

Blythswood Holm M.S. Magazine, 'Behind the Scenes', A special New Year's Number; later Free St Peter's Literary Society Magazine



'Behind the Scenes', A Special New Year's Number of Blythswood Holm M.S. Magazine, January 1871, [title page] (©CSG CIC Glasgow Museums and Libraries Collection: The Mitchell Library, Special Collections, 321129, G052)

Overview

A summary of the history of the Free St. Peter's Young Men's Association is available on our sister website, *Glasgow's Literary Bonds* (see 'Additional Notes' below).

The earlier manuscript magazine dates from January 1871, and is a bit smaller than other periodicals of this type (approximately A5 size). According to the Editor, this was the third magazine that the society had produced in the 1870-71 session, thus it was a

monthly periodical.

The magazine has 118 pages and includes 11 contributions. This issue is framed within a report on the meeting of the society regarding the production of the current issue, which quickly breaks down into a story-telling and singing session, with members taking it in turns. The contributions are mostly prose, with only three poems. However, many of the prose contributions include a combination of poems, songs and illustrations. The contributors are all anonymous. The illustrations are pen-and-ink, and the title page is pen-and-ink and watercolour.

The later print magazine from 1883 is housed in the University of Glasgow Special Collections. According to the Editor's 'Preface', the contributions to the magazine are by the current members of the congregation or those who were formerly connected with it. The illustrations are, however, almost entirely by 'outsiders'.

This magazine has 80 pages with 19 contributions. Including the frontispiece, there are 10 illustrations, all of which are not included in the pagination (this number does not include the illustration of the church on the title page). There are slightly more prose pieces than poems, numbering 11 and 8 respectively. Five contributors use pen-names and there are two unsigned pieces. The rest of the essays and poems are signed with either the authors' own name or initials. There is one article that is possibly by a woman entitled, 'Lords of Creation', a piece which challenges men's so-called superiority, and is signed by 'Female Modesty'.

This literary society magazine is of note as at least three of its contributors were-or were to become-men of some import in the community. The first contribution in the magazine is a nature poem called 'A Wild Geranium', and is written by Hugh Macmillan. Macmillan was the then current minister of the church, and the poem reflects his keen interest in botany. (For more information about Macmillan, see '[Hugh Macmillan](#)' on *The Glasgow Story* website).

The second piece, a review of a new biography of James Clerk Maxwell, which includes an overview of his life, is written by James Brown. This was probably Reverend James Brown. (For more information about Brown, see '[2nd Lieutenant Alexander Brown](#)' on *The University of Glasgow Story* website.)

The last example is an article entitled 'Some Glasgow Churches' that was written by A. M'Gibbon and was accompanied by his wonderfully detailed drawings of the churches he discusses. The author/illustrator was almost certainly Alexander M'Gibbon (alternatively McGibbon) (1861?-1938), who, at the time of the publication of this

magazine, was working as a draughtsman for John Honeyman. M'Gibbon later became an influential teacher at the Glasgow School of Art. (For more information about M'Gibbon, see the entry for '[Alexander McGibbon](#)' on *The Dictionary of Scottish Architects, 1660-1980* website.)

Name of Club, Society or Group That Produced the Magazine

Free St. Peter's Young Men's Association (later became Free St. Peter's Literary Society) (Glasgow)

Date of Existence

1871?-?

Date of Magazine

January 1871; 1883

Number of Issues

2 (extant)

Manuscript/Published Magazine

Manuscript (January 1871); Print (1883) (Glasgow: Dunn & Wright, 1883)

Contents and Contributions

Annotation; Art/Illustrations (original); Articles (non-fiction); Circulation list (1871); Editorial (x2) (1871); Essays; Fiction/Narrative; Fiction/Narrative (vernacular) (1871); Frontispiece; Poems (original); Preface; Table of Contents

Repository

Mitchell Library Special Collections (MLSC) (Jan. 1871 issue)

University of Glasgow Special Collections (UGSC) (1883 issue)

Reference

321129, GO52 BLY (MLSC)

Sp Coll Robertson Bf68-b.23 (UGSC)

Additional Notes

The *Free St Peter's Literary Society Magazine* (1883) housed in the University of Glasgow Special Collections is part of the Alexander Robertson collection, and is item 8 of 9 bound together.

See also entry for [Free St. Peter's Young Men's Association](#) (later became [Free St. Peter's Literary Society](#)) on our sister website, [Glasgow's Literary Bonds](#).