

Renwick Free Church Literary Association (not the same as Renwick Book Club, but part of same Church)

Overview

The congregation of this church was known as the Southern Reformed Presbyterian Congregation and their church was located on Salisbury Street, in the south side of the city in the Laurieston area. (For more information on this area, see '[Gorbals, Glasgow. Laurieston Guide](#)' on the [ScotCities](#) website). The City Union Railway bought the building in 1868 and a new church was built on nearby Cumberland Street. Eight years later they joined the Free Church. (For more information on the history of this congregation, see '[Glasgow – Renwick](#)' on the [Ecclegen](#) website.)

An 'intimation' to form this literary association was made at a meeting of the Renwick Y.M.C.A. held on 20 October 1889 ('Proceedings relative to formation of Renwick Free Church Literary Association, Saturday Evening 26th Octr. 1889', Renwick Free Church Literary Association, Literary Association minutes, 1889-1892, p. 1). The first meeting was held on 9 November 1889 when 18 young men met to listen to a talk by Hugh Hamilton, the President, on 'Self-Development'. They would continue to meet every other Saturday evening. From the very beginning, the group was determined to found its own manuscript magazine and one James McGilvery was appointed as its editor. To date, it is unknown if this magazine has survived (see 'Additional Notes' below).

The group seems to have dissolved in 1892. In 1908, it was revived as the Renwick United Free Church Literary Society. Members met every other Thursday evening at 8pm in the Session Room of the church. There were 17 members on the roll in the 1908-09 session, which included Reverend William Simpson, Reverend W. F. Young, and four unmarried women. The minute book also records three 'Occasional [male] Visitors'. In the following year, the group grew to 23 members, seven of whom were unmarried women. This was only ever a small group that did not exceed 25 members in its history.

The minutes record that the group held 'Magazine Nights', at which the Editor read aloud the contributions from the association (see 'Additional Notes' below). These included original essays, poems, a correspondence column and letters to the Editor. According to the minutes, the group did have at least the first two volumes bound. To date, we have not found any trace of them in the local archives.

Date of Existence

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

Source of Information

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)

Repository

Glasgow City Archives (GCA)

Reference Number

(See Source of Information)

Additional Notes

The Literary Society was different from the Renwick Book Club (instituted 28 January 1859), but it appears that they both belonged to the same church. Book clubs were different than most literary societies, in that the members solicited titles (usually rare or out of print books) for the year, which they would then have printed and auction off.

This society should not be confused with the [Renwick Free Church Branch Glasgow United Young Men's Christian Association](#), which was a separate organisation in the same church.

See also [Literary Society of St. Ninian's Parish Church](#), with whom this society had a joint debate on 1 December 1890.

See also [Renwick Free Church Literary Association \(Magazine Evening: Magazine](#)

Later Bound) on our sister website, [Literary Bonds](#).