

(Magazine Evening: Magazine Later Bound)

Overview

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

At the first formative meeting of this group in October 1889, a proposal was made to have a manuscript magazine for the society, which was 'favorably mentioned by several of the gentlemen present'. An Editor was duly appointed as one of the office bearers. It is of note that this society saw the production of a magazine as an important element to the aims of the group from the very beginning.

The group's magazine would take the form of a 'Magazine Night', and a decision was made later on to have the contributions bound. '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 association's first Magazine Night was held on 15 February 1890, when the Editor, James McGilvery, read aloud the pieces that were sent to him prior to the meeting. The minutes note that McGilvery took the trouble of re-writing all the pieces into a single document. This was an uncommon practice in mutual improvement and literary groups. It was usually done to try to maintain the anonymity of the authors as their respective handwriting was presumably recognisable by other group members. This practice also helped to give a uniformity to the magazine, which, for some

societies was of some import.

The contributions from that first night were both prose essays and poems. The authors chose pen-names, for example, 'Abbot' and 'Muse'. Most of the titles were not recorded, but it was noted that a paper entitled the 'Evolution of Plants' and a clay pipe's humorous soliloquy drew the most conversation, the substance of which is given. The subjects of the other pieces and the comments they elicited were noted. The first Annual Report for the society described the night a a 'brilliant success'.

At the close of the meeting, it was proposed that the magazine be bound and made part of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Library, and that the literary society members would have have first priority. The magazine was then placed in the YMCA Library, and was the joint property of the society and the YMCA. To date, we have found no evidence of this volume or the second volume, which was also recorded as being bound.

Thereafter, a Magazine Night was held once a session in February. In some cases, the titles and respective summaries are given in the minutes. In the case of some of the poems, it is not possible to determine the subject.

After the society was revived in 1908, the next Magazine Night was held in December 1909, with last being held a year later.

Name of Club, Society or Group That Produced the Magazine

Renwick Free Church Literary Association (Glasgow)

Date of Existence

9 November 1889-1892; 9 January 1908-1913?

Date of Magazine

February 1890, February 1891, February 1892, December 1909, December 1910

Number of Issues

5 (possibly not extant)

Manuscript/Published Magazine

Manuscript (magazines appear to be no longer extant)

Contents and Contributions

Advertisement; Articles (non-fiction); Correspondence column; Editorial; Essays; Fiction/Narrative; Game (acrostic); Letter to Editor; Poems (original); Sketch

Repository

(Glasgow City Archives)

Reference

(See: Renwick Church of Scotland [from GCA folder: 'from 1876 Renwick Free Church'], Literary Association, minutes, 1889-1892; 1908-1913)

(Note: these records are listed under different reference numbers in the Glasgow City Archives (GCA) black reference binder, and in the National Records of Scotland (NRS) online catalogue. Both are listed here: (GCA folder:) GCA, TD396/30/1-2; (NRS cat.:.: GCA, CH3/1650/9/3/1-2)

Additional Notes

See also entry for [Renwick Free Church Literary Association](#) on our sister website, [Glasgow's Literary Bonds](#).