

University Printing Office Literary & Scientific Institution

Overview

The staff at the University Printing Office of the University of Glasgow followed the model set by the Gas Workmen's Institution (1825-?) in setting up their own institution (see 'Additional Notes' below). A library was formed first and began with a donation of books by John M. Duncan, a co-partner in the printing office, in 1822. In 1825, it had 210 volumes 'consisting principally of historical works, travels, romances, and poems'. Between 90 and 95 men and boys were employed at the printing office in that year. Figures for the year before state that 54 workers subscribed to the library, and entry money was based on income.

The majority of those who subscribed were apprentices aged between 14 and 21, with only 17 of the more senior journeymen making up the rest, as it was reported that these men chose to get their books from the larger collections available at the Mechanics' Library, Anderson's Institution Library, and the North Quarter Library. Duncan suggested that a literary and scientific institution be formed based on the same principles as the Gas Works, and the library and institution were joined shortly after the institution's founding.

The committee, made up of some of the more senior staff, were requested to provide the lectures, the subjects being on scientific, mechanical, and chemical principles. The speaker who provided the introductory address, the surgeon, James M'Conechy—described by *The Glasgow Mechanics' Magazine* as a person '(who appears to have interested himself considerably in the originating of this Institution,)'—concludes his speech with what amounted to a manifesto in support of 'Popular Education'.

Date of Existence

19 March 1825-?

Source of Information

1. McConechy, James, 'An introductory address ... on the formation of a literary and scientific institution among the workmen of the university printing office' (Glasgow,

1825) (ML, Mitchell (GC) 374 53662-Copies are also available at NLS (Special Collections Reading Room, 1938.27(12)) and UGL (Library Research Annexe, Bf76-k.11);

2. 'Literary and Scientific Institution at the University Printing Office, Glasgow', *The Glasgow Mechanics' Magazine; and Annals of Philosophy*, 3, 1825, pp. 341-4 (MLSC, Mitchell (AL) 19 GLA 52873- for full holdings apply to staff);

3. 'University Printing Office', *The Glasgow Mechanics' Magazine*, 3, 1825, p. 217 (MLSC, Mitchell (AL) 19 GLA 52873- for full holdings apply to staff)

Repository

Mitchell Library Special Collections (MLSC)

National Library of Scotland (NLS) ('An introductory address')

University of Glasgow Library (UGL) ('An introductory address')

Reference Number

(See Source of Information)

Additional Notes

See also [Gas Workmen's Institution](#).