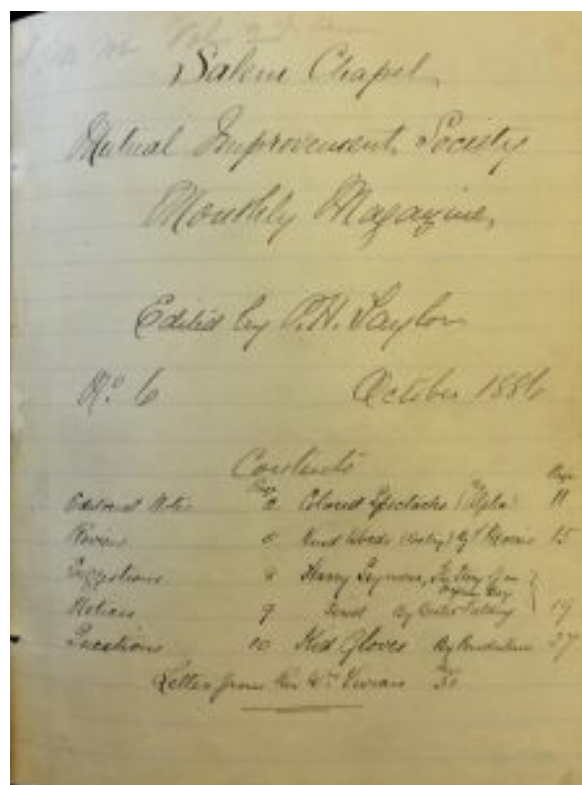


Salem Chapel Mutual Improvement Society Monthly Magazine



Salem Church, Baptist Mills, Printed Matter, etc., *Salem Chapel Mutual Improvement Society Monthly Magazine*, [title page], ed. by P.H. Taylor, No. 6, October 1886 (Bristol Archives, 35123/S/P/1). Permission to reproduce this photograph has kindly been granted by Bristol Archives.

Overview

The mutual improvement society that produced this monthly magazine was made up of members of the Salem Methodist Church in Baptist Mills (an area in the northeast of Bristol). The church was founded in 1853 and located on Lower Ashley Road. (For a brief history of this church, see '[Salem Chapel \(Demolished\), Baptist Mills, Bristol](#)' on the [Places of Worship Database](#) website.)

We don't know when the class was officially started as no other records from the

group between 1886 and 1898 appear to have survived (see below). Happily, this lacuna can be filled from various articles in its magazine. In the mid-1880s, the President of the class was the then current minister, Reverend S. Heywood, and the group had two secretaries and an Executive Committee. The subscription charge was 2s per year. It was a mixed-gender class that met weekly, and like other groups of this type, its yearly sessions (October until March or April) included a range of activities, including the reading of original essays by society members followed by 'criticisms', hearing papers read by invited speakers, debates, extempore speaking, and social evenings and outings. The attendance records given in the October 1886 issue suggest that there may have been around 60 to 70 members (at least). The class also had its own library.

There are 19 extant issues of this magazine which are bound into three hardcover volumes (Vol. 2 having 7 issues, and Vols. 4 and 6 both having 6). The magazine was initially read aloud at society meetings and later bound, which was not unusual. According to the 'Editorial' in the October 1886 issue, the 'choice of subjects [was] left entirely to the judgement and good taste of the writers', and contributions on politics were even allowed, as long as the writer refrained from party politics (P.H. Taylor, 'Editorial Notes', *Salem Chapel Mutual Improvement Society Monthly Magazine*, ed. by P.H. Taylor, Vol. 2, No. 6, October 1886, p. 3). Authors were given the option of signing their own names or using a pen-name. Some of the readers wrote to the Editor to share their comments, which were then included in the next month's issue.

Included in the magazine are regular features like: the 'Review', which gives an summary of the group's recent activities; 'Notices', which advertises upcoming talks and events; the 'Letters to the Editor'; and a correspondence column entitled, 'Questions', which is directed more towards the readers of the magazine rather than the Editor *per se*. It is only in Volume 6 that original artwork begins to be used as ornamentation or to illustrate the articles in which they appear.

There are a few records that have survived for the class dating from a bit later than the magazines: inserted into the front of Volume 6 are 16 pages selected from some of the minutes from the class's minute books for the years 1896 to 1898, including Executive meetings and lists of members (1896-97, total of 52, and for 1897-98, total of 43).

Name of Club, Society or Group That Produced the Magazine

Salem Chapel Mutual Improvement Society

Date of Existence

1886?-1898?

Date of Magazine

Nos. 6-12, October 1886-April 1887; Nos. 19-24, October 1888-March 1889; Nos. 31-36, October 1890-March 1891

Number of Issues

19 (extant)

Manuscript/Published Magazine

Manuscript

Contents and Contributions

Art/Illustrations (original); Club notices; Correspondence column; Editorials; Essays; Fiction/Narratives; Letters to Editor; Membership lists; Poems (original); Readers' Criticisms; Reviews (reports on group activities); Serial articles/stories; Sketches; Tables of Contents; Title pages

Repository

Bristol Archives

Reference

35123/S/P/1, 2(a), 2(b)