Sons of Crispin

Sons of Crispin:
The St Crispin Lodges of Edinburgh and Scotland

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SCHOLARS**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AA   Angus Archives

COEM   City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries

DLC   Dundee Central Library Lamb Collection

ECA   Edinburgh City Archives

ECL   Edinburgh City Libraries

NAS   National Archives of Scotland

NLS   National Library of Scotland

NLA   North Lanarkshire Archives

NMS   National Museums of Scotland

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION:
WHY CRISPIN?

.... with a spirit worthy of the sons of St Crispin drink to the "memory of our king for ever".[1]

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]

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[1] *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 28 October 1867.
[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.

Fig. 1-1 *Ceremonial candlesticks,* Royal St Crispin Society, City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries.

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 (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

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[6] These guidebooks are in files held in the Museum of Edinburgh.
[7] Dundee Art Galleries and Museums, 1994-1.

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 Canongate and of Edinburgh, a reading of the *Royal St Crispin Society Minute and Account Book 1823 -1831* (at that time the only known volume) and a search of Edinburgh newspapers established that the collection pertained to what seemed to be several successive Edinburgh friendly societies with St Crispin in their name, operating from the mid eighteenth century to 1904. One of these had indeed organised an impressive "King Crispin" procession through the streets of the capital in 1820, with subsequent events in following years.

There lingered, however, many unanswered questions. What was the significance of the regalia with its obvious shoemaker symbolism; why were the processions of colourful and ceremonial characters including a "king" rather than a "saint" Crispin organised? How did a St Crispin Society relate to a Society of Journeymen Shoemakers of Edinburgh, a Journeymen Shoemakers' Society for the City and Suburbs and a Young Journeymen Shoemakers' Friendly Society of Edinburgh; or to the various Incorporations of Cordiners of Edinburgh, of Canongate, of Portsburgh or Potterrow? Were there freemasonic influences, given the symbolic appearance of some of the regalia? In addition, links appeared to exist with other shoemaker groups in Scotland, such as in Kilmarnock, Stirling, Falkirk, Dalkeith, Montrose, Dunfermline, Kelso and Dundee, some of which also organised processions. The subsequent rediscovery of further documents and artefacts provided new evidence for reassessing previous conclusions.

Some St Crispin material exists in a number of Scottish museums and archives but no work had been undertaken to establish the relevance of the artefacts and records in these institutions to those in other collections; nor had there been any interpretation of the significance of the objects generally classified simply as pertaining to the Order of St Crispin. Curatorial research in Dundee in the 1980s had uncovered newspaper

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[8] C. A. Malcolm, "Incorporation of Cordiners of the Canongate, 1538-1773", *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, XVIII (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1932), pp. 100-150.
[9] Sir Daniel Wilson, *Memorials of Edinburgh*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: A. and C. Black, 1891), p. 97.

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.[10] 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.[11] 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.

That St Crispin is the patron saint of shoemakers was still well known in the nineteenth century and frequent publications of almanacs and books of days reminded those who might have forgotten.[12] 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".[13] The St Crispin Day procession in Edinburgh on 25 October 1820 attracted substantial press attention and other processions elsewhere in later years merited coverage in newspapers, as did accounts of anniversary dinners. Nineteenth-century antiquaries collected anecdotes and memoirs of shoemaking traditions, often with inaccurate detail or dating and published accounts of illustrious men who had been shoemakers.[14] Recent scholarship has used the example of Scottish journeymen cordiners parading "in several places" each year on St Crispin's day, as playing a part in maintaining workers' identities; and the Nantwich procession of 1833 is often quoted.[15] Henry Pelling cited it as evidence of the

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

[11] Image in June Swann, *Shoemaking* (Risborough: Shire Publications, 2003), p. 2.

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

[13] Sir Walter Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, vol. XXII (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1853), p. 62.

[14] William E. Winks, *Lives of Illustrious Shoemakers* (London: Sampson Low, 1883).

[15] 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: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 297; Christopher A. Whatley,

"prevalence at this time of various mystic rites probably based on Masonic practice".[16] Hobsbawm and Scott attributed the shoemakers' pageant to a "strong union", reiterated by Oakes and Price.[17] Thompson argued that craft ideals:

> lived in the sanctions and customs of the more traditional manufacturing communities. The 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.[18]

These are all passing references with no analysis of the symbolism of such processions or any interpretation of the characters who were impersonated in the pageants which, in the nineteenth century, often happened after lapses of many years. Reports of the Edinburgh 1820 procession indicated that it was a revival of an event not celebrated for 44 years.[19] There was no attempt at an explanation. Yet the characters in the St Crispin processions have symbolic meaning and many of them are part of the Crispin legends central to shoemaking traditions. An understanding of the public and private enactment of those legends is needed in order to appreciate the significance of museum collections.

This study establishes the ownership of the Edinburgh museum collection as being that of successive Edinburgh St Crispin societies or lodges with rituals shaped by centuries' old shoemaker legends and traditions. The antecededents of these societies which operated from 1817 until the early twentieth century are examined; as is their purpose, structure, organisation and relationships with branch lodges; and an interpretation of the processions and ritual associated with them is offered. An appreciation of the craft heritage of shoemakers assists an understanding of what was being manifested on eighteenth-century streets. Lynch has highlighted the difficulties in constructing an occupational

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David B. Swinfen and Annette M. Smith, *Life and Times of Dundee* (Dundee: John Donald, 1993), p. 45. The last Dundee procession, however, was not in 1822 as shown below.

[16] Henry Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1963), p. 40.

[17] E. J. Hobsbawm and Joan Wallach Scott, "Political Shoemakers", *Past and Present* (Nov., 1980), p. 109; Tim Oakes and Patricia Lynne Price (eds), *The Cultural Geography Reader* (Oxford: Routledge, 2008), p. 26.

[18] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 1963), p. 545.

[19] *The Scotsman*, *26* October 1820: *Scots Magazine*, December 1820, p. 563.

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.[20] 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.

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.[21] 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.[22] He 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.[23] 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

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[20] 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: John Donald, 1988).

[21] David Stevenson, *The First Freemasons: Scotland's Early Lodges and their Members* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), p. 42.

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

[23] Ibid., p. 41; R. A. Houston, *Social Change in the Age of Enlightenment Edinburgh 1660-1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 98.

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.[24]

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 study.

The eighteenth-century Crispin commemoration and the formation and operation of the Royal St Crispin Societies in the nineteenth century in Edinburgh and places such as Montrose, Linlithgow, Dundee, Falkirk, Stirling, Greenock, Glasgow, Paisley and Airdrie have also to be viewed in an urban context. Such associational activity relied on the sufficient numbers of craftsmen located in towns rather than scattered throughout rural areas. 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] 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.[27] Devine cites the trebling of the population of Greenock, Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock and Falkirk between 1750 and 1821.[28] 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

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[24] Christopher A. Whatley, *Scottish Society 1707-1830: Beyond Jacobitism, towards industrialisation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 210.

[25] Helen M. Dingwall, *Late Seventeenth-century Edinburgh a demographic study* (Aldershot: Scolar, 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: Dundee University Press, 2009), pp. 18-19.

[27] Whatley, *Scottish Society*, p. 67; McKean, Harris and Whatley, *Dundee*, p. 135.

[28] T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000* (London: Allen Lane, 1999), p. 152.

density being in Glasgow and Edinburgh where by 1800, 60% of Scottish urban dwellers resided.[29]

According to Rodger, the increase in Edinburgh's population in the period 1801-41 exceeded that of the entire city in 1800.[30] 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.[31] 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.[32] 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.[33] 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.[34] The shoe-making factory of James Allan, for example, was located in Edinburgh city centre.[35] 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.[36] The pattern remained relatively unaltered by the end of the century with only 7 of the 124 members

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[29] T. M. Devine, "Scotland" in Peter Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 158-9.

[30] Richard Rodger, "The Scottish Cities" in T. M. Devine and Jenny Wormald, *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 455.

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

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

[33] Rodger, *Transformation of Edinburgh*, p. 491-493.

[34] Ibid., p. 488.

[35] *Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directory 1900-1901* (Edinburgh: Morrison and Gibb, 1901), p. 7.

[36] COEC, *Royal St Crispin Contributions Book 1817-1850*.

residing in the new suburbs in 1891.[37] 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.[38] Increasingly the sphere of women's activity was perceived to be the home, the private and domestic environment.[39] 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".[40] 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.[41]

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

[38] Peter Clark and R. A Houston, "Culture and Leisure 1700-1840" in *Cambridge Urban History*, pp. 587-8.

[39] 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: John Donald, 1990), p. 75.

[40] 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: Ashgate, 2006), p. 183.

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

Of all eighteenth-century associations, freemasonry constituted the largest of the new "quasi-secret, pseudo-mystical organisations".[42] 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.[43] 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.[44] 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.[45] 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.[46] A key point for this study, 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 entrants.[47] As will be seen 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

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[42] Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 76.

[43] Stevenson, *The First Freemasons*; *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century 1590-1710* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[44] Clark, *British Clubs*, pp. 312, 119, 325.

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

[46] Ibid., p. 12.

[47] Andy Durr, "Ritual of Association and the Organisations of the Common People", Ars *Quatuor Coronatorum*, vol. 100 (1988), p. 92.

society, the origins of which can be traced to the early seventeenth century.[48] *British Friendly Societies, 1750-1914 i*s the first major re-examination of the subject since the work of Gosden.[49] 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.[50] 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.[51] During the nineteenth century, however, elite attacks on public-house sociability and a growing social approbation of friendly societies as sober, rational and respectable institutions resulted in a minimising of the importance of conviviality.[52]

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

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[48] Clark, *British Clubs*, p. 325, 47.
[49] Simon Cordery, *British Friendly Societies, 1750-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Peter Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England 1815-1875* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961).
[50] Cordery, *British Friendly Societies*, pp. 7-8.
[51] Ibid., p. 40.
[52] Ibid., p. 151.

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.[53]

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 Foresters 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".[54] 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".[55] 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 is known.[56] 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 Royal 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*.[57] 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

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[53] COEC, *Royal St Crispin Society Minute and Account Book 1823-32*.
[54] Cordery, *British Friendly Societies*, p. 31.
[55] Clark, *British Clubs*, p. 385.
[56] Victoria Solt Dennis, *Discovering Friendly and Fraternal Societies: Their Badges and Regalia* (Risborough: Shire Publications, 2005), p. 155.
[57] T. Fairman Ordish, "St Crispin", *The Antiquary*, vol. VI (October 1882), pp.138-143.

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.[58] 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*.[59] 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".[60]

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

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[58] Thomas Wright, *The Romance of the Shoe*, (London: Farncombe, 1922).

[59] 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: Ashgate, 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", *"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.

[60] E. J. Hobsbawm and Joan Wallach Scott, "Political Shoemakers", *Past and Present* (Nov., 1980), pp. 86-114, 96.

processions, often dismissed as quaint relics of the past, examples of lingering traces of the more traditional guilds. The existence of the Royal St Crispin Society network and its ritual remains unacknowledged and the extent and variety of processions unrecorded. This study, therefore, aims to provide a context for the Royal St Crispin collections held by City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries and related material located in the holdings of Dundee Art Galleries and Museums, Glasgow Museums, McLean Museum and Art Gallery, National Museums of Scotland and Smith Art Galleries and Museum.[61] The analysis 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. A construction of ritual procedure and an interpretation of objects in terms of symbolism and meaning is attempted; with the narrative providing 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, for example, 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. An examination of these documents and those 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 comprehensive especially with regard to ritual and there may be more material as yet undetected. Many secrets were uncovered, however, by piecing together the extant

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[61] Appendix I.

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".[62] 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.[63] 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.[64] Press accounts of processions and articles in almanacs such as Chambers' *The Book of Days* make no acknowledgement of the Royal St Crispin Societies and attribute them generally to shoemakers.[65]

A more complex story, however, unfolds in this study though thematic chapters which link archival and material evidence to demonstrate key stages in the history of the Royal St Crispin societies. Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 7 examine the origins, organisation development and demis of the Edinburgh Society and its associated branches; chapter three analyses the processions and chapter five interprets the ritual. 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-

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[62] Cordery, *British Friendly Societies*, p. 9.
[63] Appendix 2. Works such as Samuel Tymms, East Anglian, or Notes and Queries on subjects connected with the counties (Lowestoft and London: Lock Wood and Co, 1864) and Charles Mackie, Norfolk Annals: A Chronological Record of Remarkable Events in the 19th century 1801-1850, vol. I (Norwich: Norfolk Chronicle Office, 1901) have helped to identify English processions.
[64] 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.
[65] Robert Chambers, (ed.), *The Book of Days* (Edinburgh: W. and R. Chambers, 1869).

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.

Chapter Two

St Crispin as Patron Saint

Let Crispin live, and let Saint Hugh's bones rattle.[1]

Shoemakers and Saints

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. In which historical period Scottish cordiners adopted the saint and his brother Crispianus (sometimes named Crispinian) as their spiritual protectors is unknown but the cult of the saints had been established in France in the centuries following their supposed martyrdom. Their earliest literary acknowledgement can be traced to Geoffrey of Tours in the sixth century. In his *History of the Franks*, Geoffrey describes how Clodobert, son of King Chilperic, was buried in the Holy Church of the Martyrs Crispin and Crispinian in Soissons.[2] Two centuries later the Church of the Saviour in Saint-Riquier at Centula near Abbéville had an altar to these saints "beloved of the common people".[3] A chapel to St. Crispin and his brother existed in fourteenth- century Reims, and in 1379, letters patent of Charles V of France allowed the shoemakers of Paris to establish a confraternity "en l'honneur de Saint Crépin et Saint Crépinien dans l'église Notre Dame de Paris".[4] In 1414 the confraternity was given relics of the saints from the

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[1] Thomas Duffett, "Epilogue to The Shoomaker's a Gentleman, Spoken by the Master-Shoomaker" in *New poems, songs, prologues and epilogues never before printed; and set by the most eminent musicians about the town* (London: Nicholas Woolfe, 1676).

[2] Geoffrey of Tours, *History of the Franks*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin, 1974), p. 298.

[3] Allan Doig, *Liturgy and architecture from the early church to the Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 128.

[4] Anne Walters, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims Context and meaning in his musical works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.14; Elisabeth

monastery of Saint-Crépin-le-Grand in Soissons.[5] In Rouen the shoemakers mounted a representation of the martyrdom of the saints in 1443, while those of Paris enacted *mystères* in 1458 and 1459.[6] Confraternities dedicated to the brother saints existed in numerous French towns such as Saumur, Troyes and Pesmes, with plays being performed in Aix-en Provence (1443) and in Compiègne (1488).[7]

In other medieval European states many examples of shoemakers' chapels and commissioned artworks featuring Crispin and Crispianus can be cited. Yet more relics of the saints still rest in the church of San Lorenzo in Rome (built c.1300 and rebuilt 1575-6) with a painting by Giovanni Francesco Romano.[8] In Bruges the shoemakers' chapel, with its carved door (1470) and painting by F. Pourbus (1570-1622) in the church of St Salvator, is flanked by the patron saints bearing their shoemakers' knives.[9] The church of Herenthals in Brussels contained an altarpiece attributed to J. and P. Borman (late sixteenth century); while in Antwerp Cathedral, 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.[10] The medieval shoemakers' guild in Cracow embraced the saints as patrons; the National Museum of Warsaw owns a 1494 painting by Aert van den Bossche of their martyrdom and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow holds a sixteenth-century

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Lalou, "Les cordonniers metteure en scène des mystères de saint Crépin et saint Crépinien", *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes,* tome143 (1985), pp. 104-5, <http://www.persee.fs/web/revues/home/prescript/artice/bec_0376237_1985_nm_1_4503697>[June 2012].

[5] Gervase Rosser, "Crafts, Guilds and the Negotiation of Work in the Medieval Town", *Past and Present*, no.154 (Feb., 1997), p. 23; Elizabeth Lalou, *Bibliothèque*, p. 99.

[6] Ibid., pp. 105-10, 100-102.

[7] Ibid., p. 104.

[8] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Lorenzo in_Panisperna>[5 January 2011].

[9] Grant Allen, *Belgium: Its Cities* (Boston: L. C. Page, 1903), p. 103.

[10] Myriam Serck Dewaide, "Support and Polychromy of Altarpieces from Brussels, Mechlin and Antwerp, Study, Comparison and Restoration", trans. Jack Soultanian in Valerie Dorge and F. Carey Howlett, (eds), *Painted Wood: History and Conservation, Part Two: Historical Perspectives* (Los Angeles: Getty, 1998), pp. 82-99, <http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/paintedwood2.pdf>[22 June 2012].*The Burlington Magazine*, vol.118, no.876, (Mar., 1976), pp. 128, 132.

Dutch painting of "St Crispin".[11] After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, the shoemakers in Cordoba, town name from which the words cordiner and cordwainer are derived, took over the synagogue and in 1588 added to it a chapel dedicated to St Crispin.[12]

In England, documents relating to the Dean and Chapter of Wells refer to St Crispin's and St Crispinianus' Day both in 1281 and 1344.[13] In 1479 William Mountford, cordiner, left six pounds of wax to the light of St Crispin and Crispianus in the church of the Carmelite friars of Sandwich; while in Great Yarmouth, the saints' altar in St Nicholas' church was supported by the Guild of St Crispin and Crispiana.[14] (According to a nineteenth-century source, Crispiana was reputedly the sister of Crispin, though she does not appear in the legends and probably her name is a mis-reading of Crispianus.[15] There was, however an African St Crispina who also suffered under Diocletian and was beheaded in Numidia.) Ordinances of the "Gild of the Assumption of our Lady of the Crafts and Misteries of the shoemakers, curriers and cobblers of Canterbury" decreed in 1518 that members should offer one penny at the mass for the souls of deceased brethren on the morning of the feast of St Crispin.[16] Guilds dedicated to the shoemakers' patrons also existed in Greyfriars' church in medieval Colchester and, bearing the tools of their trade, the saints featured in the east window of the south aisle in Horncastle church in Lincolnshire.[17]

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[11] Leonard Lepszy, trans. R. Dyboski, *Cracow, the royal capital of ancient Poland: Its History and Antiquities* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912), p. 47.

[12] <http//:www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g187430-105876/Cordoba:Spain> [5 January 2011].

[13] *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of Wells*, vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1907), pp.158-178, vol. 2 (1914), pp.5-11, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=67370&strquery=St Crispin> [22 November 2010].

[14] Francis Blomefield, and Rev. Charles Parkin, *An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, vol. II (London: William Miller, 1810), p. 365.

[15] *Leeds Mercury*, 27 August 1881.

[16] "Friaries: The Carmelite friars of Sandwich", *A History of the County of Kent: Volume 2* (London: St Catherine Press, 1926), pp. 204-205, 199-201, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=38225&strquery= Crispin>]26 June 2012].

[17] Janet Cooper and C. R. Elrington, (eds), *A History of the County of Essex*, vol. 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 57-66; Penny Hegbin-Barnes, *The Medieval Stained Glass of the County of Lincolnshire* (Oxford: British Academy, 1996), p. xii.

Crispin and Crispianus in Scotland

On 25 October 1506 and 23 October 1507 King James IV of Scotland made an offering of forty shillings for "bred" and "lichts" for "Saints Crisipine and Crispianes".[18] Such royal endorsement of the saints is an indication that their cult was well established in Scotland by this time though they are absent from recent academic studies edited by Boardman and Williamson.[19]The earliest dated mention of a shoemakers' altar to Crispin and Crispianus comes from a description of the Seal of Cause 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 and concert of the Royal St Crispin Lodge the Chairman, in his opening address:

> 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 flag within the collection of City of Edinburgh Museums bears the date 1449.

Documentary evidence exists of subsequent Seals of Cause. In the seal dated 4 February 1509/10 apprentice cordiners had to pay 6s. 8d. towards the altar and on 17 September 1533 the Town Council allowed the cordiners to make specified levies on goods coming into the town for the augmentation of divine service at their altar within St Giles.[22] Three years later a further Seal of Cause confirmed various rules, including the fee of

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[18] *Accounts of the Lord Treasurer of Scotland*, vol. III, ed. Sir James Balfour Paul (Edinburgh: General Register House, 1901), p. 284; *Accounts*, vol. IV (Edinburgh 1902), p. 36.

[19] Steve Boardman and Eila Williamson, (eds), *The Cult of the Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010).

[20] William Maitland, *The History of Edinburgh, from its foundation to the present time, Book IV* (Edinburgh: Hamilton, Balfour and Neil, 1753), p. 305.

[21]*The Scotsman*, 22 November 1884.

[22] *Extracts from the Burgh Records of Edinburgh* ed James Marwick, vol. I (Edinburgh: Scottish Burgh Records Society, 1869), p. 127; vol. II (1871), p. 65.