



Durham City Freeman



Elvet Bridge circa 1880

Barbers' Guild

DURHAM CITY FREEMEN

BARBERS' GUILD

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Foreword

In 2016 the 'Freemen' established a History Group and embarked on a project to explore the history and heritage of their eight remaining guilds/companies, using a wide range of archive material, together with artefacts discovered and recovered from the bed of the River Wear beneath Elvet Bridge, by Gary Bankhead.

The group comprised of both 'Freemen' and local people who had an interest and passion for the heritage of their city.

Their work does not purport to be an academic study, but has been created for the general public, with the aim of shedding light on the history of the guilds/companies, sustaining the heritage of the Durham City Freemen for future generations.

The trade guilds/companies and Freemen held power and influence and did much to shape the city and its heritage for over three hundred years years.

I hope you find the work of the History Group both interesting and informative.

Eric Bulmer
Chairman of the History Group

Acknowledgements

With grateful thanks to the members of the History Group and in particular, to Sheila Kitson, Geoff Kitson and John Booth for their major contribution in researching the Barbers' Guild.

The creation and production of this booklet could not have been achieved without the support of Liz Bregazzi, County Records Office, Chris Caple and Gemma Lewis of the Archaeology Department, Durham University, Francis Gotto from the Palace Green Library and Gary Bankhead, for his guidance and access to artefacts he discovered and recovered from the bed of the River Wear beneath Elvet Bridge.

Finally, special thanks must go to Geoff Kitson the official photographer of the Freemen for providing images and John Booth, the Warden of the Butchers' Company and Freemen website manager who assembled the research material for the production of this booklet.

Introduction

The guilds or companies of Durham City stretch back over five hundred years and this year marks the special anniversary of the Butchers Company that was recognised with its right to trade in 1520.

There were historically three main types of guilds in the Middle Ages, merchant guilds, craft guilds and religious guilds, but only the craft guilds have survived. In medieval times groups of skilled craftsmen in the same trade formed themselves into guilds. A guild would ensure anything made by its members was up to standard and sold at a fair price.

The first Charter (granted to the citizens in 1179 by Bishop Hugh Pudsey) granting the citizens to be 'free from' in-tolls and out-tolls for their merchandise, hence the term 'freemen'. The first recorded Charter granted to a guild was the Weavers and Websters in 1450 and by the late 15th century there were sixteen Guilds in Durham.

The two primary concerns for the guilds were with the trades, where they endeavoured to maintain standards of workmanship (now known as quality control) and keep a local monopoly of the trade for their own members, by control of the admission of apprentices.

An apprentice to a guild was trained by a guild member, who would

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expect to be paid for this by the boy's parents. An apprentice could live with his master for up to fourteen years, but seven years was more common. The ultimate certification as a 'master of their craft' was the production of a 'masterpiece' at the end of his apprenticeship. Once an apprenticeship was over, the young person became a 'journeyman'. A journeyman continued to learn his craft but from different masters, and was now paid.

All charters stipulated certain rules known as 'Ordinaries'. Common to all guilds was that, '*they must take part in the celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi*' (1st Thursday after Trinity Sunday). The guilds, with their banners displayed, went in procession from the Market Place to Palace Green, where they enacted religious plays.

Another Ordinary stated that, '*no guild would permit a Scotsman to be an apprentice*', no doubt a reaction to the continuing conflict with our northern neighbour. This rule no longer applies.

Original 16 Guilds

The object of Guilds was to maintain high standards of workmanship through apprenticeships, and to engender good fellowship in society and religion. The following sixteen Guilds were established in Durham:

Weavers & Websters (1450)

Cordwainers (1458)

Barber Surgeons, Waxmakers, Ropers and Stringers (1468)

Skinners and Glovers (1507)

Butchers (1520)

Goldsmiths, Plumbers, Pewterers, Potters, Painters, Glaziers and Tin Plate Workers (1532)

Barkers and Tanners (1547)

Drapers and Tailors (1549)

Merchants incorporating Grocers (1345), Mercers (1393),

Salter (1394), Ironmongers (1464) and Haberdashers (1467) (1561),

Fullers and Feltmakers (1565)

Curriers and Tallow Chandlers (1570)

Free Masons, Rough Masons, Wallers, Slaters, Paviours, Plasterers and Bricklayers (1594)

Blacksmiths, Lorimers, Locksmiths, Cutlers, Bladesmiths and Girdlers (1610)

Saddlers and Upholsterers (1659)

Carpenters, Joiners, Wheelwrights, Sawyers and Coopers (1661)

Dyers and Listers (1667)

Of these only the Barbers, Butchers, Cordwainers, Curriers, Drapers, Joiners, Masons and Plumbers survive.

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Guild Definition

Samuel Johnson, in his famous Dictionary, gave the definition, of a Guild as: "*A Society, Corporation, Fraternity or Company combined together by orders and laws made among themselves.*"

The Guilds all had a deeply religious origin (an alternative name for the Barber-Surgeons was the Guild of St. Magdalene) and their activity was devoted to the care of their poorer brethren.

A Craft Guild bore no resemblance to a modern trade union, although it was a local "closed shop". It had some slight resemblance to a modern friendly society.

Masters and men (i.e.,the apprentices) were bound together by strict rules for the mutual benefit of each, and there was always a long period of apprenticeship, generally seven years, followed by a strict examination before admission, with subsequent entry as a Freeman on the local roll.

The Examiners or "Searchers, "with a special badge of office, included among their duties discipline among the apprentices, exclusion of poaching strangers, prevention of Sunday trading and all matters guarding the local monopoly of the Guild.

Craft Guilds continued to flourish from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, but in the seventeenth century they went gradually into decline, and before 1750 most of them had ceased to exist. This was long before their powers were officialy ended, and all Guild restrictions on trade abolished, by the Municipal Reform Act of 1835.

Barber Surgeons

From as early as 1000 AD, the role of surgeons and physicians was separated. The surgeons often catering to the lower class, while physicians resided in courts and castles and were to be found almost exclusively in the service of the wealthy. They considered themselves above the practice of surgery and instead observed the patients, spotting symptoms, injuries, and afflictions, offering counsel reliant upon their academic knowledge to suggest an appropriate course of treatment.

The physicians, mostly in the 15th century and onwards, were accredited and licensed by the universities in which they studied, whilst barber surgeons were not. They had to apply to the trade guild and would subsequently become apprentices to barbers. Over time the term barber surgeon was born and the basic service of a barber gained many other tasks.

An average surgeon trained in a guild was expected to deal with basic wounds and lacerations, with burns and skin rashes, setting fractured bones and dislocated limbs, venereal diseases, lancing infections, and the application of poultices. The more skilled surgeons would also perform demanding procedures including trepanation, amputation, cauterization, and delivering babies, tasks that physicians would not do.

The barber surgeon arose as a more lowly form of a true surgeon essentially, an apprentice. They were tasked with more basic procedures.

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The earliest and most basic roles of barber surgeons were connected to monasteries. As early as 1000 AD they would be employed, through guilds, by the numerous monasteries around Europe for their barbering skills. They were on-hand to cut the monks' hair regularly, as they needed to be tonsured, the religious practice of shaving the top of the head.



St Bartholomew (1473) by Carlo Crivelli. (Public Domain)

As monasteries took on the role of hospitals and sanctuaries, especially in France and Germany in the Middle Ages, barber surgeons took a real medical role. Hair cutting went on to bloodletting, setting limbs, and eventually amputation. In medieval Europe, bloodletting became the standard treatment for various conditions, from plague and smallpox to epilepsy and gout. Practitioners typically nicked veins or arteries in the forearm or neck, sometimes using a special tool featuring a fixed blade and known as a fleam.

In 1163 a church edict prohibited monks and priests, who often stood in as doctors, from performing bloodletting, stating that the church “abhorred” the procedure. Partly in response to this injunction, barbers began offering a range of services that included bloodletting, cupping, tooth extractions, lancing and amputations along with, trims and shaves.

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Barbers traditionally advertised their medical workings by leaving a bowl of blood in the front window or by hanging blood soaked bandages on a pole outside.



A surgeon letting blood from a woman's arm: Wellcome Collection CC BY4.0

Bloodletting was a common procedure and remained in heavy use all the way up to the 18th and 19th centuries. Only on rare occasions would it be beneficial, and the effect was only a temporary feeling, as the loss of blood would reduce blood pressure. In fact, bloodletting was usually harmful to patients.

As time progressed, barber surgeons - the apprentices - became increasingly independent, and eventually became competition for proper surgeons.

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In 1210 a special college was created at St. Côme. It was established and run by Jean Pittard and was the first step towards the later emergence of the guilds. The surgeons at St. Côme were separated into two classes, the long and short robes. The long robes were the proper, established master surgeons, while the short robes were the apprentices – the barbers in training.

In 1308, King Edward II of England granted the barbers guild status created to regulate the trade of barbering in the UK. Afterwards, in 1375, this guild was further established and separated into two distinct roles – those who did surgery and those who were only barbers. In 1540 Henry VIII merged the barbers guild and surgeons guild to form the Guild of Barber Surgeons.

A proclamation was also made that required all surgeons to be licensed by the Crown in order to perform their services, and in Glasgow, under James the VI, all apothecaries, surgeons, barbers, and barber surgeons were united under one charter - but they were dominated by the majority of barber surgeons.

The union of the Barbers and Surgeons was never easy to manage and the relationship continued uneasily for 200 years. In 1745, at the request of the surgeons, a Bill was finally passed and the Surgeons left the Company forming what eventually became the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

The Barber Surgeon was one of the most common medical practitioners of medieval Europe, generally charged with looking after soldiers during or after a battle. At that time, surgery was not generally conducted by physicians, but by Barber Surgeons.

The role of barber surgeons became increasingly associated with more gruesome surgical procedures when their services were employed in wars. They were prominent when Henry V undertook his campaign in France in 1415, as well in the Thirty Years' War from 1618 and 1648.

Formal recognition of their skills in England goes back to 1540, when the Fellowship of Surgeons (who existed as a distinct profession, but were still not "Doctors/Physicians" for reasons including that, as a trade, they were trained by apprenticeship rather than academically) merged with the Company of Barbers, a London livery company, to form the Company of Barber Surgeons.

The 16th and 17th century's profession of Barber Surgeon required the apprentice to live with a full member of the Barber Surgeon Guild for seven years while being taught the trade.

The Master (Guild member) was responsible for giving him food and clothing throughout the term of the apprenticeship. After the apprenticeship, he was admitted as a Freeman Member of the Barber Surgeon Company.

Originally, universities did not teach surgery as it was considered manual labour and nothing more. This changed with the rise of secular universities that led to an increased study of medicine and the human anatomy. From then on academic surgeons wore long robes to signify their status, while barber-surgeons wore short ones and were referred to as "*surgeons of the short robe.*"

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One standard concept of their practice was the so-called humorism.

This system of medicine survived from Roman and Greek medicinal practices and revolved around four “chemical systems” that regulated human behaviour and health. These four temperaments were: sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic. Barber surgeons continued the practice in the Middle Ages.



Alchemic approach to four humors in relation to the four elements and zodiacal signs. (Public Domain)

They would almost always examine the patient's urine in order to determine their affliction via a chart. Based on the colour, consistency, and the taste of the patient’s urine, the barber surgeon would proceed with treatment.

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In England, surgeons with little expertise in hair-cutting began to join guilds such as the Company of Barbers in order to earn more for their services until, in 1368, they formed their own Fellowship of Surgeons.

In England barbers and surgeons originally had separate guilds, but these were merged by Henry VIII in 1540 as the United Barber Surgeons Company.



King Henry VIII presenting a document of union to the associations of barbers and surgeons, 1540. Wellcome Collection, CC-BY

Barber Surgeons' Guilds, later called Companies, are known to have existed in London and in at least twenty six major provincial towns in England. These Companies had a major role in maintaining standards in the craft, they supervised apprenticeship, controlled entry to the craft and eventually to the Freedom.

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They regulated the behaviour of both members and 'foreigners' and should be regarded as the most effective and widespread agency in the regulation of medical practice in early modern England.

Barbers had their own craft guild and received higher payment than most surgeons. Wealthier barbers worked from shops, where, in addition to hair cutting, hairdressing and shaving, they offered a range of surgical procedures.

The red and white barber's pole, still seen outside some traditional barber shops, is a reminder of the two services offered by the barber and was originally intended to reflect the blood and napkins used to clean up during bloodletting.

This treatment was one of the main tasks of the barber-surgeon, as well as extracting teeth, performing enemas selling medicines, performing surgery and cutting hair.

As the science of medicine, surgery and dentistry advanced, the two professions were beginning to separate, the barbers became less and less capable of performing the triple functions of barber-surgeon-dentist. The surgeons wished to be separated entirely from the barbers and they petitioned parliament to sever the ancient relationship of the barbers and surgeons.



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Surgery was establishing itself as a profession. Increasingly, barbers were forbidden to carry out any surgical procedures except for teeth-pulling and bloodletting.

Surgical skills were learnt from a practising surgeon, and both women and men became surgeons through apprenticeship. Women were forbidden from entering universities, so they couldn't be physicians, and as surgical training became more formal, from the 17th century, women were gradually excluded from becoming surgeons.



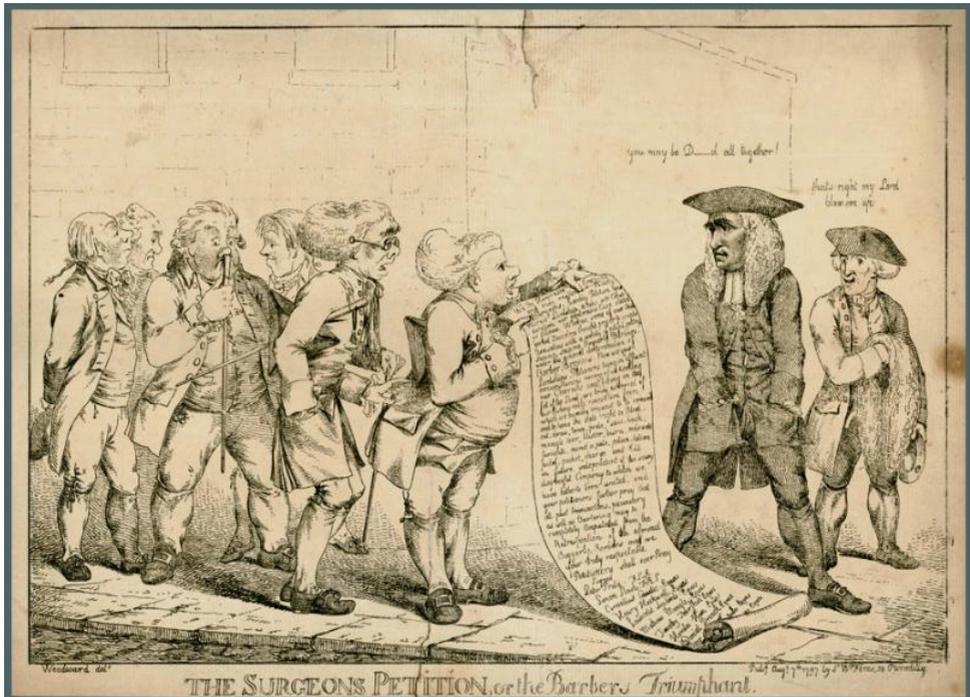
'The Surgeon' by David Teniers the Younger, 1670s. (Public Domain)

By an act of parliament, which received the sanction of the King, the alliance between the barbers and surgeons was dissolved, in June, 1745 the two professions were separated by King George II, who established the London College of Surgeons. By this time surgeons were university educated.

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The Surgeons Petition

In 1700s England, surgeons and barber-surgeons competed for business and clients. In 1745, surgeons separated from the Company of Barber-Surgeons to form their own company. In 1797, they petitioned Parliament to establish a College with the aim of raising their professional status, but were defeated mainly thanks to a speech by Lord Thurlow. The print below shows the surgeons petitioning Lord Thurlow for the sole rights to perform surgical procedures. The bill is signed with names that have surgical associations. The surgeons were attempting to raise their social status, which explains their dress.



*'The Surgeons Petition or The Barbers Triumphant',
Credit: Science Museum London CC BY 4.0*

As time went on and surgery gained a more refined and important aspect, barber surgeons quickly became phased out. This was directly caused by surgery shifting from a craft to a profession. One of the first steps towards the diminishing of barber surgeons occurred in France, when surgery got a boost under the rule of Louis XIV.

His grandson, Louis XV, would further this when he established five chairs of surgery at the college of St. Côme, and finally, in 1743, every barber and wig maker in France was forbidden to perform surgery.

In 1745, after a series of investigations, a bill was passed to separate barbers and surgeons. This marked the decline of barbers as practitioners of medicine. By the end of the 18th century, most barbers had given up their rights to perform surgery, except in small towns where surgeons were not available. They lost their status and became labourers, fashioning wigs in the 18th and 19th century.

In 1745 in England, barber-surgeons who cut or shaved hair were not allowed to perform surgery. In 1800 the College of Surgery was founded in England, and the last practicing barber- surgeon in England died in 1821.

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Ambroise Paré

One of the most famous barber-surgeons was Ambroise Paré, whose 20 years in that profession made him one of the most famous surgeons in Europe and he was a physician to Kings Henry II, Francis II, Charles IX and Henry III.



*Portrait of Ambroise Paré [1510–1590], French surgeon.
Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)*

Born in Laval, France in 1509, he learned Latin from a priest and apprenticed under a barber-surgeon in his town. Later, he went to Paris to study surgery, worked for a College of France professor, and was a resident at the Hotel-Dieu, the largest hospital in the world at that time.

In 1536, at 27, he was appointed surgeon to a colonel-general to serve in Italy. He returned to Paris and had a long innovative career. He published numerous books, was active in promoting the fledgling prosthetics industry and is considered the father of French surgery, modern forensic pathology, surgical techniques and battlefield medicine. He also invented surgical instruments. He died at 81 on December 20, 1590.

Guilds - Company Arms

Evidence of the history and heritage of the guilds can be found in the Durham Town Hall. In the Guildhall, there are 18th century watercolour interpretations of crests of a number of Guilds.



*Crest of the Barber Chirurgeons and Ropers (1784)
Displayed in the Guildhall, Durham City Town Hall*

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In the roof of the Main Hall on the hammer head beams are the painted coats of arms of the sixteen original Guilds.



Arms of the Barbers' Company, Displayed in the Town Hall roof

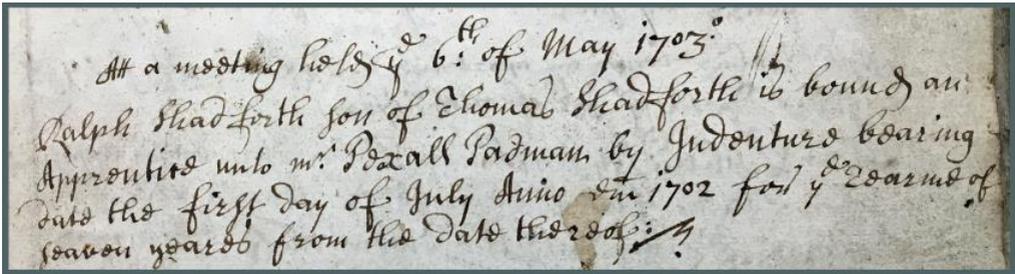
Early Admission as a Freeman

Initially, freedom (to become a Freeman) could only be obtained in two ways either by Servitude or Patrimony.

Servitude

Serving a seven year apprenticeship (now only three years).

This was usually confirmed in a deed (written contract) by which an apprentice was bound by indenture to a master. Once he had completed his apprenticeship he was admitted to the Company/ Guild of his craft.



The image above is from the Durham University Library records dated the 6th of May 1703 documenting Ralph Shadforth son of Thomas Shadforth is bound an apprentice unto Mr Pexall Padman by indenture bearing the date 5th July 1702 for a period of seven years.

Apprentices almost always started as teenagers, usually between thirteen - fifteen years of age. To carry out an apprenticeship, they would seek a master craftsman who required an apprentice and be offered a position. If the apprentice accepted, then a Certificate of Indenture was drawn up.

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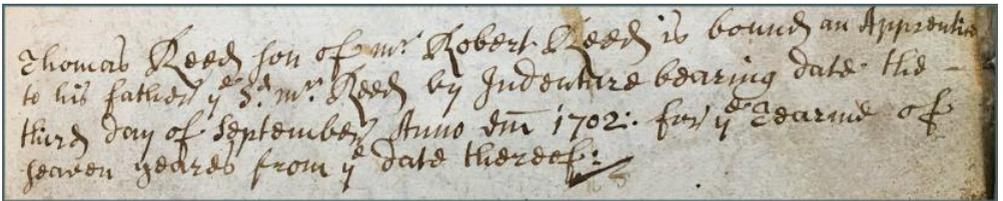
The certificate known as one's "indentures" or "indenture papers" was a contract between the Master Craftsman, and the Apprentice. It stipulated in black and white what the Master owed his apprentice, and likewise, what the Apprentice owed the Master. Both parties would sign the indentures (there was always at least two) and then it was certified by a legal official such as a notary, judge, or a member of the guild.

The contract was written in duplicate on the same sheet of paper, the copies separated along a 'toothed' cut (hence indent-ure). The two parts could be fitted together later to confirm authenticity.



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It was very common for the children of master craftsmen to follow in the professions of their fathers. In this instance, the apprentice's own father would train them in their chosen profession. In this way, generations of craftsmen could all work within a single family, and many famous craftsmen throughout history, entered their professions this way. You still had to fill out your certificate, sign it, and agree to it.



Thomas Reed son of m^r. Robert Reed is bound an Apprentice
to his father y^e s^r. m^r. Reed by Indenture bearing date the
third day of September Anno dⁿ 1702. for y^e terme of
seven years from y^e date thereof.

Document showing Thomas Reed bound an apprentice to his father Robert Reed by indenture on the 3rd of September 1702.

Apprenticeships usual length of time was seven years. In this way, an apprentice completed his apprenticeship when he was in his early twenties. In that seven years, an apprentice was expected to learn, and be taught, all the skills of his chosen trade or profession.

Near the end of their apprenticeships, apprentices had to pass what we would call today a ‘*practical examination*’, and prove their skills to their master by creating a ‘*journeyman piece*’. This piece would incorporate all the various skills, techniques and methods that they had learned throughout their apprenticeships, and the better the piece, the more likely they were to progress in their profession.

Patrimony

Conferred on the eldest son of a Freeman (today all sons and since 2010, daughters can also be admitted).

Customary Freedom

Occasionally individuals (who do not qualify as above) are invited to become Freemen whose influence on behalf of the guilds is worth having.

During medieval times and until 1835, the Freemen had authority and power. They were the only citizens that could vote for or be elected as Mayor. The Great Reform Act (1832) and the Municipal Corporation Act (1835) extended electoral franchise, removing the power of the Freemen overnight.

Although stripped of their authority, the Freemen have retained three historical privileges;

- To erect a stall in the marketplace free of charge.
- To graze their livestock on the Sands.
- The use of the Guildhall free of charge.

The functions of the Freemen and guilds today are largely ceremonial, notwithstanding their continuing support for the community and charitable causes.

The Initial Charter

The earliest known charter affecting surgeons is the Charter of Incorporation of the Barbers' Company granted by King Edward IV in 1462.

The company of Barber Surgeons, Waxmakers, Ropers and Stringers was the result of an amalgamation. In accordance with the parliamentary legislation of 1436, the Barber Surgeons and Waxmakers received their charter from the Bishop of Durham on 20th February 1468.

The charter was much the same as the others regarding the annual election of officials, and the Corpus Christi procession and play.

From 1602 onwards, under a charter granted to the city by Bishop Matthew of Durham, the Freemen of the city were the only electors and the only candidates for election to the city council, an exclusive right which they retained until the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835.

In 1617, a set of rules agreed upon by the company were signed by those present at the annual meeting. With modifications and additions most of these are to be found in the rules as passed in 1655.

The Ropers and Stringers united with the Barbers at the end of the sixteenth century, the rules agreed in November 1655 were twenty in number and as the Commonwealth was ruling, several of the fines appointed were to be paid to the company and to the Mayor of Durham, instead of the Bishop.

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The Ordinaries/Rules

The Ordinary or rules were regulations under which the Company (the Freeman) were allowed to operate. Below are 6 examples of the 20 rules.

- *"No one shall make evil or indecent speeches against another".*
- *"No other weights shall be used but the pound and half pound, i.e. 16 oz. and 8 oz., and also in great work 13 pounds to the stone of good and lawful wrought work".*

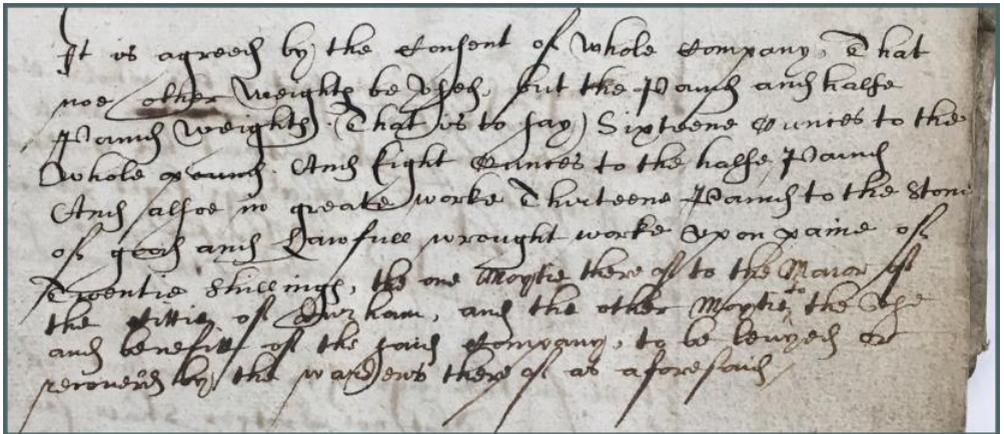


Image: Durham University Library Records

- *"No brother shall keep any man at work more than one month without first acquainting the wardens or shall pay 26/8 to the company".*
- *"Every journeyman shall pay a groat for the good of the company, to be gathered every quarterly meeting".*

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- "No Roper or Stringer shall sell any wares in the market on market days before 10 o'clock". A later version of this rule says before the 12th hour in the forenoon, save only in their shops".
- "No brother shall call any customer from his brother's shop or stall in the market. Nor shall his wife or servant do so".

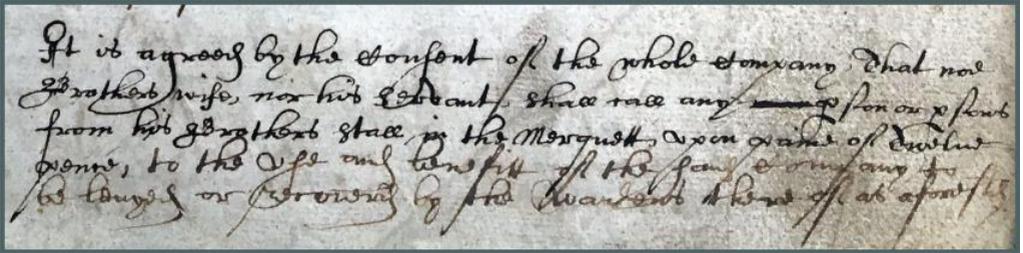


Image: Durham University Library Records

These rules were strictly enforced. Thus in 1620 George Scott was fined for selling his wares in the market on two days in November, presumably before he was qualified.

In February 1626 the same George Scott was fined for "undecent words and speeches".

In 1668 Gilbert Stott was fined and sued at law for selling his wares to a brother's customers before the enquiry ordered by rule 14.

On the next page is a copy of the August 9th 1680 meeting document, when Robert Padman was fined 20/- to be paid to the mayor and 20/- to the company for trimming the hair of Mr. Simpson, schoolmaster in the Elvet, on a Sunday, and several others were fined, though two of them had their fines returned.

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All a Gild Meeting being Sept. 9th 1680
Absent John Wood
James Starkey came in
Pete. Padman
Edward King
Richard Duxford
William Dunt
Matthias Holt
Robt Padman
William Hickson
Doall Padman
Robt Wood
M^d that Robt Padman is fined for trimming
vpon Go Sunday according to order of G^d Company
to be Major & xx^s. to G^d Company for he
vpon he trimmed being M^r Simpson Street in Shutt
M^d that Go abouted Day & meeting that Nicholas
Lodder cat tondred p^r fine for hee transgression
in trimming on Go Sunday. Armand Medator
cat done hee like & vpon vote Nicholas Lodder
hee p^r fine returned againe And Armand Medator
cat taken of him ~~for~~ for hee like transgression
of trimming on abouted

Image: Durham University Library Records

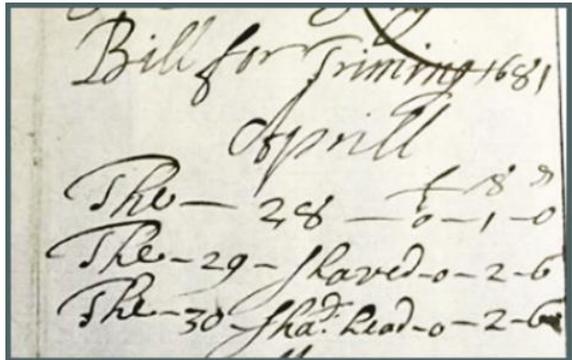
The Barbers Quaterage

In the eighteenth century, men didn't wear beards, they only shaved once every three or four days, this would be very different to shaving every day.

Unlike today with payment being taken at each visit, early barbers were often paid quarterly on account known as the barber's 'quaterage'. For barbers this had the advantage of enabling them to establish long term working relationships with clients, and to guarantee income for some periods of time.

For customers, barbering was a profession that relied on trust. Submitting yourself to lie still while a stranger hovered a lethally sharp blade over your jugular required some estimation of their ability. Visiting the same barber for a long period of time enabled the relationship to build over time.

The image on the next page: The Barbers Bill 1681 is a bill for trimming and clearly documents shaving every third day from the 30th April to the 21st of May.



Section of barbers bill enlarged

'Trimming' is often taken to refer to hair cutting, but it equally referred to cutting the beard.

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J. Witt Lingmill
 Bill for Trimming 1681

April

The-28 - 6-1-0
 The-29 - shaved - 0-2-6
 The-30 - shaved - 0-2-6

May

The-1 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-2 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-3 - shaved - 0-2-6
 The-4 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-5 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-6 - shaved - 0-2-6
 The-7 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-8 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-9 - shaved - 0-2-6
 The-10 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-11 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-12 - shaved - 0-2-6
 The-13 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-14 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-15 - shaved - 0-2-6
 The-16 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-17 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-18 - shaved - 0-2-6
 The-19 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-20 - - - - 0-1-0
 The-21 - shaved - 0-2-6
 The-22 - - - - 0-1-0

The Barbers
 Bill-1681
 p 14 (10)
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Barbers Bill 1681
 Image Dr Alun Withey

A Century of Change

Between 1745 and 1919 very few surgeons were admitted to the Worshipful Company of Barbers' London.

In 1919 the bonds between the Company and the Royal College of Surgeons were re-established and surgeons, including surgeons to the Royal Family and the Royal Household, have been admitted to the Barbers Company in memory of the past union.

Today The Barbers' Company is ranked 17th in precedence among the 110 livery companies of the City of London. It is one of its oldest, having celebrated its 700th Anniversary in 2008. They continue with charitable activities that underpin the ethos of the Company.

The Durham City Freemen Barbers' Company, in 2020, currently has 26 members.

Further Reading

'In the care of the warden'; 'miscellaneous papers chiefly concerned with the Barbers' Company', Library of the University of Durham (p. 383). Durham City Guild Records, GB 033 DCG.

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