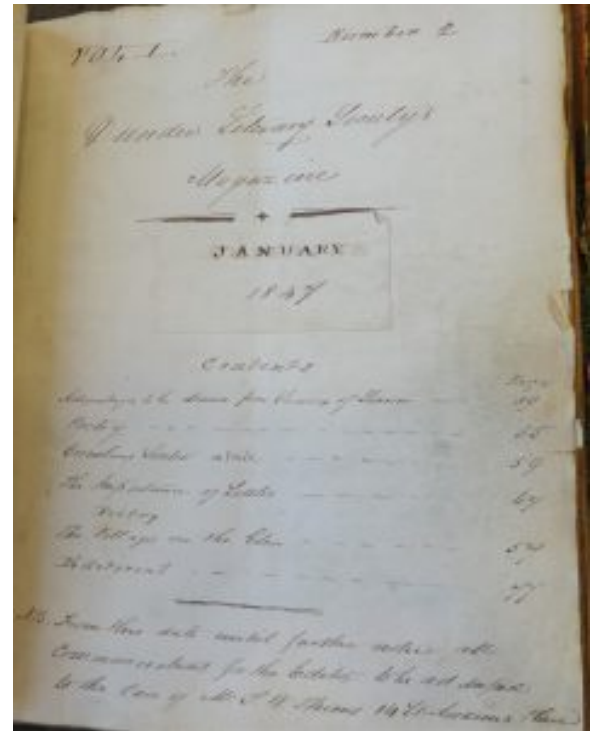


The Dundee Literary Society's Magazine



Dundee Literary Society, *The Dundee Literary Society's Magazine*, [title page], Vol. 1, No. 2, January 1847 (Libraries, Leisure and Culture Dundee, D22021, Lamb Collection). Permission for the use of this image has kindly been granted by Libraries, Leisure and Culture Dundee.

Overview

Dundee Literary Society's decision to launch a magazine in December 1846 was mainly focused on extending the reach of its influence, meaning that those who could not attend meetings because of time or location could share in some of the benefits. Perhaps some of those who benefited from the magazine were prevented from attending meetings due to age or gender restrictions too, but this is not clear from the readers' list. The wider circulation was also intended to make authors try harder in their work, especially with the potential for scrutiny by a "higher class of readers

than was to be found in the society itself.”

The magazine was published monthly between October 1846 and June 1848, at which point “several factors [...] obstructed its progress.” The editor gives no more detail than this, though lack of enough regular contributions seems a likely reason. The magazine’s revival, in January 1849, went ahead despite some opposition from members. The latest surviving issue is from 1852, although this does not necessarily mean publication ceased after that year.

On more than one occasion, the magazines were used to reflect upon the benefits of the societies themselves, either in editorials or submitted essays. In 1851, Dundee Literary Society’s magazine included a piece entitled “On the Influence of Literary Societies on Particular Aspects of the Character.” The author notes the volume of recent public discussion on the benefits of literary societies - reinforcing their popularity - and reiterates the argument that these societies are good for improving members’ natural “vigour of mind” and instilling modesty, particularly through the active habit of practicing virtue.

The benefit of the friendly rivalry which these societies can foster is also presented as a benefit (a more formalised version of the Republic of Letters’ weekly competitions, see ‘Additional Notes’ below), as the sense of rivalry was considered to only emerge among equals: “[the] peasant does not envy his wealthy master, yet in the rustic game he will do his utmost to excel.” The society was an equaliser on intellectual terms, encouraging members to apply themselves until they were a match for their most accomplished colleagues.

Name of Club, Society or Group That Produced the Magazine

Dundee Literary Society

Date of Existence

31 Jan. 1845-?

Date of Magazine

1847-1854 (Vol. 1, 1847; Vol. 1, Nos. 1-6, 1849; Vol. 3, Nos. 13-18, 1850; Vol. 4, Nos. 19-24, 1850; various unbound copies, 1851-1854 (Incomplete))

Number of Issues

6 vols.* (*while the 1850 Contents lists 6 issues, there are only 5, the last one not

included) = 45 issues

Manuscript/Published Magazine

Manuscript

Contents and Contributions

Articles (non-fiction); Editorial; Essays; Letter to 'Critic'; Letter to Editor; Magazine Rules; Poems (original); Table of Contents

Repository

Dundee District Central Library, The Wellgate

Reference

D22021, Lamb Collection

Additional Notes

See also [Dundee Natural History and Literary Society Magazine](#) for more information about The Republic of Letters, and [Dundee Literary and Scientific Institute Magazine](#).

These magazines were collected in the 1860s by A.C. Lamb, a Dundee temperance hotelier. Many of the societies represented met on premises owned by either himself or, in earlier decades, in his father Thomas' coffee house. Lamb was often involved in society life himself, and his collection of over 450 boxes covers a wide range of material relating to literature, poetry, culture and politics in Victorian Dundee. For more information on this material, please contact local.history@leisureandculturedundee.com.