

Toynbee House Literary Society (University Settlement Association)

Overview

This society was one of several classes, clubs and societies formed by the University Settlement Association, Toynbee House, which was located at 130 Parson Street, Townhead, Glasgow. (For more information on this area, see the entry for '[Townhead Glasgow. Cathedral Precinct](#)' on the [ScotCities](#) website). The University Settlement Association was the University of Glasgow branch of Toynbee Hall in London, which was founded in 1884. (For a history of and details of the current work of Toynbee Hall, see their website ('Our History', *Toynbee Hall* <<http://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/our-history>>. For a more detailed discussion of settlement houses during this period, see Lucinda Matthews-Jones, 'Centres of Brightness: The Spiritual Imagination of Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, 1880-1914' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manchester, 2009).

A 'Memorandum' written in 1889 by the Honorary Secretary provides a good summary of the association, and provides further details on the work. Modeled on the work of social work being conducted by Toynbee Hall in London, in 1886, the Glasgow University Settlement Association hired two rooms at 130 Parson Street (located in the Townhead area, in the north of the city) in which to hold discussions and serve tea. Working-class people from the area were invited every fortnight for social evenings.

The same 1888-1889 report gives an account of the first session of the Literary Society. The group was made up of approximately 50 to 60 members. At the meetings, essays were read and debates were held which were followed by discussions. In addition, members practiced extempore speaking. At the end of the session, there was a large social meeting at which there was music and readings.

Date of Existence

1888-?

Source of Information

1. Toynbee House (Glasgow), Report of the University Settlement Association, Toynbee House, 130 Parson Street, Glasgow, 1888-90 (Glasgow: James Maclehose &

Sons, [1888?] (UGL, Research Annexe, Store MacLehose 762);

2. Toynbee House (Glasgow), Report for 1901-1902 of Toynbee House, Cathedral Court, Rottenrow, Glasgow ([MacLehose], [1902]) (UGL, Research Annexe, Store MacLehose 784);

3. Toynbee House (Glasgow), Report for 1903-1904 of Toynbee House, Cathedral Court, Rottenrow, Glasgow ([Glasgow: MacLehose], [1903]) (UGL, Research Annexe, Store MacLehose 791);

4. (Newspaper clipping:) Glasgow Herald (24 March 1908) (this article is on the Old Glasgow Club, but mentions this society) (MLSC, Young's Scrapbooks, Vol. 18, p. 70)

Repository

Mitchell Library Special Collections (MLSC)

University of Glasgow Library (UGL)

Reference Number

(See Source of Information)

Additional Notes

See also [Shakespeare Reading Class \(Toynbee House, University Settlement Association\)](#).