

(Magazine Evening)

Overview

The first 'Annual Report of the Committee of the Airdrie Young Men's Christian Association' (in manuscript) provides a brief history of the group's inaugural year from its founding in February 1872 until January 1873. The association was nonsectarian and its object was its members' religious, moral and intellectual improvement. This was to be accomplished by holding a variety of meetings which were divided by the group into the religious and the secular. For example, in addition to meetings held for bible studies, devotional exercises and 'proofs', there were also meetings specifically for mutual improvement activities like preparing and presenting 'general essays' to the group, holding debates, and reading materials aloud at the meetings.

The group met at the Town Hall in Airdrie by permission of the Town Council (later, the venue would change to the Association Hall, which was located at 89 Graham Street). The sessions ran weekly during the winter from October until April, and the first session wrapped up with a social meeting. The subjects of the essays and debates were similar to those of other literary and mutual improvement groups. During the summer of 1872, the group met for classes in elocution, and 25 members took part. In the second session, a class in shorthand and another in French were started.

There were 40 members in the first (short) session, and by January 1873, mid-way through the second session, there were 68. The Committee noted rather tartly that the attendance levels at the mutual improvement meetings were on the whole better attended than the religious ones. This document also includes the attendance rolls.

The second document related to this group is a printed announcement for the opening lecture for the 1883-1884 session. The last is a printed prospectus booklet for the 1893-1894 session, which includes: a list of the Airdrie Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) office bearers; list of affiliated associations; names of the members of the General Council; advertisements for the association's activities; syllabus for the 'Literary Section'; a list of the section's committee members; its bylaws; constitution of the YMCA; and membership details.

From the syllabus of the Literary Section, we know that the group continued to meet weekly in the late nineteenth century. Membership was open to young men who were members of the YMCA and others who were of good moral character. The subscription

charge was 1s 6d, which was cheaper than the subscription for 'Basic Members' of the YMCA (2s), and cheaper than the average for these groups at this time (2s 6d). Similarly to the meetings in the 1870s, guest lectures were given and essays read, but a musical evening was added to the syllabus along with an annual free breakfast for the poor. Further, 'Magazine Evenings' (listed in the Syllabus as the 'Editor's Drawer') were now featured, and there were three held during this session.

'Magazine Evenings', 'Magazine Nights', or even 'Manuscript 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.

Name of Club, Society or Group That Produced the Magazine

Airdrie Young Men's Christian Association, 'Literary Section'

Date of Existence

7 February 1872-1894?

Date of Magazine

1893?-1894?

Number of Issues

(at least) 3 Magazine Evenings (unknown if contributions were preserved)

Manuscript/Published Magazine

(Presumably unpublished manuscripts)

Contents and Contributions

(unknown)

Repository

North Lanarkshire Archives

Reference

Airdrie Young Men's Christian Association, 1872-1893, U31 2/1-3

[Note: the reference number given on the [Scottish Archive Network online catalogue](#) for this material is listed as the following: GB1778/U31]