

HISTORY OF MITCHELLS ROBERTON

From Bonnie Prince Charlie to Prince Charles

The Oldest Firm in Glasgow?

The present firm of Mitchells Robertson came into being on 1st January 1985 through the merger of two firms, Mitchells Johnston Hill and Hoggan on the one hand and Mackenzie Robertson & Co. on the other. Mitchells Johnston Hill and Hoggan itself was the creature of a merger when the firms Mitchells Johnston & Co. and Hill & Hoggan combined on 1st January 1972.

Both Mitchells Johnston & Co. and Hill & Hoggan, despite a number of changes of names over the years, can trace their origins at least as far back as the 1740s, the time of the Second Jacobite Rebellion. The former firm traces its origin to Thomas Grahame and the latter to James Hill, both of whom were in practice during that decade. These men were in fact brothers in law, having married daughters of John Robertson, himself one of the leading lawyers in Glasgow at the beginning of the eighteenth century. John Robertson had no sons and it is accepted that much of his practice transmitted to his two sons in law.

Going back even further in time, John Robertson had been in practice with his father Robert who was admitted as a member of the Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow in 1686. The Robertsons were related to the famous Glasgow family of Hutcheson, who founded Hutchesons' Hospital and Hutchesons' Grammar School. Even to this day Mitchells Robertson continues to be associated with these two institutions.

The firm's history is touched by the First Jacobite Rebellion as well as the Second. In 1715 John Robertson is noted in the records of the city as being the lawyer who was sent to Stirling by the Town Council to report on the progress of the rebels.

Partners from the respective firms have been active in the business and legal affairs of the city for nearly three centuries. Perhaps the most prominent public figure was Robert Grahame, who had the unique distinction of becoming the first elected Lord Provost of Glasgow in 1833 after his retirement from the firm, which was then known as Grahame and Mitchell.

Rather in the manner of Oxford colleges, there used to be a friendly rivalry between the firms of Mitchells Johnston & Co. on the one hand and Hill & Hoggan on the other as to which was in fact the oldest firm in Glasgow. That problem was definitively resolved with the amalgamation of the two firms in 1972.

While perhaps not so venerable as the other two, the third branch of the family, Mackenzie Robertson & Co. is no young upstart either. It was founded on 1st July 1896 by the amalgamation of the two firms of Robertson, Low, Robertson & Cross and Mackenzie, Gardner & Alexander. The former firm was founded prior to 1800 by Nathaniel Stevenson. The latter firm can trace its history to 1803.