

Library

Prior to the early 19th century, law books were housed in the Cathedral Library (the Consistorial Court meetings were held in the South-West Tower of the Cathedral). The formation of a law library by the Faculty was first proposed in 1736 but a Faculty Library was not established until 1817. It began its life in the Lyceum Sale Rooms in Nelson Street with the library already containing 800 books, including Baillie's Library and other bequests.



Between 1817 and 1857 the Faculty Library moved a further couple of times until the Faculty Halls were built at 62, St. George's Place (renamed Nelson Mandela Place in 1986).

By 1951, of the 41,000 volumes the library contained, nearly half were non-legal literature and reference works. Since then the library has focussed, almost exclusively, on legal material but retains a certain amount of material related to the history of Glasgow (including the Hill Collection – bequeathed to the Royal Faculty in 1912).

The Royal Faculty also maintains a branch library at the Glasgow Sheriff Court for the use of members there.

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Welcome to the



Royal Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow



History of the Royal Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow



Originally Notaries were created by Papal authority and later also by Royal authority. The Royal Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow is a professional institution for solicitors practising in Glasgow and south-west Scotland and is certainly one of the oldest surviving societies in the city of Glasgow.

The Faculty was granted a Royal Charter by King George III in 1796. At that time the designation 'Procurator' was the standard one, from Roman law, for a law agent. Before this Royal Charter the lawyers had been recognised officially for centuries by the courts in Glasgow and Lanarkshire and had achieved the exclusive privilege of acting in these local courts. The earliest surviving record is a minute book which begins on 12 November 1668.

The Faculty was responsible for establishing good standards of practice, and it prescribed a five-year apprenticeship and attendance at university for prospective members. In 1861 a Chair of Conveyancing was endowed at the University of Glasgow. The Faculty also maintained charitable funds to assist needy members or their widows and children.

The Law Agents (Scotland) Act 1873 widened the recruitment and the training of law agents and the Faculty lost its exclusive privilege of practising in the local courts.

The title 'Royal' was conferred on the Faculty by King George VI in 1950 and in 1996 a further Royal Charter was granted.

Royal Faculty Building

The building, into which the Faculty and its library moved in 1857, is a two-storeyed building with three façades designed by the architect Charles Wilson (1810-1863) in the style of a Venetian Palazzo. Wilson is also responsible for some of Glasgow's finest Italianate buildings.

The keystones to the arches, depicting the faces of eminent lawyers, were modelled by Alexander Handyside Ritchie and carved by James Shanks.



Faculty Hall

The Faculty Hall has been used for a variety of purposes over the years including auctions and Royal Faculty lunches. Currently it is used, in the main, for holding seminars, lectures and meetings. It also houses a collection of texts on old Glasgow, nominate case reports and manuscripts.

Small Library

The Small Library houses a collection of older legal reference books. The room is also used for meetings and consultations. The fine "bicentenary window" was commissioned from John K. Clark for the Royal Faculty's bicentenary in 1996. Mortification boards around the balcony commemorate bequests to the Royal Faculty's charitable funds.



Main Library

This splendid facility was described in the Glasgow Herald of 12 June 1857 as "one of the most exquisite halls in the West of Scotland". 9 busts of former members of the Faculty and other notables add character to the library. It is still used as a working space by solicitors and advocates and houses an extremely important collection of legal texts.