

Aemulus

Overview

The mutual improvement group that produced this magazine was based at River Terrace Church (River Terrace was later renamed Colebrooke Row), Islington, London. The church was built in 1834 for its Scottish congregation. The River Terrace Young Men's Association later became The River Terrace Bible Class, before changing again to the Islington Presbyterian Church Young Men's Association in 1862.

There are two minute books (also housed in the London Metropolitan Archives) and three extant volumes of a manuscript magazine from this later group (see also [LMA catalogue](#) for the records of the earlier River Terrace groups). From these, we know that the association was made up of young Scottish men that met weekly at the church between December and June, a session that was a bit unusual for this type of society. The object of the association was the 'moral, intellectual and religious improvement of the Young men connected with the church'. Women were allowed to join as full members in January 1891. Four years after its founding, the group started its own manuscript magazine for its members.

In 1866, the first issue of *The Aemulus* was produced. The contributions to the issue were previously read aloud at the society's 'Magazine Nights'. 'Magazine Evenings' or 'Magazine Nights' were meetings that were devoted to the reading of original essays (or occasionally poems) written by group members that were submitted to the Magazine Editor beforehand. The Editor would be responsible for collecting, occasionally selecting, and reading the pieces aloud to the group (more rarely this was done by the contributor him/herself) on the appointed night. This would be followed by 'criticism' — or discussion on the piece's positive *and* negative points — by the group members.

After the meetings, these contributions were sometimes bound and saved in the society's library (if they had one) or would be kept by one of the office bearers. In these cases, it was intended that the magazine was to be preserved and that group members would have access to it at a later date. It is of note that literary and mutual improvement groups used the term 'magazine' to refer to the oral as well as the material medium.

The 1866 volume serves as a 'typical' example of the later volumes. There are 35

prose pieces, 14 poems (of which two that are listed as such in the front 'Index' are acrostics), one musical score for piano and one voice, three illustrations, and six photographs of Office Bearers. According to the 'Preface', the pieces were produced over the course of one year, and nineteen members and two non-members contributed.

As the Editor, Thomas William Thacker, wrote at the beginning of the volume, '[t]his manuscript magazine was started to give the members of the Islington Presbyterian Church Young Men's Association a means of committing to paper thoughts more or less matured. It is strictly anonymous: and few beyond the fellow members have seen the parts as they were issued month by month.' While the group continued to meet until 1894 (at least), it is currently unknown if they continued to produce their magazine after 1878.

Name of Club, Society or Group That Produced the Magazine

Islington Presbyterian Church Young Men's Association (London)

Date of Existence

1862-1894?

Date of Magazine

Vol. I, '(Parts IX)', 1866; Vol. III, 1868-1869; Vol. III [sic], 1878

Number of Issues

3

Manuscript/Published Magazine

Manuscript

Contents and Contributions

Art/Illustrations (original); Articles (non-fiction); Editorials; Essays; Indexes; Lists of Office Bearers; Magazine Rules; Music; Photographs (members); Poems (original); Prefaces; Puzzles; Title pages

Repository

London Metropolitan Archives

Reference

LMA/4303/E/04/015;

LMA/4303/E/04/016;

LMA/4303/E/04/017