Barber-Surgeons’ Guilds and Ordinances in Early Modern British Towns – the Story so Far

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Hundreds of barber-surgeons are known to have lived and worked in early modern Britain, but how do we find out about them? They were arguably the general practitioners of their day, but their role in the everyday lives of early modern people has been overshadowed by greater interest in academically qualified physicians on the one hand, and colourful quacks on the other. Moreover, medicine’s view of itself ultimately eliminated any trace of the fact that barber-surgeons had a long-established collective identity embedded in urban administration. Barber-surgeons’ guilds, later called companies, are known to have existed in London and in at least 26 major provincial towns in England (see below). They can also be found in Ireland and Scotland, but not, apparently, in Wales. Under the aegis of town councils, these companies supervised apprenticeship, controlled entry to the craft and thence to the freedom, and regulated the behaviour of both members and ‘foreigners’. Perhaps most importantly, they had a major role in maintaining standards in the craft, and should be regarded as the most effective and widespread agency in the regulation of medical practice in early modern England. This role has been obscured, partly by the perception that early modern medicine was barely regulated at all, partly by a focus on collegiate medicine and ecclesiastical licensing, and partly by a distancing of medicine from the other trades and crafts under civic control.

A further obstacle is that very few records of the companies survive outside London. Many losses occurred relatively recently, as an effect of the final fading-out of the guilds. The surviving records tended to pass into private hands and to become untraceable. R. S. Ferguson and W. Nanson, editors of Some Municipal Records of the City of Carlisle (1887), defended their printing of guild records rather than city charters on the grounds that the latter were in safe custody, whereas the former were not (p. viii). Guild records were subject to loss by war damage, fire and other accidents, including, in the case of the gardeners of Glasgow, the consequences of plague. The deacon or warden of the gardeners caught the plague, was sent to the 'Foull Moor' to be cleansed, and in the process crucial documents among his goods were lost (Lumsden, 1930, pp. 11-12). With respect to barber-surgeons’ companies in particular, there are substantial survivals for Chester, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle, York and possibly Durham. Durham provides a tantalising instance of substantial guild records still in existence in the hands of individuals in the 1940s. Elsewhere we are usually dependent upon what the town clerks needed to record for the purposes of civic administration and control. This could take the form of the names of office-bearers of the company for a given year, admissions to
apprenticeship or freedom, the duties of (craft) searchers, or ordinances which had been approved by the city or higher authority. We need to note, however, that the absence of material about guilds in town records need not mean that they did not exist, since even important guilds may receive little mention in records of town business or indeed in town charters.

The focus here is on barber-surgeons’ ordinances. It should be noted that oaths and charters often overlapped in content with ordinances, and that charters and ordinances can to some extent be seen as interchangeable. It is possible, given at least one recent precedent, that more such material remains to be discovered, and one reason for drawing up the list that follows is to encourage further investigation. In the absence of detailed records of process such as minute books, ordinances, which consist of the rules all members of the craft were meant to follow, take on considerable value. They are often our only clue to the nature, condition and status of the craft in a particular locality. However, we have also to remember that rules were not necessarily followed, and that conditions on the ground might have been rather different from what companies chose to embody as their raison d’être. It is also clear from surviving minute books, as in Newcastle, and from ‘town books’, that rules were regularly changed or added to, so that a set from any given time may reflect only a snapshot.

Surviving sets of ordinances vary considerably in length and degree of elaboration. A few, such as that of York, are lovingly detailed and redolent of ancient custom and practice; others, especially those dictated as much by the city as by the craft, are short, utilitarian, and probably designed to meet a particular contingency or phase of reform. It should be stressed that the medical crafts were not excluded from sets of ordinances intended for the governance of the crafts and trades as a whole, so that these ordinances must also be taken into account. Barber-surgeons were often numerous enough to form a company on their own, especially in the largest towns, but they are also found in combination with other trades, like waxchandling, wig-making, silk-weaving and even rope-making. In many cases, individual barber-surgeons diversified into other trades, according to local economic conditions and opportunities, and there is usually a real relationship behind these apparently odd combinations. In many places, but not all, the company is called for practical purposes a barbers’ company, but this, as the case of Norwich shows, does not mean that the company included no barber-surgeons or that barbers’ craft and surgery were separate, even where authorities tried to ensure that this was the case. Although some barbers undoubtedly did little more than shave, wash, and cut hair, it is safer to assume that barbering,
minor surgery, and cosmetic as well as curative work on the body regularly overlapped. As will also become evident, barbers’ companies could also include apothecaries and physicians as well as surgeons.

The list below begins with a transcription of a previously unpublished set of ordinances of the barber-surgeons’ company in Norwich. This set was found in the city records c. 1980 (see Pelling, 1998, p. 210), and is of the concise, utilitarian type, but nonetheless gives an impression of what the city expected of the company in terms of good order. This included such administrative matters as the election of officials and the keeping of accounts, but also the prohibition of working on the Sabbath day (a perennial problem with barbers in particular), apprenticeship as the means of entry to the craft, and the oversight of dangerous cures. The latitude allowed to practitioners who were prepared to treat without charging a fee is also worth noting. This set from the early Stuart period in Norwich is complemented by a known set of 1561 (in the form of a petition), a set of 1622 covering all the crafts and trades, and a more elaborate set of 33 articles for the barber-surgeons of 1684. The last of these is characteristic of the claims and petitions put forward by towns in defence of their privileges during the quo warranto proceedings of the 1670s and 1680s. References for each set are provided in the entry for Norwich in the alphabetical list of towns that follows below.

The Norwich set is followed by a later set from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which is a copy made c. 1900 of a set or ‘ordinary’ dating from 1671. This transcription, kindly provided for present purposes by Justin Colson, presents a comparison and a contrast with the earlier Norwich ordinances. The Newcastle ones are typical of their period in being more verbose and more legalistic. Although the full title of the company is constantly repeated, there is no sign in the content of specific concern about regulating the chandlers. These ordinances could be regarded as simply a rather elaborate ratification of an earlier ‘instrument or writing’ of 1442, but they do lay down at the later date provisions for preventing intrusion into the craft by ‘foreigners’ or outsiders, for apprenticeship (including reference to mistresses, i.e. female masters), and for reducing quarrels among practitioners over cures (i.e. a patient or case) and the fees to be paid by patients.

After the Norwich and Newcastle transcriptions, there are entries in alphabetical order for towns, giving known sources for companies and sets of ordinances, or for evidence of their existence. It will be clear that, even though our interpretations of the material might now differ (to say the least), we owe a
substantial debt to antiquarians and to older generations of medical and urban historians who assiduously hunted for and put into print manuscript material which in some cases is now lost. By the same token, we can sometimes be dependent upon these printed accounts for the accuracy of their transcriptions. Quite frequently the nineteenth-century authors are quoting from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century antiquarians and city memorialists. Frustratingly, many older articles are published versions of talks given to local societies and are not fully referenced. Where the manuscript source is indicated in a published text or its footnotes, this information is appended to the entry below. In most cases, this will be the original source as then known or described: location or call number could well have changed, so that detective work would be required to track it down (supposing it still exists).

This annotated list is intended to supply useful or suggestive information, but I also very much hope that it will prompt other scholars to make searches of their own and to add their own findings to it. Many towns have surviving records which remain to be explored, in particular 'town books', a generic name for the records of civic administration. Some claims by older authors, including Parker and Kramer (see General references, below), need verification. For the medieval period, there is the possibility that there are extant returns relating to barbers’ companies as a result of the enquiry into all guilds and fraternities conducted in 1388 under Richard II. Two of these, for Norwich and Lincoln, have been reprinted by Young (see entry for London, below). The towns in which Parker (1914, p. 286) located barber-surgeons’ companies (at any period) are: Beverley, Bristol, Chester, Cork, Dublin, Durham, Exeter, Glasgow, Gloucester, Hereford, (Kingston-upon-)Hull, Ipswich, Limerick, Lincoln, London, Newcastle, Norwich, Oxford, Reading, St Albans, Salisbury, Southampton, Worcester, and York: i.e., 24 rather than his stated total of 25. The missing name seems to be Edinburgh. To these Kramer (1927, p. 18) adds: Canterbury, Devizes, Dorchester, Kinsale, Sandwich, Shrewsbury, and Windsor. Barbers were also represented in conglomerate guilds in Kendal, Lancaster, Ripon and elsewhere. Where possible I have followed up Kramer’s occasionally cryptic references. Coventry can be included as a result of the study by Phythian-Adams (1979). Parker claimed (p. 286) to have found ordinances for twelve towns. A revised total must depend partly on how surviving ordinances are defined: as manuscript originals, early modern or later transcripts, or partial excerpts and quotations. All are represented in the list below. Similarly, it has to be decided whether to consider only those companies and ordinances relating exclusively to barbers and barber-surgeons – arguably far too exclusive a criterion, and possibly one difficult to
apply – or whether instead we have to take into account ordinances drawn up for conglomerate companies or for all guilds in a town. It should be stressed that barbers and barber-surgeons are likely to have been present in most centres; the absence of a company and of ordinances merely indicates that the craft was not organised. Wales is perhaps the most obvious example of this, but other possible examples include Kings Lynn, Colchester, Great Yarmouth and Liverpool, as well as some Scottish towns.

Finally, it will be evident that some of the sources cited below contradict each other or are inconsistent. More work would be needed to resolve these discrepancies.

A note on terminology: there was considerable debate in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries about the origin of the guilds, influenced partly by the emergence of trades unions, partly by English localism, and partly by the interpretations of scholars in continental Europe. This is reflected in spelling and etymology: `gild’ was used by those claiming Anglo-Saxon origins, `guild’ by those claiming that these organisations were imported, for example by the Normans. `Guild’ is now the more usual spelling, regardless of interpretation. It should also be noted that, strictly speaking, only the crown could grant incorporation. However this term began to be used more generally in the early modern period, especially by towns.

Full references will be found in the entry for the town or city to which they relate.
Orders and Constitutions for the Mystery of Physicians, Barbers and Barber-surgeons of Norwich, 31 May 1605

These were ratified at an Assembly meeting held during the mayoralty of Thomas Hyrne, assisted by George Birch and George Cocke. Birch was a prominent apothecary and medical practitioner who was himself mayor in 1621. As occasionally happened elsewhere, some physicians joined this barbers’ company, but although they are mentioned first, they were few in number and did not predominate. It is worth noting that sections of these ordinances are identical with sets drawn up at the same time for the tallowchandlers and the struggling hatters’ craft. The title is as given in the margin. The original spelling and capitalisation have been retained (except for u/v and i/j) but standard contractions have been expanded.

Whereas the Company of Physicians Barbours & Barber Surgeans within this Citty have this day exhibited their bill conteinyng many good & profitable orders for reformynge & amendinge many & sundry Abuses in their mystery or scyence, doe make humble suite & request to the right worthy Mr Mayor Shreives [sherriffs] Cittizens & Comm[onality] here assembled this day, that the same orders & constitucyons may be here [as lawes] Constitucons within this citty And forasmuch as the said orders have ben this day redd & debated of and thought very mete & necessary for the better order to be had & maynteyned in the seid mystery or science & the Common good of this common welth it is therefore by the whole consent of this Assembly ordered and agreed that the seid orders exhibited as aforesaid shalbe entered amongst the Lawes & Acts of this citty And that the same shalbe from this day forward houlden stand & remayne & be as Lawes within this citty and so to be continewed.

1. Imprimis that all phisicyauns and barbour surgeans inhabitinge or dwellinge or that shall hereafter inhabit or dwell within the seid citty or suburbes of the same usinge the mystery of barbours or surgery to be joined into one felowship & so to be inrolled And that they shall beare all such chardges & offices as bene appertynynge to the seid mystery.

2. Item yt ys further ordered that the headman & wardens of the seid mystery that nowe ben shall within one moneth after the ffyrst day of May next comynge & so yearely to continewe call an Assembly of the seid Company & mystery for the electinge & chosinge of a headman & two wardens of the seid company & mystery and of a beadle for the same ffor the yeare followinge And yt the headman or wardens so to be chosen shall refuse to take upon them the seid
office that then every such offender to forfeit & loose the some of Ten shillings the same to be devided into two parts vidz thone [the one] halfe thereof to thuse [the use] of the Maior of the seid citty for the tyme beinge & thother halfe to thuse of the seid mystery & company and the same to be levyed by way of distresse by the seid Maiors officer for the tyme beinge of the goods and chattels [of] every such offender & for want or default of a sufficyent distresse the partie or partyes offendinge to be commytted to prison by the seid Maior for the tyme beinge untill the same be satisfyed or payd.

3. Item that yt shalbe lawfull for the seid wardens for the tyme beinge to cause to be warned every yeare by the seid beadle ffower Assemblyes (beside the Assembly abovemencyoned) And yf any of the seid mystery or company so warned doe make default of his or their apparence without a reasonable excuse thereof to be allowed by the seid Mayor for the tyme beinge shall forfeitt and loose for every such defalt xii d to thuse of the seid Company the same to be levyed as ys aforesaid.

4. Item that yt shalbe lawfull for the headman & wardens of the seid mystery or two of them at the least duringe the tyme of their seid office to viewe & search all such defaults & inconveniences as shalbe commytted by any of the seid mystery or company or by any other nowe usinge or that hereafter shall use the mystery of Barbors or surgery within the seid citty or libertyes of the same And yf any of them shall refuse to be viewed and searched as aforesaid shall forfeitt and loose for every such default vii s viii d thone halfe thereof to be to thuse of the seid Maior for the tyme beinge and thother halfe to thuse of the seid mystery or Company the same to be levyed as ys aforesaid.

5. Item yt ys ordeyned that yf any of the seid mystery or company inhabitinge or dwellinge within the seid citty or lybertyes thereof shall take any dangerous cuer [cure] in hand & doe not counsell with the headman or wardens of the seid mystery or with some other expert man of the same mystery or with some of them before he shall take the same cuer in hand, Or in case the seid patient or cuer shall decay or be not perfectly healed that then every such offender shall forfeitt & loose for every such default xx s the same to be devyded and levyed as ys aforesaid.

6. Item yt ys further ordeyned that the oulde headman and wardens of the seid mystery or science shall yearely at the fyrst Assembly to be houlden for the seid mystery or scyens next after that the newe wardens be sworne make & yeld upp a trewe & perfett accompt & reckonynge unto the seid wardens & company of all
such mony as they have received the yeare past upon payne to forfett for every such defalt x s the same to be devided & levyed as ys aforeseid.

7. Item that yt shalbe lawfull for the headman & wardens of the seid mystery once in every yeare to rate & assesse every one of the seid mystery or company to such quarterly payment of mony towards the mayntenance of the seid mystery as by them shalbe thought reasonable And yt any of the seid mystery or company shall refuse to pay the same (beinge demanded) that then the party so refusinge shall forfett & loose for every such default doble the mony upon him so assessed The same to be levyed and devyded as ys aforeseid.

8. Item yt ys further ordeyned that [if] any of the seid mystery or company (beinge present at any of the Assemblyes aforeseid) doe depart from the seid Assemblyes without lycense of the headman of the seid company for the tyme beinge That then the partie so offendinge to forfett & loose for every such default iii s iii d the same to be devyded & levyed as ys aforeseid.

9. Item yt ys ordeyned that noe barbor or barbor surgeon shall poll washe or trymme any person or persons upon the Saboth day upon payne to forfett & loose for every such default vi s viii d the same to be devyded & levyed as ys aforeseid.

10. Provided alwayes that yt any of the seid mystery or scyense will mynister or doe any cure of Neyghbourehood or of pitty & charytie (takinge by no meanes any thinge for the same) that then yt shalbe lawfull for every of them so to doe any thinge heretofore to the contrary notwithstanding.

11. Item yt ys ordeyned that no phisicyon or barbor surgeon or any other person whatsoever noe or hereafter usinge surgery shall occupy the mystery or scyence aboveseid within the seid citty or lybertyes of the same or sett open any shopp or sett upp any byll concernynge the same except he hath [served] as an apprentice to the seid mystery or scyence by the space of seaven yeares at the least, until such tyme as he or they be allowed by the Mayor of the seid Citty for the tyme beinge And also approved & allowed by the headman & wardens of the seid mystery or scyence, the seid headman & wardens not takinge above x s for his seid allowance, upon payne to forfett & loose for every such offence contrary to this Act xx s the same to be devided & levyed as ys aforeseid.

[Source: Norwich, Norfolk Record Office (NRO), Case 16, shelf c: Assembly Minute Book No. 5, 1585-1613, fols 311-12.]
Ordinary of the Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers of Newcastle upon Tyne

I owe the transcription that follows to Justin Colson and I am grateful to him for permission to reproduce it here and for allowing me to see photographs of the original. The document is a copy, made c. 1900, of a set of ordinances dated 1671 which itself refers to an earlier ‘instrument’ of 1442. The title is as given on the outside, with the subheading ‘John Clapton Town Clerk Newcastle upon Tyne’. Original spelling – as transcribed c. 1900 – has been preserved but contractions have been expanded. Numbering has been added.

Ordinary of the Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers

To all Christian people to whom this present writing shall come. Wee William Carr esq. Maior, Sir John Marlay Sir Francis Anderson knight Mark Milbank John Emerson Henry Maddison William Blackett Henry Brabant Ralph Jenison Thomas Davidson Ralph Grey esq. and Alderman and Robert Roddan esq. Sherife of the towne and county of Newcastle upon Tine send greeting. WHEREAS wee have lately seen a certain instrument or writing heretofore made the tenth day of October in the yeare of our Lord God one thousand four hundred forty and two [1442] and in the two and twentieth yeare of the reigne of King Henry the Sixth after the conquest touching the foundaton of a certaine Societie Fellowship or Companie of the Misterie and Craft of Barber Chirurgeons Wax and Tallow Chandlers to us the said Maior Aldermen and Sherife presented and exhibited by the said Fellowship wherein are comprised and inserted certaine rules orders and acts for the well quietly orderly and peaceable ruleing and good governing of the said Company Fellowship or Societie which said Company Fellowship or Society wee perceive by the instrument presented to us as aforesaid to have been very antient and of long standing within the said towne. Neverthelesse forasmuch as the said instrument touching the said Societie and the foundation by the said Company and Society stiled their Ordinarie is of ancient date and inasmuch as the Stewards and Society of the Barber Chirurgeons Wax and Tallow Chandlers have desired the confirmation of the said Societie and to the end the [fol. 2] usagges, customes liberties and privileges of the said Societie for the time to come be better observed and abuses committed amongst the brethren of the Societie one to another and by strangers foreigners
and others prevented or duly punished and inasmuch as the said Society and Company of the Mistery and Craft of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers have sought unto us that the said Instrument called the said ordinary may be confirmed & amended as the cause shall require according to the usagings and customs of the said towne and the said Company Fellowship or Society and the severall antient customes belonging to the same by them exercised and enjoyed may by us be confirmed approved of and allowed unto them. WEE therefore the said Maior Aldermen and Sheriffe willing the due regular and orderly government of the same Society to be observed Doe by these presents for us and our respective successors as much as anyway in us lyeth Grant order confirme and direct by these presents in manner and forme following.

1. First that the said Company of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers now inhabiteing and resideing or hereafter to inhabite or reside within the said Towne and County of Newcastle upon Tine be and by these presents are declared to be in fact deed and name one body politque incorporated of themselves for ever within the said Towne and Countie of Newcastle upon Tine by the name of the Company of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers of the said Town and County of Newcastle upon Tine.

2. AND WEE the said Maior Aldermen and Sherife doe further grant and confirme and by these presents order and direct as much as in us lyeth for us and our successors that the said Company of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers and their successors be from henceforth named by the name of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers of the Towne of Newcastle upon Tine and by noe other name And by the same name to prosecute sue and implead and to be sued and impleaded to answere and be answered [fol. 3] before us the said Maior Aldermen and Sherife of Newcastle upon Tine aforesaid and our successors Maiors Aldermen and Sheriffs of this Towne in all and singular bounds of this Towne and in all manner of actions and causes and suites whatsoever.

3. AND WEE the said Maior Aldermen and Sherife of Newcastle aforesaid doe by these presents order establish and direct that the said fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers of Newcastle upon Tine aforesaid and
their successors shall yerely and every year for ever in the Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers Hall or some other convenient place within the said Towne and County of Newcastle upon Tine att their discretion to be appointed quietly and discretly meet together and elect and chuse two of the most honest and substantial men that are and shall be free of the said Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers to be the Wardens or Stewards of the said Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers for the year next ensuing. And they the said Wardens soe yearly chosen shall take a Corporall Oath before the said Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers to their best power and knowledge for the year following to rule and governe the same whole fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers in good and quiett order [...] and to see every point and article in this Ordinary to be observed and kept by every one that shall be free of the same Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers and every one that is and shall be free of the same Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers shall willingly obey the said Wardens or Stewards of the said Fellowship soe chosen for the time being and shall take a Corporall Oath when he is made free of the said Fellowship before the wardens and Company of the said Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers that he shall doe and accomplish all and every pointe and [fol. 4] article in this Ordinarie for him to doe and observe

4. ALLSOE It is further ordered directed and established by us the said Maior Aldermen and Sherife of the said Towne of Newcastle upon Tine that noe person or persons whatsoever Alien Stranger or other inhabitant within the said Towne of Newcastle upon Tine or the liberties of the same town shall take upon him or them to deale or meddle in any respect in the Craft Art or Science of a Barber Chirurgion Wax and Tallow Chandler above the space of foureteen dayes before that he or they or any of them shall come and present him or themselves to the Wardens or Stewards of the said Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers [^ and agree with the said wardens and fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers^ ] upon paine that every one so offending to pay for the first default tenn shillings for the second default twenty shillings and for the fourth default forty shillings and after so often as any
default shall be made and duly proved to pay forty shillings the one halfe of the
said forfeitures or penalties levied and taken to the use of the said Craft Art or
Science of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers and the other halfe of
the same forfeitures to be levied and taken to the use of the Towne Chamber of
Newcastle aforesaid.

5. ALLSOE that noe person or persons whatsoever shall presume or take it upon
him or them to sett up or keep any shopp Chamber or Secret Place whereby to
occupie worke meddle and take in hand in any respect the aforesaid Craft Art or
Science of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers within the said Towne
of Newcastle upon Tine the liberties of the same Towne nor to sett any manner of
signe or token either by writing word or otherwise within the said Towne of
Newcastle upon Tine or liberties of the same towne whereby to meddle deale or
occupie the said Crafte or Art or Science of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow
Chandlers [fol. 5] before that he or they be allowed and agreed with the said
Craft Art or Science above the space of foureteen dayes upon paine aforesaid to
be divided and imploied to the uses aforesaid.

6. ALLSOE It is ordained and established by us the said Maior Aldermen and
Sherife of Newcastle upon Tine aforesaid that the Wardens or Stewards of the
said Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers shall have
from time to time when need requireth att the discretion of the Maior of the said
Towne for the time being an officer to take every such offender and to bring him
or them before the said Maior of the said Towne for the time being and the said
offender to remain in the prison untill the said offender hath fully paid the
forfeitures and penalties and every part thereof.

7. AND It is further ordeined and established by us the said Maior Aldermen and
Sherife of Newcastle upon Tine aforesaid that every apprentice of or in the said
Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers which hath served
his Master dutifullly the space of seaven yeares and shall be made free with the
said Fellowship of the said Trade Art or Science of Barber Chirurgions Wax and
Tallow Chandlers shall pay to the said Fellowship att his being made free the
sum of forty shillings and every Free Brothers Sonn shall pay at his being made
free of the said Fellowship thirty and three shillings without any forgiveness att all.

8. ALLSOE IT is ordained and established that when any of the said Art, Science or Trade of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers hath taken any cure or cures in hand or medled any wayes touching the said art or science in that behalf or laid or ministered to any person or persons that none other sending he or they which have taken first in hand any such cure laid or ministered shall meddle with the same unless that he [fol. 6] or they be agreed reasonably with all upon paine to pay for the first default twenty shillings for the second default thirty shillings for the third default forty shillings and after soe often as any such default shall be made and duely proved shall pay forty shillings the one halfe of the said forfatures to be lavied and taken to the use of the partie that is first called to the patient and first dresseth the partie soe called to. And the other halfe to the use of the said Company of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers.

9. AND ALLSOE that if any of the said Fellowship be called upon to come to any cure or cures that then he or they that soe are first called shall if need soe require call upon only of his brethren of the said Fellowship to goe with him or them and meeting soe together shall all together amongst themselves confer consult and heare every one of their opinions about the same for the better cureing of the same.

10. ALLSOE It is further ordained and established by the said Maior Aldermen and Sherife of Newcastle upon Tine aforesaid that noe man of the said Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers shall take any to be an apprentice under the space of seaven yeares fully it to be compleate and runn without any colusion or deceite and if any apprentice be entred in the bookes and it afterwards appere that he is taken for lesser tearme and that colusion and deceite hath been used that then in such case such apprentice shall not be made free with the same Fellowship. And that none of the said Fellowship shall intice or frame other to intice from another his apprentice upon paine for every such offence committed and duly proved the sume of forty shillings to the use of the said Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers aforesaid. And
if it happen the Master of any apprentice in the said Fellowship to die at any time before the said seaven yeares be ended then that [fol. 7] apprentice shall serve his Mistress during the remainder of his yeares if she continue a widdow or marry a free brother of the said Company she causing him to be instructed in the said Art or Science. And if the widdow have not aminde to have her said apprentice then the said apprentice shall be putt and sett over to some other of the said Fellowship by the advise of the Wardens and Company of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers And the same apprentice soe sett over to serve diligently and truely the said man to whom he is assigned (the residue of his yeares) which he hath not served to be finished and the said man to whome he is so putt shall teach and inform the said apprentice in the said Art Science Mistery Trade or occupation of a Barber Chirurgion Wax and Tallow Chandler soe well as he can during the residue of his yeares. And if none of the said Fellowship will take him then at the end and expiration of his yeares of his apprenticeship to receive his freedom for his duties paying as before is mentioned.

11. PROVIDED alwayes that all redemptioners who are or hereafter shall be made free of the said Fellowship shall not make any of their apprentices free without the agreement and consent of the Wardens or Stewards for the time being and the Fellowship of the said Trade or the most part of them that shall be att such freedome makeing and also that every man of the said Fellowship when that he shall be warned by any of the Wardens for the time being or their deputie to be att all times ready to come and assemble and commune and counsel together with the said fellowship upon all such causes and matters as then shall happen to be communed of for and upon any cause of redress or of any good order lawfully and rightfully then by the Wardens and Fellowship aforesaid or the most part of them to be ordained and made there to doe assent and fullfil in every article without gainsaying and their Counsell have [fol. 8] keep and hold off and in the premises upon paine of and for every such offence and doing the contrary hereof to pay twelve pence every time to the said Fellowship without any forgivenesse. And also that when any of the said Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers shall meet together at any of their places accustomed assigned appointed and warned by the Wardens or Stewards for the
time being of the said Fellowship for to enter communicate amongst themselves as is aforesaid rehearsed or at dynners or drinkings made for the said Fellowship to be at that noe manner of person of the said Fellowship shall then revile on another or give any ill or unwellcome words or misdeeds one to another whereby any dissention strife or debate might grow or arise among them and if such offence be found by the Wardens of the said Fellowship for the time being and soe by this presente dept every offender to pay three shillings and foure pence of lawful english money without remission.

12. ALSOE it is ordained and established by the said maier Aldermen and Sheriffe that noe manner of person of the said Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers shall wash dress or drawe any man upon the Sabbath day upon paine for every such offence two shillings.

13. AND likewise it is ordained and established by the said Maior Aldermen and Sheriffe of Newcastle upon Tine aforesaid that if any man being a Foreigner and can work in any of the said Arts or Sciences of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers happen to come to this Towne of Newcastle upon Tyne and desire to work upon any of the said Arts or Sciences for a certain time he shall be received to worke with any of the said fellowship as his course cometh to as it shall happen from one to another as their turns shall fall [fol. 9] And the said stranger to pay for his [course?] soe to work yearly to the said fellowship thirteen pence sterling as long as he continueth in the said Towne and that from henceforth for ever hereafter there shall be yearely chosen by the said Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers two honest and good men of conscience of the said Fellowship to be searchers and they by the Wardens to be yearely presented openly in the Towne Court before the Maior and Sheriffe for the time being and show in their persons the said Searchers to receive their oaths.

14. AND further WEE the said Maior Aldermen and Sheriffe of Newcastle aforesaid doe by these presents as much as in us lyeth for us and our successors grant and confirm and by these presents order and decree the said wardens and Fellowship or the maior part of them and their Successors for ever to have full power and authority to make ordaine and constitute amongst themselves such
lawfull orders actes and laws as shall be by them thought fitt meet and convenient for the well quiet and orderly government of themselves and transgressors or offenders of the same orders actes or lawes to punish by reasonable fines and penalties of money as in the discretion of the said Wardens and Fellowship or maior part of them shall be thought good and meet.

15. AND for the full conclusion we the said Maior Aldermen and Sheriffe of Newcastle aforesaid doe further order and decree by these presents and the Wardens and Fellowship of Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow Chandlers that now are have for them and their successors assented and agreed thereto that if any ambiguitie question or doubt shall happen att any time thereafter to arise upon any sentence [fol. 10] article or word contained in this ordinary or writing or about any manner or cause whatsoever touching or concerning the occupation of the said Art Science or otherwise whatsoever that then the said Wardens and Fellowship of the Barber Chirurgions Wax and Tallow chandlers and their successors shall stand to abide and firmly obey the resolution declaration order and determination of the Maior Aldermen and Sheriffe of Newcastle aforesaid and their successors for the time being without any further suite trouble and contradiction. IN WITNESS whereof we the said Maior Aldermen and Sheriffe to this present ordinary or writing have caused the Seale of the office of Maioralitie of the said towne of Newcastle aforesaid to be affixed.

Given att the said Towne of Newcastle upon Tine this five and twentith day of September in the three and twentith yeare of the Reigne of our Sovereign Lord Charles the Second by the Grace of God King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, defender of the faith and in Anno Domini 1671

William Carr Maior

[25 September 1671]

[Source: Newcastle, Tyne and Wear Archives, GU/BS/1, Copy c. 1900 of Ordinary of the Barber-Surgeons and Wax- and Tallowchandlers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1671.]
General References Relating to Ordinances and Companies


[Gross’s study arose from his German doctoral thesis. His ‘proofs and illustrations’ are primarily medieval but he includes a great deal of source material on many towns, in Wales and Ireland as well as England. Unfortunately for present purposes, he does not index crafts separately.]


[Kramer’s survey and synthesis contains a great many items of information but these can be difficult to retrieve. Her text and notes are inaccurate and/or cryptic in some details.]

J. M. Lambert, Two Thousand Years of Gild Life (Hull, 1891).


G. Parker, ‘The history and powers of the barber surgeons in Great Britain’, International Congress of Medicine (History of Medicine Section), 23 (1914), 285-95.

[Parker’s is the most useful survey, but it is under-referenced. He appends a time-line including ordinances, pp. 293-5.]


[The preliminaries include an essay on guild history by Lujo Brentano which provoked much debate.]


A. J. Willis and A. L. Merson (eds), A Calendar of Southampton Apprenticeship Registers 1609-1740, Southampton Record Series 12 (Southampton, 1968).

[One of the major functions of ordinances was the regulation of apprenticeship. Merson’s substantial introduction, while primarily an analysis of Southampton registers, is an excellent guide to variations and trends within apprenticeship.]
References to Barber-Surgeons’ Companies and Ordinances in England, Scotland and Ireland

Aberdeen


[Dingwall (p. 23) states that the barbers and surgeons of Aberdeen obtained a Seal of Cause in 1537, which was not ratified. Recognition followed in 1647, by which time the company consisted of barbers and wigmakers.]

Abingdon

B. Challenor (ed.), Selections from the Municipal Chronicles of the Borough of Abingdon, from AD 1555 to AD 1897 (Abingdon, 1898).

[By an act of Common Council in 1669, printed by Challenor, Abingdon decided that all freemen were to be divided into three conglomerate companies, the Grocers, the Butchers, and the Skinners. Barbers and apothecaries, as well as schoolmasters and scriveners, were sorted into the Grocers. Tallowchandlers were put into the Butchers. The mayor was given powers to place anyone following any other trade into whichever of the three companies he thought fit. Rules for all trades to follow were included in the act (pp. 159-62). A similar but less detailed act had been passed in 1559 (p. 123).]

Andover


[Collier mentions corporation records and craft ordinances but both referencing and dating are vague or absent. Andover apparently had a merchants’guild divided at some point into three, Leathersellers, Haberdashers, and Drapers. The barbers were members of the Haberdashers, along with food and drink trades, cappers, painters etc. (p. 306).]


[Gross quotes from extant minutes, 1715-1807, of the Haberdashers’ company (vol. 2, p. 349). In 1715 these included a list of ‘the particular trades fixed by the
old orders to every of the three companies’, with additions to be made. The
apothecaries were to be added to the Leathermen, and the surgeons (and
combmakers) were to join the barbers in the Haberdashers.]

Source: ‘paper volume in the possession of Mr Frank Shaw of Andover’.

Beverley

[Parker (1914, pp. 286, 293) has a barber-surgeons’ company appearing in
Beverley in 1436.]

Bristol


[Bickley provides original documents in Latin and French with parallel
translations. He prints ordinances for the barber-surgeons of 1395, 1418, and
1439. Cf. below.]

G. Parker, ‘Early Bristol medical institutions, the medieval hospitals, and barber
surgeons’, Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 44
(1922), 155-78.

[Parker states that for neither 1395 nor 1418 is the full text of the Bristol guild’s
ordinances recorded. He prints a copy of the ordinances of 1652, which he states
to be ‘the only text of the Ordinances of any date [for Bristol] known to exist’ (p.
166). The spelling is modernised. The original was then in private hands. The
preamble to the 1652 set states that the previous ordinances of the company ‘are
now worn out, defaced and become illegible’ (p. 172).]

Source: ‘family of the late Mr Francis Fox of Yate House’; now Bristol Archives
Office, 04369 (1) no. 7.

R. Milnes Walker, ‘The barber surgeons of Bristol’, Bristol Medico-Chirurgical

[Walker states that the first reference to the Bristol guild dates from 1395, and
consists of a compound ordinance in Latin which he quotes in an English
translation by F. B. Bickley. Walker next paraphrases new ordinances, in French,
ratified in 1418. He then paraphrases the new articles from a set written in
English in 1439. Parker (1914, p. 289) says that this set was that passed by the
city’s magistrates according to the parliamentary legislation of 1436. An
indenture of 1561, also quoted by Walker, gives the title of the company as ‘the craft or mystery of barber-surgeons and physicians’. Walker next paraphrases new ordinances, making particular mention of surgery, submitted in 1599 and ratified in 1612. Further ordinances relating to sea surgeons were added in 1650-1, followed by a complete revision (23 articles) in 1652, of which Walker gives a gist (cf. above). By 1739 the company also included peruke-makers.

Source: Little Red Book; Great Red Book.

Cambridge


[Cambridge has rich survivals from the medieval period, but these relate almost entirely to religious guilds. The preface by W. Cunningham states that there are few traces of craft guilds for Cambridge (though no lack of artisans).]

Canterbury


[In the course of correspondence in 2000 Dr Durkin kindly sent me a transcript, in modern spelling, of ordinances for the barbers’ and surgeons’ company of Canterbury, passed in July 1602. This was part of a process of revision of the rules governing many of the Canterbury companies. Among other points of interest, including a rare reference to commemoration of the feast of SS Cosmas and Damian, these ordinances refer to apprentices serving with ‘master or mistress parents or friends to the aforesaid sciences’ outside the city. Dr Durkin also mentioned an earlier extant wording dating from 1543-4, as well as a wording of 1497-8 which included physicians.]


[Hutchins quotes as an example rules included in a set of ordinances put to the mayor and aldermen by the ‘Company or Fraternity of Barber-Surgeons’ of Canterbury in 1498. Hutchins and Kramer (1927) both cite ‘Civis’, Minutes Collected from the Ancient Records and Accounts in the Chamber of Canterbury (Canterbury, 1801-2) which I have been unable to locate.]
Chester

F. Simpson, ‘The city guilds or companies of Chester, with special reference to that of the barber-surgeons’, Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society, n.s. 18 (1911), 98-203.

[In Chester, as in Newcastle, the barber-surgeons were combined with the wax- and tallowchandlers. They ranked third among 23 city companies. Simpson prints charters of 1540 and 1550, equivalent to sets of ordinances, as copied into the company’s books. He provides examples of the modification of rules as well as oaths, indentures, company property and livery, etc. He also supplies a list of company office-bearers (called aldermen and stewards) from 1606.]

Source: Company Register or Minute Books 1606+, then in the possession of R. Roberts, the sole surviving member of the Company.

Chichester

Chichester, West Sussex Record Office, CHICTY/AH/3; CHICTY/AH/8; CHICTY/AH/16.

[Among ‘indentures’ between the corporation of Chichester and the various city companies are three relating to the barbers’ guild, 1527; the company of barbers, surgeons and glaziers, 1608; and the company of barber-surgeons, periwig-makers and glaziers, 1685. I am grateful to Peter Elmer for this information.]

Cork

R. Caulfield (ed.), The Council Book of the Corporation of the City of Cork, from 1609 to 1643, and from 1690 to 1800 (Guildford, 1876).

[A single entry for 1732 shows the corporation supporting the rights of the barbers’ company.]

Coventry

C. Phythian-Adams, Desolation of a City: Coventry and the Urban Crisis of the Late Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1979).
[Phythian-Adams gives a vivid account of a pre-Reformation town under stress, in terms of both work and household. He looks at the rules of the companies in terms of the state of the town as a whole. He makes a few references to the barbers’ company, one of which (p. 79) notes that barbers were allowed to break the prohibition on Sunday shaving in favour of sick men or wayfarers.]

**Devizes**

E. Kite, ‘The guild of merchants, or three trading companies, formerly in Devizes’, *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, 4, no. XI (1858), 160-74.

[Kramer (1927, p. 18), states that the Devizes barber-surgeons lost their guild identity. Her grounds for this are not clear. Her reference is to Kite, who rather suggests that barber-surgeons were always members of one of the three conglomerate guilds, first noticed in 1371 and reorganized in 1614 into Drapers, Mercers and Leathersellers. Barbers, surgeons, and apothecaries belonged to the Mercers, along with grocers, haberdashers, hatters, food and drink trades, Chandlers, painters and glaziers. Kite summarises the ordinances of the Drapers, which were almost identical with the set granted to the Mercers.]

**Source:** Book of Constitutions of the Fraternity of the Mercers, in the possession of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.

**Dorchester (Dorset)**


[Kramer (1927, p. 18) states that Dorchester’s barbers lost their guild identity. This is her interpretation of an agreement of 1630 (Hutchins, vol. 2, pp. 338-9) by Dorchester’s capital burgesses to divide the crafts and trades into five conglomerate companies: Merchants, Clothiers, Iremongers, Fishmongers, Shoemakers and Skinners. The Merchants included the barber-surgeons and the apothecaries as well as the grocers and booksellers. It is not evident that the barber-surgeons had a separate identity before this date. Hutchins’ indexes (not added to by the modern republication) confine themselves to persons, places, arms and pedigrees.]
**Dublin**


[Berry asserts that the Dublin Fraternity of Barbers was ‘the most ancient medical corporation in the United Kingdom’ by virtue of a (royal) charter granted in 1446, possibly following Cameron (see below). This charter Berry describes as no longer extant except for a document embodying it dating from 1715, which he paraphrases. Like other late-medieval guild records, this document mentions women or ‘sisters’. The surgeons were united with the barbers by a charter of 1577, also summarized by Berry. Apothecaries were included in the company from at least the date of a charter of 1687 (at which date it appears also to have included periwig-makers and physicians) until 1745. Berry appends a list of masters and wardens, 1534-1760.]

*Source*: London, Public Record Office [TNA], Rolls Office Miscellanea; Dublin, Trinity College Library.


[In this compendious tome (882 pp.) Cameron provides bibliography and biography for Irish medicine, but also a translation of the Elizabethan charter of 1577, a transcription of the James II charter of 1687, and of the charter of incorporation of the surgeons of 1784.]


[Webb usefully embeds references to the Dublin ‘fraternity of barber craft’ in an account of all the Dublin guilds. He states that the apothecaries were incorporated in 1747 as ‘the youngest guild’, the guild of St Luke. Previously the barber-surgeons’ guild was known as the fraternity of barber-surgeons, apothecaries and periwigmakers. The Elizabethan charter emerges as having parallels with the incorporation of the surgeons into the London barbers’ company in 1540. Webb prints an oath of the Dublin barbers extending to 16 articles and overlapping to some extent with the content of ordinances.]

**Durham**

[Parker (1914, p. 289) states that the Durham barber-surgeons’ guild had its ordinances passed in 1468 in accordance with the parliamentary legislation of 1436, and that in Durham the barber-surgeons were united with the ropemakers (p. 291).]


[Whiting quotes copiously from the records of the Durham companies then extant, including those of the Barbers (pp. 158-72). His referencing is minimal, but he appends a list of such records, most of which were in the hands of the then wardens, including those of the Barbers (p. 384). The earliest of the latter date from 1615. As App. VI he prints the ordinance of the ‘Barber’s Craft, Waxmakers and Surgeons’ of 1468, also then extant and in the charge of the Barbers’ warden. This guild was united with the ropers and stringers at the end of the sixteenth century, with a new set of rules agreed in 1655 (20 articles, summarised pp. 160-2). The surgeons apparently dropped out sometime in the seventeenth century, but the company admitted other trades (druggist, apothecary) provided they did not exercise the occupations of the company. In the eighteenth century, some barbers and barber-surgeons diversified as periwig-makers or occupied all the trades of the company (p. 165). Whiting devotes much space to the concerns of the companies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including the Barbers, and gives an interesting impression of the attenuated but stubborn character of their later history.]

*Source*: ‘in the care of the warden’; ‘miscellaneous papers chiefly concerned with the Barbers’ Company’, Library of the University of Durham (p. 383). The latter can presumably be equated with: Durham University Library, Durham City Guild Records, GB 033 DCG.

**Edinburgh**

[Colston documents the twelve incorporated trades of Edinburgh, of which the ‘Chirurgeons (and Barbouris)’ were one. He also provides lists of the ‘Deacon-Conveners’ and other office-bearers. He states that the apothecaries were conjoined with the surgeons from 1657 and that later there was a union with pharmacy. The barbers were separated from the surgeons in 1722 and were organised into a new body which, like the chandlers, was not included among the incorporated trades.]


[Creswell seemingly set out to produce a work similar to that of Young’s for the London company, but his death in WWI meant that his text is undocumented. It does however make ample and detailed use of relevant records of the Edinburgh corporation as well as of the minutes and other records of the Edinburgh company. His chapter on the separation of the barbers and surgeons in 1722 includes part of the text of the new regulations of the surgeons. Like Young, Creswell clearly thought that the barbers were as worthy of notice as the surgeons. He has several chapters on the apothecaries and makes a claim for Edinburgh’s having originated the ‘surgeon-apothecary’.]


[Creswell accounts for the sense of injustice felt by the barbers, whose numbers had risen to 99 by 1718 and whose admission fees since 1682 had materially contributed to the prosperity of the surgeons’ company. He also points to the versatility of the barber as being likely to make him more in request than the pure surgeon; the barbers were also more closely identified with the town corporation that the surgeons. However, he also sees an evolution of the ‘simple barbers’ into barber-surgeons during the sixteenth century, and a submergence of barbers in the next.]


[In her appendices Dingwall reprints the text, in Scots, of the Seal of Cause of 1505 of the Edinburgh barbers and surgeons from town council records, and the text (English) of the ratification of the Seal of Cause in 1506. These equivalents of ordinances are notable for their early stress on literacy, knowledge of anatomy,
and examinations, as well as a monopoly of the brewing and sale of aqua vitae, later lost. Minutes of the Edinburgh ‘Craftsmen’, later Incorporation, survive from 1581 onwards.]


R. S. Moncrieff, 'Note on the incorporation of surgeons and barbers', *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, 9, no. 6 (1912), 524-30.

[This is interesting in documenting the demand in the city for barbers’ services and the partially successful resistance of the barbers to the surgeons’ repeated attempts at subordination and separation.]

[Parker (1914, p. 289) states that the Edinburgh guild ‘copied the English fashion’ by having its ordinances confirmed by a Seal of Cause in 1505 (cf. above).]


[Amid some whimsy, Wade quotes from and paraphrases the petition of the barbers and surgeons of 1505, and states that the Seal of Cause was granted in 1506. He further states that the barbers existed as a guild before their union with the surgeons, that in 1648 barbers were required also to know surgery, and that apothecaries joined the guild in the next decade. He usefully compares the 1505 petition with contemporaneous documents relating to other crafts, stressing that the former was part of a general process.]

**Exeter**


[Exeter seems to have had numerous craft or trade guilds, as well as a company of Merchant Adventurers trading to France which became defunct in the seventeenth century. One, the Tailors, faded out c. 1850, and another, the Weavers, was still going when Cotton was writing. He focuses on the Weavers and the Merchant Adventurers and no medical crafts are mentioned.]
[Parker (1914, p. 289) states that the Exeter barber-surgeons’ guild had its ordinances passed in 1487, in (somewhat belated) accordance with the parliamentary legislation of 1436.]


[The editors note that, of the Exeter craft companies, for only two, the Tailors, and the Weavers, Fullers, and Shearmen, are there any records extant. However, Exeter’s record of freedoms, culled from all sources, is unusually complete and includes many barbers from an early date, as well as apothecaries and the occasional doctor of medicine.]


[Rowsell states that the Exeter barber-surgeons were incorporated in 1487 and that there was no record of any later renewal. The same issue of this journal (p. 247) has an anonymous item, ‘Description of the arms of the Exeter companies’, with a description of the arms of the Exeter barber-surgeons taken from Izacke, *Remarkable Antiquities of the City of Exeter* (1676).]

**Glasgow**


[There are gaps in the Glasgow burgess roll, as well as different classes of burgess, but the surviving entries provide much additional information about kinship, marriage, patronage, and the ways in which fees that were paid for the freedom, and the freedom itself, were used to support the poor and sick, pay for cures, and induce practitioners to practise in the town. Doctors or `professors’ of physic were also admitted as burgesses. Lumsden (1930) provides a concise explanation of how Glasgow’s burgess system worked and of how its burgess roll should be interpreted.]

A. Duncan, *Memorials of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow 1599-1850* (Glasgow, 1896).

[The founding principles of the Glasgow Faculty as expressed in 1599 had more to do with the control and regulation of practice than with the range of
responsibilities, and the level of incorporation, characteristic of a guild or company. Duncan’s account follows this medical lead and his tone is judgemental. Barbers were not formally admitted to the Faculty until 1602, when rules for regulating apprenticeship were also enacted. Demands for redress by the barbers from c. 1702 led ultimately to separation (an outcome first suggested by the barbers) in 1722. Duncan’s preface states that (c.1870) the minutes of the Faculty were extant from 1602 to 1681, and after 1733. The second minute book, 1681-1733, had been destroyed by fire. Duncan found the early minutes 'bald' and supplemented them with records of the town council and other sources. His appendices reprint the royal charter of 1599 and its ratification in 1672, signet letters, and a 'letter of deaconry' of 1656 creating union between barbers and surgeons. He also provides a roll of members, 1599-1851.


[Appendices include a chronology, foundational documents in modern English, and 'bonds of desistance' (i.e. undertakings not to practise), 1657-1701. The authors state that the term 'faculty' was used only from 1629. They suggest that difficulties over enforcement effectively led to transformation into a craft guild of barber-surgeons in 1656. Physicians were admitted from 1673. It is claimed (p. 2) that Glasgow was unique in including physicians, surgeons, apothecaries and barbers in a single corporation; this may be open to challenge (see e.g. Dublin).]

*Source*: Glasgow City Archives, Mitchell Library (Minutes of Incorporation of Barbers, 1707-65); Glasgow, RCP SG (Minutes of FPSG, 1599-1681, 1733/4-1859).


[This is more than a bibliography, as Lumsden gives an account of each guild in terms of its foundational documents, as well as an explanation of guilds in general, and the relatively complicated guild structure of Glasgow in particular. With respect to the barber-surgeons' company, Lumsden states that the supervision and rights of apothecaries were considered from 1599 onwards and that the company included apothecaries, surgeons, barber-surgeons and barbers from 1602. The barber-surgeons were one of a group of fifteen crafts formed into a federation by the 'letter of guildry' of 1605. This federation founded in 1605 a 'Trades Hospital' or almshouse, also used as a meeting house. The hospital’s first
master was the surgeon Peter Lowe, who was also the first ‘Collector’ of the Trades House.]

J. B. Tennent, *Records of the Incorporation of Barbers, Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1899); 2nd edn (Glasgow, 1930); 3rd edn (by F. S. Batchelor) (Glasgow, 1979).

[I have not been able to consult this work, which is described by Lumsden (1930, p. 33), as a ‘faithful and unbiased narrative’.]

Gloucester


[Occasional references in Barlow’s introductions make it clear that Gloucester had a barbers’ company in the early 17th century which was still active c. 1720. Apprenticeship enrolments give an indication of the process of evolution of the medical crafts, but the enrolments do not provide information as to the company to which the apprentice’s master belonged.]

Hartlepool


[Hartlepool was incorporated as early as 1200 but Sharp (p. 84) finds only one reference, in 1674, to companies of tradesmen other than fishermen in its town records which date from 1593. That William Loxon was admitted a free burgess as a tallow Chandler and barber-surgeon in 1679 (p. 85) can only be suggestive. Regrettably not even the modern reprint has an index.]

Hereford

[Parker (1914, pp. 286, 294) states that he traced a barber-surgeons’ company in Hereford, seemingly by finding them in a city procession, presumably for Corpus Christi, in 1503.]

Hull

Lambert prints a set of ordinances of 1714 which constituted a `composition’ whereby the Hull barber-surgeons were combined with the peruke-makers.

**Ipswich**


[Kramer (1927, p. 18) states that the Ipswich barber-surgeons lost their guild identity. Barbers are not initially mentioned among the groups of trades involved in the Corpus Christi processions of the fifteenth century (Wodderspoon, pp. 165-6) but are included by 1473-4 (p. 168). In 1575-6 all the Ipswich occupations were organised into four conglomerate companies: Mercers, Drapers, Tailors, and Shoemakers. Physicians (and cooks) were put into the Mercers, surgeons into the Drapers, and barbers (with chandlers) into the Tailors (p. 174). Wodderspoon found it incongruous that physicians were included among the trades at all; in fact it is more unusual for barbers and surgeons to be separated as they are here.]

*Source:* Great Court Books?

**Kendal**


[This part of the *Tenth Report* includes (pp. 299-318) a description by H. C. Maxwell Lyte of the extant records of the corporation of Kendal. In particular Lyte calendars Kendal’s ‘Book of Record’, dating from 1575, of which there was also a modern transcript. This town book included lists of freemen and apprentices, orders for various crafts, etc. Lyte prints (pp. 312-13) a list, c. 1578, of the twelve combined companies, of which the tenth included the surgeons, scriveners, barbers, glovers, skinners, parchment and pointmakers. The surgeons are the first mentioned, but it is not clear that their company was known as the Surgeons.]

*Source:* ‘Book of Record’. 
Kinsale


[New charters were required for the ‘trades and artificers’ in 1687. Four men were incorporated as the ‘Barber Chyrurgions and Periwigg Makers’ of the town and its liberty in that year, on condition that they trimmed the town’s main officebearers and their successors for nothing. There is reference to another charter ‘for the Barbers’ in 1696. Caulfield also refers to a petition of the peruke-makers of 1746, requesting a charter and suggesting that the apothecaries and surgeons could join them if they so wished (p. lxxix).]

Lancaster

[Kramer (1927, p. 18) states that in Lancaster the barber-surgeons were united with the plumbers, glaziers, saddlers, whitesmiths and cutlers.]

Limerick

R. Herbert, ‘The trade guilds of Limerick’, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 2, no. 3 (1940-1), 121-34.

[Herbert’s series of excerpts is interesting primarily for the effects of Protestant occupation. He gives a list of guilds and officebearers of 1769 including ‘surgeon-barbers’ and infers that the guild was defunct by 1833.]

Lincoln

[Parker (1914, p. 293) states that ordinances were passed for this guild in 1369.]


[In his appendices (pp. 575-9) Young prints and translates a return relating to ‘the Fraternity of Barbers of Lincoln’ arising from the enquiry under Richard II into all guilds and fraternities in 1388. The return consisted of a certification of a set of ordinances (10 articles). On its own account this guild or fraternity dated from before 1369. Parker (1914, p. 289) states that the Lincoln guild, in accordance with the parliamentary legislation of 1436, had its ordinances passed in 1440.]
Liverpool

M. Power (ed.), The Liverpool Town Books, 1649-1671, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire 136 (Stroud, 1999).

[In addition to recording admissions to the freedom of practitioners, including physicians, this source, like other town books, enables the piecing together of the civic life and misdemeanours of individual practitioners. There is however no sign of company organisation.]

London


[This guide lists (p. 7) MS ordinances of the barber-surgeons’ company of 1387-8, 1435, 1530, 1606, 1633, 1681, and 1709, all of which had reverted to the custody of Barber-Surgeons’ Hall.]


[In spite of its title, this account deals with the London company only. It is typical of its period in seeing the London corporations as national institutions. South’s project was not dissimilar to that of Young (see below), who nonetheless helped Power in the editing of South’s materials. South’s work includes 18 appendices of documents relating to the London barbers and other practitioners from 1375 onwards, some of them sixteenth-century copies, and including ordinances, and instruments relating to the failed attempt at a conjoint college of physicians and surgeons in the fifteenth century.]

[Furnivall and Furnivall provide extensive appendices quoting sixteenth-century statutes and orders relating to medicine, surgery and barbering nationally and in London. They list (Appendix XIII) the 185 freemen of the London barber-surgeons’ company in 1537, when the barber-surgeons were the most numerous of the companies in the capital, and print the ordinances of the company of 1529, which were draft rules revised and ratified in 1530.]


[As Appendix A, Young includes surviving returns relating to barbers’ companies arising from the enquiry under Richard II (1388) into all guilds and fraternities. His text (pp. 29-34) includes a transcription in Norman French and a translation of a copy of 1634, made from the Tower Records, of the return relating to the London company, which he says is ‘probably the only one extant of the whole of those made by the London trade guilds’. As Appendix B, ‘Sir Thomas More’s ordinances, 1530’ he prints the set drawn up by the London barber-surgeons’ company in 1529 and revised and ratified in 1530 according to an Act of Parliament of Henry VII governing the making of rules and ordinances by all guilds. Young made his transcription from the original, noting that versions given by D’Arcy Power and Thomas Knot were not literally accurate. Young draws extensively from the various sets of ordinances in the course of his study.]

*Source:* London, Barber-Surgeons’ Hall.

**Newcastle-upon-Tyne**


[Bulmer is chiefly concerned with the Newcastle company’s hall and its armorial bearings. This company also possessed perhaps the ‘best single [surviving] collection’ of eighteenth-century surgical instruments; these are depicted and identified by Hodgson. Bulmer quotes a regulation governing the borrowing and return of the instruments.]

[Embleton mentions an ‘ancient ordinary’ of 1442, the source for which, an ‘old book’ covering the period 1442-1616, appears lost. Embleton reprints extracts from the earliest surviving company minute book for 1616-1686 which indicate the rules or ordinaries by which the craft regulated itself. Parker (1914, p. 289) states that the Newcastle guild had its ordinances passed in 1442 in accordance with the parliamentary legislation of 1436.]

*Source:* Minute Book 1616-1686.

Newcastle, Tyne and Wear Archives, GU/BS/1, Copy c. 1900 of Ordinary of the Barber-Surgeons and Wax- and Tallowchandlers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1671.

[See transcription above.]


[Pybus reprints a paraphrase of the ordinary of 1442 from Bourne’s *History of Newcastle* (1736) and quotes extracts from the surviving minute books of the company. He notes that periwig-makers were included in the company from at least 1711.]

**Norwich**

*At an Assembly of the Maior, Sheriffs, Aldermen, and Common Councell of the City of Norwich, holden within the Guild-hall of the same City the nineteenth day of August, in the Twentieth yeere of the Raigne of our Soveraigne Lord James…*[London, F. Kingston, 1622].

[There is a copy in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, under the above title; aka *Ordinances of Norwich* (1622).]


[Knights communicates a transcription of the petition of 1561 by A. W. Morant. He appends other relevant transcripts, including licences to practise, testimonials and advertisements from Norwich sources.]

*Source:* Assembly Minute Book, etc.

Norwich, Norfolk Record Office, Assembly Minute Book 1585-1613: ‘Orders and Constitutions for the Mystery of Physicians, Barbers and Barber-surgeons of Norwich’, 1605.

[See transcription above.]

[Parker (1914, p. 293) states that the Norwich guild passed ordinances in 1349.]


[Williams includes, pp. 6-10, the petition and ordinances of 1561. These were accepted to stand for only one year in the first instance.]

*Source:* Assembly Minute Book.

C. Williams, ‘The ordinances of the gild of barber-surgeons of Norwich’, *Antiquary*, 36 (1900), 274-8, 293-7.

[Williams prints the ordinances of 1684.]

*Source:* NRO, Case 17, shelf d: Byelaws of Trades 1683-1719.


[As Appendix A, Young includes two returns relating to barbers’ companies in Norwich and Lincoln arising from the enquiry under Richard II (1388) into all guilds and fraternities.]
Oxford

H. E. Salter (ed.), Records of Medieval Oxford (Oxford, 1912), pp. 70-6 ("The ordinances of the gild of barbers").

[Salter prints, for the first time, a full version in English which he says probably dates from 1499, when the cappers were united with the barbers. The original version, presumably in Latin, dates from 1348. These Oxford ordinances were ratified not by the town council but by the University, as barbers, cooks and others serving the University had the status of privileged persons. Salter surmises that there may have been another barbers’ guild, supervised by the town.]


[Kramer (1927) makes various references to the Oxford company, citing the Bodleian Library MS. She quotes (p. 58n) from a [mid-seventeenth-century?] Oxford ordinance implying the repudiation of ‘makers, dressers and sellers of perewiggs, borders, artificiall Heade or haar…notoriously known to belong to the Trade, mistery or occupacon of a Barber’. The Oxford company dissolved itself in 1859, dividing its funds in the process (pp. 180-1).]

Reading


[With very little in the way of referencing, Ditchfield outlines the different types of guild and prints excerpts including ordinances, mainly from the pre-Reformation period. He states that Reading had a guild mercatory, organised into five sub-guilds which were themselves conglomerations. The barbers were in the Cutlers’ and Bellfounders’ company, while the chandlers were with the Victuallers. He quotes an interesting by-law of 1443 restricting late-night opening of barbers’ shops.]


[Like other town books, or records of the proceedings of the town council or mayor’s court, this includes admissions of freemen as well as cases of the
regulation of crafts and trades, conflict between apprentices and masters, restrictions on ‘foreigners’, treatment of disease among the poor, management of a hospital or house of correction, etc. Guilding’s transcripts cover, with gaps, the period 1431-1654.]

Ripon

*Ripon Millenary, A Record of the Festival. Also a History of the the City arranged under its Wakemen and Mayors from the Year 1400*, comp. W. Harrison and W. Grainge (Ripon, 1892).

[Kramer (1927), p. 18, notes only that in Ripon the barber-surgeons were united with the drapers, dyers and apothecaries. Her source, as above, confirms this and indicates that the information derives from a general attempt by the town at better regulation and ‘reduction’ of all the Ripon companies, c. 1662.]

St Albans

[Parker (1914, pp. 286, 294) states that a barber-surgeons’ company existed in St Albans c. 1563. His grounds for this are not clear.]

Salisbury


[Haskins states that most Salisbury companies had their ordinances ratified in 1562 (p. 49), and that new orders and constitutions were granted to the barber-surgeons’ company in 1614. As in Norwich, there was a wholesale revocation of the orders of all companies in the 1670s and the company was reconstituted in 1676, with the barber-surgeons combined with the silk-weavers, having in the late medieval period been combined with the cooks. Haskins publishes this set of ordinances (27 articles, of which the first seven were common to all the companies).]

[Parker (1914, p. 289) states that the Salisbury company had ordinances passed in 1458 in accordance with the parliamentary legislation of 1436.]
Sandwich


[Dickin prints a grant of articles of 1482 incorporating into one company the barbers, surgeons and waxchandlers of Sandwich, to be known as the Barbers of Sandwich.]

*Source:* ‘the Old Black Book’.

Shrewsbury


[Leighton prints a set of eleven ordinances governing the Shrewsbury barbers’ company dating from 1440, followed by a revised set of 1662 (17 articles), by which time the company was known as the ‘Brotherhood of Barbor Surgions wax chandlers tallow chandlers and Apothecaries’. From at least 1696 barber-surgeons were diversifying as periwig-makers. Leighton also prints a by-law of the ‘Company of Barbers Chirurgions & Periwigg Makers’ of 1740, lists of freemen in the constitutive crafts from 1675, and apprentices from 1737.]

*Source:* none given.

Southampton

J. S. Davies, *A History of Southampton. Partly from the MS. of Dr Speed, in the Southampton Archives* (Southampton, 1883).

[John Speed (1703-81) was a practising MD. The ordinances printed by Davies, in many versions, are those of Southampton’s guild merchant, but would have been of general application. Certain other entries, dated 1512 and 1608, suggest that the barbers were incorporated in some way and may have had their own set of orders (pp. 265-6).]


[Southampton has a full panoply of extant town records – books of ‘remembrance’ (i.e., matters needing to be recorded), of apprenticeship, of court
leet proceedings, of the assembly or council. Each contains scraps of information about barber-surgeons which, when pieced together, make up civic biographies as well as an impression of medical services in the town. There is, however, little sign of a barbers’ company as such. Horrocks outlines a major re-organisation of crafts and trades in 1616 in which each acquired ordinances, with little difference between the sets.]

**Windsor**


[The Annals, though very detailed, includes only one reference (vol. 1, p. 653) to a barber-surgeons’ company in Windsor, dated 1590, when two of the company, as did other trades, settled with the mayor that their consent was needed for the admission of any foreigner to trade in the town.]

**Worcester**

[Parker (1914, pp. 286, 294) states that the Worcester barber-surgeons were joined with the chandlers in 1677.]

**York**

G. A. Auden, 'The gild of barber surgeons of the city of York', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine (Section of the History of Medicine)*, 21 (1928), 1400-6 (70-6).

[Auden states that the earliest known ordinances of this guild date from c. 1400 (see Sellers, below). He publishes additional ordinances, written in English, dating from 1485, and notes further ordinances of 1614. As in Bristol and Norwich, the York company included physicians.]


[Palliser mentions the barbers only in passing, but provides an invaluable analysis of the dynamics of guild development, and a reassessment of the interpretations of earlier authors such as Kramer.]
M. Sellers (ed.), *York Memorandum Book Lettered A/Y in the Guildhall Muniment Room*, 2 vols, Surtees Society 120, 125 (Durham, 1912-15), No. 120, Pt I, 1376-1419.

[The York Memorandum Books overlap with each other rather confusingly. In Pt I Sellers prints an early set of barbers’ ordinances in Latin, which she dates approximately to the late fourteenth century, and another of later date in English. A note (p. 208) mentions additions made in 1580 and 1592. In 1413, she adds, the barbers of London were urged by the Archbishop of Canterbury to follow the example of the barbers of York.]

