⁸⁷ These crescent shaped pies are usually associated with Forfar.

⁸⁸ There are reports for 3 and 25 October 1866, 2 November 1876, 5 November 1880.

⁸⁹ AA, MS 502/1/2.

27 October, 'Sir Hugh' (subject of the 1876 letter to Edinburgh), 'made a stirring appeal to the Brethren to come forward and support the Order better than they had done in time past.'⁹⁰ Whatever the results of this plea, entries in the minutes continue until 19 December 1876, followed by a gap until 1 November 1881. After this the next and last report is for 14 October 1889 when the members met 'to try to get the lodge raised to its old standing'; and to arrange to hold the anniversary on 1 November.⁹¹ Nothing further is recorded.

The sparse minutes of the *Royal St Crispin Lodge Airdrie*, 28 October 1861 to 14 February 1881, are recorded in a hardback exercise book with some pages torn out. The haphazard entries and spelling give the impression of a more homespun lodge than the status indicated by the purpose-made books of the Edinburgh society or the two volumes of Montrose. After 28 October 1868 the entries relate almost exclusively to the Court of the Masters, with some details about elections of office bearers for the other Orders. Months often elapse between the notes and there is a gap of five years before the last entry. The document may be a notebook indicating the loss of more formal records.

Airdrie's receipt of its charter denoting it as No. 12 is unrecorded but this was probably before 1844, when Dalkeith became No. 14, although lodge numbering is not always proof of longevity. The first entry in the Airdrie minute book indicates that the lodge had been in existence for some time and is concerned with the election of office bearers. These include first, second and third 'Spearman', offices which do not appear within the Grand Lodge, but accord with the ritual of the Knights of St Hugh, as will be seen later. There are also two Keymasters, a Lodge Master and Banner Keeper. At this point the Airdrie lodge had only two Orders. After an inquiry to Edinburgh as to 'what was paid for entering the order of a Master Craft', a Court of Masters was opened on 6 July 1863, candidates entered and presented with 'Masters Badges'.⁹²

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² NLA, U431.

Airdrie in the 1860s seems to have concentrated on being a fully-fledged branch lodge, by augmenting its regalia and robes and having a public presence on the streets. Brethren participated in the procession of the 'Airdrie GrenHouse Lodge of Free Gardnes' and in the celebration in honour of the marriage of the Prince of Wales.⁹³ Organisation of their own Crispin coronation, procession, dinner and ball – with robes borrowed from Perth – incurred a loss made good from the lodge funds.⁹⁴ Unlike Montrose, the Airdrie lodge communicated with the mother lodge and other branches and attended events as cited earlier – the 1860 Linlithgow coronation of King Crispin; the procession of February 1862 for which robes were borrowed from Falkirk; the opening of the Grand Lodge in Falkirk and participation in discussions in Edinburgh in 1862. In September 1862 Airdrie recommended to the Grand Lodge that Wishaw become an associated lodge; and it sent a collection of ten shillings to Edinburgh two years later.⁹⁵

With regard to further contact, some information can be gleaned by cross referencing the Airdrie minutes with records of the parent lodge. The Airdrie brethren decided to send two representatives to the conference scheduled for Edinburgh in August 1865, though there is no mention of the meeting in any record. In February 1867 they were diligent in making returns to the Grand Lodge but on 1 April wrote to Edinburgh for a 'Return of the Burail funds'.⁹⁶ What this implies is not clear but Edinburgh complied with the request and the Airdrie Society gave each member back his share in July. Airdrie Royal St Crispin is cited by Knox as being one of the early 'Beneficent Societies' in the town.⁹⁷ The Edinburgh accounts note the payment of £1 'Br Goodet debt to Airdrie' in February 1867 but do not cite the context.⁹⁸

The remaining Airdrie evidence of contact with the Grand Lodge is a letter from the secretary of the latter, dated 14 February 1870, forwarding return sheets:

⁹³ Ibid., 20 February 1862, 10 March 1863

⁹⁴ Ibid, 9 October 1863.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 7 March 1864.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 18 February, 1 April 1867.

⁹⁷ James Knox, *Airdrie: A Historical Sketch* (Airdrie, 1921), p. 99.

⁹⁸ COEM, *Grand Lodge Royal St Crispin Accounts*.

to be filled up and returned to me at your Earliest convenance (sic) so that your New Members may be installed in the Grand Lodge Roll Book so that we may have a correct idea of the strength of the ancient order.⁹⁹

References to Airdrie in the Edinburgh minutes concern the loan of robes (17 August 1875), the annual conference (18 June 1877) and the payment of dues and initiation fees (January 1876, March 1877). On 13 January 1879, however, the Edinburgh secretary recorded the receipt of a letter from Lodge No. 12 Airdrie, which stated that the lodge had been lying in a dormant state for some considerable time with little prospect of any improvement.

Property owned by the Falkirk St Crispin Lodge appears in the Falkirk Burgh Valuation Rolls until 1960, but neither artefacts nor minutes have survived, with the exception of the photograph of King Crispin (**Fig. 27**).¹⁰⁰ A copy of Falkirk Friendly Society Rules is included in the St Crispin collection in Dundee Library.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless Falkirk appears as an active and combative branch, as recorded in numerous *Falkirk Herald* reports of anniversary processions, soirees, picnics and meetings and in Grand Lodge minutes and accounts throughout the 1860s and 1870s. With the exception of some contentious issues to be examined later, most of the contact concerned the payment of dues and requests to borrow regalia or for Grand Lodge representation at demonstrations. The Grand Lodge also received substantial sums for diplomas and aprons, especially after the introduction of a new design for the 'Diploma of the Order of St Crispin which would represent all three orders of the Craft'.¹⁰² Falkirk spent £5 on these new diplomas for which they negotiated a discount; and £4 5s for stamping one hundred aprons with the new design 'with the exception of the center (sic)'.¹⁰³ The Falkirk brethren also seemed anxious to 'take out a licence for our coat of arms', but payment for this proved a thorny issue with some form of compromise being reached in July 1877.¹⁰⁴

In 1872 the Falkirk brethren staged a King Crispin coronation with accompanying procession. Several entries in the Grand Lodge accounts

⁹⁹ NLA, U431.

¹⁰⁰ I am indebted to the Falkirk Archivist, Jean Jamieson for this information.

¹⁰¹ Dundee Library Lamb Collection, 418(18).

¹⁰² The finished copy was approved on 18 July 1870.

¹⁰³ COEM, Minutes, 15 August 1870; *Accounts*, January, July 1873.

¹⁰⁴ COEM, *Minutes*, 15 July 1872, 2 July 1877.

concern the transport of robes and regalia to Falkirk, cab hire and payment for 'lost time' for this event.¹⁰⁵ Falkirk also invited a presence from other branches, as Glasgow indicated to the Grand Lodge that the 'Deputation to Falkirk would be small'.¹⁰⁶ The coronation took place in the Corn Exchange where a 'large number of the brethren were assembled' and where 'a most effective spectacle was displayed' followed by a procession.¹⁰⁷ Falkirk borrowed regalia and the coat of mail in the following year for a 'holiday' to Stirling and invited the company of the Grand Lodge.¹⁰⁸ Edinburgh also loaned robes for a Grangemouth procession and the two societies participated in a Linlithgow demonstration on 10 August 1878, when the weather proved too unfavourable for the planned sports.¹⁰⁹

Falkirk's success continued, as demonstrated by a return to the Grand Lodge of £2 8s 6d for 97 new members on 10 February 1879 and by the communication (26 January 1880) that the Provost of Falkirk and Chief Magistrate of Grangemouth were to be made honorary members of the Order. Falkirk made one more contribution to the overall organisation of the network of lodges in this period. On 21 February 1881 the Edinburgh secretary:

went carefully over a printed copy of the Ritual of the Crispin Order got put in type by Falkirk Lodge and was instructed to write asking what would be the cost of about twenty copies with Blank left for the name of the Lodge and also suggesting that more Blanks be left so should it fall into any party's hands not a member of the Order, they would not be able to make anything of it.¹¹⁰

Presumably the Falkirk brethren had decided that a more formal script for ritual was now needed. They submitted a proof of the Second Order Ritual on 16 May, prudently deducting 12s 6d for printing costs from their returns sent in December. By this time, however, their energies were being devoted to the future of the Grand Lodge.

The only material evidence for the Stirling lodge is two aprons, one flag and two letters relating to the donation held by the Smith Art Gallery (**Fig. 29**). NAS have Friendly Society rules for 1888.¹¹¹ Although less visible in the

¹⁰⁵ COEM, *Accounts*, July 1872.

¹⁰⁶ COEM, *Minutes*, 15 July 1872.

¹⁰⁷ *The Scotsman*, 29 July 1872.

¹⁰⁸ COEM, *Minutes*, 14 July 1873.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 30 August 1876, 10 August 1878.

¹¹⁰ COEM, *Minutes*.

¹¹¹ Smith Art Gallery, 19970.01; 03883; NAS, FS/4/1094.

Grand Lodge *Minutes* than Falkirk, the Stirling brethren showed themselves to be active and contentious in the period before 3 April 1882. There is correspondence about returns and diplomas and a request on 6 December 1863 for permission to keep the borrowed robes for a cost of 15s and a guarantee of safe return. The Grand Lodge decreed that in the future these terms should be given to all branch lodges. Conferences were held in Stirling in 1870 and 1874 and in February 1877 the Stirling brethren requested the assistance of the Grand Lodge at a coronation ceremony. A later question posed by them as to whether the Grand Lodge intended to move on the matter of procuring 'uniformity in the aprons worn by the different daughter Lodges', received a negative reply as 'all they desired' was adherence to the colours of the different Orders.¹¹²

Signs of lack of unity and harmony in the Stirling lodge emerge from intriguing Edinburgh minutes for the late 1870s. On 18 June 1877 the Grand Lodge received an appeal from several Stirling brethren against a decision of their Master concerning the election of a representative to the annual conference. The dispute lasted for three years, culminating in a request from Stirling to Edinburgh 'to erase the six subscribing names to their Charter and substitute new and "more worthy ones"'.¹¹³ The Grand Lodge required some justification and on 12 July 1880 agreed 'that we do not erase these names until we get more satisfactory evidence of the crimes charged against them'.¹¹⁴ No more is noted.

In August 1880 the Stirling lodge secretary asked permission:

for a brother who is about to proceed to America to open a Crispin Lodge there and to dispense with the usual formalities this being an exceptional case.

The Grand Lodge ruled that the brother should first proceed to America:

and after he has made acquaintance there to make application in his own name and with the names and addresses of two other parties there through the Stirling Lodge (as guarantees) for the necessary Charter and Book to enable them to open a Lodge there.¹¹⁵

¹¹² COEM, *Minutes*, 17 December 1877.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 14 June 1880.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12 July 1880.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9 August 1880.

This answer satisfied the Stirling brethren.¹¹⁶ Stirling sent returns of 6s 6d to the Grand Lodge on 10 February 1879, being the fees for thirteen new members. Further requests for returns met with a refusal in December 1881 and provoked a Grand Lodge instruction to the secretary 'to write asking if it was a joke they were perpetrating'.¹¹⁷ After further letters Stirling eventually complied in March 1882, by which time new reorganizational moves were afoot.

NMS hold an apron and sash of the Order of St Crispin worn by Linlithgow tanner James MacLean (1830-1901) (**Fig. 30**). NAS have *Rules and Regulations of St Crispin Friendly Society of Linlithgow* 1843, lists of members and some returns for the years 1846-1852.¹¹⁸ The benefit function associated with the lodge is confirmed by *The New Statistical Account* of 1845 which states that the 'Crispins' have been in existence for nineteen years.¹¹⁹ Beveridge's notes assert that the Linlithgow Royal St Crispin Lodge became defunct but no date is given.¹²⁰ It appears, however, that the Linlithgow brethren continued to function until the early 1880s. The 1863 Crispin coronation and procession necessitated the loan of the Edinburgh regalia and Linlithgow sent cash to the Grand Lodge in August 1864 and 1865; the latter sum of 12s 6d being the registration fee of 25 new entrants since 1862. A further procession on 15 July 1869 required the 'loan of Regalia from the three separate Orders to enable them to appear'; and three more members were recruited in the following year.¹²¹

Silence ensues until 1876 when the Grand Lodge accounts show expenditure for a deputation to Linlithgow in February and receipt of fees in August. Some correspondence followed over the annual conference in 1877 and a proposed demonstration in 1878, but the signs proved ominous.¹²² When the Linlithgow brethren requested assistance in 1880 'in opening a

¹¹⁶ There is an earlier example of the Scottish diaspora in the minute of 1 December 1873. Four brother Crispins in Adelaide South Australia requested information about a charter and the opening of a lodge.

¹¹⁷ COEM, Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge *Minutes*, 5 December 1881.

¹¹⁸ NAS, GD215/1728; FS1/26/1.

¹¹⁹ *The New Statistical Account*, vol. II (Edinburgh, 1845), p. 186.

¹²⁰ NAS, GD215/1728.

¹²¹ COEM, Grand Lodge *Minutes*, 21 June 1869; 25 April 1870.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 18 June 1877, 12 August 1878.

Master Court for the initiation of some brethren', Brother Harper moved 'that seeing this might prove to be a revival of the Linlithgow Lodge, the Grand Lodge send a deputation'.¹²³ This is the last appearance of the Linlithgow branch before 1883.

The Charter of Dundee Lodge No. 10 is in the NMS collections; Dundee Library, Dundee Museums and COEM have a certificate each (**Figs 31-2**).¹²⁴ As with Montrose, Dundee is absent from Grand Lodge minutes of the 1860s and early 1870s, with the exception of a reference on 1 September 1863 to the Dundee lodge's intention of being at the opening of Baxter Park.¹²⁵ Two newspaper advertisements for 'clothing and paraphernalia for the different degrees of the St Crispin Order' indicate there was no lack of enthusiasm among the Dundee Crispins in the early 1860s.¹²⁶ The *Dundee Courier* estimated that about twenty participated in the Dundee celebration of the marriage of the Prince of Wales.¹²⁷ The newspaper also reported the election of office-bearers (including the Guide and Guardian of the Shrine) and the St Crispin anniversary supper and ball in 1866. A similar account on 30 October 1869 commented on its 'very flourishing condition, a great many having recently joined its ranks'. At what was described as the first annual festival of the Dundee shoemakers on 1 March 1873, the Royal Lodge of St Crispin shared the occasion, or at least the decoration of the hall, with the Incorporation. The evening's programme of entertainment provided the opportunity for the account of the history of the Order of St Crispin cited earlier.

Although Lodge No. 10 does not seem to have been represented at conferences, it did correspond intermittently with Edinburgh and an entry of 15s appears in the Grand Lodge accounts for July 1875 for a deputation to Dundee and Perth. Indications of dissension in the Dundee branch appear in a Grand Lodge minute for 2 December 1878 when twelve Dundee brethren petitioned that 'a Charter or power to form a new Lodge might be granted to

¹²³ Ibid., 31 July 1880.

¹²⁴ NMS, H.OF 74; COEM, HH/937; DL, 418(14); Dundee Museums, 1954-296.

¹²⁵ This took place on 9 September 1863, but none of the newspaper accounts describe the deputations beyond saying they were from the trades.

¹²⁶ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 21, 23 February 1863.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 4, 11 March 1863.

them'.¹²⁸ The Dundee secretary countered by expressing a hope that due caution would be exercised by the Grand Lodge in the granting of a Charter. Considerable discussion and some unhappiness ensued among the Edinburgh brethren as the Master Court had already recommended the granting of a provisional order, which some members considered to be 'premature pending fuller information'.¹²⁹ In the end the Masters prevailed with the assent of the Knights and a Charter and Ritual were dispatched to the new Lodge No. 19 on 16 December 1878. In the following month Lodge No. 10 retaliated by indicating they had initiated five new members for whom they enclosed returns.

A Grand Lodge deputation ventured to Dundee in March 1879, formally to open the new lodge. The reception 'exceeded their most sanguine hope' and Edinburgh agreed to lend the relics of the society to Lodge No. 19 on condition that the brethren procure a set for themselves.¹³⁰ In August the brethren reported success but expressed 'a regret that they had not a set of Relics for the purpose of making Knights'.¹³¹ Edinburgh eventually agreed a temporary loan of 'the sticks at present in the Grand Lodge belonging to the defunct Kirkcaldy Lodge' with one guinea set as 'the formal value'.¹³² From this point to April 1882, Dundee No. 19 took a proactive role by entering new members, paying for its charter, diplomas, seals and aprons and tabling business for the conference. The last press notice for Lodge No. 10 concerned the twenty-sixth annual festival and installation of officers on 22 October 1880.¹³³

Given the lengthy press coverage of King Crispin's coronation in Perth in 1863, regular accounts of the Perth Royal St Crispin Society might have been expected, but this is not the case. Reports of the jollifications for the Prince of Wales's marriage noted the presence of this 'ancient order' which also subsequently held a special festival in honour of the baptism of the

¹²⁸ COEM, *Minutes*.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 17 April 1879

¹³¹ COEM, *Minutes*.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 28 August 1879.

¹³³ *Dundee Courier and Argus, Caledonian Mercury*, 29 October 1880.

Prince's son.¹³⁴ The *Dundee Courier* took great delight, in announcing the 'Abdication of King Crispin'; namely the resignation of 'Sir John Mucklejohn' who 'was lately crowned King of the Ancient Order of St Crispin' in the City Hall; whether 'from fear of assassination or inability to discharge the onerous duties of his kingly office, we have been unable to learn'.¹³⁵ Only two reports of elections of office-bearers were printed and participation in a torchlight procession to celebrate the wedding of the Duke of Edinburgh in 1874 seems to be the last public appearance of the Perth Lodge.¹³⁶

Perth features little in the Grand Lodge records after the initial 'awakening' of the early 1860s, being described as 'very weak' on 29 December 1873.¹³⁷ A deputation from Edinburgh visited in July 1876 but after a request from Perth on 16 December 1878 for a copy of the Rules of the Sick Society there is silence. No material evidence relating to the Perth lodge has been located.

Glasgow Museums lists an apron in its collection and Rules for the Glasgow Royal St Crispin Lodge No. 9 Friendly Society, ratified on 14 October 1874, are to be found in the NAS.¹³⁸ Glasgow, though designated as number 9, became a St Crispin branch in 1864 and enlisted Edinburgh's help in enrolling new members in 1866. The Grand Master, Sir Hugh and others of the mother lodge travelled to Glasgow for the initiation of new members in the Bell Hotel 68 Trongate. 'Men of any trade may become Brethren', stated the press advertisement.¹³⁹

Glasgow brethren visited Edinburgh in June 1871 when the Grand Lodge seized the opportunity to impress their visitors, including representatives from Paisley and Stirling, by orchestrating an occasion of high public visibility. The programme for the twelve hours included two processions overseen by the Grand Marshall and headed by a mounted Champion and two Heralds. The routes encompassed many streets of the New and Old

¹³⁴ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 12 February 1863; *Caledonian Mercury*, 11 March 1863; *The Scotsman*, 11 March 1864.

¹³⁵ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 12 March 1864.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 9 September 1864, 8 November 1866; *The Scotsman*, 24 January 1874.

¹³⁷ COEM, *Grand Lodge Minutes*

¹³⁸ Glasgow Museums, A.1946.18.[1]; NAS, FS/4/1249.

¹³⁹ *Glasgow Herald*, 25 September 1866.

Towns with sightseeing, refreshments and dancing in the Corn Exchange included in the day's schedule, curtailed only by the necessity of catching the seven o'clock trains to Glasgow and Stirling. Not surprisingly the repair and renewal of regalia and costumes, the printing of posters and payment to the Keeper of the Corn Exchange incurred considerable expenditure.

Glasgow requested information about the organisation of a Crispin coronation and procession in March 1872 and indicated an intention of being present at the Falkirk demonstration in July. The lodge invited the Grand Lodge to accompany them to the unveiling of the Burns statue in Glasgow on 25 January 1877 and it hosted the annual conference on 25 August. On 6 September 1880, however, the Edinburgh Secretary minuted receipt of a letter from Glasgow stating that the lodge 'had been defunct since the last conference'.¹⁴⁰

Events in the 1860s marked the fraternal bonds between Edinburgh and Dalkeith, with both lodges making reciprocal visits.¹⁴¹ Seventeen Edinburgh Crispins attended the Dalkeith coronation celebrations on 25 September by means of two four-horse carriages, but the euphoria did not last.¹⁴² The Dalkeith brethren defaulted on a visit to the Edinburgh lodge (6 December 1864) and craved more time to pay the remaining balance of their arrears in March 1865, their funds being in 'rather a depressed state'.¹⁴³ On 22 July 1867 a Grand Lodge deputation reported that they had found the lodge 'almost dead in Dalkeith but that the brethren there had promised to use every effort for a revival'.¹⁴⁴ This must have occurred, as Dalkeith brethren accompanied Edinburgh members to Stirling on 29 August 1870 and Edinburgh sent a deputation to Dalkeith in October 1875.¹⁴⁵ Thereafter Dalkeith disappears from the records.

There is little evidence in the Edinburgh minutes and accounts of the relationship with, or activities of, the other lodges which received charters in the 1860s – Greenock (1862), Wishaw (1863), Dumbarton and Paisley (1864).

¹⁴⁰ COEM, Grand Lodge, *Accounts*, August 1862, *Minutes*, 22 June 1863.

¹⁴¹ COEM, Grand Lodge, *Minutes*.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, March 1865.

¹⁴⁴ COEM, Grand Lodge, *Minutes*.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

There is an apron in the Inverclyde collection of the McLean Gallery. Greenock brethren held a coronation ceremony and procession in September 1864 and made a contribution to the Infirmary fund a few days later.¹⁴⁶ Four years later the lodge was 'defunct'.¹⁴⁷

Dumbarton marshalled a full King Crispin retinue including Champion, Indian Prince and Russian Cossack, for the laying of the foundation stone of Dumbarton Town Hall and Burgh Academy in 1865.¹⁴⁸ Expenditure incurred in meeting the delegation and in 'the warding of regalia to Dumbarton' is noted in the Edinburgh accounts.¹⁴⁹ Beyond the initial payments for charters, badges and seals, however, and the cost of rail fares to Paisley in November 1866, nothing further is recorded with the exception of the presence of Paisley brethren in the Glasgow visit to Edinburgh in 1871. None of the lodges of Greenock, Wishaw, Dumbarton and Paisley seems to have attended conferences, or contributed sufficiently to the debates among their fellow brethren, to warrant a mention in the Edinburgh minutes.

The revitalisation of the Royal St Crispin Society and its network in the 1860s had promised well for the future of the Order but by the beginning of the 1880s the Grand Lodge was in crisis. Of the branch lodges Falkirk, Stirling and perhaps Dundee had grown but Airdrie, Linlithgow, Glasgow and Greenock no longer functioned, Montrose was struggling and there is no record of the others. Particular local circumstances may account for failures, or perhaps the initial enthusiasm of a few Crispins raised expectations which were not realised in their areas by the recruitment of new members. The 1870s and 1880s were, however, years of what contemporaries regarded as a depression in trade 'unexampled in their generation'.¹⁵⁰ Numerous newspaper articles reported on reductions in wages, trade disputes, unemployment and bank failures.¹⁵¹ The *Aberdeen Weekly Journal* replaced 'Merry Christmas' in

¹⁴⁶ *Glasgow Herald*, 20 September, 1 October 1864.

¹⁴⁷ COEM, *Minutes*, 28 May 1868.

¹⁴⁸ *Glasgow Herald*, 24 June 1865.

¹⁴⁹ July 1865.

¹⁵⁰ Account of the Trade Union Congress meeting in Edinburgh in *The Scotsman*, 17 September 1879.

¹⁵¹ For example, see *The Times*, 28 May 1877 for the trade depression and the Clyde shipbuilders' dispute or the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, 20 November 1878 for unemployment and reduction of wages in Fife and bank failure in Glasgow. *The Scotsman* recorded

1878 with 'social eclipse', declaring that 'in every town in the kingdom a large portion of the industrial and labouring classes are idle and on the verge of starvation'.¹⁵² The unemployed included men from trades from which the Edinburgh society certainly drew membership – shoemakers, painters, bakers, brass finishers. Those in work may have preferred to participate in trade union activities rather than join a St Crispin society if it did not also offer a benefit scheme. While there is no evidence to suggest that a lodge such as that in Falkirk suffered any decline in numbers because of the general situation, in 1883 Linlithgow declared:

there was no chance of a Lodge doing anything at the present time as the town was done. There was a meeting held once every year for the election of office bearers at which they could scarce get a sufficient number to open a Lodge. There was no work in the town, no money and no men as the few Crispins that were left were all old men and when they died Crispianism in Linlithgow would die out.¹⁵³

To the inactivity of many lodges, however, must be added a diminution in the ethos of unity, harmony and brotherly love as Edinburgh suffered the failure of another of its benefit schemes and a power struggle emerged over the nature of the organisation.¹⁵⁴

An Elected Grand Lodge

The Perth King Crispin coronation of 1863 included the reminder to the brethren that they held their authority to proceed in this coronation:

from the Royal St Crispin Lodge of Edinburgh, which you will acknowledge at all times, and on all occasions as your parent Lodge, and of which the Perth Royal St Crispin Lodge is a branch.¹⁵⁵

Edinburgh's pre-eminence did not preclude criticism from the branch lodges, as was demonstrated two years later by Perth's refusal to send returns because 'the parent Lodge had failed to implement its promise in calling a conference of all the daughter Lodges'.¹⁵⁶ Whether this was an excuse or a

numerous shoemakers' strikes through the 1870s in places such as Linlithgow, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Denny and Dunfermline among others.

¹⁵² 25 December 1878.

¹⁵³ COEM, Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge, *Minutes*, 31 October 1883.

¹⁵⁴ The Grand Lodge scheme failed in July 1866 with new rules adopted in November 1868. This benefit function also foundered, was amended and then dissolved in 1881.

¹⁵⁵ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 31 October 1863.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 7 March 1865.

genuine grievance, it provoked discussion in the Grand Lodge meeting on 2 May and elicited a conference in August.

Falkirk advised the parent lodge to correspond more regularly (3 February 1868) and two years later Glasgow questioned the purpose of the return fees and correct record-keeping, but more serious disquiet followed.¹⁵⁷ At the Stirling conference of 1870 both lodges disputed 'the authority of the Grand Lodge having power over the Daughter Lodges' and what was said 'would have been better unsaid'.¹⁵⁸ There is no record of the outcome of Edinburgh's attempt 'to ascertain if the attack was premeditated and arranged'.¹⁵⁹ In 1874 the Edinburgh brethren took advice regarding the withdrawal of the charter from Falkirk. Legal opinion advised against resorting to the law courts but confirmed the Grand Lodge's justification in 'suspending them from making Crispins on our Charter'.¹⁶⁰ Falkirk canvassed the other branch lodges resulting in their refusal to send returns but eventually a compromise was reached. The Grand Lodge accepted the Falkirk brethren's offer of ten pounds, provided they gave no further trouble over the fees and acted according to their charter.¹⁶¹

Stirling attempted independent action five years later when, in a request for forty diplomas, they stated they would provide the seals themselves as 'they thought that a better could be got and at less money'.¹⁶² Edinburgh responded curtly that seals must be procured through the Grand Lodge otherwise they were illegal. Further rumblings of discontent can be detected in the preparations for the Edinburgh conference; Falkirk stating that 'all they wished for was the welfare of the Order', while Dundee No. 19 sent 'a list of business'.¹⁶³ By this time, however, financial difficulties had overcome the Grand Lodge resulting in the dissolution of its benefit society on 9 May 1881; and no conference took place.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 23 May 1870.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 12 September 1870.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 12 September 1870.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 18 May 1874.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 22 February 1875.

¹⁶² Ibid., 17 May 1880.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 4 October 1880.

Perhaps in desperation, as both funds and membership were so low, the mother lodge elicited the opinion of Brother Miller of Falkirk regarding a conference and the feasibility of making the Grand Lodge a representative body elected from the daughter lodges.¹⁶⁴ Unsurprisingly he urged the calling of a conference for April for 'the constitution of a Grand Lodge elected from and supported by the various Lodges'.¹⁶⁵ He declared later that the Grand Lodge 'should resign unconditionally and appoint an Executive'.¹⁶⁶ During the ensuing canvassing of opinion Dundee No. 19 lodge declared that 'the Grand Lodge ought to have been a representative body all along' as then there would not have been 'so many grievances to complain of as have been for the last quarter of a century'; and being a constituted body 'will add a bright star' to 'our Ancient and Honourable Order' and ensure that the daughter lodges 'will get fair and impartial hearing'.¹⁶⁷ Dundee further asserted that it was not in favour of the benefit society in connection with the lodges – there being plenty of other societies such as the Foresters – but requested information.

The Edinburgh brethren met for the last time as the Grand Lodge Royal St Crispin on 3 April 1882. The formal entry in the minutes of the momentous conference on 13 April 1882 reads:

Delegates representing the Grand Lodge Edr, Stirling, Roy St Crispin Lodge, Falkirk Lodge and Dundee and Forfarshire (No 19) were present. After sitting in Conference from 10 o'clock forenoon to 8 o'clock evening with an interval of an hour and a half for dinner, the delegates present formed themselves into the new Grand Lodge of Scotland and elected office bearers for the ensuing year.¹⁶⁸

It was the end of the reign of the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Society as the governing body for the branch lodges holding charters from it. Whatever the motives of the founders of the Royal St Crispin Society in 1817, they had established a new order rooted firmly in the centuries' old devotion to the memory of the legendary figures of Crispin and Crispianus, but including also a cult of the late sixteenth-century literary legends of saints Hugh and Winifred. With the addition of a third elevated order of Masters, and accompanying ritual and regalia to emulate, if not rival, that of the

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 23 December 1881.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 6 February 1882.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ DLC 418(3), *Letter Book Lodge Royal St Crispin No 19 Dundee and Forfarshire*.

¹⁶⁸ COEM, *Minutes*, 27 April 1882.

Freemasons or the Free Gardeners, the Royal St Crispin Society proved a powerful magnet for shoemakers in Edinburgh and other towns. The granting of charters created a lodge network which waxed and waned throughout the nineteenth century. Proclamations about unity, harmony and advancing the cause of Crispianism sat alongside internal squabbles and resentments that the Edinburgh society should also be the Grand Lodge. This organisational dominance of Edinburgh ceased with the decision on 13 April 1882, but it was not the end of the 'Royal Ancient Order of St Crispin' of Scotland.

5: A Crispin led and blind

He comes He comes
Who is he that comes
A Crispin led and blind
Within this dreary wilderness
What can he hope to find¹

A ritual tradition

In common with other medieval European churches St Giles in Edinburgh housed a number of altars maintained by the crafts in honour of their patron saints: Crispin and Crispianus for the cordiners, St Anne for the tailors, St Eloi the hammermen, for example.² The saints accrued many legends over the centuries, always involving miraculous happenings, often gruesome martyrdoms and usually with a tale or two connected with the craft under the care of the relevant saint. Each craft also had its individual customs or rituals aimed at differentiating the practitioners from other workers, giving them a sense of identity as well as ensuring the maintenance of craft standards and the protection of livelihoods from interlopers. All who did not share in the myth were, by definition, excluded. Myth provided:

the narrative, the set of ideas, whereas ritual is the acting out, the articulation of the myth; symbols are the building blocks of myths and the acceptance or veneration of symbols is a significant aspect of ritual.³

Of these rituals those of the masons have received most attention, modern scholarship attributing the development of speculative freemasonry to lay interest in the practices of operative stone-masons. The legendary history of their craft and its inherited obligations earned the name of 'The Old Charges'. Stevenson thinks that in the later medieval period these were intended to be read out or recited at meetings, especially when entrants were admitted to the craft.⁴ The admission or initiation into the craft of masonry, shoemaking, candle-making or any other craft necessitated the performance of a set ritual. The successful initiate then learned the secret passwords, grips

¹ AA, MS503/35.

² George Hay, 'The late medieval development of the High Kirk of St Giles, Edinburgh', PSAS, vol. 107 (1975-6), pp. 254-5.

³ George Schöpflin, 'The Function of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths' in Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (eds), *Myths and Nationhood* (London, 1997), p. 20.

⁴ Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry*, pp. 19, 21.

and signs known in masonry as 'the mason's word'.⁵ The regular meetings of the crafts, the nature and organisation of their processions, feasts and religious devotions also had prescribed formats. Richly imbuing the set-piece formulae was 'an entire universe of symbolism'.⁶ Thompson argues that these traditions:

still had a remarkable vigour in the early nineteenth century in some of the old Chartered Companies or Guilds of the masters and of master-craftsmen and of their journeymen in the "Trade"

They were replicated in friendly societies and early trade unions.⁷

The Royal St Crispin Society was neither a trade union, nor a trade society, being unconcerned with the craft aspect of shoemaking, the province of the incorporations and journeymen societies; and with its membership not exclusively limited to shoemakers. Neither could it claim to be a friendly society, though it constituted and dissolved many benefit schemes throughout the nineteenth century. Rather the Royal St Crispin Society fits more appropriately into the classification of 'convivial orders of a semimasonic kind' in that many of the rituals and much of the symbolism resemble those of freemasonry; and may indeed have been in imitation thereof in the manner of other organisations such as the Oddfellows, Foresters or Druids.⁸ Equally, however, certain of the customs might not have been out of place among medieval cordiners. The entire ritual and organisational format of the Royal St Crispin Society is imbued with legends and traditions relating to shoe-making, as will be shown. When Gist studied the 800 different fraternal organisations operating in America in 1927, he recognised that 'while a common cultural thread appears to run through the whole of fraternalism', specific societies had effected some variations of the pattern 'which serve to give each group a certain individuality within the larger fraternal complex'.⁹ The Royal St Crispin Society provides an example of this.

⁵ Durr, 'Ritual of Association', p. 89.

⁶ Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, p. 152.

⁷ E. P. Thompson, 'Rituals of Mutuality' in Jeffrey C. Alexander and Steven Seidman (eds), *Culture and Society* (Cambridge NY, 1990), p. 179; R. J. Morris, Clubs, societies and associations, *Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 401.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Thompson, p. 161.

⁹ Noel P. Gist, 'Cultural Patterning in Secret Society Ceremonials', *Social Forces*, vol. 14, no. 4 (May, 1936), p. 497.

Exclusivity and an organisation's distinctive character were preserved through the apparent maintenance of secrecy and non-divulgence of the workings of the group to outsiders; hence there is little written evidence, especially with regard to ritual and symbolism. There was always the chance that disaffected or expelled members would divulge the secrets, as indeed happened with freemasonry, a number of exposés of which were published in the eighteenth century and earlier.¹⁰ Yet a variety of different meanings could be attributed to the same symbol – 'ritual symbolism is often ambiguous: the symbol has no precise meaning'.¹¹ This truism must have provided some psychological safeguard to members of 'secret societies'. In an age when numbers of different clubs and associations met in the same taverns or halls in close proximity, especially in Edinburgh where the local cadies knew everything about everybody, there cannot, in reality, have been much secrecy except with regard to the passwords, grips and signs.¹² With the exception of some material from Montrose and Dundee, written evidence of Royal St Crispin Society 'secrets' is lacking. Reconstructing a version of the ritual working of the lodges, as opposed to the business agenda, necessitated identifying all references to ritual and regalia in extant documentation; comparing the material evidence in museum collections; and marrying small nuggets of information in one archival source with those in another to gain some understanding of the scripts the Crispins had written for themselves.

The Legend

'Good myths have entertainment value' and 'whether or not people believe in the irrational content of myth is irrelevant', for its symbols have 'metaphoric value'.¹³ Publicity material for King Crispin processions in the 1820s included versions of the Crispin legends that incorporated both the French story of the two martyred brothers and the later sixteenth-century English alternative. A

¹⁰ For a synopsis of these see Durr, 'Ritual of Association', p. 91.

¹¹ David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (Yale, 1988), p. 11.

¹² The cadies acted as guides, spies and messengers in eighteenth-century Edinburgh and their knowledge of people and places was encyclopaedic.

¹³ Joanna Overing, 'The Role of Myth. An Anthropological Perspective: "The Reality of the Really Made-up"' in Hosking and Schöpflin, *Myths and Nationhood*, pp. 3, 7.

written synopsis of the original legend was apparently in existence in 1740 and this document reappeared, or was discovered, in 1870. That Montrose had a version also can be assumed from the list of articles designated as 'absolutely necessary' on 13 November 1826. Number two on this list is 'a box for the legacy' (presumably legend).¹⁴ There is no evidence of the legend being read at lodge meetings or annual festivals of the early nineteenth century or that any such practice had fallen into abeyance. By the 1860s, however, on minuted admission, the brethren's knowledge of the Crispin legendary history was insufficient to enable the composition of a lecture of initiation into the Order in a proper and correct style. Why should such deficiency have caused concern at this time? The revival of the Grand Lodge, the renewed enthusiasm of the associated lodges and the recruitment of new members must have encouraged a degree of questioning as to the origin and traditions of the Order and what was special and different about it. But in a country with, by the nineteenth century, an established Protestant ethos, what was now known of the lives of Catholic saints? The practice of other affiliated orders provides another clue.

Common to all 'secret orders', namely those with initiation ceremonies and ritual, is legend often heavily imbued with biblical references. This applies both to organisations created in the nineteenth century and to those with earlier origins. Many of the trades societies, including the newer 'unions', clung to their traditional histories and taught them to new members, so that a fledgling blacksmith learned the legend of King Solomon's smith or stories about 'Old Clem' (St Clement who replaced St Eloi as patron saint); or a ploughman in North-East Scotland, that Adam caught the first horse.¹⁵ The ritual of the Free Gardeners was based on biblical references to the garden and the Foresters traced their ancestry to Adam.¹⁶ A variety of myths and legends circulated among Oddfellows regarding 'the Romans and other

¹⁴ AA, MS 502/1/1.

¹⁵ Angela Tuckett, *The Blacksmiths' History* (Southampton, 1974), pp. 367-399. Stories, legends and rhymes are found in Appendix A. Ian Carter, *Farmlife in Northeast Scotland 1840-1914* (Edinburgh, 1979), pp. 154-6. For legends connected with the barber-surgeons, for example, see Sidney Young, *Annals of the Barber-Surgeons* (London, 1890), pp. 433-5.

¹⁶ For an example of the questions asked of gardeners see Durr, 'Ritual of Association', p. 98.

ancient peoples' but their debt to freemasonry was acknowledged in an article in the *Oddfellows' Magazine* for 1829, which stated that the Order:

was originally instituted on Masonic principles, the object of which is to cement more firmly the bonds of social feeling and sympathetic intercourse between man and man.¹⁷

The Oddfellows, however, presented their myths and legends to new members in the form of lectures at initiation ceremonies; the lecture books being secured in a box with two keys which remained in the lodge.¹⁸ A revision of the lectures in 1846 incorporated words of wisdom from Burns, Scott and Shakespeare. The Ancient Order of Foresters inaugurated lectures in 1836, printing in 1856 a new ritual book which ran to many editions.¹⁹ By the 1860s these larger affiliated orders had established themselves in Scotland.²⁰ Faced with the more professional image presented by such national organisations, the Royal St Crispin Society might well have felt the pressure of having a formal version of its legend inscribed and delivered as a 'lecture' when new candidates entered the Order.

As seen in the previous chapter the legend that St Crispin founded the order and was first practitioner of Crispianism appeared in prefaces of friendly society rules and in speeches at annual celebrations. Thus it conforms to Truant's analysis that:

In composition and imagery all the myths are profoundly Christian in that each myth relates the story of a sacred figure who bestows a new 'law' on a group of followers, eventually sacrifices his life for this 'law', and in so doing, establishes an enduring institution.²¹

When the Grand Master read 'old Document Dated October 1740' to the assembled brethren on 7 November 1870, the Secretary felt it necessary to write explanatory notes in the margin of the minute about James VI who is mentioned in the text as having confirmed the seal of cause to the cordiners on 6 March 1598.²² The legend, as recorded here and in the next Minute Book, devotes as much space to the origin of the name cordiner, the granting of seals of cause and the altar in St Giles, as it does to details about Crispin

¹⁷ Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England*, pp. 1,127.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹⁹ Durr, 'Ritual of Association', p. 99.

²⁰ 27 Glasgow surgeons were contracted to provide medical support for the Oddfellows in 1844.

²¹ Truant, 'Solidarity and Symbolism among Journeymen Artisans', p. 221.

²² COEM, *Minutes*.

and Crispianus. No further mention is made of the legend in the minutes until 23 January 1884, when Brother Fyfe read the 'Legend' for the benefit of the brethren who had been initiated during the past few months. Clearly no changes had been introduced in the intervening years. The society did feel it necessary in the following year, to print a 'Short Outline of the History of the Society' on the poster for the annual soiree of 20 November. The text is somewhat economical with the truth, stating that the society 'is the descendant of the Ancient Corporation of Cordwainers' – a strange claim as the Incorporation of Cordiners of Edinburgh still existed as a corporate body and the Royal St Crispin Society had processed with the Shoemakers Society in July 1884.²³ Mention is made of the privilege granted by Lord Archibald Hamilton 'of holding a Meeting and marshalling a Procession in the Picture Gallery of Holyrood Palace', but no reference to a coronation. The synopsis concludes with the statement that during all the years the Lodge 'had been conducted as a Secret Society such as the Freemasons' but is now 'remodelled as a Friendly Benefit Society and the Contributions and Sick and Funeral Benefits will compare favourably with other Societies of a similar nature'.²⁴

Clearly the Royal St Crispin Society was now distancing itself from the 'mythical legend' and emphasising instead that the organisation, unlike many of its rivals, had a genuine validated Scottish 'history'. The success of the message seems to have been limited as a few months later:

a discussion arose as to the reading of the Legend at the Initiation of the members some of the members saying that they knew nothing as to the origin of the Order nor as to history of the patron saint.²⁵

The meeting tasked the Secretary with ascertaining the cost of printing the Legend. This however is the last mention of the Legend in official documentation. Whatever the periodic intentions of the brethren, unlike the practice of other Affiliated Orders, a lecture on the Legend does not seem to have been an integral part of any Royal St Crispin Society initiation ceremony, although dubious accounts of the 'History of the Order' continued to be part of public speeches.

²³ Currently the Incorporation is part of the Trades Convenery of Edinburgh.

²⁴ COEM, Poster pasted into the Minute Book.

²⁵ COEM, *Minutes*, 28 April 1886.

Initiation Ceremonies

In his study of secret society ceremonials Gist found that most of the fraternal ceremonials 'have dramas that contain simple narrative plots in which the members and the neophytes play appropriate dramatic rôles'.²⁶ The Royal St Crispin Society comprised three Orders – St Crispin, St Hugh and Court of Masters. Each had its own initiation or entrance procedure. In adhering to this formula the organisation conformed to centuries' old social traditions, whether craft, secret order or any 'rite of passage'. Rituals accompanied the movement from apprentice to journeyman to master; from novice to monk to abbot. The French *compagnonnages* had a 'vocabulary and corpus of myths and rites' adopted in many parts of eighteenth-century France with elaborate initiation ceremonies, multicoloured ribbons, esoteric forms of greeting and terminology to indicate officials and rival associations.²⁷ The Freemasons in the nature of their ritual, and the nineteenth-century Orders of Oddfellows, Foresters, Druids, Buffaloes tailored their ceremonies to suit the images they had created for themselves. Common to all initiation rites are the concepts of separation and isolation of initiates, their transition or journey and overcoming of obstacles, climaxing in acceptance into the new brotherhood – 'reborn as new men into new family of approving brethren or patriarchs'.²⁸ Only then would they learn the signs, grips and other symbols secret to their particular organisation and be able to bond with others elsewhere who had also been initiated. Thus 'by the St Crispin sign' the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin delegates recognised the Secretary of the Falkirk lodge when they met in 'Grahamstown' station on 12 September 1870; and when a brother from Airdrie wished to be affiliated to the Edinburgh lodge he was able to pass the test by 'working his way into the Lodge'.²⁹

²⁶ Gist, 'Cultural Patterning', p. 499.

²⁷ Garrioch and Sonenscher, 'Compagnonnages, Confraternities and Associations of Journeymen in Eighteenth-Century Paris', p. 26.

²⁸ Garner, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*, p. 125.

²⁹ COEM, *Minutes*, 6 February 1884.

The Order of St Crispin: the First Order

Little emerges from the written records of any of the Royal St Crispin lodges concerning the ritual of the first initiation. The standard Edinburgh minute book entry for the pre-1832 period follows the format of that of 29 March 1819: 'The Lodge having met in Mr Stewards the following persons were admitted members after proper recommendation'.³⁰ Names, occupations and addresses are then given. After the restoration of the Grand Lodge in 1862 a little more formality is introduced, with 'the Lodge being opened in due and ancient form' by the Master. Following recommendation from two named members and approval by the lodge, candidates are 'duly initiated into the Royal Order of St Crispin' and pay their entrance money.³¹ That there was a First Order ritual is confirmed by the minute noting that 'the brethren resolved to have a rehearsal of the first Order for the benefit of the newly elected officebearers'.³² Furthermore the Grand Lodge determined to have the ritual transcribed, as on 13 November 1865:

The meeting then took into consideration the great trouble and loss of time sustained by Br Jackson in preparing the addresses and arranging the initiation books of the two Orders, and he refusing to take any adequate remuneration for so doing, the meeting considered it their duty to give Br Jackson and Br Robt Cormack Junr for assisting him a vote of thanks with all the honours was then awarded to them and ordered to be recorded in the minutes.

A hint of the 'separation and isolation' involved in initiation comes on 23 October 1871 when:

Br D Fraser then intimated that he had two candidates who wished to become members of the order of St Crispin. The Secretary then waited on the candidates in the antie (sic) Room.

The candidates obviously fulfilled what was required of them and were fully initiated by the Master 'into all the mistries (sic) of the Ancient Order of St Crispin'.³³ The existence of the offices of Outer and Inner Guardians also indicates the practice of keeping the lodge safe from 'outsiders' and that candidates, and indeed members, have to be admitted to the lodge by the Guardians. (More detail will emerge from an examination of the Second Order ritual.) This procedure echoed that of freemasonry but was not uncommon.

³⁰ COEM, *Minutes*.

³¹ COEM, *Minutes*, 19 August 1862.

³² *Ibid.*, 21 November 1864.

³³ *Ibid.*, 23 October 1871.

Until the late twentieth century the boilermakers had an Outer Guard who checked members' passwords and knocked on the door of the lodge and an Inner Guardian who admitted them.³⁴ An initiate Oddfellow also had to pass the Outside and Inside Guardians on his blinded way to the lodge-room.³⁵

Initiation into the Order of St Crispin was doubtless a 'making ceremony' akin to that of seventeenth-century operative stonemasons or late eighteenth-century London bookbinders. Details of the latter were published in 1834, a year after the printing of the 'Making Song' of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows.³⁶ This would explain the presence of '1 Painted Making Peice'(sic) in the inventory of Edinburgh lodge regalia undertaken on 13 July 1820. There are a number of painted batons in the Dundee collection but these are more likely to relate to the knights or lodge officials (**Fig. 33**). One Edinburgh object might be a making piece. Although unpainted it resembles the moulding tool depicted in a shoemakers' *Catalogue* of 1800 (**Fig. 34**).³⁷ No copy of the ritual of the Crispin Order 'put in type' by Falkirk in 1881 has been located.

The Knights of St Hugh: the Second Order

The cordiners' attachment to St Crispin was of centuries-old standing. It is less obvious why, in 1817, the founders of the Royal St Crispin Society should have given such priority in their new organisation to Sir Hugh who was the fictional creation of an English writer. Barczewski has shown the enthusiasm for medieval literature which grew steadily in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and has described the elevation of King Arthur and Robin Hood to the status of British national heroes.³⁸ The roles of James Macpherson and Sir Walter Scott in creating a romantic 'historical' past have been well documented.³⁹ In establishing the Knights of Sir Hugh the Royal St

³⁴ Durr, 'Ritual of Association', p. 88.

³⁵ Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England*, p. 132.

³⁶ Durr, *Ibid.*, p. 97, 103; Gosden, *Ibid.*, p. 134.

³⁷ R. A. Salaman, *Dictionary of Leather-Working Tools* (London, 1986), p. 35.

³⁸ Stephanie I. Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2000).

³⁹ See, for example, David Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (Harlow, 2002), pp.153-164; Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 255-267; Murray Pittock,

Crispin Society may well have been emulating the fashion for 'medievalism'. As seen in chapter four, they had an association with Sir Patrick Walker, friend of Scott, noted antiquary, collector of medieval armour and eminent freemason.

As with the First Order, however, there is very little reference to the Knights of St or Sir Hugh in the early records, their importance being established in the wording of the charters granted to the branch lodges, the references to Sir Hugh's costume and presence in processions, and a presentation to the society of a chair and desk on 5 March 1832. From 1862 meetings of 'Encampments' are economically recorded by secretaries. The term 'Encampment' seems to have been coined in the 1720s by freemasons to describe a subordinate or specialist lodge held within the parent lodge but possessing its own ritual and regalia.⁴⁰ It signified the formal meeting of the second Order. Many encampments existed in Scotland in the eighteenth century, particularly among lodges of freemasons established in military units. Later within the Ancient Order of Foresters a second Order functioned, the Ancient Shepherds (not to be confused with the Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds, Ashton Unity, a separate organisation).⁴¹ All Shepherds were Foresters but not necessarily vice-versa. Both Orders of the Royal St Crispin Society had their own seals as can be seen from the two extant charters granted to Dundee and Dalkeith. The seal of St Crispin is red with the imprint of a crown, cutting knife and thistle set on a white ribbon. Sir Hugh's ribbon is red and bears a black seal on which is depicted a heart pierced with three spears set within a six-pointed star **(Figs 35-6)**.

In common with the First Order the ritual for opening and closing an encampment is enigmatic in the minutes, the most expansive phraseology being:

The Noble Knights of St Hugh held their encampment this evening ... the encampment being opened in due and ancient form by our Noble St Hugh ... the encampment was closed in due form.⁴²

The Invention of Scotland (London, 1991), pp. 84-85; John Prebble, *The King's Jaunt: George IV in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2000).

⁴⁰ Keith Thomas, *Some Observations on the History of the Royal Arch Degree* (Cork, 2005), p. 17, <[http://www.pgracjak.org.uk/lectures/thomas%20L3pdf\[30\]>](http://www.pgracjak.org.uk/lectures/thomas%20L3pdf[30]>)[May 2012].

⁴¹ Gosden, *The Friendly Societies of England*, p. 128.

⁴² COEM, *Minutes*, 21 Feb 1865.

Airdrie and Montrose minutes are no more explicit. The existence of a written format is confirmed by the minute of an encampment which deliberated:

about the purchasing of a box for the treasurer to keep the books which contains the rules and regulations of the office bearers for an encampment and also for holding some other things belonging to the orders. So the treasurer was desired by the Lodge to order a box with a peculiar lock on it and two keys to be held by two different knights.⁴³

In spite of these precautions the Knights were unable to proceed with a rehearsal on 21 November as the book connected with this order was not forthcoming and, following some discussion, decreed that Sir Hugh and not the Treasurer should keep the book.

That there might be an initiation ritual of some complexity for the Second Order is suggested on 12 June 1865 when Sir Hugh:

intimated to the brethren that he would hold a few meetings for the purpose of rehearsals to enable the Brethren and particularly those in office to perform their different parts with more exactness when any initiation took place St Hugh reserving to himself the power of fixing the time and place which intimation he was to give to the Brethren on the regular meeting nights.⁴⁴

Two months later the brethren agreed that the initiatory system of the Order of Knighthood:

should be transcribed in MS that the daughter lodges might receive copies of the same, so that one uniform system of initiation may pervade throughout all the lodges in the understanding that each lodge shall pay a proportionate share of the expense of so doing. Br Cormack be empowered to furnish 12 copies into which he shall write the whole of our initiatory system of the order of Knighthood for which he was to receive a reasonable pay for his labour.⁴⁵

This is perhaps a tardy response to the complaints of 'irregularities' made at annual Grand Lodge meetings with the branches in 1862 and 1863 and possibly an attempt to correct the Montrose and Airdrie malpractices of initiation into both Orders on the one evening. Being fully conversant with the niceties of initiation ceremonies proved, however, to be a recurring challenge to the brethren, as demonstrated when the Knights agreed that the Hall-Keeper be admitted to the Order of Knighthood:

with the suggestion that the ceremony be more credolably (sic) performed than on the occasion of his receiving the first degree for which purpose it was agreed that the officebearers should meet for rehearsal.⁴⁶

A further rehearsal took place on 9 February 1880.

⁴³ Ibid., 12 April 1864

⁴⁴ Ibid. 12 August 1865.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 21 August 1865.

⁴⁶ COEM, *Minutes*, 7 April 1879

Tantalising snippets of information regarding furniture, regalia and procedure of the Order of St Hugh appear intermittently, such as the account – ‘still due’ and ‘too much’ – for repairing and repainting the shrine of St Hugh.⁴⁷ The affair climaxed in a summons to the Master to appear in the Sheriff Court regarding the contested £6.⁴⁸ In February 1864 however, the shrine was deemed ‘out of order and would require to be repaired’ at a cost of 13s 11d.⁴⁹ On 11 November 1867 the Secretary suggested that:

the position in the Lodge of St Hugh should be made more prominent by having a raised seat opposite the Grand Master as a better effect will be produced by observing more closely the ancient forms and ceremonies of the Order. Likewise that the supporters of Sir Hugh be seated one step higher than the rest of the non official Brethren. It was suggested ... that Crispianus shall have his official position with his supporters arranged in like manner

This of course relates to general meetings of the Society rather than initiation ceremonies but indicates hierarchy and hints at the importance of the office of Crispianus. Indeed Brother Bonnar, elected to the office of Crispianus on 18 November 1878, ‘asked leave of the Knights assembled to take home his ritual with him which was granted’. His ‘ritual’ would be the Crispianus script for initiation ceremonies normally kept safe within the lodge or lodge box. Brother Bonnar obviously wanted to learn his part. The issue of the supporters proved thorny at an encampment meeting in 1871, when:

a very animated discussion took place whether Sir Hugh and Crispianes (sic) chose their own supporters or whether they were elected as the other officebearers and not able to agree Sir Hugh ordered the Secretary to look over old minutes to see what had been the custom formerly.⁵⁰

What happened in the interim is not recorded but on 18 October 1880:

The question was then raised as to the election of the Right Hand and Left Hand Supporters of Sir Hugh, two very important offices in the Initiation Service and after a good deal of talk it was agreed to hold by the old rule of allowing Sir Hugh to choose his own supporters for this year at least

Another important figure in the initiation ceremony is the Guardian of the Bridge who first appears in the minutes in the list of nominations of office bearers on 7 September 1874. A few months later ‘Knight Clark requested that we should get a bridge for the use of the order’; and accordingly a

⁴⁷ Ibid, 2 December 1862.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 3 November 1863.

⁴⁹ COEM, *Grand Lodge of Scotland Royal St Crispin Accounts*, March 1864.

⁵⁰ COEM, *Minutes*, 23 October 1871.

committee was appointed.⁵¹ The bridge measuring three feet by fifteen inches cost seventeen shillings but there is no indication of how it was used in the initiation ceremony.

When the Grand Lodge granted a charter to Dundee Lodge No. 19, it also sent ritual (16 December 1878) and later loaned the sticks necessary for 'making Knights' formerly belonging to the Kirkcaldy lodge.⁵² The new elected Grand Lodge placed the Second Order Ritual on the agenda for the meeting held in Dundee on 24 October 1883. Edinburgh protested vigorously against the proposal to substitute an 'Older' Ritual for the Second Order – 'the one in use in the Mother Lodge and used in Falkirk and the other lodges being the only one in existence' – and the subject was dropped.⁵³ The delegates did discuss the 'Knocks of the First Order' which, according to Brother Millar of Falkirk, now Grand Master, were not correct. He asserted that:

if we looked to the knocks of the Second and Third Order we would find that the passwords were spelt in Knocks and in making candidates when we initiated them with the hands laid on. He proposed as the Law done at Stirling 12 months ago that the alteration now take effect – the other delegates seeming to be at one with him that it should be.⁵⁴

The Grand Lodge was 'closed in due form with the new Knocks' – a procedure employed in the practice of freemasonry.⁵⁵

No more is minuted with regard to the Second Order but an outline of the initiation ritual of the Knights of St Hugh can be sketched from manuscript fragments in Angus Archives and Dundee Library. The Dundee evidence belongs to Lodge No. 19 – probably individual copies of the ritual sent by the Grand Lodge in 1878. The 'script', with relevant cues and stage directions, has been apportioned to the different officials so that no one individual would possess a full edition, as with Brother Bonnar's ritual for Crispianus cited earlier. For example, the handwritten and damaged exercise book labelled 'Inside Guardian' reads as follows:

For initiation only
Crispianus Who comes
Inside Guard Crispins upon tramp
Crispianus From whence

⁵¹ Ibid., 8 July 1875.

⁵² Ibid., 28 August 1879.

⁵³ COEM, Minutes, 17 October 1883.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 31 October 1883.

⁵⁵ Kenning, *Scottish Craft Rituals*, p. 3.

IG	From the lodge of St Crispin
Crispianus	whether bound
IG	To visit the shrine of the noble Sir Hugh
Crispianus	Indeed! dangerous a journey
IG	Yes: these hearts are sealed and protected by the Sacred Lance of St Crispin
Crispianus	got a passport
IG	No but I have got one for them
Crispianus	Then give it to me. ⁵⁶

The Montrose crib sheets for the Second Order are handwritten on black-edged sheets which appear to date from the second half of the nineteenth century rather than the first. They follow a similar format to those of Dundee with interesting detailing of the formulae for opening and enclosing an encampment. Neither archival collection gives anything like the full picture but the scenario seems to conform to the formula cited above of isolation, journey, obstacles and acceptance. The encampment opening set-piece is an exemplar of Garner's analysis that, although meetings were always held in the evening:

the ceremonies characteristically began at 'daybreak', further distancing members from the outside world ... After the initiations the process was reversed. The lodge was closed with a prayer or perhaps a song and an announcement that, because the sun had set, one's labours as Mason, Odd Fellow or Pythian had come to an end.⁵⁷

Following calls and answers notated by signs in the text, Sir Hugh enquires of Crispianus, 'guardian of the encampment', as to his duties and receives the reply 'to see that the encampment is properly guarded and every knight at his post'. After positive assurances of this he asks 'How go the watches of the night' and is told:

The sun has opened the gates of the east and arts and arms (Montrose) signs (Dundee) have resumed their accustomed tour so stands the Knights of Sir Hugh waiting the orders of their commander.⁵⁸

This ritual is very similar to that of the Opening of the Lodge in the First Degree of Freemasonry.⁵⁹ Sir Hugh opens the encampment by prohibiting all cursing and swearing, political, religious or immoral conversation and requesting 'that degree of decorum which characterises the Brethren of this honourable order'.⁶⁰ More unspecified calls and answers ensue.

⁵⁶ DLC, 418(9).

⁵⁷ Garner, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*, p. 29.

⁵⁸ AA, MS 502/3/2; DLC, 418(11).

⁵⁹ Kenning, *Scottish Craft Rituals*, p. 3.

⁶⁰ AA, MS 502/3/2; DLC, 418(11).

Sir Hugh, Crispianus and the other office bearers all had roles to play in the initiation ceremony of aspirant Knights who are designated as pilgrims.⁶¹ Although the Montrose and Dundee versions vary, it is possible to hazard a reconstructed synopsis of the plot which resembles that of the Royal Purple Degree of Odd Fellowship:

the candidate is referred to as a pilgrim making a journey through the wilderness. As he is conducted around the room he is stopped at different stations to receive 'lectures' by different officials on the dangers and pitfalls of his sojourn.⁶²

The Crispin pilgrims 'set out' from the Lodge of St Crispin with the Inside Guardian at hand. Crispianus asks 'Who comes! Who comes!' to which the Inside Guardian replies 'Crispens upon tramp'. This is a neat reference in the Dundee text to the tramping system for seeking employment. The Crispins seek the shrine of St Hugh and have been prepared for the dangerous journey by having their hearts sealed and protected with the sacred lance of St Crispin, the shoemakers' name for the awl. The Grand Lodge received a presentation of a 'Guilded Awl' on 22 June 1868 and there are unadorned versions in the Edinburgh and Dundee collections (**Fig. 37**). An underlined stage instruction 'Lance of St Crispin' follows in the Dundee ritual. The Airdrie inventory of regalia lists a 'shrine lance'.⁶³

Much in the next part resembles the 'Ceremony of Passing' in the freemasons' ritual of the Second Degree when the 'Conductor' answers the questions and gives 'the p...w....' on behalf of the initiate.⁶⁴ In the Knights' initiation the Inside Guardian produces a passport which Crispianus takes, before informing Sir Hugh of their arrival. In the Montrose version the Guardian of the Gate plays this role. Beyond the words 'Pilgrims', 'And fear no evil', there is no record of Sir Hugh's words before Crispianus gives further instructions and introduces two Guides. The passport is a star which Crispianus places in a pilgrim's hand (at the same time giving the other end to the Second Guide) and bidding him:

⁶¹ 'Pilgrim' in the Montrose manuscript.

⁶² Gist, *Cultural Patterning*, p. 500.

⁶³ NLA, U431.

⁶⁴ Kenning, *Scottish Craft Rituals*, p. 18.

quit hold of it to none, by it and it alone can you hope to get to the end of your journey, many attempts will be made to take it from you but I again charge you to resist them all.⁶⁵

The Edinburgh collection contains eight six-pointed metal stars each attached to a green cord (**Fig. 38**). The following rhyme rings out:

However dreary is the way
What dangers may ensue
Their homage still they hope to pay
At the shrine of the Great Sir Hugh⁶⁶

The Pilgrims and the Guides who proclaim – ‘They come they come’ (singular in the Montrose version) – now proceed to the Bridge where they encounter the Guardian of the Bridge who asks – ‘who is it that comes’ – followed by – ‘within this dreary wilderness what can you hope to find’. Warned by the Guardian of the dangers ahead, the Guide retorts that other Knights have had more and he produces the passport which will ensure that the Pilgrims can proceed to the Well of St Winifred.

On arrival the party seems to encounter the Right and Left Hand Supporters of Sir Hugh who declare:

you must drink at this sacred fountain and out of this cup now gilt with purest gold which ne’er was formed by hands but cast in nature’s mould.
Drink to the memory of Crispen to the memory of Sir Hugh – To the memory of the fair Winnifred – to all those noble knights who have entered in by the great gate at the head of the way, crossed the bridge and drank at the sacred fountain⁶⁷

This part of the initiation ritual explains the presence of the gilded skulls in the Edinburgh and Dundee museum collections (**Fig. 39**). These traditional symbolic reminders of mortality found on gravestones, banners and iconic objects, also serve here as vessels for containing the water from ‘Winfred’s Well.’⁶⁸ This interpretation is confirmed by Beveridge’s Linlithgow notes:

the skull and cross bones were dug from the church yard with the flesh attached; buried in Loch; initiated Crispins had to drink water from the skull.⁶⁹

In freemasonry the skull and crossbones are essential symbols in the ritual of the Third Degree.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ AA, MS 503

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ DLC, 418(10).

⁶⁸ Gist, ‘Cultural Patterning’, p. 505. He considers this aspect of ritualism to be especially appropriate for organisations having sick and death benefits.

⁶⁹ NAS, GD215/1728.

⁷⁰ Kenning, *Scottish Craft Rituals*, p. 28.

Winifred is allocated a verse (with slight variations) in both Montrose and Dundee manuscripts:

Montrose

Beside this well fair Winnifred sat
Her faith were fixed on heaven
Nor did she leave this sacred spot
Till from it she was driven
Hard by this font the Great Sir Hugh
With her were (was) doomed to die
A martyr to the Christian cause
Upon a scaffold high⁷¹

Dundee

Beside the well fair Winnifred sat
Her thoughts were fixed on heaven
Nor did she leave the sacred spot
Till from it she was driven
Hard by the well the Great Sir Hugh
With her was doomed to die
A martyr to the Christian faith
Upon a scaffold high

The next stage of the 'journey' is the traversing of 'the dreary path that leads to the shrine of the most noble Sir Hugh', accompanied by an anthem sung to the tune 'Evan' and with various interjections of 'trust to honour' and 'fear no evil'.

At this point it is difficult to determine what happens next. Seemingly random lines indicate that, following a question and answer session conducted by the Right and Left Hand Supporters of Sir Hugh – 'They come, they come, Who is it that comes, Crispins led and blind', Sir Hugh is informed of the arrival of the pilgrims. Crispianus or the Right Hand Supporter tells him that 'here are pilgrims craving admission to the Holy Shrine to receive the honor of Knighthood'. Sir Hugh, having ascertained that they have followed the correct procedure by drinking at the well and holding fast to their 'honor', now commands that the Pilgrims be conducted 'with slow and steady pace' to the singing of the 'anthem':

To him that drank out of this cup
Now gilt with purest gold
That ne'er was formed by hands of man
But cast in nature mould.⁷²

With the ceremony at 'St Winifred's Well' and this culmination of the 'pilgrim journey', the Royal St Crispin Society has transformed elements of the martyrdom scene in Thomas Deloney's tale of Sir Hugh, into a theatricality which hardly matches the original but conforms to the conventions of nineteenth-century secret society ritual. In *The History of the Gentle Craft* Winifred chooses a martyr's death by being bled to death. The wicked tyrant

⁷¹ The Montrose manuscript has 'faith' scored out and 'cause' substituted.

⁷² DLC, 418(10).

catches her dripping blood in 'certain basins', mixes it with poison and gives it to Sir Hugh to drink, which he gladly does.

In the grand finale of the Second Order initiation ritual Sir Hugh bids the 'golden gates' be open and the Pilgrims to 'quit your guiding star with safety'. The Chaplain now administers the 'most Solemn obligation' to be 'faithful to the Secrets' with which they might be entrusted. He does this at some length, having instructed the Pilgrims to kneel – one use for the 'Knealing Cushion for candidates' listed by the Montrose secretary as being 'absolutely necessary'.⁷³ The obligation contains much that is in imitation of an eighteenth-century freemasonry oath and reflects 'the quasi-religious character of esoteric fraternalism'.⁷⁴ In the presence of 'the Knights encamped around' the initiate pledges not to reveal any of the signs, secrets or ceremonies connected with the Order of St Hugh; and that he will not 'write, print, paint, cut, carve stain or engrave or in any manner whatever delineate any such secrets, words or grip'. Nor is he to 'speak evil of any Knight or willingly hurt the Order' but is to 'assist all poor and needy brethren' unless detrimental to personal or family interest; pay due respect to the office bearers; and not associate 'with any encampment which does not hold its authority from the Grand Encampment Scotland'. The penalty for breaking the promise is 'to have my heart taken from my left breast, placed upon the points of the three sacred spears expose to the four winds of heaven there to wither and rot.' The obligation ends with a plea to the 'All Seeing eye of Divine Providence' to keep the new Knight firm and resolute.

This Dundee script is interesting on two counts. Firstly the penalty of having a heart impaled on three spears explains the otherwise enigmatic graphic depicted on regalia, diplomas and the seal of the Order. There are three similar objects in the Dundee collection and two in Edinburgh (**Fig. 40**). Three steel spears on handles and three brass ones are listed in the Airdrie inventory.⁷⁵ Secondly the text comes from Dundee Lodge No. 19 which received its charter and ritual in 1878 from Edinburgh, thereby demonstrating that the Royal St Crispin Society, unlike other orders, had not toned down its

⁷³ AA, MS 502/1/1.

⁷⁴ Gist, *Cultural Patterning*, p. 503.

⁷⁵ NLA, U43.

ritual by the latter part of the nineteenth century, and was still using a penalty similar to that of the freemasons, described for example in the *Echo* of 1728.⁷⁶ The Montrose ritual however, includes a piece of verse entitled 'Address at the shrine by J Lee', which is very much of the period of the Grand Lodge in its language and sentiments. Probably composed to be read before the Obligation, the text includes such gems as:

Pilgrim behold the monument sublime
That stands betwixt eternity and time
To mask the limits of earthly joys and fears
And of the path-way through this land of tears....
Ah! What is life?
Tis but a fleeting breath
A prelude to the hastning hour of death
A funeral march thro' fitful light and gloom
Its halt within the ever ready tomb

More follows in this vein and must have had some effect of inducing in Pilgrims the required sense of, if not terror, then awe and gravitas required by such initiation ceremonies.⁷⁷ The poem ends with the customary promise of rebirth into the new society:

Then let us look beyond this land of night
To the clear fountain of perpetual light
For hark the glad anthem rings from shore to shore
'Man dies to live and lives to die no more'.⁷⁸

After initiation and the transaction of relevant business Sir Hugh closes the Encampment in a format which echoes the opening ritual.

The Court of Masters: The Third Order

Early evidence of the existence of the Court of Masters comes from Montrose. On 10 June 1824 a representative from Edinburgh established the Court with a set of byelaws for its governance.⁷⁹ Little is recorded of its transactions or ritual beyond a description of the badge of the Order, a gold or gilded crown worn above the Star of St Hugh. Minutes of a Third Order meeting on 9 December 1867 note the election of a Master General, Depute Master, Chaplin, Inner Guardian, Treasurer, Secretary, and Officer with the

⁷⁶ See chapter three; Gosden, *The Friendly Societies of England*, pp. 131, 134.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.131-2.

⁷⁸ AA, MS 502/3/1.

⁷⁹ AA, MS 502/2, *Rules of the Masters of St Crispin*.

latter three officiating in all three Orders.⁸⁰ The Masters of the Airdrie lodge also received badges and office bearers included a Master at Arms.⁸¹

Some general information can be gleaned from Edinburgh minutes after 1862 but nothing concerning ritual. For example, on 9 December 1867 the Grand Lodge Court of Masters expelled Brother Shiels from their Court on the grounds that he had deserted his wife and eloped with the wife of another man. Being 'in direct opposition to the Laws of the Order of St Crispin' members condemned his conduct as 'base and not worthy of the name of Brother but rather that of an Animal'.⁸² Brother Shiels' behaviour evoked the application of Rule 5 whereby:

A Master may be degraded from his Rank by vote of the Lodge or Society for injury done thereto or by a Lodge of Masters for gross immorality.⁸³

His behaviour evidently contrasted with that of Brother Bain who was recommended to the Court of Masters as a 'fit and proper person' on account of his attention to the office of Outside Guardian and devotion to the Order of St Crispin.⁸⁴ Elevation to the Court of Masters was through merit, although on 20 November 1871 the Grand Master intimated his intention of taking the 'Privilege of his office' to join the Third Order. In 1887 as part of a recruitment initiative, it was suggested that a Knight who brought in six new members in a year be raised to the Master Degree free of charge.⁸⁵

The Court of Masters dealt with certain thorny issues such as the Falkirk charter controversy described in the previous chapter, or the transactions of the Festival Committee.⁸⁶ The only question raised with regard to ritual appears on 5 March 1884 in a health and safety concern regarding 'the height which candidates in being initiated had to leap ... the present system of leaping off the seats being characterised as dangerous'.⁸⁷ Initiation into which degree is not stated but the brethren appointed a committee to

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ NLA, U431, 6 July 1863, 7 March 1864.

⁸² COEM, *Minutes* 9 December 1867.

⁸³ AA, MS 502/2, *Rules of the Masters of St Crispin*.

⁸⁴ COEM, *Minutes*, 12 October 1868.

⁸⁵ COEM, *Minutes*, 27 April 1887.

⁸⁶ COEM, *Minutes*, 4 October 1880.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

investigate any alteration that might be made on the platform used in the Third Degree.

Among the records of Dundee Lodge No. 19 is a fragile and sometimes illegible note-book which outlines a Court of Masters initiation ceremony.⁸⁸ The office bearers for the ritual are Master General, Depute Master General, Master Treasurer (all denominated His Excellency), Master Secretary, Master Chaplain, Master at Arms, Inside Guard and Outside Guard. The Lance of St Crispin, the three spears of Sir Hugh, the Cutting Knife of a Master, the vessel containing the oil of time (sic) and the (wreath?) olive branch appear as essential objects.⁸⁹ Masters wear the livery of white apron topped with crimson, gold sash and collar trimmed with blue and gold, the latter two having crimson velvet centres. The candidate craving admission to the Court must present himself without shoes and with the right knee and left breast bare.

In the opening ritual the Excellent Master General asks his Depute – ‘what is your first duty in the opening of this Court’.⁹⁰ The response involves instructions to the guards and enquiries about their responsibilities. The Inside Guard must receive the sign and grip of a master and ensure that none ‘approach our EMG but those properly clothed as masters’. He also receives ‘properly recommended candidates’. The Outside Guard prevents strangers from approaching and ensures that members of the Court are correctly dressed. Once the EGM is satisfied that all is in order he opens the Court with a reminder of the penalties for misbehaviour and invokes the ‘all seeing eye of Providence’ to ‘look down upon us and may his hand guide us in all our deliberations from our opening to our end’. He concludes with additional sentiments regarding ‘Unity Honour and Peace’ and hearts agreeing in concord, harmony and love.

The initiation begins with the familiar question and answer format. After making the correct responses the candidate has to prove himself ‘acquainted

⁸⁸ DLC, 418(7).

⁸⁹ Oil of thyme is listed in the *Cash and Receipt Book*, 418(2) as costing one penny. The Oddfellows dropped thyme on the coffin of a deceased brother. See Weinbren, *The Oddfellows 1810-2010*, p. 104.

⁹⁰ References to the Masters’ ritual are from DL 418(7).

in the tools of the Craft'. He is presented with each of the three spears in succession and asked for the relevant grip, password and sign, the third grip, sign and word having been 'received at the shrine of the holy Sir Hugh'. This part of the pilgrimage complete, the Chaplain administers the obligation during which the initiate promises not to reveal the secrets and ceremonies or assist in the admission of persons of dubious character; to carry out a range of duties and on resignation of office return any relevant property; to abide by majority decisions and to behave as befits a master of the craft.

The EMG now instructs the candidate in 'the mysteries of this our order' by asking him to hold up his right foot. Although the candidate appeared shoeless at the beginning, the Master takes the cutting knife and cuts a hole in the centre of the insole declaring:

I now anoint you on the sole of the foot that you may at all times be able to stand upright in the presence of your brethren
I now anoint you on the right Knee so that when you bend your knee to the most High you forget not your brethren in your petition
I now anoint you on the palm of the right hand so that when you give the right hand of fellowship to a brother you give it in sincerity and truth
I now anoint you in the region of the heart so that you at all times be pure in heart and hand to a brother so that no malice or bad feeling can exist in a Master Court
I now anoint and crown you with the (?)olive the emblem of earth (see Genesis 8th chap vs 8-12) and anoint you with the oil of Thyme on the Crown of your head so that peace may run through your whole body.
As you are now anointed from the sole of your foot to the crown of the head and have devoted your whole body to the cause and have taken a solemn obligation to keep all the signs secret and symbols you may at any time be entrusted with in this order
The word sign and grip are now given and the ceremony is complete

Anointing from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head may seem formulaic but it has a resonance associated with shoemaking. In the craft a 'crown' was another word for an inspection or scrutiny.⁹¹ The Crispins are thus indulging their love of punning with the incorporation of trade-specific words in the ceremony. The aspiring master has been tried and tested just as the shoe is 'crowned' or inspected for flaws.

The Dundee manuscript continues with a brief summary of how to test a brother master. This consists of three questions – 'how was you (sic) made a master; can you cut an insole; how would you begin'. These questions are 'as important as the symbols of the order'. More questions and answers occur

⁹¹ James Dacre Devlin, *Critica Crispiana, British and Foreign of the Great Exhibition* (London, 1852), p. 20.

with the closing of the Court and involve demanding the 'Knocks from the Guards and signs from the brethren, followed by congratulations on the efficiency of the Guards. The Excellent Master General closes the Court with the words – 'And let this be our sign and may the eye of omnipotence be upon us until we again assemble'.

The byelaws for Dundee Lodge No. 19 are a succinct version of those of Montrose with the omission of any reference to the Master badge and the addition of a rule decreeing that the proceeds of the masters' initiation fees be applied for the benefit of a friendly society connected with the lodge, and where no society exists, to be set aside for charitable purposes after expenses. The text concludes with a note regarding the minute passed at the last conference, namely that irrespective of the amount charged for confirming it, the Third Degree should be considered an 'Order of Merit'.⁹² A candidate must have meritorious conduct and have 'consciously worked for the good of the Order' or held office for a year, although the lodges could decide the initiation fee.

Additional Interpretation of Ritual

The Montrose and Dundee archival evidence for the ritual of the three Orders of St Crispin is more in the form of aides-memoires than complete scripts. The sum of 13s 6d expended by the Grand Lodge for 'the writing of three rituals and book for the same' in March 1879, has not ensured the survival of material evidence.⁹³ The ceremonies undergone must have been lengthier than indicated in the extant text. For example, there is no mention of a 'set of Relics for the purpose of making Knights' as was required by the new Lodge No. 19.⁹⁴ There is a specific shoemaking 'pun' here. Shoemakers used sticks and bones (St Hugh's bones) for polishing and rubbing down. The sticks varied in length from about five inches to the Scots langstick of approximately thirteen inches, their function being to level, smooth, polish,

⁹² This was probably 20 November 1885. There is a reference to the question in the Edinburgh minutes of 14 October.

⁹³ COEM, Grand Lodge, *Income and Expenditure*, March 1879.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 28 August 1879.

remove wrinkles and finish off stitches and seams.⁹⁵ Thus symbolic sticks might be employed to 'finish' a knight', perhaps at the shrine of St Hugh or before the obligation. The Dundee collection includes 28 varnished wooden strips which might have been the St Hugh 'sticks'.

There is a complex interpretation of the six-pointed star which is the mullet for the heart pierced with three spears, the seal of St Hugh. The star is the 'passport' for the initiate knight. In freemasonry the six-pointed star can signify the seal of Solomon, the shield of David or the presence of divinity; it is a 'proved' mark.⁹⁶ In heraldry, however it is the ensign of knightly rank; and a star of some sort constitutes part of the insignia of every order of knighthood. The Scottish mullet is six-pointed and is called a mullet if pierced, but a star if it is not. The mullet is the 'molette' or rowel of a spur.⁹⁷ Spears do not feature in the Deloney story of Sir Hugh but the Old Testament of the Bible tells the story of Absalom, who was punished for his betrayal of King David by being pierced through the heart by, depending on the translation, three javelins, spears or darts.⁹⁸ In heraldic terms there is a distinction between spears and lances or javelins.⁹⁹ The 'spears' depicted in the Crispin iconography look like heraldic lances. As the ritual of many organisations – freemasonry, affiliated orders or trade societies – alludes to a biblical source, the pierced heart may be a reference to Absalom's fate. The only image similar to this seal of St Hugh found to date appears in a seventeenth-century book on emblems of the heart as depicted in art. Here the heart pierced with three 'spears' is shown under the head of Absalom with its hair entwined in the branches of a tree as in the Old Testament verses (**Fig. 41**).¹⁰⁰ Two hearts, one pierced with a single sword (the sacred heart), the other with three spears appear in the mural in Mission Dolores in San Francisco. Painted around 1790, the hearts are currently interpreted as referring to the crucifixion of Christ, the 'spears'

⁹⁵ Salaman, *Dictionary of Leather-Working Tools*, pp. 93-96.

⁹⁶ Albert G. Mackey, *An Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry and Kindred Sciences*, vol. 2 (New York, 1929), p. 919.

⁹⁷ A.C. Fox-Davies, *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* (London, 1985), p. 222.

⁹⁸ Second Book of Samuel, chapter 18.

⁹⁹ Fox-Davies, *Heraldry*, p. 215.

¹⁰⁰ Francesco Pona, *Cardiomophoseos, sive, Ex corde desumpta emlemata sacra* (Verona, 1645), p. 53,
<<http://www.archive.org/stream/francisciponaeca00pona#page/n3/mode/2up>>[30 May 2012].

being the traditional three nails and the sword the lance which pierced Christ's side.¹⁰¹ There is also an ancient reference to shoemaking and a spear. The Celtic god Lugh, named Lugos by the Romans, seems to have had a connection with shoemaking in Lyons and there is a shoemakers' dedication to him in Uxama (Soria, Spain).¹⁰² He carried a spear and is depicted in tripartite form. In Gaulish iconography the god of the spear is associated with healing springs and in the Welsh legends Lleu, armed with spear, is one of the three golden shoemakers of Britain.¹⁰³

If the illegible word beside 'olive' in the Masters' initiation text is wreath, leaves or branch this would explain the small wreath of artificial green leaves in the Edinburgh collection (**Fig.42**). The accompanying citation of verses from Genesis is another example of a reliance on Old Testament symbolism. The lines in question tell how Noah sent out the dove from the Ark three times to ascertain the depths of the flood water. On the dove's second return it brought with it olive leaves, indicating that the water was subsiding and the earth reappearing. Here is another instance of the 'rebirth' theme of initiation ceremonies. The reference to Noah also helps explain the presence of the Ark on Royal St Crispin aprons and certificates. It is the emblem of the Third Order, no doubt chosen because, in the language of the lecture of the third degree of freemasonry, it represents a well-spent life.¹⁰⁴ Entrants to the Court of Masters had to demonstrate evidence of their 'well-spent' lives usually through service to the society. The Grand Lodge instruction to the associated lodges on 20 June 1870 that the new design of the Diploma of the Order of St Crispin would 'represent all three orders of the Craft' is a reference, therefore, to the depiction of crown and cutting knife, heart pierced with three spears and the Ark on diplomas such as the one in the Dundee collection.¹⁰⁵ The key position of the Second Order, however, is demonstrated visually by the dominance of symbols for the Knights on diplomas and aprons. The central

¹⁰¹ See the Mission's website for images of the restored mural and its hearts, <<http://www.missiondoloresmural.com>>[30 May 2012].

¹⁰² J. A. MacCulloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts* (Edinburgh, 1911), pp. 90-1.

¹⁰³ Rachel Bromwick (ed.), *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Welsh Traditions* (Cardiff, 1978), pp. 176-7.

¹⁰⁴ Mackey, *An Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, vol.1, p. 97.

¹⁰⁵ COEM, *Minutes*.

image is that of a waterfall – surely St Winifred’s sacred spring or well – and this is ‘supported’ by two figures in heraldic poses, male clad in armour and bearing a battle axe, female dressed in ‘classical’ garb (**Fig. 43**). They can be none other than Sir Hugh:

See Good Sir Hugh in armour bright,
A brother and a noble knight¹⁰⁶

and the fair Winifred, who appears sitting beside flowing water in an image painted on the lids of the two chests in the Edinburgh collection (**Fig. 44**).

In all initiation ceremonies there was a central place for the Bible, certainly with regard to the taking of the obligation. The edition belonging to the Edinburgh Crispins included the Apocrypha and bears the inscription ‘Grand Lodge Royal St Crispin Society April 1862’; the month of the first entry in the Grand Lodge Minute Book. The accounts note a cost of twelve shillings. Br Fraser presented the Lodge with a very handsome scarlet cushion for the Bible on 23 October 1871. This is doubtless one of those in the Edinburgh collection as it is difficult to determine the original colours, scarlet or purple (**Fig. 45**). Also presumably relating to the Edinburgh Court of Masters is a box in the form of two books with the words ‘Magister Arte Crepidarum Tom1’ on one spine, repeated but with ‘Tom 2’ on the other. The object opens as a book to reveal two covered compartments, one hollow and marked B; the other marked A designed to hold objects (**Fig. 46**). Whether this box and its contents were used in initiation ceremonies or during other ritual connected with the Court of Masters is undetermined.

Other Ritual and Regalia

When in November 1886 the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge invited William McEwan Esq. MP to become an honorary member of the Lodge he replied that the initiation stood in the way. The brethren were so anxious to recruit him that they agreed he would only ‘be required to go through a short ceremony’, ‘curtailed as much as possible’ and this Mr McEwan agreed to

¹⁰⁶ COEM, *Minutes*, 23 October 1889; lines from the concert song.

do.¹⁰⁷ The hurriedly arranged ceremony took place in the Royal Hotel Princes Street where the Guide introduced Mr McEwan, who was:

thereafter duly initiated by the WM who clothed him with an apron while the Sec affixed a Gold Master Badge on his breast and requested him to accept it as a memento of the occasion from the members of the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge No1. Br McEwan having now shaken hands with all the Brethren he thanked them in a very neat speech for their having initiated him an Honorary Member of the Order at the same time remarking that as a loyal brother he would do his best to give the Lodge a lift. The Master thereafter suitably replied and called upon the Brethren to give Br McEwan a very hearty welcome. The WM then closed the Lodge in due and ancient form. After the Lodge was closed Br McEwan pledged the success of the Lodge in a bumper of champagne...¹⁰⁸

The Secretary also noted that he had been able to get a small gold badge at a reasonable price. Intermittently other individuals became honorary members on account of services rendered, but there is no record if they were spared the rigours of full initiation.

Freemasons and other affiliated orders had a ritual for the funerals of brothers and the Crispins on three minuted occasions indicated the same. On 15 May 1865 they attended a brother's funeral wearing plain black clothes, white neckties and white gloves. They walked in a body, two deep, in front of the hearse to the cemetery gates where they parted to allow funeral party through, then fell in behind. The obligation of attendance at funerals was reinforced in the next month by the introduction of a byelaw to that effect. Twenty-five members turned out for a funeral on 6 January 1883 when 'they proceeded in front of the Hearse in the usual style' (thereby indicating an established custom), with 'the Officer in front carrying the Sceptre draped in crepe'.¹⁰⁹ There is no mention of any form of words being said, as was the practice at the funerals of Oddfellows.¹¹⁰

Some Grand Lodge minutes for the 1860s give an indication of the ritual accompanying the annual installation of office bearers on or near St Crispin's day:

the worthy Master Br Jackson having stated the purpose of the meeting the interesting ceremony of the installation was then proceeded with. The worthy Master having called forward Br John McKenzie informed him that having been elected by a large majority to fill the important office of Grand Master of and belonging to the Royal Order of St Crispin put the usual questions to him which being answered in the

¹⁰⁷ COEM, *Minutes*, 2 February 1877.

¹⁰⁸ COEM, *Minutes*, 2 July 1887.

¹⁰⁹ COEM, *Minutes*.

¹¹⁰ Gosden, *The Friendly Societies of England*, p. 136.

affirmative the obligatory oath was then administered. The Coronation then took place and was conducted according to ancient usage and custom. Br J McKenzie being declared crowned King of the Craft having full power to act and being invested with all authority in and on behalf of the brethren belonging to the Royal Order of St Crispen. Br McKenzie being duly installed into the high office the Grand Master took the chair amidst the cheers of the assembled brethren...Brother McKenzie then entered his duties as Grand Master over all the Lodges held under the name of St Crispen in Scotland and holding their authority by charter granted from the Grand Lodge Royal St Crispen Edinburgh.¹¹¹

In 1869:

The newly elected Grand Master, after promising faithfully to discharge the duties pertaining to that high office' was 'crowned according to ancient custom by the Crown being placed upon his head'; and afterwards 'acknowledged King and Master of the Grand Lodge Royal St Crispin' by the brethren assembled with acclamation.¹¹²

The affirmation of the King's or Grand Master's authority over the branch lodges is obviously the accepted form of words, as witness the Perth coronation. These Edinburgh examples are of course, occasions for the recognition of new officials rather than full-scale coronations. On both occasions cheers and acclamation greeted the installation of Chaplain, Inside and Outside Guardians and other office bearers. The toasts given at the suppers are interesting as much for their reception as their proposal. The 'health' of the Queen and Royal family, daughter lodges, retiring officers, newly-elected officers, the ladies was greeted with cheers or applause; but the memory 'of our Patron St Crispin drank standing in deep silence' and that of Sir Hugh and St Winifred 'in solemn silence'.¹¹³ A convivial evening of food and drink, interwoven with songs and recitations in the time-honoured manner of St Crispin Day celebrations is given an updated twist by the secretary's parting comment in 1869. The time had been spent 'in doing honour to the Memory of our departed Saint and founder of the Order of Saint Crispin' – thus setting the installation ceremony and celebrations in a Royal St Crispin Society context rather than a commemoration of a craft patron saint.¹¹⁴

References to initiation, opening and closing rituals indicate that certain objects were specifically used for lodge ceremonials. Other items, in particular many robes or costumes, must have been intended for processions or participation in specific demonstrations such as civic occasions or celebrations. This would account for the ambiguous nature of the inventory of

¹¹¹ 25 October 1864.

¹¹² 25 October 1869.

¹¹³ COEM, *Minutes*, 25 October 1864.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 25 October 1869.

regalia made by the Royal St Crispin Society 13 June 1820 prior to the October procession, namely:

2 Flags 9 Aprons 6 Sashes – 1 Vest and Robe 1 Bonnet 1 Crown and Cushion 3 small Crowns 3 long poles, 3 Bottom 3 knives 2 Herald rods, 1 Painted Making Peice 1 Robe for the preist 1 Sett Bands 1 Lance

(Fig. 47). Lists made by Montrose on 13 November 1862 and Airdrie on 30 September 1867 reveal a mixture of lodge items such as lodge robes (Montrose) and a bible and three brass shrine spears (Airdrie); and possibly processional costumes such as cloaks and hats (Airdrie). The Edinburgh society had to borrow, hire or buy most of the costumes and accessories necessary for the 1820 procession. In subsequent years it augmented its wardrobe, also spending considerable amounts on repairs to costumes and regalia – for example, 6s for mending the champion’s dress in 1824 and 10s for armour repaired in 1888.

Throughout the nineteenth century Edinburgh received many requests from branch lodges for the loan of robes and regalia, either for St Crispin processions or participation in public events. Thus on 21 June 1869 the Linlithgow brethren craved ‘a loan of Regalia from the three separate Orders’ to enable them to process in the town ‘clothed as Crispins’.¹¹⁵ Clearly the mother lodge had a costume collection unrivalled by the branches whose regalia can therefore be assumed to be primarily for use in the lodge. The Montrose brethren for example, deemed it necessary to have the lodge robes repaired on 30 September 1867. There is also evidence in later years of requests for robes from shoemaker groups unconnected with the Royal St Crispin network. The balance sheet for September 1884 shows a return of 10s from the Inverness Shoemakers’ Society who borrowed armour, heralds’ tunics and caps for the franchise demonstration in the town. Nairn and Tain followed suit with similar requests in October, and these were obliged courtesy of the night passenger train. Such loans outside the circle of Royal St Crispin Societies would have been refused in earlier years, as would that of the Star of Midlothian Lodge of Oddfellows in Dalkeith who borrowed regalia in 1888 and 1889 for their demonstrations. Financial pressure must have been a strong incentive for this kind of agreement. There was also by now a greater

¹¹⁵ COEM, *Minutes*.

emphasis, publicly at least, on the 'benefit' rather than the 'secret' role of the society though the items borrowed would reveal nothing of the 'secrets'.

A reasonable assumption can be made therefore that individual lodges purchased the regalia and clothing essential for the regular enactment of lodge ritual, as well as the means of keeping it safe (chests and boxes). Most costumes required for a public St Crispin display would be borrowed. It is unclear if members individually purchased any regalia. Apron and sash would be obvious contenders, as witness the apron in the NMS collection worn by the donor's father.¹¹⁶ These items do, however, appear in lodge inventories and regular expenditure for aprons or sashes is listed in Edinburgh accounts: ten apron sets at 2s 4d each, seven sash sets at 3s 6d in August 1871. The most specific minute entries are those of 19 October and 2 November 1876. The first instructs the Officer to gather in articles of clothing in the hands of brethren; the second notes that the Festival balance is to be devoted to the formation of a fund for clothing the members of the lodge in regalia. Periodic levies on members to enable the purchase or renewal of regalia had been undertaken from the earliest days of the Royal St Crispin Society, as on 5 July 1819 when members agreed that all who had entered the lodge previously should pay 2s 6s each towards furnishing the lodge with a suitable regalia. What this entailed is not disclosed.¹¹⁷ In November 1871 the brethren discussed the establishment of a fund 'for the purpose of getting Robs (sic) for the Lodge' and 'clothing for the officebearers'. They heard about the scarcity of regalia in the lodge in January 1884.¹¹⁸ On this latter occasion a request was made to Falkirk for a sample apron. Samples printed with the 'Diploma design on Leather' appeared a few weeks later but it was 'left to the members themselves to get up the aprons the Lodge supplying the Design'.¹¹⁹ The Linlithgow apron in the NMS collection is leather, those in other collections being woven cotton (**Fig. 48**). From June 1884 Edinburgh brethren could purchase the 'Apron Squares' for one shilling and sixpence each. Whatever the earlier practice the Crispins now had to buy their own symbols of the

¹¹⁶ NMS, K.19999.1451&2.

¹¹⁷ COEM, *Minutes of the Royal St Crispin Society*.

¹¹⁸ COEM, *Minutes of the Grand Lodge; Minutes of the Royal St Crispin Lodge*.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 28 May 1884.

Order and two years later contribute one shilling each towards repairing and renewing the lodge regalia.¹²⁰

Ritual and the Crispins

Throughout the nineteenth century the enactment of ritual, the possession of objects relating to that ritual and the wearing of regalia symbolising it remained integral to the Royal St Crispin Society and the branch lodges. That ritual forms tend to be slower to change than many other aspects of culture, thereby giving a sense of continuity, is perhaps exemplified here.¹²¹ However distanced the late nineteenth-century brethren may have been from an understanding of the shoemaker traditions and legends which shaped the 'mysteries' of their organisation, they remained committed to ceremonies undertaken by their predecessors decades earlier. The coronation of King Crispin continued to be performed, if only at the annual election of office bearers and occasionally on the public platform. In common with other contemporary organisations such as the Oddfellows or Shepherds, much of the ritual and regalia owed a debt to the practices of freemasonry. The structure of the society, with its three Orders of St Crispin, St Hugh and the Court of Masters and particular rituals for meetings, regalia and initiation ceremonies, bears some signs of similarity to the Three Degrees of early freemasonry. The initiation formula of attaining a higher state of knowledge or worth by undertaking a 'journey', overcoming obstacles and being reborn into a 'new' society or deemed deserving of a new honour is particularly demonstrated in the ritual of the Knights of Sir Hugh.

Yet while the Royal St Crispin Society adopted a format apparently influenced by freemasonry, its original founders created scripts to incorporate shoemaker stories, even if embellished or adapted, as with that of Sir Hugh and Winifred, to meet the requirements of a 'secret order'. The Old Testament iconography, the use of verses from the scriptures, the singing of a psalm and offering of a prayer at conferences is little different from the practice of the cordiner incorporations which inscribed the introductory prayer for meetings at

¹²⁰ Ibid., 24 March 1886.

¹²¹ Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power*, p. 12.

the beginning of minute books or above the lintels of doorways. The very name of the Third Order, the Court of Masters, shows its medieval craft origin. The aspiring shoemaker first became an apprentice, then after relevant years of training, a journeyman, providing he passed the test or 'essay' set him of making various items of footwear to a prescribed standard under certain conditions. Finally he might become a master, again if he met the conditions and paid the entry money – much as an 'entered Crispin' could become a Knight and then a Master if worthy enough and able to pay his due. An initiate, whatever his occupation, became a member of an order through the use of ceremonial language which mixed specific shoemaking terminology and references with religious phrases. Shoemaking tools also became ritual objects; St Crispin's lance or awl, sticks for making a knight; the cutting knife featured in the symbol of the First Order or gilded and placed on top of poles to be carried in lodge or procession.

While the Royal St Crispin Society did not stage any large-scale processions after 1832, branch lodges still deemed the wearing of regalia and enactment of the ritual of procession to be desirable in the second half of the nineteenth century. Numerous demonstrations were mounted, especially in Falkirk and Linlithgow, throughout the 1860s to 1880s with costumes and regalia borrowed from Edinburgh. These anniversary processions or representations in civic events are augmented three-dimensional versions of the eighteenth-century Dundee frieze. Champion and heralds proclaimed King Crispin in the 1890s as they had done a century and a half earlier. The need for ritual and regalia, if now less potent, nevertheless still lingered among the Crispins – 'what rituals do is not so much mean as emote'.¹²²

¹²² Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 299.

6: Up wi' Crown and Cutting Knife

Arouse! Ye gentle Craftsmen a'
The sun is glinting o'er the Law
Make haste, an dress yersels fu' braw,
And wear the Crispin apron.
Up! Heralds now your trumpets sound!
Until Auld Scotia's hills resound
And every Brother has been found,
To don his Crispin Apron.¹

The beginning of the end

From its origins in the early nineteenth century until 13 April 1882 the Royal St Crispin Society of Edinburgh granted charters to branch lodges, received monies, loaned robes and regalia, issued diplomas and seals, called conferences and dealt with various issues and disputes. Not surprisingly, therefore, the mother lodge fought to maintain pre-eminence at a time when the fortunes of the Royal St Crispin Societies seemed to be waning. The formation of an elected Grand Lodge to act as governing body for all the lodges of the St Crispin Order seemed to be the only way to solve the difficulties the Edinburgh brethren faced at the beginning of the 1880s. The newly elected body, however, found itself confronting the same problems – the number of lodges still in operation, how to encourage them to play a more active role and the recruitment of new members.

The bulk of the evidence comes from the Edinburgh minutes and accounts. Those of Dundee are more in the format of notes, with nothing recorded beyond 1883. Intermittent reports of events appear in the press, though most of these relate to Edinburgh soirees. Increasingly the emphasis, at least publically, is on the friendly-society function of the organisation rather than traditional lodge activities. In reality maintaining this role in the face of declining membership proved too much for the Royal St Crispin Society and all the branches bar one. The denouement unfolds through the examination of two subject areas: the operation of the elected Grand Lodge and the Royal St Crispin Society in its final reincarnation.

¹ COEM, Extract from *St Crispin Song* printed in the concert programme of 25 October 1889.

The Elected Grand Lodge

Delegates to the meeting held on 13 April 1882 decided:

That in future the Grand Lodge Royal St Crispin be composed of members elected from and supported by the various daughter lodges in Scotland. The Delegates present were Edr Bros R Brown, Davidson, Sir Hugh, W Fyfe Secy 7 Stirling Wm Watson WM 8 Falkirk Jas Struthers WM D Millard Secy 19 Dundee Brs McLaren WM and Hutchison – Br Brown GM in name of the Grand Lodge. Edinburgh handed over to the Delegates present all powers rested in them also the Grand Lodge Roll Book which was accepted and in future the Grand Lodge was to be called the Grand Lodge Royal St Crispin Scotland.²

As a statement of intent the new representative body arranged a conference in Stirling for 23 October. Whether by accident or design no representative from Edinburgh attended this meeting but brethren from Stirling, Falkirk, Paisley and Dundee No. 19 did appear.³ There is no record of the discussion but the Dundee secretary prepared a memorandum of organisational issues, such as plurality of office-holding and centralisation of benefit function, for his representative. The delegate was also instructed to take notes as to which lodges had responded with their contributions in cash; and to suggest Dundee as the place for the next conference.⁴

Prior to this meeting scheduled for 26 October 1883, a letter outlining the agenda caused a degree of consternation in Edinburgh. The proposal from Dundee Lodge No.19 to be styled 'The Provisional Grand Lodge of Forfarshire' was considered to be 'presumptuous on the part of No 19 to ask it being only two years in existence and having nothing to be Grand Lodge over' and furthermore 'likely to cause enmity with No. 10 the elder Lodge of the two'. The Edinburgh representative 'was to go direct against it', as well as opposing the substitution of a supposed older ritual for that of the Second Order, as cited in chapter six.⁵

A press report of this conference of the 'Ancient Order of St Crispin' accentuated the positive outcomes and glossed over the thorny internal issues later reported to the Edinburgh society by Brother Fyfe.⁶ Seven delegates attended – from Edinburgh, Falkirk, Stirling and Dundee. Brother

² COEM, *Minutes of the Royal St Crispin Lodge (Mother Lodge)*.

³ *Ibid.*, 31 October 1883. Brother Brown was indisposed.

⁴ DLC, 418(16), *Memorandum for James Maclaren*.

⁵ COEM, *Minutes*, 17 October 1883.

⁶ *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 3 November 1883.

Miller of Falkirk, 'Most Excellent Grand Master of Scotland', presented a glowing financial statement for the previous year:

which showed a handsome sum in the General Treasurer's hands. This is a sure proof of the prosperity of this newly-constituted body, this being the first year of its existence under the new constitution, viz. that of being a representative body.⁷

By inference this was confirmation of Edinburgh's past incompetence. Of the 'various other matters' the newspaper mentioned only the revision of the ritual of the first degree, 'which as amended is decidedly a step in the right direction', before continuing with Brother Miller's eulogy on the benefit societies of Falkirk and Stirling and recommendation to the Dundee brethren 'to start at once with this laudable object'. Following elections of office bearers the Grand Lodge 'was duly closed', Lodge No. 19 opened and a 'gentleman from Edinburgh' initiated into the Order of St Crispin.

Brother Fyfe, now Grand Lodge Secretary, gave his version of events to his Edinburgh colleagues on 31 October. When the Grand Master had thanked delegates for their presence he styled Edinburgh as the Lodge Edinburgh No. 1.

I took exception to the number and there was a short discussion as to whether Edinburgh should be named Mother Lodge or should take up the number originally held by the Leith Lodge. I insisted that as the Leith Charter was still abroad we could not take that number when the Dundee brethren stated they had the Leith Charter in their possession at one time when they belonged to No 10 Dundee but that it was transmitted to Edinburgh. The subject was left an open question for a decision for the next Grand Lodge meeting but that in all official Documents it be styled Edinburgh (No1) until that time.⁸

This explains the naming of this Minute Book as *Minutes of the Grand Lodge (of Scotland) Royal St Crispin (Edinburgh) now the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge (Mother Lodge)*; a case of clinging to status or preeminence rather than *primus inter pares*.

Following his summary of the treasurer's report Fyfe recounted the ongoing issue of the absent lodges. Letters to Paisley, Montrose and Dundee No.10 had elicited no response and Linlithgow's answer, quoted earlier, was discouraging.

I then requested a loan of the Grand Lodge Roll for the sake of getting a list of the Members who have passed through this Lodge during the past 20 years as it was

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The references in this section are from the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge minute of 31 October 1883.

handed over to the new Grand Lodge without that being done – agreed on condition that it be returned to the Secy within 4 years.

The delegates also discussed the issues of ritual, in particular the 'Knocks of the First Order' cited in chapter six. The question of whether lodges wishing to initiate friendly societies could work with established ones such as Falkirk or Stirling was raised but due to lack of support the proposal was dropped. The absence of Montrose and Dundee No.10 resulted in the withdrawal of the subject of 'the styling of No 19 of themselves as the Provincial Grand Lodge of Forfarshire'. Before the closing of the conference delegates heard another heartfelt plea from the Secretary for suggestions for 'the wakening up of Dormant Lodges as he had done all in his power and had got little heartening from them', Dundee No 10 being singled out for its rudeness in not responding. The brethren then elected office bearers for the ensuing year and the lodge was closed in the due form with the new Knocks.

This is the fullest account of any Grand Lodge conference after 1882, and it sets the scene for the years to 1890, with Falkirk, Stirling, Edinburgh and (initially) Dundee No.19 emerging as principal players. William Fyfe was unable to attend the next conference held at Falkirk on 28 November 1884, hence the brief account from the Worthy Master who did attend. Only Falkirk, Edinburgh and Stirling presented reports and these indicated a membership of 117 for Edinburgh and 82 for Stirling, but an impressive 1136 for Falkirk. (Notwithstanding its initial enthusiasm Dundee disappears after 1884, perhaps because of the trade depression in the town.⁹) A few weeks earlier, however, Edinburgh received an indication of a revival of interest among some erstwhile brethren when Brother Jackson from Glasgow requested sashes and aprons for the imminent trades Franchise Demonstration scheduled for that city. He indicated that:

he and a few more were anxious to restart the Lodge but they could not get the Charter, Regalia and other working tools of the Order without paying the sum of £12 to Br Boyd of Glasgow who made that claim on account of monies given out for storage.

⁹ *The Scotsman*, 15 December 1885. 1000 unemployed workers were reportedly fed by the Town Council's soup kitchen.

The Edinburgh brethren advised him 'to apply to the Grand Lodge for a new Charter which could be got for less than £12' and granted the loan of the requested items.¹⁰

Prior to the 1885 conference held in Edinburgh on 20 November the Grand Lodge made a proposal to nominate the Earl of Zetland and Brother Bolton Esq. as Honorary Grand Master and Honorary Deputy Grand Master.¹¹ The Earl of Zetland, notable public figure and major landowner in the area, interested himself in the local affairs of Grangemouth and Falkirk and the public park in Grangemouth was named in his honour in 1882.¹² The Earl laid the foundation stone of the Falkirk Town Hall on 30 August 1884 and the 'St Crispins' participated in the civic procession, though whether they initiated the aristocrat as a member of the lodge at this time is ambiguous.¹³ Recruiting the Earl of Zetland as figurehead Honorary Grand Master would be a powerful marketing tool, at least for the Falkirk St Crispin Lodge if not the Order as a whole. The freemasons had long demonstrated the efficacy of having royal personages and notable public figures to lend respectability and gravitas to the organisation.

On 14 April 1886 the Edinburgh Worthy Master intimated his intention of going to Glasgow with other Grand Lodge members to open a new lodge there.¹⁴ He received permission for the use of the Crown, Sceptre and other regalia 'so as to make as good a show as possible'.¹⁵ As he expected there would be nearly forty candidates to be initiated, this was obviously a pleasing, if tardy, outcome of the initiative to revive the Order of St Crispin in Glasgow. Further encouraging news came on 14 May when the WM again requested articles of regalia for the opening of a new lodge in Ayr on 25 May.

As a compliment to the new lodge in Glasgow the annual conference was held in the city on 27 October 1886. Edinburgh lodge members subsequently heard of the election of the Earl of Zetland as Honorary Grand

¹⁰ COEM, *Minutes*, 3 September 1884.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 30 September 1885.

¹² *The Scotsman*, 5 June 1882. The *Falkirk Herald* of 1 August 1872 notes a Crispin branch in Grangemouth.

¹³ *The Scotsman*, 1 September 1884; COEM, *Minutes*, 3 September 1884.

¹⁴ Intimation of a meeting to reconstitute Lodge No 9 appears in the *Glasgow Herald*, 29 March 1886.

¹⁵ COEM, *Minutes*, 14 April 1886.

Master but reacted angrily to the news that the next Grand Lodge meeting would be held only if there was business to be considered. They agreed on strong representation being made to the Grand Lodge 'in favour of holding the meeting of the Lodge annually so as to keep alive interest in the Order'.¹⁶ Edinburgh's view prevailed, as witness the discussion minuted on 17 August 1887. Members felt that the agenda for the coming conference at Ayr should include the positions of the Grand Lodge Secretary and Treasurer who remained in office, although they had not represented lodges for two or three years.

The Ayr conference must have been stormy as following their report the Edinburgh brethren commended their delegates for their labours:

and the Lodge upon having come to the front and having held their own – if not as the Grand Lodge at least as No1 and also for the Draft Grand Lodge Rules which were to be printed and which would be laid before the Lodge for consideration in a few weeks.¹⁷

After five years Edinburgh obviously still resented the lack of Grand Lodge status. None of this appears in the newspaper cutting pasted into the Edinburgh Minute Book.

Order of St Crispin of Scotland – the annual meeting of the Grand Lodge Royal St Crispin of which the Earl of Zetland is Hon Grand Master was held on Friday and Saturday in the burgh of Ayr when delegates representing Edinburgh, Stirling, Falkirk, Paisley and Ayr lodges were present. The membership of the Order is at present over 2000 with accumulated sick and funeral funds amounting to £9000. The juvenile branch comprises 400 members with a capital of £300. There is also a building scheme in hand for the erection of working men's houses in which £2000 is invested. The principal business transacted was the receiving of reports from the various lodges, the election of office-bearers for the year and the revision and amendment of Grand Lodge rules and bye-laws. The next meeting will be held in Stirling in July 1888.¹⁸

This report confirms the continuing operation of Paisley as a lodge and demonstrates the pre-eminence and diversity of Falkirk. If the latter (including its branches) had maintained or exceeded its total of 1136 given in 1884, the other lodges, mustered at best 864 members, of which around 115 to 120 belonged to the Edinburgh lodge.¹⁹ The juvenile branch must have been attached to Falkirk as Edinburgh had two years previously deferred the

¹⁶ Ibid., 10 November 1886.

¹⁷ Ibid., 9 November 1887.

¹⁸ *Scottish Leader and Evening News*, 8 November 1877.

¹⁹ COEM, *Minutes*, 23 March 1887.

question of whether to have a Juvenile Lodge and Children's Scheme.²⁰ The building scheme was also a Falkirk initiative.²¹ Such figures are not huge when set in the context of other contemporary organisations. In 1879, for example, over 69,000 members belonged to masonic lodges affiliated to the Grand Order.²² Dalkeith, where the St Crispin lodge now longer functioned, boasted of having 2015 members in the local branch of the Ancient Order of Foresters, 409 in the Oddfellows and 400 in the Independent Order of Scottish Mechanics in 1890.²³

The Grand Lodge meeting at Stirling in July witnessed some form of St Crispin display as the Edinburgh brethren allocated a sum 'not exceeding 30s' to allow the delegates to 'make a respectable appearance' and for the two heralds and champion to be mounted.²⁴ The report of the meeting included the ominous words that 'steps were being taken to resuscitate the Glasgow, Ayr and Dalkeith Lodges'.²⁵ Glasgow's renewal of Crispianism had been short lived. Following its institution 'by Charter granted from the Grand Lodge on 25 May 1886' the Ayr brethren established a friendly society, with rules ratified on 10 February 1887.²⁶ The Instrument of Dissolution of the Royal St Crispin Lodge No. 21 Friendly Society is dated 27 February 1888. *The Scotsman* reported erroneously, on 31 December 1888, that Ayr Royal St Crispin Lodge was one of five new societies registered during the year. This information, taken from the Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, concerned the year ending 31 December 1887.

In complete contrast the flourishing Falkirk lodge indicated an intention to start a branch in Glasgow for which it required a Charter 'as the candidates could not be expected to go to Falkirk for installation'.²⁷ Edinburgh seems to have retained some involvement in the issuing of charters – perhaps a stock

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 13 May 1885.

²¹ The *Falkirk Herald* carries reports of building schemes in 1894, 1895, 1898, 1900.

²² W. W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present* (Edinburgh, 1999), p. 100.

²³ John Carmel (publisher), *Dalkeith District Directory and Household Almanac for 1890* (Dalkeith, 1890), p. 47, <<http://www05.us.archive.org/details/carmentsdirector1890dalk>> [28 October, 2012].

²⁴ COEM, *Minutes*, 20 June 1888.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15 August 1888.

²⁶ NAS, FS4/1180.

²⁷ COEM, *Minutes*, 14 January 1889.

or the lithographic stones— as a minute of 21 September 1888 indicates the presence of some extraordinary income from selling charters to the Grand Lodge. William Fyfe in his capacity as Grand Master was invited to Glasgow to open this Falkirk branch.²⁸ From several reports in the *Falkirk Herald* it appears that Falkirk already had branches in Grangemouth, Stenhousemuir and Larbert and Bonnybridge.²⁹

Perhaps as an acknowledgement of the unlikelihood of a significant revival of the St Crispin Order, discussion took place at the Edinburgh society's March meetings about amalgamating the lodges of Edinburgh, Stirling and Falkirk. An understanding already existed 'that members belonging to Falkirk or Stirling if residing in Edinburgh might put their contributions in this Lodge or our members might pay there'.³⁰ Contributions from Falkirk members amounted to 13s 2d, from which 8s had been paid over to that lodge, currently leaving 5s 2d in the Edinburgh Treasurer's hands. Some months later, however, brethren expressed dissatisfaction 'at sending Delegates year after year to the Grand Lodge annual meeting' and 'no apparent return being got for the expense'. In defence the Worthy Master stated that while there might be 'no apparent good to the order at present he hoped the time would come when it would turn out to be for the good of the Order at large'.³¹ Delegates appointed to attend the Edinburgh conference were instructed to press for an amalgamated Funeral Fund of the lodges.

This meeting is unrecorded in the Edinburgh minutes, but the Grand Lodge meeting arranged for July in Falkirk, did take place. The Edinburgh balance sheet for the year ending 31 December 1890 shows payments for Grand Lodge delegates and return fees to the Grand Lodge.³² The minute entry for 9 April 1890 is the last until that of November which indicates that the Royal St Crispin Society had been registered under the Friendly Societies Act on 30 October with an operational date of 1 January 1891. The next Minute

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 13 February 1889.

²⁹ For example, 1 August 1872, 2 February 1878. Branches in Camelon and Carronshore are recorded in the 1890s along with several juvenile lodges.

<<http://www.lodgedolphin.co.uk/index.php?option>>[31 May 2012].

³⁰ COEM, *Minutes*, 20 March 1889.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 31 July 1889.

³² Printed balance sheets are pasted into the *Minute Book*.

Book begins on 5 January 1891 and information regarding the continuation of the Grand Lodge is sparse. On 1 June the brethren appointed delegates to attend the next meeting, although the date remained undetermined by 3 December. In the hope of an imminent conference, reelected representatives were instructed to 'get it wound up at once and not accept the responsibility of the Grand Lodge which was handed over to the Lodges.'³³ On 1 February 1892 the Secretary explained that the 'delay seemed to lie with the officials'.³⁴ Eventually the Grand Lodge conference took place in May, with a report to the Edinburgh lodge meeting on 6 June. There is no evidence of the report but the balance sheet for 31 December shows a payment to delegates of £1 and £1 in return fees to the Grand Lodge.³⁵ This is the last record of the Grand Lodge.

The logical conclusion is that the remaining lodges of the Order of St Crispin in Edinburgh, Falkirk and Stirling accepted that erstwhile lodges were not going to revive or reconstitute and therefore they abandoned the Grand Lodge concept. Beyond a presence at the Ayr conference of 1887, the Paisley Crispins play no recorded part in subsequent events. Stirling submitted amended rules for its benefit society to the Assistant Registrar and these were approved on 7 June 1888. A later submission of 7 October 1891, however, requested a cancellation of this registry, the reason being that the 'society is now a Branch of the British Order of Ancient Free Gardeners'.³⁶ Falkirk continued its association with Edinburgh but showed an aptitude for survival, diversity and growth lacking in the mother lodge. Falkirk Royal St Crispin Lodge No. 9 Friendly Society is listed as being approved by the National Health Insurance Commissioners (Scotland) in 1912.³⁷ It was dissolved on 27 June 1969.³⁸

An unresolved question remains. Rule No.1 of the *Rules of the Royal Ancient Order of St Crispin Society of Scotland Friendly Society City of*

³³ COEM, *Ancient Order of St Crispin of Scotland (City of Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge No1 Friendly Society) Minutes*, 7 December 1891.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1 February 1892

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ NAS, FS4/1094, *Royal St Crispin Lodge No 7 Benefit Society*.

³⁷ W Carlyle Croasdell, *The National Insurance Act* (London, 1912), p. 65.

³⁸ *Edinburgh Gazette*, 1 July 1969.

Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge No.1 states that as well as managing benefit functions, the Society:

shall have for its objects the raising of Branches with power to erect a Grand Lodge when a sufficient number of Branches have been opened ... All branches to be under the control of the Central Body and contribute to its funds

Did the Edinburgh brethren anticipate a time when they might again resume supreme control? Or did they intend to emulate Falkirk by establishing branches which would later elect a Grand Lodge? As events unfolded neither of these possibilities came to fruition.

Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge

Prior to the inauguration of the elected Grand Lodge the mother lodge of Edinburgh had struggled to reinvent itself in the wake of the collapse of its benefit society. Established in 1868 and remodelled in 1876 the Grand Lodge Royal St Crispin Benefit Society had been dissolved on 8 February 1881 with the agreement of nineteen members, three others not signing the document.³⁹ Funds at dissolution amounted to around £63 – approximately £2 10s for each member dependent on the level of their arrears. This state of affairs demonstrates the perennial problem faced by small friendly societies. Actual and potential financial outgoings frequently exceeded incomings. Accounting and organisational systems to prevent failure had been devised throughout the nineteenth century, from the efforts of the Highland Society in 1824 to the latest legislation of 1875.⁴⁰ The brethren met for the last time as members of a benefit society on 2 May 1881 and every member present agreed ‘to stand by the Lodge’. This entailed the continuation of monthly Crispin lodge meetings, with 2s 6d deducted from each member’s share to establish a fund, a monthly subscription of 4s and the rent of the Good Templar Buildings at 3s per night.⁴¹

The first meeting of the lodge ‘independent of a Benefit Society’ took place on 16 May when the business ‘was more of a conversational character

³⁹ NAS, FS4/845; COEM, *Minutes*, 9 May 1881.

⁴⁰ Highland Society, *Report on Friendly or Benefit Societies* (Edinburgh, 1824); Act 38, 39 Vic., c.60.

⁴¹ COEM, *Minutes*, 2 May 1881.

as to what was to be the future of the Lodge'.⁴² In subsequent months the brethren reclaimed lodge property from a disenchanted brother and dealt with Grand Lodge matters, but only seven members attended the meeting of 6 June and in August the lodge remained closed due to the lack of a quorum. Thirteen members attended the meeting on 5 September and elected office bearers on 3 October – Grand Master, Depute Grand Master, Secretary, Treasurer, Inside and Outside Guards. There is no mention of the Knights of Sir Hugh, Court of Masters or St Crispin anniversary. Eventually on 5 December the brethren instructed the secretary to write a begging letter to Falkirk explaining the low state of the Grand Lodge funds and requesting annual returns. At this point no other solution but the creation of an elected Grand Lodge seemed viable.

As indicated earlier, the Edinburgh brethren fought to maintain their status as mother lodge throughout the operational period of the newly constituted body and to emphasise in their public appearances their 'historical' preeminence. Initially, however, they struggled for survival in the months following the Dundee conference of 13 April 1882. A few members met on 5 June but without opening the lodge and no meetings occurred in the summer months. Enough brethren rallied for a meeting on 2 October but although monthly meetings occurred in the Good Templars' hall until March 1883, the lodge remained unopened.

The state of the matter having become so disheartening to the office bearers (who had never been re-elected but had simply kept their various offices) they agreed to give up the Hall in the meantime and the Boxes were taken to the house of the Secy who made room for them.⁴³

Probably Crispianism in Edinburgh would not have survived at this point without the efforts of Secretary William Fyfe, acknowledged later by the lodge with the presentation of a 'handsome Timepiece'.⁴⁴ Uniquely in the Royal St Crispin Society he held office for over thirty years and was instrumental in gifting the St Crispin collection to the City of Edinburgh in 1909. Br Fyfe, a printer's reader, initiated a recruitment campaign on by producing poster text and eliciting contributions towards printing costs from the nine colleagues

⁴² COEM, *Minutes*, 16 May 1881.

⁴³ COEM, *Minutes*, 2 October 1882.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 12 November 1884.

present in Buchanan's Hotel. Adorned with crown and cutting knife this circular invited all persons 'who may at any time have belonged to this Ancient Order' or who may wish to join, to attend an 'Open Meeting' on the understanding that the Order is 'not confined to any particular Trade or Profession' but that 'any person of good moral character' might become a member.⁴⁵ As an incentive the entry fee was reduced to one shilling for a limited period of three months.

The advertisement had limited initial effect. Some former members and four newcomers attended the meeting on 12 September. By 19 September however numbers had grown to 23 brethren who discussed the founding of a lodge friendly society based 'upon the old Sick Society Rules which had worked so well until revised and the scale of the benefit increased'.⁴⁶ Confidence grew sufficiently for the members to elect office bearers on 17 October and agree to start a Sick and Funeral Benefit Friendly Society in connection with the lodge. This might be evidence of the power of 'custom and practice' or perhaps the brethren hoped the benefit function would be a means of attracting recruits. No move towards registration under the Friendly Societies Act occurred until 19 September 1888, but this did not prevent the advertising of sick and funeral benefits in the brief history of the society produced for the annual soiree of 28 October 1885. Conveniently ignoring preceding friendly societies the narrative states that the lodge had been conducted as a secret society:

It has now been Re-modelled as a Friendly Benefit Society and the Contributions and Sick and Funeral Benefits will compare favourably with other Societies of a similar nature. Any person above the age of 16 years and under 45 years is admitted irrespective of Trade or Occupation.⁴⁷

When the Honorary Worthy Master Brother McEwan, in his letter of apology for absence from the 1889 anniversary concert, enclosed a cheque for ten guineas for the sick fund and opined that:

a medical doctor to give attendance in time of sickness would be an inducement for members to join and thus increase our membership which he expected was not increasing as it ought to though he thought the Society was in a fairly prosperous condition.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Ibid, 20 August 1882.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 19 September 1882.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 28 October 1885.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 23 October 1889.

This is an interesting oversight on the part of the society's members of the 1880s. On 12 September 1831 their predecessors had appointed a Dr Drumbeck to visit sick members and the later rules of the Grand Lodge Benefit Society had required the surgeon to be a member of the Order of St Crispin.⁴⁹ The rules of the *Royal Ancient Order of St Crispin of Scotland Friendly Society* received ratification by the Assistant Registrar in 1890.⁵⁰

The image of the Royal St Crispin Society as being only a friendly society is repeated in press reports of annual festivals in the 1880s. In 1884 the Grand Master outlined the history of the order, incorporating such erroneous detail as James II's grant to the Sons of Crispin to meet within Holyrood Palace, before stating that 'the order now took the form of a friendly society solely and in that character had been attended with considerable success.'⁵¹ Baillie Anderson as Town Council representative then 'dwelt on the advantages accruing from membership in friendly societies with the habits of thrift and self denial they fostered'.⁵² In 1886 Baillie Russell, in his chairman's remarks, championed benefit societies, arguing that no man who was not a member of such a society should have the privilege of voting in parliamentary elections. Guest speaker Mr McEwan M.P. in politically-motivated rhetoric:

spoke of the advantages which working men possessed, by which their disadvantages were counterbalanced. The joys and sorrows of life ... were equally distributed through all classes of society. Each class had its own peculiar advantages and disadvantages. The peculiar disadvantage of the working man was the fear of sickness and the uncertainty of employment, and he could scarcely conceive a more trying position for a man than to know that he had saved nothing and that if sickness came upon him he would have to trust to the charity of others. What a comfort it must be for such a man to join a benefit society. He hoped the St Crispin Society would have a life as long as that of the ancient order to which it belonged.⁵³

It was after this oration that the brethren sought to enrol him, but it seems to have been his first and last appearance at an annual soiree.

The virtues of benefit societies were extolled at subsequent anniversary evenings. In 1887 Baillie Walcott declared that he 'would not be a Scotsman if he did not seek to inculcate upon his hearers the principles of

⁴⁹ NAS, FS4/845.

⁵⁰ NAS, FS4/921.

⁵¹ *The Scotsman*, 22 November 1884.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 20 November 1886.

Thrift'. He urged them that while they were in health and earning good wages 'they should be careful to provide for "a rainy day" because the moment they touched charity they lost their manliness and independence.'⁵⁴ *The Scotsman* report in 1889 mentioned a donation from Mr McEwan to the sick funds of the society and reiterated the claimed longevity of the Order, many years a secret body but latterly formed into a friendly society attended with great success.⁵⁵

The Crispins were being disingenuous in publically claiming to be a friendly society rather than a secret order. Perhaps they now saw themselves as members of a friendly society with ritual rather than a secret order with a benefit society attached. There is no evidence of any cessation of their former activities. New recruits are 'duly initiated into the mysteries of this ancient order' and the brethren agreed:

the Hall Keeper Mr Kemp be made an Honorary member of the Order without charge as he was so close in attendance so as to give him the liberty of entering the Hall should occasion require when the lodge was open and that it be left to him whether he join the Sick Fund or not.⁵⁶

By the meeting of 26 December 1883 membership had risen to 56, fifty of whom voluntarily contributed to the sick fund. The Secretary devoted much time in 1883-4 to retrieving lodge property and in augmenting regalia. This is also the period of discussion about the 'Legend' and issues of ritual procedure cited in the previous chapter. The organisation had not abandoned the practices associated with lodge and Order of St Crispin but there is a major difference. In 1817 'conviviality' partnered ritual in meetings of the Royal St Crispin Society, as it did in other clubs of the period. By the 1880s, in reflection of changed social attitudes, the brethren's evenings included 'a few selections on the violin', or an 'Exhibition of Views of Scottish Scenery by reason of the Lime-Light and descriptive notices of the views'.⁵⁷ Two meetings of the lodge, following the establishment of the elected Grand Lodge, took place in Buchanan's Hotel, a well-known Edinburgh temperance

⁵⁴ Ibid., 26 November 1887.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 26 October 1889.

⁵⁶ COEM, *Minutes*, 28 November 1883.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 28 May, 11 June 1884.

establishment; and others in premises belonging to the Order of Good Templars.⁵⁸

The finale of lodge meetings for the rest of the 1880s is a variation of the above theme with amusements ranging from musical performances and a reading from Chambers' *Traditions of Edinburgh*, to a lecture on superstitions and a presentation of photographic views by means of the oxyhydrogen light. There was even a suggestion that a committee be appointed to arrange for some small entertainment 'to fill up the spare time of the Lodge'.⁵⁹ Br Brown's lecture on the Edinburgh stage recalled to some members 'pleasant memories of places now blotted out', one member being heard to remark when Shakespeare Square was mentioned, 'that was where I was married'.⁶⁰ There cannot have been anyone present to recall that a tavern in Shakespeare Square had also been the location for the delivery of a Charter to the Perth Brethren in 'a very large lodge meeting spent in great harmony' in 1824.⁶¹ This reminiscence would have vividly demonstrated the changed circumstances of the Royal St Crispin Society.

Descriptions of annual public celebrations in honour of St Crispin exemplify the kind of entertainment popular in the 1880s and the emphasis placed on the supposed history of their order by the Crispins. Not only do speakers give a synopsis of this, as seen above, but Crown, Sceptre and Sword of State are displayed on the platform and Heralds wear their robes of office (**Fig. 49**).⁶² In 1884 the audience of over 650 who attended the annual soiree (fruit and cake) seemed pleased with the entertainment and 'quality of the Bag which was purveyed by A and J Gibb Bakers'.⁶³ Various vocalists performed and 'renowned Scottish Humorist' Brother Lumsden introduced his 'Original and Laughable Sketch of "Half an Hour wi' Tam O'Shanter and

⁵⁸ Airdrie, where the Crispins had operated mid-century, had the largest branch of the Order of Good Templars in the world. Elspeth King, *Scotland Sober and Free: The Temperance Movement 1829-1979* (Glasgow, 1979), p. 16.

⁵⁹ COEM, *Minutes*, 9 December 1885.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 12 February 1890.

⁶¹ COEM, *Minutes*, 15 December 1824.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 21 November 1884; *The Scotsman*, 20 November 1886.

⁶³ Bakers made up paper bags of the requested items to be given out to the audience as refreshments.

Souter Johnny”⁶⁴ The evening climaxed with an ‘Assembly’ scheduled for 11.30 pm when a total of twenty varied dances appeared on the dance card, including the Crispin March and Circassian Circle, a Scotch Reel, Spanish Valse, Mazurka and Highland Schottische.⁶⁵

This successful format was repeated in 1885 and necessitated the purchase of crimson knee breeches with shoe buckles and stockings ‘to complete the Heralds’ Dresses’ as well as a ‘dance rehearsal’ for which the Roxburgh Hall was hired.⁶⁶ The soiree programme of musical solos, duets and quartets interspersed with official speeches shows a mixture of sentimental Scottish, English and Irish airs and comic songs. In 1887 the programme of ‘The New Orleans Coloured Opera Troupe’, specially engaged for the occasion, differed hugely from the traditional St Crispin Day celebrations of the past. Whether the inclusion of ‘A Screaming farce entitled “Bust Up” or “The Darky Photographer’s Difficulties”’ and a finale of ‘the Darkies festival or Life in the Sunny South with Plantation Walk Around’, was to members’ taste is not recorded.⁶⁷ In the following year the entertainment followed the more familiar format of songs including ‘The Lost Chord’, ‘That awful Fitba Club’ and ‘Auld Lang Syne’. The 1889 Soiree Concert and Assembly introduced the ‘St Crispin Song’ with words printed on the back of the programme and sung to the Air ‘Whistle o’er the lave o’t’:

And see the Chief of all the Band,
In regal robes yet heart and hand
A brother still tho’ he command
All those who wear the apron.
His loyal subjects all around,
Firm in the chains of friendship bound,
Where can a Brotherhood be found
As those who wear the apron?

This celebration of the Order of St Crispin sat alongside renditions of ‘Banjo Funniosities’, ‘De Big Red River’, ‘Down the Burn Davie Love’ and a ‘humorous duet Home Rule’. Delegates from Falkirk and Stirling and from kindred societies in Edinburgh were present.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ COEM, *Minutes*, 21 November 1884.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 30 September, 28 October, 28 December 1885. The dance practice incurred a deficit of £1 2s 9d.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 25 November 1887.

⁶⁸ *The Scotsman*, 26 October 1889.

The St Crispin lodges of Edinburgh, Falkirk and Stirling sent mutual invitations to annual celebrations, as did branches of other organisations such as the Rechabites, Gardeners, Foresters and Oddfellows whose hall the Crispins hired in the 1880s for such festivals.⁶⁹ In 1884 ‘the Flag of the Edinburgh Cordwainers Society kindly lent for the occasion with the “Grand Lodge Royal St Crispin” scroll thereon’ was placed above the chair on the platform.⁷⁰ The explanation for this had been given some months earlier. In lodge discussions of the Trades Demonstration in Edinburgh in favour of parliamentary reform the Worthy Master had deemed it inappropriate for the lodge to be represented, ‘this being a political Demonstration’, and as members were in different trades they might prefer to ‘go with them’.⁷¹ The subject was dropped but re-emerged at the beginning of July when delegates from the Shoemakers Society were asked to come to the lodge room. On their arrival the lodge was closed because they were not members – a clear indication of the separate purposes of the two groups. Consequently sixteen members of the lodge joined with the shoemaker contingent at the Demonstration. They:

had a pleasant surprise in store for them as they found that a Banner under which they were to walk had the words written on it:- “The Grand Lodge Royal St Crispin” This banner was the result of a joint subscription in the year 1866 by the Shoemakers and the Crispin Lodge the Shoemakers to have the custody of it but the Crispins to have the use of it whenever they had a use for it. The inscription on it is the “Cordiners of Edinburgh” but the Crispin Lodge having got a loan of it to go to Stirling they got the other inscription painted and stitched on and the shoemakers had never taken it off hence the reason for their turning out under the Royal St Crispin Banner.⁷²

The reference to 1866 is the Franchise Demonstration of 17 November, accounts of which appeared in several newspapers.⁷³ The *Edinburgh Courant* of 14 July 1884 recorded the presence of a contingent of over 250 shoemakers ‘marching under the banner of “Grand Lodge of Old St Crispin”’, a slightly inaccurate version of the slogan cited above. This episode is interesting for the glimpse it gives of links between the Shoemakers Society, a

⁶⁹ COEM, *Minutes*, 1 September 1888. In 1888 the larger Literary Institute was rented instead. The Crispin representative was not impressed by the lack of bags given at the annual concert of the Ancient Order of Foresters on 31 December 1890.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 21 November 1884.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 20 June 1884.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 9 July 1884.

⁷³ *Edinburgh Courant*, 17 November 1866; *Daily Review* 19 November 1866; *The Scotsman*, 19 November 1866.

journeyman trade organisation and the Royal St Crispin Lodge which, although it boasted of being open to any occupation, nonetheless remained rooted in its loyalty to St Crispin, patron saint of shoemakers.⁷⁴ This banner is not part of the collection of City of Edinburgh Museums but there is a flag bearing the crown and cutting knife on one side and 1449 on the reverse which might have been purchased in 1888 (**Fig.3**). A note in the minutes for 25 April records the need for a 'Flag and Banner'. The claim of the lodge for an ancient pedigree was again demonstrated when the Worthy Master gave information that there was the panel of an old pew with the Crispin Arms carved on it in the possession of a Dalkeith brother. He thought 'it would be good to have if at any time this Lodge were to get a Hall or a Master's Chair to insert in the back of it'.⁷⁵ No outcome of the request for details is recorded.

By 23 March 1887 the society had grown in membership from around 23 in 1883 to 120, still a modest total in comparison with the numbers attributed to Falkirk. As an incentive to their comrades the committee charged with increasing the membership of the lodge recommended:

that Members who brought up six candidates in the course of the year be admitted to the Second Degree free of charge if not at present members of that degree but if they were...that they be admitted to the Third or Master Degree free of charge.⁷⁶

Lack of members remained an urgent issue as, by 21 September 1888, the management fund could not meet expenses although the Sick Fund was deemed to be in a satisfactory state. Again the brethren discussed the advisability of establishing a juvenile branch but the proposal was left unresolved pending investigations.

By the end of the 1880s, therefore, the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Society had recovered from the ignominy of having to relinquish its position as Grand Lodge. Renamed as the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge No. 1, though clinging to its historical status as mother lodge, the brethren had managed to survive the difficulties of 1882 and 1883, recruit new members, practise lodge ritual and establish another sick and funeral benefit fund. Members now commemorated the festival of St Crispin with annual concerts

⁷⁴ Around 17% of new entrants in the 1880s were not shoemakers or in the leather-working trades.

⁷⁵ COEM, *Minutes*, 3 March 1886.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 27 April 1887.

and soirees attended by civic dignitaries who made speeches emphasising the centuries' old traditions and history of the Order and extolled the merits of friendly societies as a means of improving the condition of the working classes. A Member of Parliament was recruited to the ranks as Honourable Worthy Master, thus ensuring a patron with a public profile who regularly donated to the funds without claiming benefits. The Edinburgh St Crispin Lodge contributed to the operation of the elected Grand Lodge by attending conferences and carrying out relevant duties, although by 1890 only Edinburgh, Falkirk and its branches were left to wear the Crispin apron. By this time also, Edinburgh had again registered as a friendly society. Members met on 5 January 1891 as the *Ancient Order of St Crispin of Scotland (City of Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge No1) Friendly Society*.

The Lodge as a Registered Society

The last extant minute book of 1891-1895 lacks the kind of detail recorded in earlier years. Most of the information concerns the operation of the friendly society, namely entries of new members, reports from the medical officer and visitors of the sick, sickness levels and financial challenges. A candidate for admission to the society now had to fill in a declaration form stating name, occupation, address, marital status, date of last illness, name of doctor, current state of health, age of wife, her state of health, and names of two proposers. If deemed satisfactory, which included being aged between sixteen and 45 years and passing a medical examination, he was initiated at the next lodge meeting, provided he was not 'a member of another Lodge in the Order'.⁷⁷ It was no longer the practice to propose and initiate a new member on the same evening. Although not explicitly stated, it is unlikely that prospective members were now initiated into the lodge only with an option of joining the friendly society. Persons of over 45 years, however, could only become Honorary Members.

Tantalising glimpses of lodge activity occur periodically, such as the frustrations with the Grand Lodge cited earlier. As before the lodge 'was

⁷⁷ NAS, FS4/921. Entry money was 4s 6d of which 1s was allocated for the medical examination with 2s 6d to the Management Fund and 6d for a copy of the rules.

opened in due and ancient form' and the format of three Orders continued, as did ritual practice. Rule Six of the Friendly Society states that no member shall be elected to fill the office of Worthy Master, Depute Worthy Master, Treasurer, and Secretary 'who has not obtained his Third degree'.⁷⁸ The remaining office bearers of the management committee bear familiar titles – Immediate Past Worthy Master, Inside Guard, Outside Guard – but include a Check Book Keeper, three Trustees and not more than three ordinary members. As with the first Minute Book of 1817-1823, little detail is provided as to the activities of the Second and Third Orders, or indeed to their existence. Br Campbell referred to the latter when he 'hoped that a Master Court would be held soon as several members wished to be admitted'. It was explained 'that this would be taken notice of by the Master Court officers'.⁷⁹ Evidence regarding the Knights of St Hugh is sparse. This title is never applied, nor is any mention made of encampment meetings. The balance sheets show that entry money for the Second Degree amounted to 15s in 1890, £1 in 1892 with 8s for 'Second Degree Expenses' and 7s 6d in 1893 with 2s 8d of expenditure. The minutes only record the proposal of two brothers at a Second Degree meeting on 3 October 1892; and the recommendation of three more to the Second Degree at a quarterly lodge meeting on 5 September.

By 5 December 1892 the Outside Guardian had also acquired the title of Regalia Keeper. The continuing importance of regalia is demonstrated by entries in the balance sheets of the 1890s. These are pasted into the minute book, as are circulars calling members to quarterly and annual meetings. In 1890 the Regalia Fund stood at £3 7s, a sum of 10s having been received for the loan of unspecified items to the Dalkeith Foresters and 18s incurred for repairs and cleaning. The outgoing sum of £3 17s attributed to the Regalia Fund in 1894 was actually a reallocation of part of the over-expenditure incurred by the 1893 Festival.⁸⁰ Small amounts of income are entered against

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ COEC, *Minutes of the Ancient Order of St Crispin of Scotland (City of Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge No 1 Friendly Society)*, 7 January 1895.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 4 June 1894.

the heading of 'apron', presumably from sales to members.⁸¹ Likewise an entry of £1 is set against 'Diploma' in 1892. When the lodge had to relocate from the St James Masonic Lodge Hall, criteria for the selection of another venue included the ability 'to store several large boxes' – 'it was not every hall that could accommodate us'.⁸² The hall-keeper of the Typographical Hall, 98 High Street, expressed willingness to undertake this, although this choice entailed changing the meeting night.⁸³ The presence of the boxes which contained the regalia and 'rituals' is an indication of the continuing adherence to the traditions of the Order of St Crispin in spite of the dominance of friendly society business.

Throughout the five years to 1895 the Crispins showed no reluctance to commemorate the festival of the Order's patron but regularly debated the nature of the festival, as they did suggestions for other social events. Many brethren feared the cost of such occasions and the proposal for a procession was dropped because of the scale of the expense – 'the usual amount of cold water having been thrown on the proposition'.⁸⁴ An annual social meeting did take place later in the year on 27 November. Mr Lewis McIvor, an entertaining chairman, informed the audience of the increasing membership in this first year of registration and the proposal for a juvenile lodge to be attached to the 'mother lodge in Edinburgh'.⁸⁵

On 5 September 1892 the members decided to commemorate the festival 'as usual' with a soiree and concert, having several months earlier dismissed the suggestion to hold a September procession and demonstration in the Waverley Market.⁸⁶ The festival attracted 'a crowded attendance including a great many young folks' who heard a brief history of the Order as well as being exhorted to provide 'for a rainy day'.⁸⁷ The event made a profit of 5s 1d. On 6 June 1893 members discussed the potential of a sports day as a marketing strategy for increasing membership and raising the profile of the

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 4s in 1892, 2s in 1893 and 1894.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 10 February, 6 March 1893. Use of the hall was now to be for 'masonic purposes only'.

⁸³ Some members later claimed this change caused low attendance at meetings.

⁸⁴ COEM, *Minutes*, 2 March 1891.

⁸⁵ *The Scotsman*, 16 December 1892.

⁸⁶ COEM, *Minutes*, 7 March 1892.

⁸⁷ *The Scotsman*, 17 December 1892.

lodge. Examples of other orders having done this were given but Brother Gillies 'who had conducted an afternoon's sports on behalf of the Order of Mechanics' advised 'to have nothing to do with them'. He considered 'it would be the ruin of the Society', and his view prevailed.⁸⁸ The brethren did agree to hold a 'Coronation Ceremony' as part of the annual festival as well as an 'Assembly'.⁸⁹ On 7 November they heard that the Honorary Worthy Master Mr McEwan had sent a donation of £10 to the Sick Fund but declined to take the chair at the Festival. Mr McEwan, in a letter sent from Venice and pasted into the minute book, pleads ignorance of the 'sacred mysteries of Masonry' and feels he cannot adequately 'go through the ceremony of a Coronation' as:

on such an august occasion as that you must have some one thoroughly versed in all the mysteries of the craft to give it the required éclat. I should not like to run the risk of failure and therefore I must decline on this occasion. I hope, however, in other hands the Coronation will be a great success.⁹⁰

Success would enable his fellow brethren to replenish the Death Fund which 'appears to be unduly depleted by the demands which have been much upon it during the past years.' Mr McEwan in his phrase 'the sacred mysteries of Masonry, demonstrates his unfamiliarity with the traditions of the Order of which he is patron. He remained an outside figurehead, sympathetic to the aims of the friendly society to which he made donations (duly reported in the press), but distanced from the workings of the lodge and absent from annual festivals.

Baillie Dunlop presided as chairman at the Festival, extolling the benefits of the society in his speech and advising 'every working man who wished to preserve his independence to make provision for sickness and old age'.⁹¹ Following the description of the coronation ceremony the *Evening Dispatch* added a paragraph about the pre-Reformation altar to St Crispin in St Giles but concluded:

There seems to be some doubt as to the exact date of the institution of the Edinburgh St Crispin Lodge, but it appears to have had an existence for considerably more than a hundred years.⁹²

⁸⁸ COEC, *Minutes*, 6 June 1893.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 5 September 1883.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7 November 1893.

⁹¹ *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 16 December 1893.

⁹² *Ibid.*

Once again it seems that no one in the lodge had read the early minute books. No account of the coronation appears in the minute book, though an entry of 5 December notes the proposal of Dr Duff as an Honorary Member. As Dr Duff had consented to act as Chaplain at the coronation it was thought desirable for him to be a member of the lodge but no explanation for this choice of Chaplain appears. The same minute recorded a letter from Falkirk concerning the loan of regalia for 'the Coronation on 15th inst'. This stated that goods could not be removed from the lodge 'until they received a Fire Insurance Policy' as the inventory of the goods to be sent totalled over £160. Had Edinburgh requested the loan of regalia from Falkirk – unlikely given that the mother lodge had always been the lender – or were the brethren asking advice as to the procedure for displaying the regalia at a public event? Members proposed 'that the Regalia be insured and the Fire Policy sent on' but there is no record of this.⁹³

Undeterred by the loss of £4 15s 2d incurred by the Festival the Crispins decided on 3 September 1894 to hold another concert and soiree but no coronation. Details of this occasion again come from a press report. Sheriff Johnson, 'presiding over an audience which completely filled the hall' of the Literary Institute, emulated the example of his predecessors by pointing to the advantages of friendly societies generally and remarking that 'the best kind of charity was that which they made for themselves'.⁹⁴ This Festival incurred a deficit of £4 12s 7d, which is probably the reason for the lack of evidence of subsequent public events until 1899. A circular from the Ancient Order of Shepherds inviting all societies to have a combined procession and games on a Saturday in June, received the response that 'it would lead us into expense which the Lodge cannot afford at present'.⁹⁵

The members did not suggest abandoning the annual celebration but rather a return to the more modest events enjoyed by the Edinburgh brethren for most of the century. Accordingly, a General Committee recommended that:

⁹³ COEC, *Minutes*, 5 December 1893.

⁹⁴ *The Scotsman*, 7 December 1894.

⁹⁵ COEM, *Minutes 4 March 1895*.

we should not venture another soiree in the meantime looking to the loss of the past two years but that we recommend that a Supper and Dance be got up to take place in the Lodge Room.⁹⁶

Lodge approval on 2 September resulted in the appointment of a committee to make arrangements for a date on or after 25 October. What ensued is unknown as there are no subsequent minute books, but the brethren must have recovered both sufficient confidence and funding to stage 'a successful soiree and concert' on 15 December 1899. Councillor Mallinson chaired the first part of the meeting and made the obligatory complimentary remarks on the benefits of friendly societies. As well as 'an attractive musical programme' the evening's agenda also included the last recorded public coronation of King Crispin in a more modest ceremony than even the event of five years earlier and with hindsight a portent of the future.⁹⁷

Speakers at annual soirees painted a positive picture of prosperity, citing in 1894, for example, that 'over the past twelve years over £600 had been paid out by the Lodge in sick and other benefits, and £131 in funeral money'.⁹⁸ In reality the recruitment of members and the high numbers of claimants on the sick list remained a constant challenge. Early in 1891 members decided that prizes should be offered to the persons who introduced the most members to the lodge in that year.⁹⁹ In October the desirability of bringing forward young men as new entrants was emphasised and in November the decision made that candidates' wives also had to be under 45 years.¹⁰⁰ After the presentation of the prizes for recruiting new members (21 in total) on 7 March 1892, Brother Brown urged his colleagues 'to do their utmost to bring in members for Initiation as a means of helping the Funds of the Lodge'.¹⁰¹ The high number of members who were 'on the sick list' and therefore drawing on the funds caused concern at this time and resulted in accusations that the Society's employed medical officer unnecessarily delayed the return of patients to work. Payment arrears, defaults and false claims also constituted an ongoing problem although there was nothing new

⁹⁶ Ibid, 26 August 1895.

⁹⁷ *The Scotsman*, 16 December 1899.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 17 December 1892.

⁹⁹ COEC *Minutes*, 2 March, 6 April 1891. This strategy was also used by the Oddfellows.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 5 October, 7 November 1891.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 7 March 1892.

about this. A much-admired appearance as King Crispin in the 1820 procession did not prevent William Sawers from being expelled from the society for non-payment in 1824.

On 6 March 1893 the lodge decided to repeat the experiment of offering a financial incentive for recruitment, this time with three prizes of 10s, 7s 6d and 2s 6d, but in June dismissed the suggestion of a sports day as a means of attracting new members. (The recurrent proposals for sports days reflect the late nineteenth-century popularity of these among associational groups both voluntary and work-related.) Problems continued with the operation of the Sick Fund and arrangements for the provision of medicine. The relevant roles and relationship of the doctor and the sick visitor who checked on indisposed members, some of whom flagrantly flouted the rules by not being at home or by appearing to be intoxicated, resulted in the doctor's resignation on 21 November 1893. Dr Farquharson who replaced him in January 1894 was initiated as an Honorary Member on 3 December 1894, perhaps as a means of involving him more closely with the lodge.

Throughout 1894-5 the minutes record low attendances at several meetings and without the imposition of an extra levy of 2s on members the Sick Fund would have been in deficit.¹⁰² As a strategy for augmenting membership the subject of a Juvenile Branch and a Female Scheme reappeared on the agenda in June 1894 and was remitted to a committee on 3 September. Not until 23 August 1895 did this committee feel confident to recommend 'that the Juvenile Lodge be started on Monday 16 September in the Lodge Room'.¹⁰³ This date was an autumn holiday. On 2 September, therefore, members heard the revised proposal 'that the Juvenile Lodge be started on Monday 21 October with the same benefits and practically on the same rules as "Court Victoria" Ancient Order of Foresters.' Along with the appointment of a committee to organise the annual soiree this is the last record in the minute book.

¹⁰² Ibid., 4 March 1895.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 23 August 1895.

The Twilight Years

When the lodge submitted the valuation returns for the year ending 31 December 1895 the Registry of Friendly Societies responded that ‘the loss of interest and deficiency demand immediate and serious attention’.¹⁰⁴ What action was taken remains unknown but the papers concerning the registration and dissolution of the Friendly Society include a receipt of valuation dated 31 December 1900 (although no accounts) and forms for the appointment of trustees in 1897, 1898, 1899 and 1903.¹⁰⁵ Two trustees were connected with shoemaking, the others being a photographer and a grocer’s assistant.¹⁰⁶ The lodge appears to be continuing as usual and whether foolhardy or not the brethren obviously felt sufficiently confident by 1899 to stage the soiree and coronation of 15 December described above.

The last of the Society’s record books, the *Contributions Book* for 1891-1904, contains the names of members, their contributions and sick payments as well as a page entitled ‘Falkirk’ with entries for 1891, 1892, 1893. Along with entries in the balance sheets this is confirmation of the arrangement whereby Falkirk members residing in Edinburgh could make their contributions to Edinburgh (and vice versa).¹⁰⁷ By totalling the names for the various years a steady decline in numbers is shown for the later years. The lodge grew from 148 members in 1891 to a peak of 192 in 1895 but, after fluctuations, stood at 90 in 1904. The latter figure is a gross exaggeration as the members listed on the Instrument of Dissolution signed on 1 August 1904 total 39. The last two pages of contributions are undated but contain 40 names with signatures against each, under the heading of compensation and amount (mostly 1s but some 1s 6d or 2s), thereby indicating the actual members who shared the funds at the dissolution of the society.

William Fyfe’s letter to the Assistant Registrar on 12 April 1904 intimating the agreement of the society members to ‘voluntarily dissolve it at

¹⁰⁴ NAS, FS4/921, letter dated 15 October 1896.

¹⁰⁵ NAS, FS4/921.

¹⁰⁶ COEM, *Royal Ancient Order of St Crispin of Scotland Contribution Book 1891-1904*. The photographer had left the society by 1904.

¹⁰⁷ 20 March 1889 cited on p. 7.

as early a date as possible', gave as the reason the inability 'to pay the Benefits promised for a much longer period'.¹⁰⁸ Fyfe explained:

A levy was put on of 1/- per member for six months from July last, there was no dissentient voice at the time, but fully half of the members have not paid anything towards the funds since. The drawings at present will not be able to meet the Sick Benefits of four members at present permanently on the Sick Fund for the next twelve months.

Here is the reason for the 1904 mismatch of numbers. Once again a friendly society associated with the Royal St Crispin Society had foundered. Only one of the signatories of the dissolution document of 1904, however, had also witnessed the demise of its predecessor in 1881, namely the Secretary William Fyfe.

The last balance sheet of the *Ancient Order of St Crispin of Scotland Friendly Society*, giving the abstract of accounts from 1 January to 30 November 1904, was issued to members in advance of the meeting called for 5 December for the formal dissolution.¹⁰⁹ The accounts show an income of £167 5s 10d and expenditure of £105 17s 10d, thereby giving a balance of £61 8s to be divided among the members. One of the costs listed is a sum of 4s for 'repairing Lodge Boxes'. As had happened in the past it appears that lodge meetings were held after the dissolution. Some of the names in the *Contributions Book* have 'died 1905' or 'died 1908' against them, thus implying some continuity of lodge activity, probably due to the determination of Brother Fyfe whose devotion to the society had remained constant since his appointment as Secretary in 1879.¹¹⁰ But even he must have faced, eventually, the reality that another revival of Crispianism with the full panoply of costumed officials, public ceremonies and proclaimed ancestry was not possible. The Minutes of Edinburgh Town Council record the submission of:

Letter from the Hon. Secretary Royal Ancient Order of St Crispin of Scotland offering for acceptance by the Corporation of the Regalia of this Order (now dissolved) so that it might be suitably housed in the Municipal Museum for all time coming.¹¹¹

Councillor Macfarlane, Convener of the Museum Sub-Committee of the Plans and Works Committee, indicated to the Town Councillors that shortly before its dissolution one or two members of the Council had been initiated into the

¹⁰⁸ NAS, FS4/921.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ The last Post Office Directory listing is for 1907-8.

¹¹¹ ECA, SL1/1, *Minutes of Edinburgh Town Council*, 9 February 1909.

Order.¹¹² (Baillie Innes signed the Instrument of Dissolution of 1 August 1904.¹¹³) Later in the year the Museum Sub-Committee accepted an estimate of £11 for a case for 'St Crispin relics in Town's Museum (**Fig 50**).¹¹⁴

There is no account of these 'relics' in the Accessions Register of the museum, which merely notes the donation in general terms. The list of items described in the newspaper accounts is incomplete. Yet although the museum received minute and account books, chests and items of regalia, William Fyfe and the office bearers cannot have relinquished everything. Unless they have been lost or destroyed, the collection includes no ritual books either printed or hand written. The Crispins retained some secrets and may have continued practising these as before, for there is an epilogue to the history of the Royal St Crispin Society as it stands to date. On 15 February 1910 the Town Museum's curator recorded in the *Memoranda Book*:

Letter to William Fyfe Esq with proposal to hold a meeting St Crispin's Lodge at the Museum on Thursday 24th inst. at 8.p.m.

There is nothing further to indicate whether this was a final meeting of the lodge when members could bid farewell to the material evidence of former glory, or if indeed the meeting took place.

¹¹² *The Scotsman*, 10 February 1909.

¹¹³ NAS, FS4/921.

¹¹⁴ ECA, SL44/2, *Minutes of Plans and Works Committee*, 1 July 1909.

7: Conclusion

A mystery remains about the demise of the Royal St Crispin Society, as with its creation in 1817. Meetings were held after the dissolution of the friendly society in 1904 but no evidence of the continuation of the lodge beyond 1910, nor any indication of the size of membership, has been discovered. Only the Secretary William Fyfe could demonstrate longevity and continuity of membership, the maintenance of which had proved a challenge during the period from 1881 to 1904, as it had in the 1850s. Yet throughout the nineteenth century fluctuating numbers of brethren continued to enjoy specific lodge activities. They participated in ritual openings and closings, initiations of new members, elevation ceremonies to Second and Third Orders, convivial evenings, the wearing of costumes and private and public coronations of King Crispin, regardless of the fortunes of the various friendly societies associated with them. At a time when writers and antiquaries were consigning the quaint customs of the shoemakers to the past, some of these customs such as public processions and coronations re-emerged in the 1860s to 1880s when the Edinburgh society and its branch lodges underwent a 'revival' and period of growth.

Until the mid-nineteenth century the Edinburgh lodge maintained a membership predominantly associated with the shoemaking and leather trades. Of recorded sickness contributions for the period 1823-5, 82% were from men working in these trades; 61% of lodge members listed in the period 1817-1850 belonged to shoe-making occupations.¹ The Linlithgow lodge attracted 37 shoemakers and 15 others in the years between 1824 and 1847.² In contrast, in the period 1891-5 none of the 55 new recruits to the Edinburgh society were shoemakers, although only twelve of these remained in 1904. That the society still attracted shoemakers is attested by the appointment as trustees of three shoemakers in 1891, a shoe, heel and toe manufacturer in 1893 and a shoemaker in 1898.³ By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the process of shoemaking itself had undergone revolutionary

¹ COEM, *Minutes*, 1823-32; *Contributions Book*, 1817-1850.

² NAS, FS1/26/11.

³ NAS, FS4/921.

transformation with the advent of factory mass-production. When the *Evening News* investigated the shoemaking trade in 1853 it identified three main processes: clicking (cutting out), closing (sewing of various cut sections) and making (four separate tasks). At that time these functions were still undertaken by hand, with men working in their own homes sometimes assisted by their wives.⁴ Shoemakers comprised 3.06% of the total population of industrial occupations in the 1861 census: by 1901 the percentage had dropped to 0.91%.⁵ The introduction of the sewing machine in the 1860s, the further division of labour and the establishment of workshops meant that even in the luxury bespoke craft sector a shoemaker no longer produced an entire shoe. From 1881 Edinburgh had a branch of the Boot and Shoe Rivetters which catered for workers in the mechanised sector.⁶ As the writer of *On a Shoemaker's Bench* declared in that year:

A man may call himself a shoemaker but it does not follow that he can make a pair of boots. The introduction of machinery and the consequent subdivision of labour have completely changed the aspect of the trade. A quarter of a century ago, a pair of boots was the work of one man; now in one of those gigantic establishments where an arithmetician is needed to keep correct count of the output, a single boot is not finished until it has been subjected to more than fifty different processes, each process a separate department of labour ... a few of the old class of shoemakers remain. But they are very few, and they are more likely to be met with in country places than in large towns.⁷

While Edinburgh could not boast of factories on the scale of those in Northampton, Stafford or Kettering, even a bespoke company such as Allan's had 45 employees involved in making shoes in 1900, a time when the average number of employees per employer in the city was eight.⁸ In 1908 Mrs Gordon described the chief departments in a boot factory as the cutting department (men working almost entirely by hand); machine room (women and girls); soling (men and machinery) and finishing (men largely operating machinery). The trade union limited the ratio of apprentices to one boy for three journeymen.⁹

How much therefore of the St Crispin legend and traditions, grounded in medieval craft methods of working, would be known or relevant by 1900 for

⁴ *Evening News*, 19 March 1853.

⁵ Robert O. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh* (Oxford, 1976), p. 22.

⁶ *Edinburgh Trades Council Minutes*, 11 October 1881, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 41.

⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, 27 August 1881.

⁸ Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy*, pp. 28, 31.

⁹ Mrs Ogilvie Gordon, *A Handbook of Employments* (Aberdeen, 1908), p.153.

a factory worker with no experience of home working or an outworker 'closing' shoe sections already cut elsewhere? As early as the 1860s some brethren had admitted their lack of knowledge and members in the 1880s confessed ignorance of their patron and 'the legend'. What interest would a baker, compositor or joiner – new Crispins of the 1890s – have in St Crispin and Sir Hugh? Recruited by existing members under the prize award scheme cited earlier, they were more likely to have been attracted by the benefit aspect of the society than its ritual. Yet of the men initiated in the period 1891-5, only 21% remained in 1904. Inability to maintain and increase membership is the key to explaining the failure of what was a still a small local society at the beginning of the twentieth century. Even at its peak in 1895 the Royal Ancient Order of St Crispin counted fewer than 200 brethren, notwithstanding its recruitment campaigns. Most members came from areas of Edinburgh not too distant from the High Street, the perennial location for meetings. Late nineteenth-century friendly societies faced the double-edged problem of the lengthening longevity and proportionate ageing of the existing membership along with the reluctance of young men to join societies.¹⁰ The intense competition among societies for new members prevented them from raising the rates of contribution or reducing benefits. As Mr Fyfe explained in 1904, even a special additional levy on members could not raise enough to pay the long-term sickness benefits of four members.

In the same period affiliated orders such as the Oddfellows and Foresters had grown to encompass thousands of members. Nationally the Oddfellows totalled 736,000 members in 1900 with the Ancient Order of Foresters accounting for 666,000 and the Independent Order of Rechabites 137,000.¹¹ The Edinburgh High Court of the Ancient Order of Foresters numbered 5,041 in 1912, with a financial balance of £34,760.¹² Anyone wishing to provide against sickness and infirmity had a better guarantee of security by investing with them rather than contributing to the scheme of a

¹⁰ Bentley B. Gilbert, 'The Decay of Nineteenth-Century Provident Institutions and the Coming of Old Age Pensions in Great Britain', *The Economic History Review*, new series, vol. 17, no. 3 (1965), pp. 553-4.

¹¹ Weinbren, *The Oddfellows 1810-2010*, p. 71.

¹² Ancient Order of Foresters, High Court, *Official Handbook and Souvenir Guide* (Edinburgh, 1925), p. xiii.

very small independent lodge. The larger societies also provided regalia and ritual for those to whom such traditions remained important and it is interesting that the Stirling Lodge chose to amalgamate with the Ancient Order of Shepherds. Other institutions competed for the savings of thrifty Edinburgh employees. An analysis of the social composition of savers with the Edinburgh Savings Bank for the period 1895-9 revealed that 50% of depositors belonged to the skilled, semi and unskilled manual worker classes – the category of employees who joined the Royal St Crispin Society.¹³ During these years also, membership of the St Cuthbert's Co-operative Association Limited grew from 13,197 in 1895 to 24,000 in 1900 and 33,164 in 1905.¹⁴ In addition to a dividend accumulated by consistently buying from 'the store', the Co-op offered a range of benefits to members including loans for mortgages and unemployment assistance. Employees could join a sick benefit society.¹⁵

The convivial club aspect of the Royal St Crispin Society had dominated its early years and remained important for the greater part of the century, while the specific lodge activities which differentiated the Royal St Crispin Society from other similar organisations remained a constant since its establishment in 1817. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the Crispins faced competition from a range of leisure options not available to their predecessors in 1817. With shorter working hours and the spread, by the 1890s, of the Saturday half-holiday to skilled and many semi-skilled workers, came the rise of national organised activities such as football and athletics, music halls and animated picture shows.¹⁶ On 5 September 1900, for example, there were press reports of four Edinburgh football matches, one cricket win, a cycling championship and three golf matches, along with advertisements for five theatres, Forth Pleasure Boat sailing, and the

¹³ Robert Q. Gray, 'Thrift and Working-class Mobility in Victorian Edinburgh' in Allan MacLaren (ed.), *Social Class in Scotland: Past and Present* (Edinburgh, 1976), p. 129.

¹⁴ William Maxwell (ed.), *First Fifty Years of St Cuthbert's Co-operative Association Limited 1859-1909* (Edinburgh, 1909), p. 269.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 158, 175.

¹⁶ W. Hamish Fraser, 'Developments in Leisure' in W. Hamish Fraser and R. J. Morris (eds), *People and Society in Scotland vol. ii 1830-1914* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp. 251-253.

announcement of the sale of Hibernian Football Club season tickets with a rate of 2s 6d for apprentices.¹⁷

In addition to the continuation of the annual works outing, many companies now provided other leisure facilities for their workers – what Mavor calls ‘paternalism and employer amenity welfarism’.¹⁸ Employees of the Nelson printing works could partake of the golfing, bowling, cricket and tennis facilities provided by the company’s athletic ground, or attend concerts and lectures in its Institute. There were also various savings and co-operative schemes operating among the employees.¹⁹ St Cuthbert’s had an adult choir, an orchestra and a literary society; it paid employees’ fees for evening continuation classes and organised an annual excursion for staff.²⁰ In contrast, involvement in trade union activity occupied only a small proportion of Scottish workers at this time – less than 3.7% of the population.²¹ The Royal St Crispin Lodge also had to compete with a range of religious voluntary organisations which had proliferated from the 1870s.²² Offering teetotal religion and ‘respectable’ leisure through the provision of teetotal pubs and hotels, reading rooms, libraries, clubs and football leagues, religious organisations also kept abreast of current leisure trends. Moving picture shows were available in the Methodist Central Hall, Tollcross in 1901 and in Tynecastle Parish church in 1905.²³

The experience of William Anderson, a coalman employed by St Cuthbert’s, demonstrates the competition for a working man’s leisure time. Anderson was a member of the rival organisations the Sons of Temperance and the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners for which he was a ‘sick steward’. He also participated in meetings of the St Cuthbert’s Young Men’s Guild. In

¹⁷ *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*.

¹⁸ Irene Mavor, ‘The Social and Associated Life of the Scottish workplace 1800-2000’ in Mark A. Mulhorn, John Beech and Elaine Thompson (eds), *Scottish Life and Society*, vol. 7 (Edinburgh, 2008), p. 500.

¹⁹ “*Nelsons*” of Edinburgh: *A short history of the firm reprinted from “The British Printer”* (? 1907), pp. 47-8.

²⁰ Maxwell, *St Cuthbert’s*, pp. 173, 174, 191.

²¹ W. W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present* (Edinburgh, 1999), p. 156; Arthur McIvor, ‘Trade Unions in Scottish Society’ in Mulhorne, Beech and Thompson, *Scottish Life and Society*, vol. 7, p. 449.

²² Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 117.

²³ George Baird, *Edinburgh Theatres, Cinemas and Circuses 1820-1963* (Edinburgh, 1964, reset 2000), pp. 150-1, 271, 273.

1904, in addition to attending evening classes and lectures, he enjoyed a Waverley Market Carnival, a waxworks exhibition, productions at the Empire and Lyceum Theatres, six miscellaneous concerts and five free military band concerts. He experienced 'Animated Pictures' at the Operetta House, attended a Celtic v. St Bernard's football match, undertook a cycle ramble, attended St Cuthbert's sports, made two tramcar excursions to Portobello for the Pierrot show, took a trip to Barnton for a picnic and participated in a procession of temperance societies.²⁴ Had his associational needs not been so comprehensively met, he might have joined the Edinburgh Working Men's Club and Institute, where a reading room, library, whist, draughts, chess, dominoes and billiards were available to members on payment terms of 2d weekly to £3 3s for life membership.²⁵

The first members of the Royal St Crispin Society created a fraternal association with a structure and ritual clearly influenced by freemasonry but which venerated the legendary and fictional figures and traditions associated with shoemaking. In their enjoyment of the convivial aspect of meetings usually held in taverns, the Crispins were no different from the members of other contemporary clubs and societies. Following the 'revival' of the mid-nineteenth century and the renewal of activity in the 1880s and 1890s, the Crispins placed greater public emphasis on 'Crispianism', interpreted as the benefits to be derived from belonging to a friendly society. They manifested their conformity to contemporary expectations of respectable behaviour by holding annual general meetings with teetotal soirees chaired by public figures. Yet in spite of its network of branch lodges the Royal St Crispin Society remained in essence what it had always been – a local lodge with a ritual related to shoemaking. The Falkirk lodge survived because, alone among the St Crispin Societies, it grew and diversified. By the mid-1890s when the mother lodge could only muster 192 members, Falkirk had formed a juvenile society and added juvenile branches to the lodges of Carronshore, Grangemouth, Bonnybridge, Stenhousemuir and Larbert, for which outings,

²⁴ William Anderson, *No Ordinary Man: William Anderson's Edinburgh Journal 1903-1906* (Edinburgh, 1986), pp. 46-95.

²⁵ ECL, YHS865E23W: Acc. No. B18168.

soirees and picnics were organised.²⁶ It successfully invested in property and in 1911 was one of the group of small friendly societies accepted to administer state benefits under the new National Insurance Act.

After the dissolution of its friendly society and the sale of the St Crispin property in 1850, the mother lodge never demonstrated this kind of initiative and drive, as witness the protracted discussions about a juvenile lodge in the 1890s. Years earlier the only proposal for the formation of another lodge in Edinburgh came to nothing.²⁷ In contrast, in 1890 for example, 47 branches of the Independent Order of Good Templars met in Edinburgh as did 12 societies of the Independent United Order of Scottish Mechanics.²⁸ After the dissolution of Edinburgh's Grand Lodge benefit society in 1881, the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Lodge, like other St Crispin lodges, might also have ceased to operate had it not been for the determination of a handful of Crispins led by William Fyfe. They engineered a revival but, by the turn of the twentieth century, membership had declined and attendance at meetings was poor. The most likely explanation is that a craft-orientated ritual and fraternal formula created in 1817 could not compete with the plethora of other attractions now available in the capital; it was deemed to be irrelevant. Without the financial boost provided by new recruits the benefits scheme became unsustainable as had happened twice before. Subsequent to the dissolution of the last friendly society in 1904 the remaining 37 members appear to have accepted that they were unlikely to be able to form another.

The traditions, legends and stories of the craft still known to the shoemakers of the early nineteenth century had been collected by antiquaries during that century and published in journals and books such as *The Romance of the Shoe* as a quaint reminder of past times.²⁹ The fundamental characteristic of myth, according to anthropologists, is 'its capacity to give pleasure and to involve the emotional participation of an audience.'³⁰ By 1909

²⁶ *Falkirk Herald*.

²⁷ COEM, Grand Lodge, *Minutes*, 2 December 1878.

²⁸ Calculated from the *Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directory*, 1890-1, <<http://digital.nls.uk/directories>>[31 October 2012].

²⁹ Ordish, 'St Crispin', pp. 138-143; Wright, *The Romance of the Shoe*.

³⁰ J.-P. Vernant quoted by Joanna Overing, 'The Role of Myth: An Anthropological Perspective' in Hosking and Schöpflin, *Myths and Nationhood*, p. 2.

William Fyfe and his fellow brethren had recognised that the St Crispin ‘myth’ had lost this entertainment value. Their gift of the Royal St Crispin Society’s collection to the Town Museum is therefore symbolic – a recognition that there was no possibility of another revival. Some items such as the heralds’ costumes and the first minute book dated from 1817 or earlier and were a tangible link to the cordiners of the past. By consigning to a museum the material evidence of the maintenance of traditions, however reinvented, the last members of the Society were recognising the end of an era and echoing the sentiments of Gavin Wilson’s *Epitaph for the Author, or any other Soutar*.

My *Cutting-board*’s in pieces split,
 My *Size-sticks* measure no more feet,
 My *Lasts* are broken all in holes,
 My blunted *Knives* cut no more soles
 My *Fuddlingcap* to thrums is worn
 My *Apron* is to *targets torn*.....
 Farewel old Crispin’s festive board
 Where I have been as drunk’s a lord.
 Adieu to *Heel-blocks* and *Saint Mondays*,
 Which made me oft keep watery Sundays
 My *Pinchers* are by age worn smooth,
 And Saint *Hugh’s Bones* have lost their worth.
 My *Hammer-head*’s broke off the shaft,
 And now no more I’ll *stump the Craft*.....
 My *Nippers*, *Tacks*, my *Strip* and *Rag*,
 And all my *Kit* have got the *Bag*,
 My *Ends* are sew’d, my *Pegs* are driven,
 And now I’m on the tramp for H----n.³¹

³¹ Wilson, *A Collection of Masonic Songs*. He provided a glossary of words used in the poem namely:

- that a shoemaker is said to split his cutting-board when he has failed in his circumstances
- journeymen shoemakers when they went on a ramble wore the best striped worsted cap they wore at work – the Fuddling-cap
- The Heel-block is the treat a shoemaker gives his comrades when he goes to a new master
- Saint Mondays are Monday rambles very common among shoemakers
- Stumping the craft is bragging to be a better work-man
- Getting the bag is the turning away a person or thing
- Tramp is a journey.

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York Herald and General Advertiser, 27 October 1838.

Appendix 2: List of Processions

This was compiled from sources cited in the text and bibliography in order to give an overview of the number and location of processions mounted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Crispin indicates a specific Crispin Procession rather than a Crispin presence in another procession. Question marks occur when there are references in the Minutes of the Edinburgh Royal St Crispin Society but no record of the event.

1739	Edinburgh	Crispin
1741	Edinburgh	Crispin
1742	Edinburgh	Crispin
1743	Edinburgh	Crispin
1746	Aberdeen	Crispin
1749	Edinburgh	Crispin
1754	Edinburgh	Crispin
1760	Edinburgh	Crispin
1763	Edinburgh	Crispin
1764	Hexham	Crispin
1770	Dundee	Crispin- robes borrowed from Edinburgh
1771	Edinburgh	Crispin
1772	Edinburgh	Crispin
1773	Kilmarnock	Crispin
1776	Edinburgh	Crispin
1777	Bury St Edmunds	Crispin
1783	Dundee	Crispin
1786	Selby	Crispin
1788	Kelso	Crispin
Late 18th	Dublin	Crispin
1796	Falkirk	Crispin
1808	Turriff	Crispin - Friendly Soc
1809	Sunderland	George III Jubilee
1813	Falkirk Dumfries Norwich	Crispin
1815	Stirling	Crispin
1818	Glasgow Dumfries	Crispin Crispin
1819	Edinburgh Stirling	Walk with standards Crispin
1820	Blyth Edinburgh C.1820 Crieff	Crispin Crispin (Kirkcaldy deputation) Crispin
1821	Ayr Kilmarnock	Crispin Crispin

	Edinburgh Kelso	Crispin procession in coaches Crispin
1822	Paisley Kirkcaldy Edinburgh Leith Dundee	Crispin George IV visit George IV visit Crispin
1823	Linlithgow Newcastle Dunfermline	Crispin Crispin Crispin – robes from Edinburgh
1824	Shrewsbury Edinburgh ? Alloa	Crispin Crispin Paid for loan of robes from Edinburgh
1825	Shrewsbury Linlithgow Montrose ? Perth	Shrewsbury show Crispin – robes from Edinburgh Request for robes from Edinburgh Paid for loan of robes from Edinburgh
1828	Montrose and ?Falkirk	Both requested use of regalia from Edinburgh
1831	?Montrose Glasgow	Request for robes from Edinburgh William IV coronation
1832	Alloa Dumfries Edinburgh Aberdeen	Reform procession Reform procession Reform procession Reform procession
1833	Nantwich	Trade Union procession
1843	Cork	Repeal of the Union
1844	Ayr	Burns commemoration
1856	Montrose	Crispin
1860	Linlithgow Falkirk Shrewsbury	Crispin - borrowed robes from Edinburgh Crispin Shrewsbury show
1861	Dundee, Linlithgow, Airdrie, Falkirk, Stirling Edinburgh	Wallace Monument
1862	Airdrie Falkirk ?Greenock	Greenhouse Jubilee Crispin Request for regalia

1863	Dumfries Dundee Airdrie Perth Linlithgow Dalkeith Wishaw	Royal wedding Royal wedding and Baxter's Park Royal wedding and Crispin Crispin Crispin procession – use of Edinburgh regalia Crispin – use of Edinburgh regalia and Edinburgh attended Royal wedding
1864	Perth Greenock Glasgow	Royal baptism Royal baptism Royal baptism
1865	Dumbarton	Town Hall foundation stone laying– loan of robes from Edinburgh
1866	?Linlithgow ?Dalkeith	Reform demonstration – shoemakers presence
1869	Linlithgow	Crispin 3 Orders – loan of regalia from Edinburgh
1870	Falkirk	Crispin – loan of robes and regalia from Edinburgh
1872	Falkirk	Crispin – robes and regalia from Edinburgh
1873	Edinburgh Dalkeith	Criminal Law Amendment Act
1874	Perth	Royal wedding
1875	Airdrie	Crispin – robes loan from Edinburgh
1876	? Grangemouth Edinburgh	Loan of robes from Edinburgh Foresters' demonstration
1877	Glasgow ? Stirling	Burns statue Crispin coronation – loan of regalia from Edinburgh
1878	Falkirk	Crispin demonstration in Linlithgow
1882	Grangemouth	Opening of Dock
1883	Banff	Prince of Wales visit
1884	Anstruther Falkirk	King Crispin in Reform parade Grangemouth Memorial

	Edinburgh Glasgow Inverness Nairn	stone – loan of crown and sceptre from Edinburgh Trades demonstration re franchise Trades demonstration re franchise – loan of sashes and aprons from Edinburgh Trades demonstration re franchise – loan of armour and costumes from Edinburgh Crispin – loan of regalia from Edinburgh
1887	Stirling	Wallace statue – loan of armour etc from Edinburgh
1893	Falkirk	Demonstration of Friendly Societies
No date	Aberdeen	Bon Accord celebrations

Appendix 3: Main Characters in the Crispin processions

This was compiled from sources cited in the text and bibliography in order to give an overview of which characters were common to all processions and which were confined to certain areas or periods.

Character	Place	Year
Crispianus	Bury St Edmunds	1777
	Dunfermline	1823
	Linlithgow	1823
	Shrewsbury	1825, 1860s
	Edinburgh	1832
	Perth	1863
	Glasgow	1864
British Prince	Glasgow	1818
	Stirling	1819
	Ayr	1821, 1844
	Glasgow	1831
Prince Royal	Edinburgh	1821, 1832
	Perth	1863
	Glasgow	1864
Young Prince	Edinburgh	1824
Lord Mayor	?Dundee	1770, 1783
	? Kilmarnock	1773
	Sunderland	1809
	Stirling	1815, 1819
	Glasgow	1818
	Edinburgh	1820, 1821, 1824, 1832
	Kelso	1821
	Kilmarnock	1821
	Ayr	1821
	Kirkcaldy	1822
	Dunfermline	1823
	Linlithgow	1823
	Glasgow	1831, 1864
	Perth	1864
Archbishop	Kelso	1821
	Kirkcaldy	1822
	Dunfermline	1823
	Linlithgow (not in procession)	1823
	Aberdeen	1832
	Perth	1863
	Glasgow	1864
Champion	Dundee	?1770, 1783
	Kilmarnock	?1773
	Dumfries	1813
	Stirling	1815, 1819
	Glasgow	1818
	Edinburgh	1820, 1821, 1824, 1832

	Crieff Kelso Kilmarnock Ayr Kirkcaldy Dundee Linlithgow Glasgow Montrose Perth	1873, 1876 Early 1820s 1821 1821 1821 1822 1822 1823 1831, 1864, 1873 1856 1863
Sir Hugh	Edinburgh Kirkcaldy Dunfermline Linlithgow Montrose Perth Glasgow	1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 1822 1823 1823 1856 1863 1864
Indian Prince	Dundee Kilmarnock Dumfries Stirling Glasgow Edinburgh Crieff Kelso Ayr Kirkcaldy Dunfermline Linlithgow Glasgow Ayr Perth Glasgow	?1770, 1783 ?1773, 1821 1813 1815, 1819 1818 1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 ? early 1820s 1821 1821 1822 1823 1823 1831 1844 1863 1864
Secretary of State	Glasgow Stirling Edinburgh Kelso Kirkcaldy Paisley Dunfermline Linlithgow Glasgow Perth	1818 1819 1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 1821 1822 1822 1823 1823 1831, 1864 1863
Sword of State	Edinburgh Kelso Kirkcaldy Dunfermline Linlithgow Glasgow	1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 1821 1822 1823 1823 1831, 1864

	Perth	1863
Macer	Dumfries Glasgow Stirling Edinburgh Kelso Kilmarnock Ayr Kirkcaldy Dunfermline Glasgow Perth	1813 1818 1819 1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 1821 1821 1821 1822 1823 1831 1863
Heralds	Dundee Stirling Edinburgh Kelso Ayr Kirkcaldy Dunfermline Linlithgow Glasgow Perth	?1770, 1783 1819 1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 1873, 1876 1821 1821 1822 1823 1823 1831, 1864, 1873 1863
Marshall or Marshall of the Camp	Dundee Dumfries Edinburgh Kelso Ayr Kirkcaldy Paisley Dundee Dunfermline Linlithgow Glasgow Montrose Perth	?1770, 1783 1813 1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 1821 1821 1822 1822 1822 1823 1823 1831, 1864 1856 1863
Black Rod	Edinburgh Kelso Kirkcaldy Dunfermline Linlithgow	1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 1821 1822 1823 1823
Red Rod	Edinburgh Kelso Kirkcaldy Dunfermline Linlithgow	1821, 1824 1821 1822 1823 1823
White Rod	Edinburgh	1820, 1821, 1824, 1832
Treasurer	Edinburgh Kelso	1820, 1821, 1824 1821

	Dunfermline Linlithgow	1823 1823
Lord High Constable	Edinburgh Perth Glasgow	1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 1863 1864
Ushers	Edinburgh Kelso Kilmarnock Ayr Kirkcaldy Dunfermline Linlithgow Glasgow	1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 1821 1821 1821 1822 1823 1823 1831
Pages	Edinburgh Aberdeen Dundee Kilmarnock Glasgow Edinburgh Kelso Kilmarnock Ayr Kirkcaldy Linlithgow Glasgow Montrose Perth	1741 etc 1744 ?1770, 1783 1773 1818 1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 1821 1821 1821 1822 1823 1831, 1863 1856 1863
Broadswordsmen	Edinburgh Kelso Kirkcaldy Dunfermline Linlithgow	1820, 1821 1821 1822 1823 1823
Spearmen	Edinburgh Kelso Kirkcaldy Dunfermline Linlithgow Perth	1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 1821 1822 1823 1823 1863
Highland Chieftain/Highlanders	Glasgow Stirling Edinburgh Kelso Ayr Kirkcaldy Dunfermline Glasgow Perth	1818 1819 1820, 1821, 1824 1821 1821, 1844 1822 1823 1831, 1864 1863
Chaplain	Edinburgh	1820, 1821, 1824, 1832

	Dunfermline Linlithgow Perth Glasgow	1823 1823 1863 1864
Cossack	Glasgow Stirling Crieff Ayr Glasgow Perth	1818 1819 ?early 1820s 1821 1831, 1864, 1873 1863
Preses/President	Edinburgh Kelso Kirkcaldy Dunfermline Glasgow Perth	1820, 1821, 1824 1821 1822 1823 1831, 1863 1864
Old King	Dumfries (late King) Kilmarnock Ayr Glasgow	1813 1821 1821 1831
Old Dukes	Kelso	1821
Girls strewing flowers	Kelso Dunfermline	1821 1823
Knights	Edinburgh Linlithgow Dunfermline Glasgow	1820, 1821, 1824, 1832 1823 1823 1864
Chancellor	Glasgow Stirling Perth	1818 1819 1863
Prime Minister	Stirling Glasgow Crieff Dumbarton	1815, 1819 1818 Early 1820s 1865