The Literary Clubs and Societies of Glasgow during the Long Nineteenth Century: A City's History of Reading through its Communal Reading Practices and Productions

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Chapter 5:
Case Study 2: The Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association

Background

This second case study focuses on the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association (hereafter the association). Formed in 1862, as of October 2017, it is still running.[306] This is an uncommon case of a literary society founded in the nineteenth century that continues to meet. In addition, it has the distinction of having the largest known collection available on any nineteenth-century Glasgow literary society I have examined.[307] In 2015, the records and the majority of the books from the association's library were deposited in the Shetland Archives in Lerwick, where they are currently housed.[308]

The history of the Association has already been the subject of a book by Jerry Eunson and Olivia D. Scott. The book provides an overview of the history of the Association, and covers the years from its founding until 1962, when the authors discuss its then current state and reflect on the Association's centenary.[309] This chapter will also cover the association's history, but will focus on the group's 'literary' history, that is, the role of reading, and the production and consumption of their own manuscript magazines in the fulfilment of its objects and aims. In keeping with the historic dates of my doctoral project, I examined only the records between 1862 and 1914.

Similarly to other nineteenth-century societies, this association used (and still uses) a broad definition of literary to define its activities—which included the development and practice of rhetorical and compositional skills—and as a synonym for and marker of culture in the broadest sense. To be considered literary in this as in other societies, one would have read a wide range of

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[306] Membership in the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association has diminished since the mid-twentieth century, a decline that its members acknowledge may be terminal. A few years ago, plans were drawn up for the winding up of the group should the membership and/or lack of funds make the group no longer viable. As of October 2017, as a newly-elected member of the association, I can report the group is still running.

[307] Since mid-March 2016, I have been informed of the existence of the 'almost complete' records of 'Ours' Club, formerly known as the Glasgow Philological and Literary Society. This club was formed in 1871 and continues to meet at the Glasgow Art Club. The records from 1871 to 1971 are currently housed in the Glasgow City Archives, located in the Mitchell Library (GCA, TD1896). The records from 1972 to the present are in the possession of the club's archivist, Donald Macaskill. I am indebted to John C. Crawford for placing me in contact with current members Jim Robertson and Macaskill. I have yet to examine these records in their entirety.

[308] B. Smith, p. 2.

[309] Jerry Eunson and Olivia D. Scott, *The Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, 1862-1962* (Glasgow: Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, 1962).

subjects and genres that included literature. The Annual Report for the 1888-89 session defines this literary or 'well read man', and uses him as an aspirational model for the members:

> A well read man is respected, honoured, and considered capable of forming sound opinions, possibly not from his greater capacity for judicious judgement naturally, but simply because the very fact of his being well read has enlarged his sympathies, his vocabulary, his opinions, and his powers of discernment and discrimination. Let it therefore be our unceasing aim to learn what we can from everybody, but to think and act for ourselves.[310]

Being literary was also part of the association's public persona in its self-designation, and was an integral component of its ethos and public practices: it was an important factor in the selection of (Honorary) members; the selection of subjects for papers and debates, including the manner in which they were delivered; the establishment of its manuscript magazine; the inclusion of the magazine's contributions; and underlies listeners' oral criticisms at the meetings and readers' written criticisms in the magazines. In the following discussion of this county association's literary meetings and magazines, I aim to demonstrate the ways in which the interplay between them helped in building a community of critical readers, writers and listeners to bring about members' 'improvement', which was centred on their identification with their (or their parents') Northern place of origin. This type of in-depth study is made possible by an almost complete set of records available in the archives.

The association's records between 1862 and 1914 include the following:

- 6 minute books (Minute Books, No. 1-6, 1862-1917);
- 1 minute book of the Reunion Committee (1912-1948);
- 13 bound manuscript magazines:
  - October 1864;
  - May 1865, containing 6 previous issues (March 1864 (belated January 1864 issue); April 1864; [July 1864?]; October 1864 (second copy); [January 1865?]; and April 1865);
  - January 1869;
  - April 1869;
  - circa 1870 [March 1870?];

[310] SA, Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, 'Twenty-seventh Annual Report of Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association', Session 1888-89, 30 March 1889, D58/4a/3. Hereafter, the Association will be abbreviated as GOSLSA, and unless otherwise noted, their records are housed at Shetland Archives.

  - October 1870;
  - April 1871;
  - January 1872, Part 4;
- 4 bound typescript magazines–from ‘Magazine Nights’:
  - D58/2/9 contains contributions from 5 ‘Magazine Nights’ for sessions 1903-04; 1904-05; 1905-06; 1906-07; and 1908-09;
  - Session 1910-1911;
  - 1912 (read on ‘Magazine Night’ held December 1911);
  - Session 1912-1913;
- 49 Annual Reports, including information on the Association’s library (1862-1915; five annual reports are no longer extant: 1864-65; 1871-1871; 1899-1900; 1902-03; and 1904-05);
- 44 syllabi (1862-1915, with the exception of those for sessions 1865-66, 1866-67, 1867-68, 1869-70, 1876-77, 1878-79, 1900-01, 1901-02, and 1902-1903);
- 14 Constitutions and Rules (1862; April 1876; April 1894; 1897; 1898; September 1905; September 1906; September 1907; September 1908; September 1909; September 1910; April 1911; September 1911; April 1914);
- financial reports;[311]
- lists of Office Bearers, Honorary Members, and Ordinary Members (1862; 1893-1915);[312]
- library catalogues (1905-1915);
- ‘Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book’ (1869-1891; 1971);
- various clippings from Glasgow, Orkney, and Shetland newspapers.

There are a few materials known to be no longer extant. These include four Roll Books, one receipt book, one cash book, two savings bank books, and various letters and papers, all dating from 1862 until 1906, when the Property Committee made its first report.[313] In addition, there is (at least) one typescript magazine no longer extant.[314] This does not detract from the richness of materials available, and the information in them, in some cases, can be gleaned from other sources.

[311] The financial reports and thus the financial status of this association will not be covered in this chapter.
[312] The Association’s published prospectuses included a list of the session’s Office Bearers, Honorary Members, and, beginning in 1893, the Ordinary Members.
[313] This information comes from the ‘First Bi-Annual Report of Glasgow Orkney & Shetland Literary & Scientific Association “Property Committee”’, dated 11 October 1906, which is included in the minutes for the 1906-07 session (GOSLSA, Minute Book, No. 6, 26 April 1906-5 September 1917, D58/1/6). The Report also itemises the various other materials and property belonging to the Association, including a reading stand, book presses, library books, various stationary items, a banner, a photograph of the Association members, and an oil painting of Lieutenant John Malcolm, the ‘Solider Poet of Orkney’.
[314] The association’s minutes give the titles of nine papers that were read at the ‘Magazine Night’ held on 7 March 1914. The minutes of the following meeting record the unanimous decision to have these papers typed and the ‘Magazine’ ‘placed in the library as usual’ (Minute entry, 07 March 1914, Minute Book, No. 6; minute entry, 21 March 1914, Minute Book, No. 6).

Overview of the Association

Origin and Initial Developments

The association was founded on the 9th of November 1862, when approximately 40 men met in the Religious Institution Rooms at 75 St. George's Place, Glasgow (now Nelson Mandela Place), to discuss the formation of a new society.[315] Thomas Stout, who would become the association's first president, occupied the chair. It was recorded that he spoke of the:

> pleasure & profit which would accrue from an association of the nature [of a literary society], breaking as it would do the alienation which has so long existed as a barrier amongst the natives of Orkney & Shetland resident in Glasgow to the furtherance of their social and material interests.[316]

After his speech, 'the Gentlemen present were invited to express their views on the subject', the result being that 'by general design' it was thought that their society would not be associated with the already extant Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Benevolent Society.[317] However, the men were unequivocal about the object under which the society should be instituted, '[t]he meeting being unanimous that an Association be formed having for its object Literary pursuits.'[318] At the close of the meeting, twenty-seven men enrolled as members.

With further discussion apparently being unnecessary, the men also seem to be in full agreement as to what comprised those 'Literary pursuits'. If Stout's speech is indicative of the general feeling, the men hoped to reap 'pleasure & profit' from their new association/s. They would have the opportunity to meet other men who, like themselves or their parents, moved from

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[315] Minute entry, 9 November 1862, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 1, D58/1/1).
[316] *Ibid*.
[317] The Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Benevolent Society was formed on 11 January 1837, thus being already in existence for 25 years prior to the formation of the literary and scientific association. The society's aims were similar to other 'friendly societies' in the nineteenth century (see Chapter 2), and its aims were largely unchanged during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The printed 'Rules' for 1925 state that '[t]he principal object of the Society shall be to raise a fund for giving charitable relief to the natives of the Orkney and Shetland Islands, their children or widows, residing in Glasgow or its neighbourhood or travelling through Glasgow, and who, from sickness or sudden emergency, may be in want of temporary aid' (Printed rules of Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Benevolent Society, 24 January 1925, D58/4b/1). While initially rejecting the amalgamation, the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association would eventually reverse their decision: on 7 April 1900, the majority of members voted in favour of the affiliation (Minute entry, 7 April 1900, Minute Book, No. 5, 2 October 1897-7 April 1906, D58/1/5).
[318] *Ibid*.

Orkney and Shetland to Glasgow, where they now resided. The association aimed to 'break' the 'alienation' that acted as a 'barrier' between them. The meetings offered a pretext for natives of Orkney and Shetland to be introduced, in effect to profit socially and possibly materially through the exchange of information regarding jobs and other opportunities. The 'furtherance of their […] material interests' could also refer to the aspirations of members to improve their position in society and in their employment through the improvement of their literary skills. In this way, this association's objects were similar to other county societies whose membership was regionally-specific and motivated by a varying combination of literary, social, and economic factors.

With some variations, the association met every other week, initially on Fridays, at 8:15pm from October until May, but altered the date and time several times over the fifty-two year period. The annual subscription for Ordinary Members was 2s 6d, eventually being raised to 3 shillings by 1876.[319] Any shortfall in the Association's budget was to be made up equally amongst the members. Honorary Members were charged five shillings annually or 5 pounds for a life membership, but by 1906, their rates were dropped altogether.[320] Although Miss Lizzie Louttit was admitted as the first 'Lady Member' in 1894, it wasn't until the commencement of the 1898-99 session that the Constitution was changed to include women as ordinary members.[321] More correctly, it was amended to include their subscription fee, which was proposed and seconded in the previous session by two 'Lady Members' at 1s 6p.[322] This amendment reflects the sudden growth in the number of women members from the previous session, rising from 7 members in the 1897-98 session to 11 members in the next session, a growth of 63% (see *Figure 5.2* below).[323]

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[319] 'Constitution', 1862, Minute Book, No. 1, p. ii; 'Constitution and Rules of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association', April 1876, Minute Book, No. 2, 8 March 1867-15 April 1876, p. 2, D58/1/2.
[320] *Ibid.* The last year that Honorary Members had to pay five shillings annually was in 1905, as listed in the Association's Constitution ('Constitution', September 1905, Minute Book, No. 5, p. 5.
[321] Minute entry, 22 November 1894, Minute Book, No. 4, 4 September 1886-3 April 1897, D58/1/4. Women were allowed to become Honorary Members *before* they were allowed as 'Ordinary Members'. Honorary Members were defined as the elected 'persons connected with the County […] distinguished in literature or science, or who shall otherwise merit such recognition' ('Constitution and Rules of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association', 1894, in Minute Book, No. 4, p. 2). Mrs. Jessie Saxby (1842-1940)—originally from Unst, Shetland, and author of tales and poetry—was the first woman to be elected as an Honorary Member was eventually passed after a new Constitution in 1876 permitted it. She accepted her membership in a letter read to the meeting held on 17 February 1877 (Minute entry, 17 February 1877, Minute Book, No. 3, 1876-86, D58/1/3.
[322] Miss Mary Anderson proposed the motion and Miss Lizzie Louttit seconded that women members were to pay 1s 6d (Minute entry, 13 November 1897, Minute Book, No. 5; 'Constitution and Rules of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association', 1 October 1898, in Minute Book, No. 5, p. i (p. 2)). While the financial records are no longer extant to confirm, Lizzie Louttit presumably paid the fee of 2s 6d as an Ordinary Member prior to this proposal.
[323] 'Roll of Ordinary Members', Prospectus for 1897-1898, in Minute Book, No. 5, [front endpaper]; 'Roll of Ordinary Members', Prospectus for 1898-1899, in Minute Book No. 5 [front endpaper].

At the 'ordinary' meetings where a paper was given, there often followed a reading of a pre-selected text by another member. Members would then offer feedback or 'criticism' on the style and manner in which it was read. The importance of this practice—in the literal sense of practicing one's diction (and accent?) by reading texts aloud, and the (somewhat) routine inclusion of this element in the Association's meetings—appears to have diminished over the years. The last entry in the minutes that records a member giving a reading is on 18 March 1905, when Miss W. S. Hamilton read a short selection from Charles Dickens's *Dombey and Son*.[324] However, readings did continue as part of the social meetings (i.e. at the yearly 'At Home', and annual reunions) up until the end of the 1914 to 1915 session.

If a debate was held, the members would vote with 'the division […] be[ing] taken first on its merits; and second, the opinion of the Members on the subject'.[325] This rule was later amended to have a vote taken on the subject alone. The amendment suggests that by at least 1897, the division between the effective argument of a subject and the subject itself were no longer seen as having separate yet equal values, the rhetorical qualities of the speaker being later subsumed under the debate's subject. The notion that every member was to have an equal opportunity to present his/her opinion was enforced through the inclusion of a new rule added to the Constitution in 1876, which stated that '[n]o Member shall be allowed to speak twice, except in explanation, until all have had an opportunity of expressing their views'.[326]

Annual Reports

The 49 Annual Reports that cover the societies' activities from 1862 until April 1915 offer a different perspective from the Minute Books that were kept by the Secretary. The reports provide the Secretaries' and later the Directors' official, public statements of the association's motivations, objects and aims, and often include a synopsis of the group's current condition. Having been '[r]ead at the Annual General Meeting, [and] Adopted', under the authority of the association,

[324] Minute entry, 18 March 1905, Minute Book, No. 5.
[325] 'Constitution and Rules of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association', April 1876, in Minute Book, No. 2, p. 361 (p. 3).
[326] 'Constitution and Rules of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association', April 1876, in Minute Book, No. 2, p. 361 (p. 2).

these reports were intended to be broadcast more widely, with reports being prefaced with a statement with 'instruct[ions for them] to be Printed and extensively circulated'.[327]

The first report claims that the motivation for the group's formation was similar to that of other young men's associations, 'namely, the love of society, both naturally and of necessity', which was an 'inherent quality in man', and to which 'may be attributed the rise and progress of Young Men's Associations' more generally.[328] This accounted for their need to be represented in Glasgow 'as well as any other place.' This official account differs slightly from the one given in their first meeting and reported in the Minute Book: while stating that the association was a means to end the 'alienation', or the social isolation they felt in their adopted city, the additional incentive to enhance members' material interests was dropped.

The stated objects and aims of the association in the annual reports varied over the years. The Fifth Annual Report tells us that '[i]t was on [a] community of feeling and sentiment, and a desire for mutual improvement, that the Association was first formed'.[329] This differs from the progressive, goal-oriented objectives set out in absolutist terms in a long exposition in the Seventh Annual Report:

> We cannot remain stationary, for to do so would be to violate the law of our being, and this law being violated, we would estrange ourselves from the common march of civilisation, and drop into that nothingness which is the chief characteristic of an ignorant man. We were formed for the acquisition of knowledge; the ground on which to work has been given us, and if we neglect to till it we do ourselves a great injustice. To enjoy life we must have an aim before our minds, a something to aspire to, a task to accomplish, and a triumph to share in. Our natures must have work, else they will die; our intellects must be cultivated, else they will rot. Our minds must be brought under the influence of a desire for knowledge, and we must bring this desire to work; we must cultivate our intellects e'er we act faithfully to ourselves. This, then, is what our Association seeks to accomplish; and now that another Session has done its work, it is each one's duty to see that he has been both individually and socially benefitted.[330]

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[327] 'Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association', Session 1862-63, 1 May 1863, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. 28. The terms 'instructed' and 'authorised' were used intermittently over the years, but the first annual report is the only one that uses 'widely circulated' and echoes the initial zeal of its founders. All subsequent reports simply use 'circulated'.

[328] *Ibid.*

[329] 'Fifth Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary & Scientific Association', Session 1866-1867, 3 May 1867, in Minute Book, No. 2, p. 9.

[330] 'Seventh Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney & Shetland Literary & Scientific Association', Session 1868-1869, 4 May 1868, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 13.

Towards the end of the century, the association's reports alternate between two main objects and aims for the group, variously using either one or both for the remainder of the period. The Twentieth through to the Fifty-Second Annual Reports, running from the 1881-82 session until the 1913-14 session, alternate between the social, and the mutual and intellectually improving aspects of the association, the same two objects that the Fifth Annual Report set out. However, unlike other Glasgow literary clubs and societies, the association opted not to change its 'official' objects as set out in its Constitutions. The 'improvement' of its members appeared to remain its core objective throughout the period even while the social aspects of its meetings were intermittently foregrounded in the annual reports.

It was not only the Constitutionally-stated objects that did not change: its members tended to remain on the membership rolls for longer periods than other societies where comparable evidence is available, with several of the founding members remaining as Honorary Members until their deaths (see below). While the range of activities in the syllabi expanded to include more social activities, and the rules regarding membership for women were amended, the organisation of the meetings and the framing structure of the session set out in the syllabi did not change. In addition, in 1869, a motion was passed to form a library, and although considerably diminished, this institution continues to serve its members up to the present.[331] The Annual Reunions of members and friends that were also natives of Orkney and Shetland that began in 1863 continued up until 1970. The association itself has survived into the twenty-first century, with some of the same traditions (e.g. a 'Literary Night') remaining on the syllabi. Continuity is a defining feature of this association. One of the reasons for this may be the association's methods for recruitment and retaining members.

Three years after the founding of the association, a motion was carried and passed '[…] that the members of the Association should each prepare and hand to the Secy a list of names of parties belonging to Orkney and Shetland that they may be visited by a deputation in order to induce them to join the Association […]'.[332] The Twelfth Annual Report urges members:

[331] Minute entry 19 October 1869, Minute Book, No. 2, p. 129.
[332] Minute entry, 16 November 1865, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 137.

> to use their influence in bringing before those young men constantly coming from the North to our City, the advantages to be derived from connection with such a Society as ours. To all such we tender our heartiest welcome.[333]

The Thirty-first Annual Report suggests that Orcadians and Shetlanders in the city might be drawn to the meetings provided members 'do all in their power to make [the meetings] attractive, cheery and pleasant'.[334] The report for the following year advocates stronger measures:

> [n]o effort should be spared by the Members to bring the interests of the Society before new arrivals from the North, to invite them to our Meetings and otherwise induce them to take part in the proceedings. The future of the Association depends on them, and without their assistance and attendance the noble aims and objects of the Society cannot be maintained.[335]

Two years later, in 1896, the Directors urge a similarly pro-active recruitment of new members that extended beyond Glasgow: '[we] urg[e] every individual member […] the necessity of using his or her influence and effort to get every Orcadian and Shetlander resident in the West incorporated on the Society's Roll.'[336] This more active recruitment policy does appear to have borne fruit, not in the following session, but two years later, in the 1898-99 session, when the membership rolls begin to increase significantly (see *Figure 5.1* below).

Another possible reason for the long continuity of the members, traditions and institutions of this association may be found in the Twenty-first Annual Report for the 1882-83 session. This report gives the association's aim as being primarily the 'intellectual improvement' of its members, but 'one of the best features' of the society is the 'bring[ing] together in social intercourse the natives of the county', which recalls and 'strengthens the chain which binds us to our island homes'.[337] The metaphorical chain that bound them to their 'island homes' also bound them to other members and the association itself, and in this way personal and kinship ties were reinforced.

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[333] 'Twelfth Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary & Scientific Association', Session 1873-74, 12 May 1874, in Minute Book No. 2, p. 304 ½.
[334] '31st Annual Report', Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary & Scientific Association, Session 1892-93, 6 April 1893, p. 4, D58/4a/6.
[335] 'Thirty-second Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Association', Session 1893-94, 7 April 1894, p. 4, D58/4a/7.
[336] 'Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association', Session 1895-1896, Prospectus for 1896-1897, in Minute Book, No. 4, p. 4.
[337] 'Twenty-first Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary & Scientific Association', Session 1882-1883, 14 April 1883, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 26.

Strongly-held notions of home and heritage are continually used in the annual reports from the association's inception.

The first annual report sets the example. Although there were said to be sufficient numbers of Orcadians and Shetlanders in Glasgow prior to 1862, the association was at a loss to discover why a society had not been formed prior to this date:

> For what reason no Young Men's Association in connection with Orkney and Shetland ever hitherto existed in Glasgow, we cannot tell. Is it that the number of young men coming from those Islands to this city is so few? Surely not; for we think the time has come, when they may be numbered by the hundred. Is it that their mental capacities are of so low an order that they are not themselves insufficient to constitute and maintain an association? No! For in this respect they prove themselves equal to their more Southern neighbours. Or is it that they are less social, homely, and patriotic? Never! For within the Scandinavian there beats as true and warm a heart as it is the pride of any other son of Adam to boast of.[338]

The report stresses the need for an association that could represent the Orcadians and Shetlanders then living in Glasgow whose numbers could potentially increase through the continued influx of the islanders into the city. It is a bold statement of assertion by its current members, concurrently being a rallying cry whose purpose is the increase of the association's membership.

This appeal to members' identification with home as being either Orkney or Shetland, and these islands' association with the North, the Fatherland, Scandinavia and the Vikings—the 'Land of a thousand sea-kings' graves'—is used throughout the entire period.[339] The rhetoric used in the reports repeatedly emphasises that the social and intellectual benefits that one accrues through membership and participation in the association are bound up in a duty to the other members by keeping each other's welfare in mind, particularly as they all hail from 'one Island home'. For example, the first annual report calls upon each individual to feel as a member of a collective:

> Let us each and all resolve fully to realise the benefits derivable from and conferred by such an Association, and to this end to be more deeply interested in and for one another,

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[338] *Ibid*.

[339] This line and more extended extracts are used in the Nineteenth and Twenty-Eighth annual reports, and are from David Vedder's poem 'To Orkney', in *Orcadian Sketches: Legendary and Lyrical Pieces* (Edinburgh: William Tait; London: Longman and Co.; Glasgow: Atkinson and Co., 1832). Vedder's work was much admired by the members of this association, as reflected in the frequent references to his work in the reports, papers and talks given to the association, and in the manuscript magazines. The emphasis on an Orcadian author's poems is reflective of the largely Orcadian membership of the association at this period. This point will be returned to below.

> which, as sons of one Island home, and that, "placed far amid the melancholy main," we should feel ourselves bound to be, and thus having at heart our interest, that of our fellow member and one common home, we have, as it were, a three-fold stimulus to urge us on to duty and exertion.[340]

This sense of solidarity with other members who hail from the North effectively separates them from 'the rest of mankind': 'Not only does the land of our birth hold a high place in our hearts, but there is also a warmth of feeling to all from the same place that is not felt towards the rest of mankind: – the chain that binds men's hearts to their country also connects with each other, more especially when they are separated from it.'[341] In subsequent reports, there often recurs nostalgic, even poetic reminiscences of 'home'.[342] The reports make it clear that the benefits that the members derive from the association, which include the 'progressive development of our intellectual powers', directly reflect honour on the 'native isles':

> whether individually or socially, let us toil nobly and well, so shall our Association flourish in the vigour of its growing strength, our native isles shall be honoured, and we ourselves shall reap the ever-increasing, everlasting reward.[343]

An individual sense of duty is often invoked through the use of authority: 'We, your Directors, as individuals, and you yourselves, have therefore a call to work in earnest for the common benefit of our Islanders, which it were a shame for us to disobey'.[344]

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[340] *Ibid*.
[341] 'Fifth Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary & Scientific Association', in Minute Book, No. 2, p. 2.
[342] For example, the Sixth Annual Report begins with a long, descriptive, romanticised vision of growing up in a 'rural home', the 'distant home where forefathers rest […] where ancestors wrought heroic deeds in the glorious past, and left their names and memorial for the generations which were to follow'. ('Sixth Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary & Scientific Association', Session 1867-68, 5 May 1868, in Minute Book No. 2, p. 69).
[343] 'Sixth Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary & Scientific Association', in Minute Book, No. 2, p. 69. This same sentiment is used in later reports, for example, the Twenty-Fourth Annual Report ends with an appeal to members' 'increased vigour and unity, redounding to the honour of our native Islands and to our own intellectual and moral improvement' ('Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary & Scientific Association', Session 1885-1886, read and approved on 13 May 1886, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 39).
[344] 'Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, Session 1895-1896, in Minute Book, No. 4, p. 3.

Members

The association began with 27 members. By the 1906-07 session, it had grown to reach its peak membership of 189 members. By the end of the 1914-15 session this would drop slightly to 176 members, and consisted of 151 Ordinary Members and 25 Honorary Members (see *Figure 5.1*).[345] Of note is the inclusion of the special classification of 'Extraordinary Members'. It allowed members who had to work and couldn't necessarily make all the meetings to remain on the rolls and pay a reduced membership fee. This category of membership was begun in 1864, and the numbers of these members are included in the association's tallies from the 1865-66 session until the 1885-86 session, when this category was discontinued. Where the annual reports are no longer extant for a session, it was sometimes possible to find information on membership in the subsequent annual report. This was not possible, however, for the 1902-03 session.[346]

[345] The totals for each session shown in *Figure 5.1* are taken from the end of session figures given in these Annual Reports.

[346] The total numbers of members in *Figure 5.1* are not definitive, however, and should be used with some caution: without the 'official' roll books, these numbers could only be taken from the Annual Reports. These reports are not consistent in their method of communicating this information, and the manner in which the figures are reported tends to obfuscate rather than elucidate their calculations. One typical example where this occurred was in the tallying of the number of members for the 1882-83 session. The Twenty-first Annual Report gives the following information: 'At the opening of the session we had a membership consisting of 41 ordinary, 10 extraordinary, and 22 honorary members. During the session 9 ordinary members have been added to the roll, and the following gentlemen elected as honorary members, viz.: – Charles Rampini, Esq., Sheriff-Substitute of Shetland; R. G. C. Hamilton, Esq., Under Secretary of State for Ireland; Rev. Oliver Flett, D.D. Paisley, and Laurance J. Nicolson, Esq., Edinburgh. Three ordinary members have been stuck off, 4 have emigrated, 2 honorary members have resigned, and 1 ordinary member has died; making at present a total membership of 73, being the same as last session' ('Twenty-first Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association', Session 1882-83, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 26). However, if one calculates the final total using the description given, the membership would be 42 Ordinary Members, 10 Extraordinary Members, and 24 Honorary Members at the end of the session, for a total of 76 not 73 members.

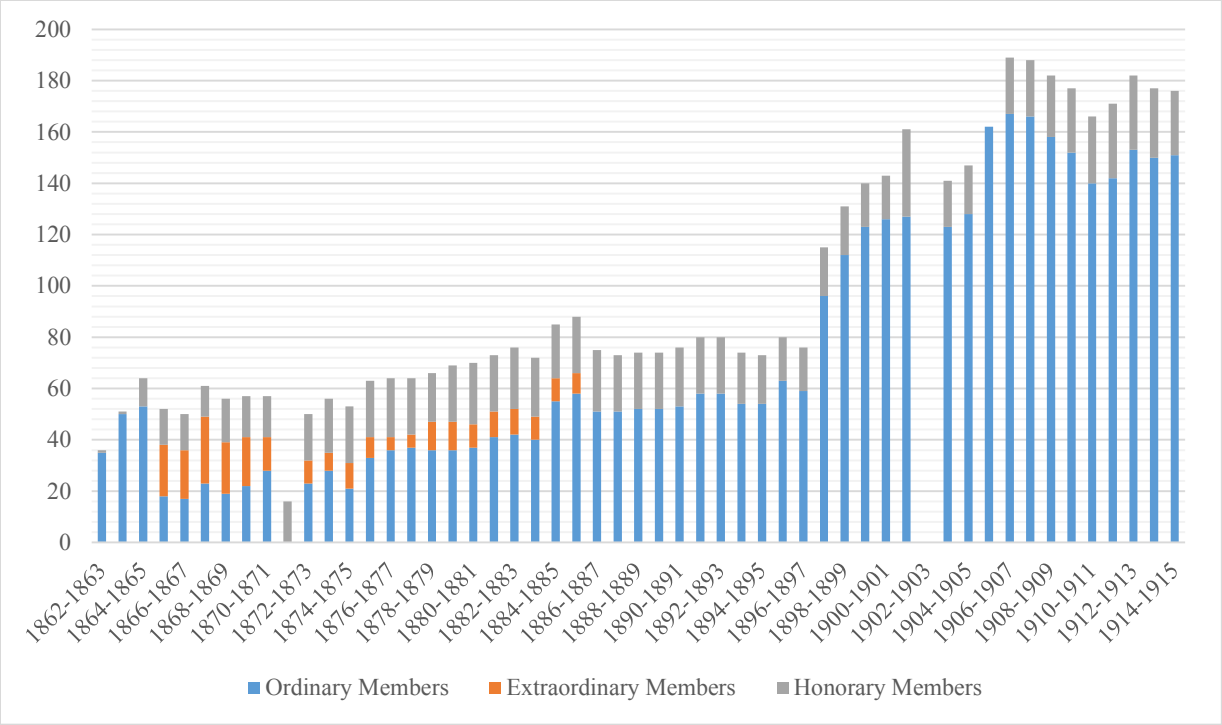

Figure 5.1: Total Number of Members of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, Session 1862-63 to 1914-15

There is a slow but steady rise in the total number of members from the association's inception until the 1896-97 session. In the very next session, there is a sharp increase: the total number of members rises from 76 in the 1896-97 session, to 115 in the 1897-98 session, an increase of 51%. The Annual Report for this session remarked on this 'substantial increase in the Membership', and the Directors' hope that this would 'inaugurate a period of still greater prosperity' seemed to be borne out, for despite some minor fluctuations, the number of members generally increased during the following years.[347]

When the association first formed, women were not allowed as members. Beginning with the Prospectus for the 1895-96 session, the association's first 'Lady Member', Lizzie Louttit, was published in the roll of Ordinary Members. From that point, there was a steady increase of female members, particularly after the 1905-06 session (see *Figure 5.2*). The Prospectuses for sessions 1900-01 to 1902-03 are no longer extant and therefore the total numbers of women members during this period are unknown. However, if all the Prospectuses available are considered, it is clear that once women starting joining, they went on to make up a considerable percentage of the

[347] 'Thirty-sixth Annual Report', Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, Session 1897-98 (D58/4a/9).

total membership: by the 1914-15 session, there were 47 women listed as Ordinary Members, the total percentage of women members rising from 1.88% in the 1895-96 session, to 31.33% by the end of the period (see *Figure 5.3*).

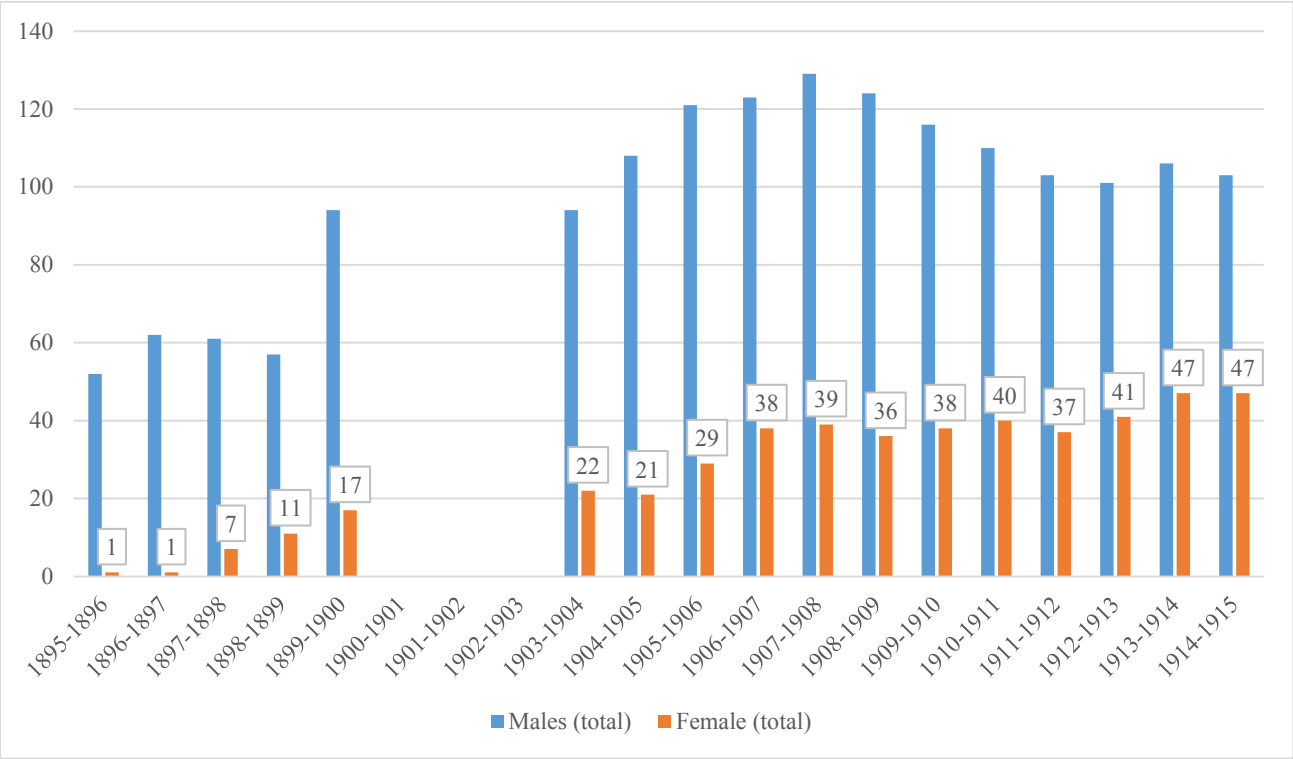

Figure 5.2: Male and Female Ordinary Members of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, Sessions 1895-96 to 1914-15

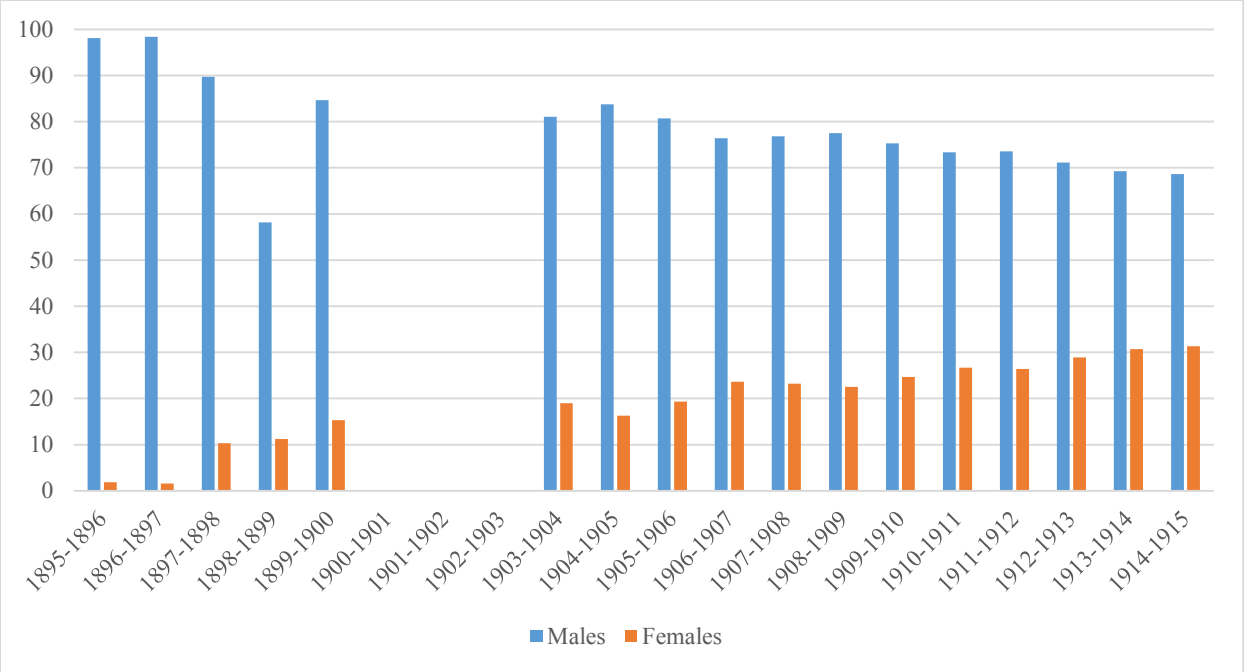

Figure 5.1: Percentage of Male and Female Members of the Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, Sessions 1895-96 to 1914-15

Even without the roll books, the lists of Ordinary Members provide further information about the members' lives. The lists include information about members who had attainted additional or 'higher' education qualifications, and other qualifications and titles. For example, the list of Ordinary Members for the 1898-99 session gives James Moodie, M.A., Jerome Dennison, B.L. and Robert Corse, C.A. amongst its roll.[348] These members are not anomalies in this association's membership history, and it was not only the men who were attaining these qualifications: the women were also following this trend, and the increasing numbers of both men and women can be tracked over time (see *Figure 5.4*).[349]

[348] 'Roll of Ordinary Members', Prospectus for 1898-99, in Minute Book, No. 5.

[349] These membership lists, however, should not be taken as a true record of the date which members achieved their qualifications as the records for Jerome Dennison demonstrate. Dennison, after having joined in the 1894-95 session, earned his degree from the University of Glasgow in 1896, but only began to use B.L. after his name in the 1897-98 session ('Roll of Ordinary Members', Prospectus for 1894-95', in Minute Book, No. 4; 'Roll of Ordinary Members', Prospectus for 1897-98, in Minute Book, No. 5; 'Graduate Record for Jerome Dennison […] Degree Information: BL (1896) […] Further information from the University records: Addison 1727-1897 reads: Law Clerk, Glasgow; Registrar's Handwritten Roll of Graduates gives the date of birth as 22 June 1873' ('Jerome Dennison', *The University of Glasgow Story* <http://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/biography/?id=WH10495&type=P> [accessed 06/04/16])).

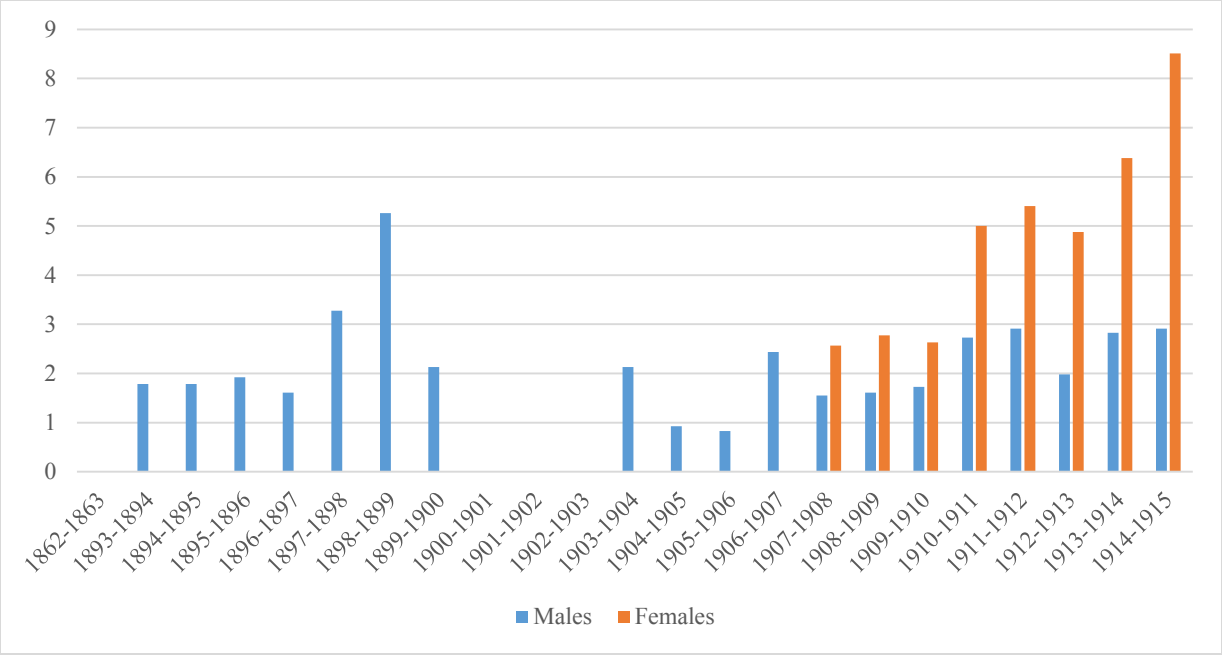

Figure 5.4 Percentage of Male and Female Members with Higher Education or Other Qualifications and Titles

Although it appears that there is a large step in the number of men who attained other qualifications between the 1897-98 and the 1898-99 sessions, the difference is actually only that of 1.98 percentage points of the total number of members. Alternatively, by the 1914-15 session, the number of women with higher education qualifications rose markedly between the 1907-08 session and the 1914-15 session: in the 1907-08 session, amongst a membership that included 39 women, (Miss) Lucy Isbister began listing herself as 'Lucy Isbister, M.A.' (5%), while in the 1914-15 session, out of a total of 47 female members, four women (8.5%) are listed as holding M.A.s.[350]

The increased incidents of members listing credentials after their names in the lists suggests that there may in fact be a connection with the 'improving' objects and aims of the association and the high(er) educational achievements and other types of qualifications attained by its members. In publishing the lists of the Ordinary Members as part of the Prospectuses that were circulated and broadcast to other members and prospective new ones, they effectively advertised the achievements of its members.

[350] 'Ordinary Members', Year Book, 1907-08, p. 7, in Minute Book, No. 6 (D58/1/6); 'Ordinary Members', Year Book, 1914-15, p. 12, in Minute Book, No. 6. The four women with Master's degrees in the 1914-15 session include two single women (Jessie M. Smith, M.A.; Lilias W. Halcrow, M.A.), and two married women (Mrs. Campbell, M.A.; Mrs. Thompson, M.A.).

Association Meetings: Prospectus's Subjects Compared

The Nascent Years: 1862-1872

Prospectuses for this association, similarly to those of other literary clubs and societies, were printed and distributed to its members, and presumably prospective members. They provide details on the upcoming meetings and social events for the coming session, which ran from September or October until March or April. Other information in the prospectuses includes a list of the elected office-bearers and honorary members for the session, the roll of ordinary members (as of 1893), details regarding the place(s), date(s) and time of the meetings, and the syllabus.[351] The syllabus for each session gives the dates for lectures, essays, debates, social events, (mock) parliamentary elections, the annual business meeting, and the annual social gathering.

Where the records of literary clubs and societies have survived, it is not uncommon for the syllabi to be found amongst the materials. However, it is unusual for the syllabi for any society to have been preserved for nearly the entire length of its existence. The Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Association is a rare case, and with the exception of nine sessions, the syllabi from its first session in 1862-63 until its fifty-second in 1914-15 have all survived.[352] This offers an opportunity to explore the range of subjects that one literary society included in its papers, debates, discussions and readings that made up its meetings for just over fifty years.

In the assessment of these materials, my aim was to utilise this nearly complete set of syllabi to evaulate any trends in the frequency of the subjects read aloud and/or discussed and debated, and any changes that may have occurred over time. First, with few exceptions, I divided the talks, readings, debates, etc. into categories by subject utilising the classifications that were used by the association themselves in their annual reports.[353] I divided the subjects as follows:

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[351] Beginning in the 1905-06 session, the Association's syllabi were published in their annual Year Books. Along with the syllabus, the Year Books contain: names and some addresses of the office-bearers; honorary members; ordinary members; the annual report, which included a report on the library; financial report; constitution; rules; list of ordinary members, and the library catalogue.

[352] I have not examined the entire set of records beyond the 1915-16 session and therefore cannot confirm how complete they are. The syllabi from the 1916-17 session until the 2014-15 session still exist, and it does appear that the vast majority (if not all) of the syllabi have been preserved.

[353] With the exception of the 'Education', 'Religion', 'Travels/Tours', 'Other', and 'Unknown' categories, all the above categories were used by the association to classify the talks, papers and essays given in a particular session. The categories were taken from the following Annual Reports: 1865-66; 1866-67; 1873-74; 1880-81; 1881-82; and 1889-90.

- Biography/Biographical;
- Education;
- History/Historical;
- Law;
- Literary (Literature);
- Magazine;
- Moral Philosophy/Philosophical;
- Northern Subjects;
- Political Economy/Politics;
- Readings;
- Religion;
- Science/Scientific;
- Social Events;
- Travel/Tours;
- Other, and
- Unknown.

In several cases, where the subject of the talk could be included under more than one category, it was counted—as in most of these cases—twice.[354] The 'Magazine', 'Social Events', and 'Readings' categories were added as these were important and recurring events in the association's calendar and/or agenda. In addition, I included the category of 'Social Events' as I wanted to see if this association followed the overall trends of literary clubs and societies becoming more 'social', or including more social events in their syllabi at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. The results from this assessment of the first decade is shown in *Figure 5.5*.

[354] Two examples of talks and papers where this occurred include the essay, 'The life and writings of Alexander Pope', which was given by Mr. John Wilson on 28 January 1873, and was categorised under both 'Biography' and 'Literary (Literature)' (Syllabus, Session 1872-73, Prospectus for 1872-1873, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 8). A second example are the essays entitled, 'Life of Thorfinn VIII., Earl of Orkney, Part 1st, and Part 2nd', which were given by James M. M'Beath, Esq. on 22 and 29 December 1864. These two essays were counted in both the 'Biography' and the 'Northern Subjects' category, being counted twice in each category for a total of four occurrences in this session (Syllabus, 1864-65, Prospectus for 1864-65, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. 71).

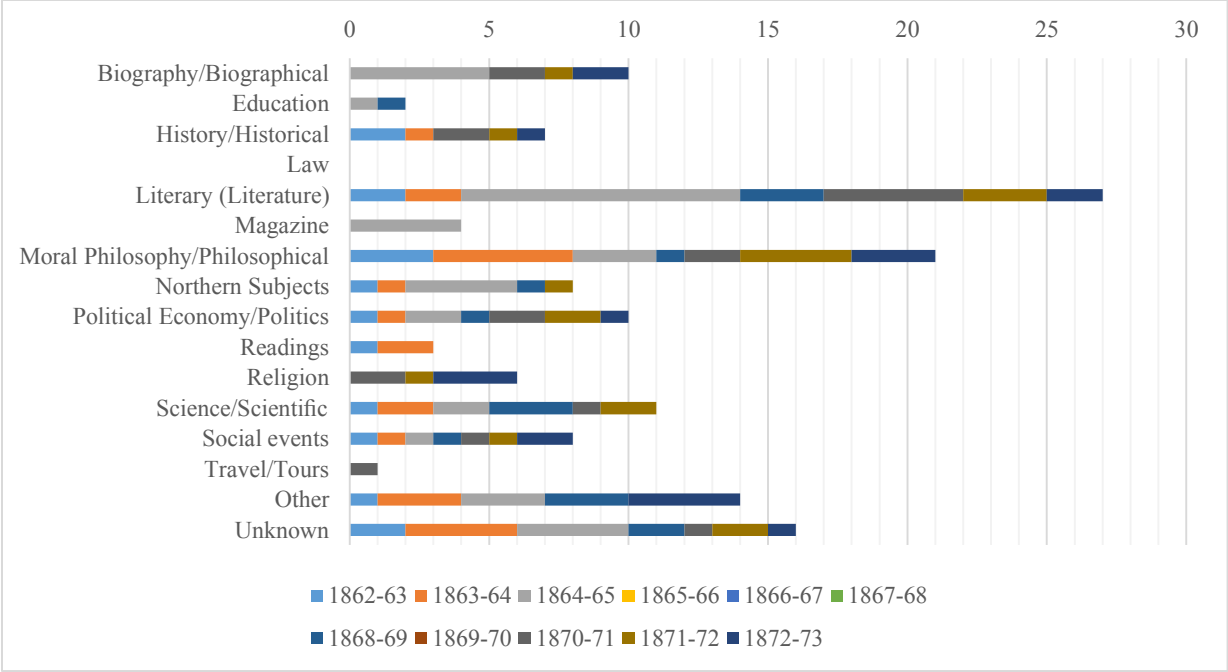

Figure 5.5: Subjects of the Talks, Papers, Essays, and Debates, Etc. of the Syllabi for the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, Session 1862-63 to Session 1872-73

These results may not be an entirely accurate representation of the subjects of the association's syllabi in their nascent years: there are four syllabi missing from this first decade, more than any other period covered in this case study. Nonetheless, there appear to be some clear trends. The subject most frequently covered in the meetings were the essays and debates in the 'Literary (Literature)' category. This is, in part, due to the meetings where the magazines were reviewed being counted twice, first in the 'Magazine' category and second in 'Literary (Literature)'. I use here the broad definition of literary as discussed in Chapter 2. The original contributions that consisted of essays, poems and artwork were composed expressly for inclusion in a manuscript magazine, but in the case of the essays and poems, were often read aloud at meetings. Thus, I take these original contributions as being literature that were intended to be literary, while concurrently constituting part of the 'oral, or vernacular, culture' of this association.[355] In addition, this category is further augmented by the inclusion of the meetings devoted to 'Readings', which were counted in both the 'Readings' and the 'Literary' category as

[355] As set out in Chapter 2, Elizabeth McHenry's definition of 'literary' as including oral culture is particularly pertinent in this study of mutual improvement society culture (McHenry, pp. 5-6).

they included selections from various published works by a diverse range of authors on sundry topics (see below).

The subjects covered in the 'Literary' category include a wide range of talks and papers during this early period. They included more 'typical' authors discussed by other literary societies, for example, Shakespeare (two talks were given on him in this decade), Byron, Dickens, and Thackeray.[356] But there were also talks on Glasgow-born author Thomas Campbell, along with Scottish authors Alexander Smith and Hugh Miller.[357] Ancient poetry also featured, with Homer's *Iliad* and Hebrew poetry among the papers given.[358] 'Northern' authors and literature more generally were well represented by essays read on 'Ochlenschlager, the Danish poet', the Hakon Saga, as well as David Vedder, 'the sailor poet of Orkney', and the works of Mary Brunton, who was always referred to as the 'Orcadian Authoress'.[359]

Of note here is that while the 'Readings' category by itself is relatively low for this decade, being only listed for the first two years, this does not accurately represent their relative importance. The 1862-63 and 1863-64 sessions are the only ones that have separate meetings especially for this purpose. However, after a motion was carried in December 1872 for their regular inclusion, readings were a fairly standard part of the meetings in the next decades.[360] If the four meetings that

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[356] The two essays on Shakespeare were given on 9 January 1862 by Mr. John G. Stobbs and on 2 March 1865 by Mr. James B. Laurence (Syllabus, 1862-63, Prospectus for 1862-63, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. i; Syllabus, 1864-65, Prospectus for 1864-65, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. 71). 'The Life and Writings of Lord Byron' was given on 26 January 1869 by Mr. Alexander Eunson (Syllabus, 1868-69, Prospectus for 1868-69, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7). An essay on Charles Dickens was given on 9 April 1872 by Mr. George Melville (Syllabus, 1871-72, Prospectus for 1871-72, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7), and one on Thackeray was given on 3 January 1871 by Mr. John Keillor (Syllabus, 1870-71, Prospectus for 1870-71, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7).

[357] An essay on Thomas Campbell was given on 1 December 1864 by Mr. Thomas Sinclair (Syllabus, 1864-65, Prospectus for 1864-65, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. 71), on Alexander Smith, by Mr. John Wilson on 13 February 1871 (Syllabus, 1871-72, Prospectus for 1871-72, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7), and on Hugh Miller by Rev. David Young on 11 October 1870 (Syllabus, 1870-71, Prospectus for 1870-71, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 71).

[358] An essay on *The Iliad* by Homer was given on 20 December 1870 by Mr. Alexander Eunson (Syllabus, 1870-71, Prospectus for 1870-71, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7), and an essay on Hebrew poetry was given on 17 November 1864 by Mr. Richard Reid (Syllabus, 1864-65, Prospectus for 1864-65, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. 71).

[359] Of particular note is that these talks were all given by Mr. James Thomson. Thomson's biographical details are currently unknown. On 5 November 1872, he read an essay entitled 'Ochlenschlager – The Danish Poet' (Syllabus, 1872-73, Prospectus for 1872-73, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 8). 'The Hakon Saga' was discussed by Thomson on 20 October 1868 (Syllabus, 1868-69, Prospectus for 1868-69, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7). He also read an essay on David Vedder on 12 January 1865 (Syllabus, 1864-65, Prospectus for 1864-65, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 71). Finally, an essay he wrote on Mary Brunton was given on 28 February 1871 (Syllabus, 1870-71, Prospectus for 1870-71, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7).

[360] At a meeting held on 17 December 1872, '[t]he chairman moved secd by Mr Holland that in addition to the Essay usually read, a recitation or reading be given by one of the members, the motion was carried & Mr Wilson agreed to give the first reading' (Minute entry, 17 December 1872, Minute Book, No. 2, p. 247).

were held in the 1864-65 session to read and review the magazines aloud are included, the total number of meetings in this category would rise to 7, which would be more representative of their actual importance in the syllabi.

'Moral Philosophy/Philosophical' subjects was the second most frequent category. Talks under this heading included 'The Sophists', and debates were held to discuss 'Is early marriage advisable?', and 'Has morality increased with civilization?'.[361] This trend is not surprising as philosophical, and moral talks and debates were fairly standard in other mutual improvement societies during the nineteenth century.

The next more frequent subjects were the 'Unknown' and 'Other' categories. Talks listed in the former category include the lectures that opened and closed the session, and these were often simply listed as 'Opening Address' and Closing' Address'. The essays categorised as 'Other' are a mixture of subjects including 'Tobacco', 'Amateur Photography', 'Wooling Time', and 'The Kelp Manufacture', and are indicative of the range of subjects considered appropriate for discussion in this 'literary and scientific' society.[362] Science and scientific topics were covered in most of the years where syllabi are available, with the 1868-69 session having slightly more talks in this area, including those on 'Astronomy', 'Practical Chemistry (with illustrations)', and 'Geology'.[363]

The 'Biography/Biographical' category was equally represented over the years with the 'Politics' category. As noted above, the relatively higher rate of the former category was due to some essays being counted twice: it was not uncommon for an essay on an author's works to include an overview of his/her life at the start of the paper. Politics was frequently the subject underlying the debates and covered topical issues for the time. For example, the debate 'Should

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[361] These talks were given on 6 December 1870 by Mr. Richard Reid (Syllabus, 1870-71, Prospectus for 1870-71, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7), on 6 February 1863, with the affirmative taken by Mr. James Greig Hicks and the negative by Mr. David D. Leisk (Syllabus, 1862-63, Prospectus for 1862-63, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. i), and on 26 March 1872, with the affirmative taken by Mr. John Garriock and the negative by Mr. K. S. Miller respectively (Syllabus, 1871-72, Prospectus for 1871-72, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7).

[362] The essay entitled 'Tobacco' was given on 10 February 1863 by Dr. Bruce Barclay (Syllabus, 1862-63, Prospectus for 1862-63, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. i). The essay, 'Amateur Photography' was given on 16 April 1864 by A. G. Horne (Syllabus 1863-64, Prospectus for 1863-64, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. 28). 'Wooling Time' was given on 15 December 1868 by Mr. John Garriock (Syllabus, 1868-69, Prospectus for 1868-69, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book' p. 7). An essay entitled 'The Kelp Manufacture' was given on 22 October 1872 by Mr. William Logie (Syllabus, 1872-73, Prospectus for 1872-73, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 8).

[363] The essay, 'Astronomy', was given on 3 November 1868 by Mr. John Riddoch, the essay entitled, 'Practical Chemistry', was given on 29 December 1868 by Mr. John Smith, and the essay on geology was given on 12 January 1869 by Mr. David Riddoch (Syllabus, 1868-69, Prospectus for 1868-69, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7).

Britain recognize the Southern Confederacy?' was given during the closing years of the American Civil War.

'Northern Subjects', History/Historical', and 'Social Events' were roughly equally represented in the first decade. I expected there to be more 'Northern' topics in an association whose membership was restricted to first and second generation natives of Orkney and Shetland, but this was not the case. In fact, in the category of 'History', there were three talks given on the subject of historic Glasgow.[364] This could be seen as indicative of members' interest in the history of their new home. In three cases, essays given on the Northern islands covered their history or historic figures, which accounts for their almost equal representation in both these categories.

Other subjects were not as well represented but present an interesting trend nonetheless. Although religion and politics were normally excluded as subjects for discussion and papers in many Glaswegian literary societies in the nineteenth century, this association included both. There were three debates and three essays whose subjects were classified under 'Religion' during the latter part of the decade. Not only was religion an acceptable subject to give a paper on, but until an internal committee's recommendation in 1874 to 'carefully avoid' it,[365] it may be argued that debate on this universally contentious topic was equally encouraged.[366] There were eight social

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[364] On 13 November 1863, Peter Miller gave read an essay entitled, 'Glasgow One Hundred Years Ago' (Syllabus, 1863-64, Prospectus for 1863-64, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. 28). An essay, 'The Motto, "Let Glasgow Flourish"', was given by Mr. John Garriock on 14 March 1871, and may refer to Glasgow being granted its coat of arms a few years earlier in 1866, and includes this motto ('Syllabus', 1870-71, Prospectus for 1870-71, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7). The 'Opening Lecture' for the 1872-73 session was entitled, 'Glasgow in the Olden Time', and was given by Rev. J.A. Taylor, D.D. ('Syllabus', 1872-73, Prospectus for 1872-73, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 8).

[365] A committee was formed in the summer of 1874 to revise the Association's rules. Along with a recommendation to change the meeting night from Tuesday to Saturday, they advised '[t]hat as this Assocn is founded on the principles of charity it be recommended to the members of the Assocn to carefully avoid any subject of essay or debate which might lead to Theological Controversy –' (Minute entry, 18 August 1874, Minute Book, No. 2, p. 306).

[366] In the 1870-71 session, there was a debate on 'Which contains the greater amount of Truth, the Writings of John Calvin or Theodore Parker?' (28 March 1871, with John Calvin being represented by Mr. Alexander Eunson, and Theodore Parker by Mr. James Thomson), and an essay was given on 'The Beauties of the Koran' (11 April 1871, Mr. James Louttit). While the essay was essentially on aesthetics, it might equally have invited discussion on points of religion ('Syllabus, 1870-71, Prospectus for 1870-71, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7). The 1871-72 session included a debate on 'Is the Influence of the Pulpit on the Wane?', with the positive being represented by Mr. James Thomson, and the negative by Mr. David Holland (Syllabus, 1871-72, Prospectus for 1871-72, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 7). Finally, in the 1872-73 session, there were three meetings where religion was featured. The first was a lecture given by Mr. George Mutch on '"Church Song", with Illustrations by a Choir'. In this case, religion underlies this musical genre and is arguably not the predominant theme of this talk. The second was a debate held on 25 February 1873 on the subject of 'Should we have a National Church Establishment?', with the affirmative taken by Mr. David Holland and the negative by Mr. James Thomson. The last was a meeting that featured an essay by Mr. George Melville on 'Martin Luther', which he gave on 8 April 1873 (Syllabus, 1872-73, Prospectus for 1872-73, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 8).

events in seven years, with the Annual Re-union featuring in each session. 'Education' was only featured twice in the decade, and the subject of 'Travels/Tours' comprised only one lecture. Although included in a later syllabus, the 'Law' was an unpopular choice of subject for this association during the first fifty years.

Changes in the New Century: 1904-1914

The Prospectuses for the last decade of the period under study show that there were some significant shifts in the association's agenda (see *Figure 5.6*). The largest number of meetings in this decade were devoted to social events, with each session having at least three meetings for this purpose. A typical session included the 'At Home', annual reunion, and Social Parlour, with 'Musical Evenings' becoming more frequent towards the end of the period. The inclusion of more social activities in the syllabi during this period is in line with the trend exhibited by the majority of literary clubs and societies across Glasgow during the late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries.

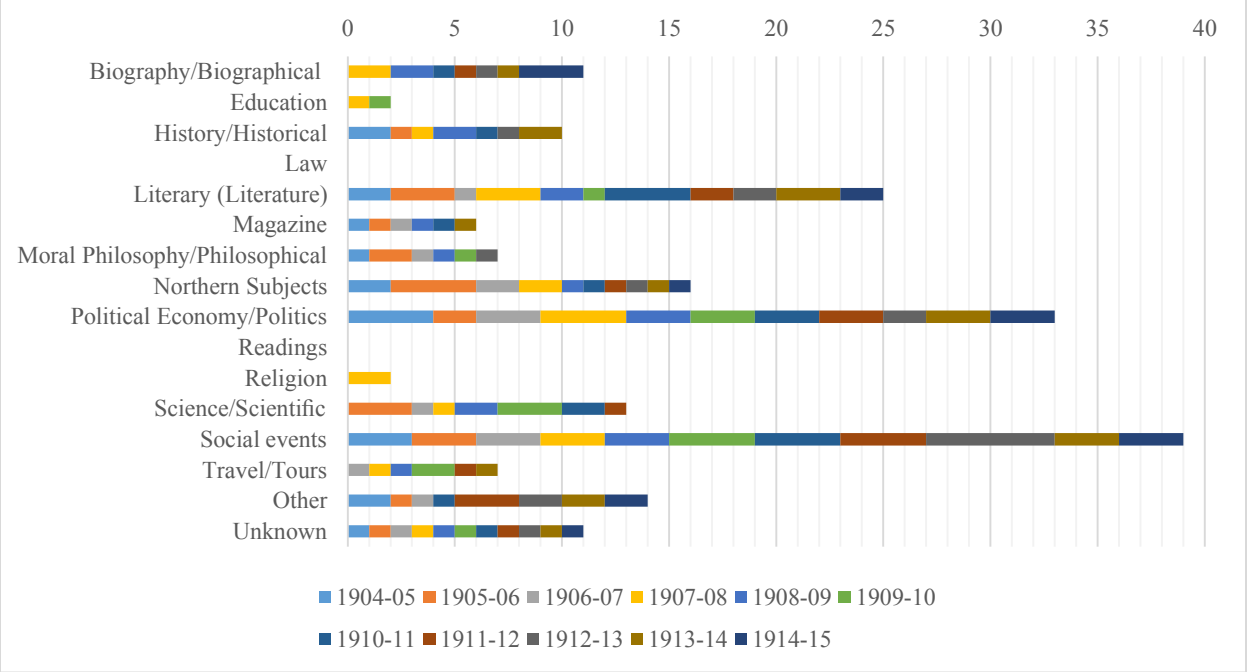

Figure 5.6: Subjects of the Talks, Papers, Essays, and Debates, Etc. of the Syllabi for the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, Session 1904-05 to Session 1914-15

The second most frequent subject of the syllabi was 'Political Economy/Politics'. As noted above, this topic was usually banned from discussion in the meetings of the majority of literary clubs, but the Glasgow and Orkney society included it with some frequency during the early period. This trend increased in the early twentieth century, and the association had at least two meetings on this subject each session. Surprisingly, there were not more meetings on politics prior to the start of the First World War, particularly as several of their members would go off to serve.[367] It was only in the 1910-11 and 1913-14 sessions that increasing international tensions or the subject of war were discussed, but these meetings address the contemporary political crises through the lens of 'peace' rather than war. For example, on 26 November 1910, an 'inter-debate' was held with the Edinburgh University Orcadian Association, their subject being 'That the awakening of the East is a greater peril to the peace of Europe than the rivalry of Great Britain and Germany'.[368] Similarly, on 22 November 1913, the association again hosted an 'inter-debate' with the Edinburgh University Orcadian Association, their subject being "Is the Accumulation of Armaments conducive to the Preservation of Peace?"[369] While international relations and politics were the focus of three of its meetings, national politics were more frequently discussed.

The next most frequently scheduled subject for the meetings was literature. This is a drop from the first to the third most frequent subject when compared to the early period of the association. Even though this category included the annual 'Magazine Night', the tendency to include meetings on literature or literary subjects declined, which might have been accompanied by a decline in the interest of its members: this slight decrease might be attributed to what could be seen as an overindulgence in papers on authors that had been discussed in several meetings in many previous sessions. The authors that were the subject of the essays and meetings during this period included such standard literary society fare as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson, Robert Burns, Walter Scott, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and George Eliot. Only four talks in this last decade discussed contemporary authors and the present state of the literary scene. These included papers on Robert Louis Stevenson, Lafcadio Hearn, 'The Theatre – Past and Present',

[367] For a complete list of the members who died during the war, see 'Roll of Honour of Members of the Association, 1914-1918', in Eunson and Scott, pp. 41-2.
[368] Syllabus, 1910-11, *Year Book, 1910-1911*, in Minute Book, No. 6.
[369] Syllabus, 1913-14, *Year Book, 1913-1914*, in Minute Book, No. 6.

and a symposium on 'Living authors: Maeterlinck, Bernard Shaw, Rudyard Kipling, Arnold Bennett'.[370]

Also included in the 'literary' category was a 'Dialect Night', which was held on 6 January 1906, when there was one 'Orcadianic Paper', and one 'Shetlandic Paper' were given.[371] While members strove to improve their rhetorical skills by giving talks and engaging in debates, they valued—and perhaps strove to preserve—the dialect of their homes. In addition to the meeting in 1906, there were (at least) three 'readings' in dialect, which took place in 1875, 1880 and 1890. There are also several examples of poems, letters to the editor, and a fictional newspaper extract in the association's magazines. While dialect could be used for poetry, and fictional, humorous newspaper extracts and letters to the editor, it was not used for original essays in prose—fiction or non-fiction—even where it might have been used to good effect, as in the fictional essay, 'A Leaf from a "Hobo's" Diary. An Orkney Lad's adventure in the United States'.[372]

As was the case with the syllabi from the 1862-63 session until the 1872-73 session, the 'Readings' category in the syllabi in the later period is greatly under-represented. Although only two meetings in the first two sessions were devoted entirely for this purpose, they continued to be included until 1905. At 'ordinary meetings', short readings of pre-selected texts often followed the main talk, and were given by speakers chosen for the purpose at the previous meeting. Beginning as a regular feature in 1872, speakers chose a range of materials to read aloud at the meetings. The purpose was to practice their rhetorical skills, but these were also meant to be entertaining and humorous. Several of the pieces, in fact, were published in popular anthologies that were published exclusively for this purpose. For example, on 28 January 1873, David Garriock read 'The Sailor Boy's Dream' to the association. This piece was included in popular journals, and educational works intended for students, for example, *An Essay on Elocution: Designed for the Use of Schools and Private Learners* and *Practical Elocution: Containing Illustrations of the Principles of*

[370] Syllabus, 1907-1908, *Year Book, 1907-1908*, in Minute Book, No. 6; Syllabus 1910-11, *Year Book, 1910-1911*, in Minute Book, No. 6; Syllabus 1913-1914, *Year Book, 1913-1914*, in Minute Book, No. 6; and Syllabus, 1914-1915, *Year Book, 1914-1915*, in Minute Book, No. 6.
[371] Syllabus 1905-1906, *Year Book, 1905-1906*, in Minute Book, No. 5.
[372] This is the title of an essay read on the Magazine Night held on 2 February 1907. This essay was then typed and bound with the other papers given on the night. These papers are bound together with contributions from other Magazine Nights held in sessions 1903-04, 1904-05, 1905-06, 1906-07, and 1908-09 ('A Leaf from a "Hobo's" Diary. An Orkney Lad's adventure in the United States', typescript magazine, annual Magazine Night submissions, Sessions 1903-04 through 1907-08, pp. 1-10, D58/2/9.

Reading and Public Speaking.[373] Much like the talks on literature during this period, the authors chosen were fairly standard choices: Shakespeare, Goldsmith, Shelley, Burns, Scott, Tennyson, and Dickens. Nevertheless, besides Burns, Scottish authors and poets like John Malcolm, Thomas Campbell, Dorothea Primrose Campbell, and Robert Leighton were also included on a fairly regular basis.

Reader Response: Evidence from the Annual Reports and Minute Books

To return to the Annual Reports, it is apparent from the first report that 'criticism' was an integral part of the Association's meetings from the very beginning. William Cowper, the Secretary, gave an overview of that first year's meetings:

> The Meetings were, throughout, of a very satisfactory nature, and the remarks on the papers showed that the Members could pass a criticism, were they but inclined to do so. Even supposing we had derived no benefit from our Meetings – which is not the case – we can all look back upon a few happy evenings anything but ill-spent. In our Syllabus, we had two debates and a reading, as well as essays. The subjects of essays were varied and instructive, and upon the whole successfully handled.[374]

Here, Cowper gives us to understand that the members were sufficiently educated, cultured and/or literary to provide feedback, even if this activity wasn't engaged in as much as it should have been. Indeed, the remarks, or criticism, on the papers were one 'benefit' to be had from the meetings. Cowper himself even provides his own criticism on the essays' subjects, reporting that they 'were varied and instructive, and upon the whole successfully handled'. The first year's activities seem to be one of the few exceptions to the rule: most years' meetings were generally characterised as having 'spirited debates, able essays, lively criticisms and general enthusiasm'.[375]

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[373] This piece appeared in *The Nithsdale Minstrel* (*The Nithsdale Minstrel: Being Original Poetry, Chiefly by the Bards of Nithsdale* (Dumfries: C. Munro & Co., 1815), pp. 121-4). It was also included in *The Scots Magazine* and books of popular children's poetry ('Scottish Review: II.' *The Scots Magazine and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany*, Vol. LXXVII, (Edinburgh: 1815), pp. 932-34; Henry T. Coates, *The Children's Book of Poetry: Carefully Selected Works of the Best and Most Popular Writers for Children* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1879), pp. 154-56). In addition, there is a broadside ballad of same title: ('Sailor boys dream', *Broadside Ballads Online* <http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/search/title/Sailor%20boys%20dream> [accessed 16/04/16]).

[374] 'Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association', Session 1862-63, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. 28.

[375] '[Annual] Report 1875-6', Session 1875-76, 15 April 1876, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 20.

These 'spirited' and 'lively' discussions were designed to stimulate a desire to learn and to 'improve'. As the 1876-77 Annual Report proclaims:

> Whatever stimulates the desire for, and helps in attaining to mental culture, deserves encouragement and support. Valuable aid in this direction is rendered by the contact of mind with mind in discussion and criticism […].[376]

It was frequently stressed that it was incumbent upon each individual member to conscientiously prepare for the meetings so that he (and later, she) might be primed to take an active part in them, and thus to feel a 'personal responsibility' for the Association's 'future success':

> […] each individual Member should feel that the future success of the Association rest with *him*, and thus conscious of his own personal responsibility, he will be regular and punctual in his attendance at the meetings, and having carefully studied the subject under discussion, be ready at any time to give his fellows the benefit of his opinions.[377]

This element of individuality in the discussions and criticisms that were, arguably, central to the meetings is, unfortunately, not recorded in the minute books.

During the fifty-two years of the association considered in my study, the Secretaries rarely record the comments of individual members from the meetings. Instead, they give general or even vague descriptions of the discussions that took place, the members' criticisms in particular being glossed over. We are only given a nondescript idea of what the criticisms involved and what points in particular the members were addressing. The minute entry for 10 November 1864 is a typical example: after John Matches read his essay on 'Education' to the association, '[t]he members criticised the Essay and awarded a cordial vote of thanks to the Essayist'.[378] Alternatively, criticism could be vague yet generally complimentary, for example, essays were 'criticised' as being 'instructive' or better yet, 'highly instructive'. 'Able and interesting' was often used to describe papers that were given by members.[379] Any dissention or contentious points that may have come up in the discussions are largely lost. For example, at a meeting held on 9 January 1863, John G.

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[376] '[Annual] Report 1876-7', Session 1876-77, 14 April 1877, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 21.
[377] '[Annual] Report, 1880-81', Session 1880-81, 16 April 1881, D58/4a/1.
[378] Minute entry, 10 November 1864, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 84.
[379] To give two examples, Mr. Oman's paper on 'The Influence of Shakespeare on French & German Literature' was 'criticised' as 'a highly instructive paper', while James Thomson's essay on 'Samuel Laings Heimskringla' was described as 'able & interesting' (Minute entry, 18 September 1888, Minute Book, No. 4; Minute entry, 12 October 1889, Minute Book, No. 4).

Stobbs read an essay on Shakspeare, and in the minute book, the Secretary gave a summary of the paper which ended with his recording that '[t]he meeting expressed themselves highly satisfied with the able manner in which the Essayist had treated his subject'.[380] The criticisms are recorded here collectively, and individual responses are lost in this general account of the meeting.

On the other hand, from this minute entry, we might deduce the elements of the essay that *were* thought to be important to criticise in this particular forum (i.e. the association's meetings), and thus we can glean the constituent elements in members' literary criticism. The Secretary's minutes could arguably be said to be a record of the compositional and rhetorical components of a literary style that was broadly shared amongst the association's members. This collective, communal response was nurtured by the social nature of the meetings and their accompanying discussions. In the case of the essay on Shakespeare, these components included the 'correct' handling of the subject matter, along with an implicit regard for the essayist's 'able' style: the members are described as being 'highly satisfied' with Stobbs's 'able manner' specifically in regards to the subject, perhaps with the additional intention of conveying the scholarly and skillful sense of his 'treatment'. These two separate critical elements of subject and style are again used in the criticism of James Thomson's essay on 'Snorro Sturlson':

> The members present not being acquainted with the subject could not speak much on the Essay[;] with they way in which the paper was written the members expressed their appreciation[.][381]

Although general, the minutes do allow us to build up a picture of the literary criticism that accompanied the essays, debates and magazines. In March of 1863, an essay by George Drever on 'Self taught men' was praised 'as being very intelligently & ably written'.[382] While seemingly generic, from this, it can be adduced that commendable literary qualities include a well-researched and/or cleverly executed paper and a laudable style in its composition. More seldom, specifics are given, as in the minute entry of 18 February 1893:

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[380] Minute entry, 09 January 1863, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 10.
[381] Snorro Sturlson, as the Secretary records in the minutes on Thomson's paper, was a 'Norse Poet & Historian who was born in the western Province of Iceland […] [and was the] gifted Author of the "Heimskingla"' (Minute entry for 27 April 1865, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 119).
[382] Minute entry, 06 March 1863, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 16.

> Mr Clouston read his biographical essay on "Hugh Miller" which was carefully prepared and very accurate in detail. It was extensively criticised and supplemented by the members, and Mr Clouston replied.[383]

Where 'very intelligently & ably written' were used before, the criticism on Clouston's essay may elaborate on these commendable qualities in that it was 'carefully prepared and very accurate in detail'. His essay even elicited 'extensive' criticism, instigating a discussion amongst the members, who were apparently knowledgeable in the subject. However, as in the case of many entries, the first part of this criticism could more accurately describe the (positive) response of the Secretary, and may or may not denote a partiality towards the essayist. The second sentence may in fact be recording the criticism—positive or negative, as in this case—of the other members. What this minute entry does highlight is the fact that criticism was a dialogue between the essayist, debater, etc. and the other members, alternatively, the critical reading community of the association.

Not all criticism was complimentary, and the minute entries that record criticism in our modern sense of the term help to establish this association's negative parameters regarding critical style. Just as it was laudable for an essay to be 'carefully prepared', it was not acceptable to write in haste whatever the reason. Notwithstanding his explanation for the short notice given him for filling in for another essayist, the members took exception with George Drever for not presenting a better review:

> Mr George Drever[,] after explaining that he appeared a week earlier than the date fixed on the Syllabus owing to the Essayist of the evening not coming forward, he craved the indulgence of the members as his essay was got up in a few hours [.] He then read the Review of the part third of the M S Magazine which was a cursory glance at the articles and wished for the Magazine a long and successful career [.]
> The members present criticised the Review and expressed their dis-satisfaction with it and expressed their regret that Mr Drever had not spent more time in its preparation [.][384]

In other cases, it is less clear to what extent the essay did not meet the listeners' expectations, and although not common, a paper could be 'severely Criticised'.[385] Just as there were 'unacceptable'

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[383] Minute entry, 18 February 1893, Minute Book, No. 4.
[384] Minute entry, 02 February 1865, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 103.
[385] An essay given by Robert Corse on 'Mental Ability', with no seeming sense of irony, was 'severely Criticised' by the members, and as was the custom, 'Mr Corse replied'. No further details of the discussion are recorded (Minute entry, 12 March 1892, Minute Book, No. 4).

styles in the composition as well as in the presentation of a paper (i.e. unskillful in style, and being underprepared), there were also unacceptable subjects:

> Secry intimated that Mr Clouston was unable to be present & deliver his Lecture as per Syllabus but that he had sent another paper to be read instead if the asson wished to do so. It was thought that as the subject of Mr Cloustons paper was strange to most of us that we had better ask Mr Robert Wilson to read his paper on Ambulancy which he very kindly consented to do the essay was most interesting throughout & received a very warm criticism from many of those present. after which Mr Wilson with the aid of Mr Deerness gave a few practical demonstration[s] in bandageing which was much enjoyed.[386]

There is no other reference to this 'strange' subject in the minutes, and considering the wide range of subjects that were considered acceptable to read papers on for this association, there is the suggestion Clouston's choice was yet still unfamiliar to other members. 'Ambulancy' was less strange, and the 'practical demonstration[s] in bandageing' were 'much enjoyed'.

There were also norms regarding the criticism itself. John Garriock, then President of the Association, gave the closing address for the session on 31 March 1877, 'taking as his subject "The writings of Robert Burns"'. After giving the address:

> Mr Garriock asked the members to discuss it. During the discussion Mr T[homas] S. Garriock having spoken of Mr Holland's criticism as "disgraceful language", Mr Holland asked him to withdraw the expression, which he refused to do. The chairman decided that Mr Garriock should withdraw the expression, which he still refused to do. A vote of censure was passed upon him by the chairman, as instructed by the Association. Mr John Garriock then replied. A vote of thanks was passed to him for his address.[387]

The language used to criticise—or in this case, to counter a criticism—appears to be regulated in this association by the same contemporary societal and professional standards of polite conversation. In addition, the censure could also imply that there was a violation of customary practice, which did not allow for abusive behavior and/or language.

Further, from the evidence of the minute books, the language used to criticise the speaker—and perhaps the criticism itself—depended upon the speaker. There was a difference in the language used to describe the criticism of the essays given by Ordinary Members, and that used to

[386] Minute entry, 24 January 1891, Minute Book, No. 4.
[387] Minute entry, 31 March 1877, Minute Book, No. 3, p. 43.

describe the criticism of a guest speaker, particularly if they were an invited lecturer and not a member. For instance, when Reverend James Nicoll, M.A. of Free Saint Stephens Church gave the opening lecture for the 1878-79 session, 'his lecture being "The Ballads of Scotland in themselves, and in their influences on the character of the Scottish people"', the response of the members was very enthusiastic:

> this was evinced by rapt attention with which the held his audience; at times, by his humorous and delightful illustrations kept alive with laughter, and simultaneously by the reading of ballads, such for instance, as the Widows lament entitled "The fa' o' the year" he would create a marked feeling of sorrow and sympathy among his hearers[.]
>
> The Chairman, when the Lecturer had finished, proposed a cordial vote of thanks to the Lecturer for his able, instructive and entertaining address, which was most heartily responded to. –[388]

This minute entry could be the Secretary's 'official' response of the association to an invited speaker, and may not be an entirely accurate representation of the members' (collective) responses. Nonetheless, the response of the audience seems to be clearly an affective one. While echoing the more familiar criticism given to Ordinary members, in addition to being 'able, instructive and entertaining', the address 'was most heartily responded to'. The different language used in this report, and thus perhaps the group's different socio-cultural mannerisms, could be seen here as indicative of a group recognition of the different, higher status of the speaker.

There was a further difference in the criticism that was recorded in the minute books for essays given by 'Lady Members' and male Ordinary Members. Once women were allowed to join, the first papers were given by Miss Lucy Isbister and Miss Eliza Allan on 6 January 1900:

> The President called upon Miss Lucy Isbister to read her paper upon "Writers & Readers". Miss Isbisters paper was thoroughly appreciated, and was an excellent summary of the doings of English literary giants, with comparison of their work and genius. […] The various speakers who followed were unanimous in their praise of the study and excellence of the paper. The President next called upon Miss Allan who read a paper entitled "Favorite Holiday Resorts". […] The speakers who followed all expressed the pleasure they had had in listening to Miss Allan's paper […].[389]

[388] Minute entry, 24 September 1878, Minute Book, No. 3.
[389] Minute entry, 06 January 1900, Minute Book, No. 5.

Similarly glowing language is only used in the minute books for guest speakers, as in the example above in the response to Reverend Nicoll's address. Allan's paper also elicited an affective reaction. Responses recorded for the guest speakers and for the 'Lady Members' in effect distances them from other Ordinary Members by providing a separate set of language cues to establish and mark their differences. As late as 1913, when women made up just over 30% of the membership, the language used to record the criticism given on their papers did not change. For example, the Secretary recorded that the lecture given by Miss Jeanie Tomison was 'charming, and much appreciated'.[390] A newspaper article from the *Shetland Times* testily remarked that '[t]he discussion which followed was much more complimentary than critical', but credited Tomison as she 'pertinently replied to the points raised'.[391] While it might be expected that a guest speaker would not be subject to the same scrutiny as members, the difference noted for women speakers suggests that they were not considered 'Ordinary': the status of women within the association during this period is reflected in their exemption from the same language and behaviour of other male members, effectively excluding them from the socio-normative leveling that the criticisms were designed to induce.

One further difference was also noted: between 1869 and 1885, the procedure for giving criticism on association debates changed. Prior to 1869, the speakers would give their arguments then members would vote for or against the subject under discussion. From 1869, the minutes record a change in the voting system: members would first vote on the merits of the subject, and then on the merits of the debate, with two votes being taken on every debate. This difference marks the importance given to the 'merits' of the speakers' arguments, giving preference to those whose rhetorical skills came foremost in the debate, while separating out the subject matter itself. After 1885, this procedure was dropped. This was, presumably, not to the diminution of the importance given to rhetorical skills – the continuation of the short readings that followed the main essay until (at least) 1905 attests to value that continued to be placed on this skill.

[390] Minute entry, 25 October 1913, Minute Book, No. 6.
[391] [Newspaper clipping from *Shetland Times*, hand-written date of 01 November 1913], following minute entry for 25 October 1913, in Minute Book, No. 6.

Manuscript Magazines: 1864-1913

History of their production

The minutes for 30 October 1863 record the first suggestion of the 'desireableness' of founding a manuscript magazine for the association. The idea, however, was not a popular one. In fact, it appears to have been the cause for a good deal of contention:

> The desirableness of having a Manuscript magazine in connection with the Association was suggested by the Chairman. After being fully discussed by the members, the following motion and amendments to were duly moved and seconded.
>
> Motion – That the consideration of a M. Magazine be deferred till next meeting.
> Ist. Amendment – That its consideration drop in the meantime. &
> IInd. Amendt – That the Association have a M. Magazine, and a Committee of management be appointed.
>
> There having been put to the meeting, the IInd Amendment – names, "That its consideration drop in the meantime", was carried by a majority. –
> Notwithstanding this decision, Mr Wood gave notice, that at next meeting, the subject of a manuscript magazine would be brought forward by him.[392]

Not only was the suggestion to be deferred, but discussion on it was to be dropped from the evening's meeting altogether. Nonetheless, the discussion continued and 'names' were suggested for the management committee, which seemed to instigate further debate, until a majority voted for the discussion to desist. Mr Wood appears to have been one of its stronger supporters, for despite the spirited discussion, he introduced the motion again at a meeting held on 27 November 1863.[393] The Second Annual Report even commented upon the magazine's slightly rocky beginnings, stating that even '[t]hough there took place at its outset a little bickering, in arranging the various details',[394] the magazine's supporters were able to (eventually) convince the other members of its 'desireableness', setting the foundations for an institution that would continue in various forms until 1956.

A set of rules was drawn up and presented to the association at a meeting in December 1863. After being 'carefully considered, clause after clause', the following were agreed:

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[392] Minute entry, 30 October 1863, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 36.
[393] Minute entry, 27 November 1863, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 39.
[394] 'Second Annual Report', Session 1863-64, 6 May 1864, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. 69.

> Rules – […]
> 1. That the Magazine be called the "Ultima Thule".
> 2. That it be conducted by an Editor and sub Editor.
> 3. That it contain Historical – Philosophic – Litrary – Scientific & general articles.
> 4. That articles intended for insertion in the Magazine be written expressly for it and that the signature appended to each contribution be left to the descretion of the Contributor.
> 5. That it be issued the first week in Jany April July and October.
> 6. That two copies of the Magazine be circulated & that each contributor furnish a duplicate of his contribution.
> 7. That articles intended for insertion be given to the Editor not latter than 10 days (ten days) previous to the issue of the Magazine.
> 8. That four days be allowed for perusal & that a fine of three pence be imposed for each day it is kept beyond that time.
> 9. That a contribution containing many grammatical errors or mistakes in spelling be corrected and sent to its Author to be re-written but that no member's contribution be excluded on the ground of its inferiority in talent.[395]

The first title proposed for the magazine, 'Ultima Thule', was changed at a meeting held in January 1864:

> These three new names were suggested
> Our Island Home
> The Norseman[s] Banner
> The Manuscript Magazine of the G. O. & S. Literary & Scientific Association[.][396]

While the last suggestion was 'almost the unanimous choice', the three options reveal the strong ties as well as the conflicting tensions felt by the members between their northern, Norse home, their new adopted home in Glasgow, and their literary aspirations.

The magazine was to be issued four times a year, continuing outside the 'work' of the session (i.e. the inclusion of a summer issue in July), and to contain a range of articles that reflected the subjects of the papers read and discussed in the meetings, as shown above. The initial intention was that articles be written expressly for the magazine rather than to be read at the meetings. This decision would eventually be reversed (see below). It was left up to the contributors whether or not the articles were to be anonymous. Contributions were accepted from association members,

[395] 'Rules', Minute entry, 11 December 1863, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 43.
[396] Minute entry, 08 January 1864, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 49.

but according to the Second Annual Report, this could include the offerings 'of any generous friend'.[397]

The association opted to have two copies of each magazine produced and circulated, which was an unusual decision. This is the first literary group that I have come across that chose to produce each issue of their magazine twice. Each contributor was thus required to write his (and later her) article twice, and the editors had to edit and produce not four but eight magazines each year, a time-consuming endeavour for all parties. At a meeting in March 1864, '[t]he plan of Circulation [was] agreed upon':

> that the Roll of membership be divided in the centre, and the distribution of the present number commence at the beginning of each division, and at the End of each with the second number. This method of circulation to be observed each succeeding number. The members upon perusal, returning the Magazine to the Editor, that it may be delivered by him to each member.[398]

In 1864, the first year of the magazine's production, as there are no official membership lists nor lists of readers in the magazines, I estimate there were approximately 30 members.[399] This would mean that each copy would be circulated—if not read—by about 15 members who had four days each to peruse them before passing the copy on to the next member, with each magazine being in circulation around two months.

Of particular interest is rule 9: 'That a contribution containing many grammatical errors or mistakes in spelling be corrected and sent to its Author to be re-written but that no member's contribution be excluded on the ground of its inferiority in talent.' This rule underlines the 'improving' ethos of the association, and 'grammatical errors or mistakes in spelling' and/or 'inferiority in talent' were no bar to their (eventual) inclusion in the magazine. Rather, upon the correction of errors, and, it was hoped, an improvement in talent, members would effect an improvement in their literacy and literary skills. The association's explicit motivations for the founding of the magazine, however, are at best vague. As noted above, the magazine was seen to

[397] 'Second Annual Report', p. 69.
[398] Minute entry, 04 March 1864, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 57.
[399] As discussed above, official membership lists are no longer extant from the 1863-64 session until the 1893-94 session.

be something desirable, and the 'Second Annual Report' is equally ambiguous yet nonetheless confident 'that it cannot fail to accomplish much good'.[400]

The published prospectus for the 1864-65 session set out the amended 'Rules of the Magazine':

> 1. The Magazine shall be named the "Pole Star."
> 2. To be conducted by an Editor and Sub-Editor, who shall be elected annually.
> 3. To contain papers on scientific and general subjects, and critiques on literary works.
> 4. Original articles only admissible, with the name of the Author or motto affixed.
> 5. The Magazine to be issued in the beginning of January, April, July, and October.
> 6. Two copies of the Magazine to be circulated, and each contributor to furnish a duplicate of his article.
> 7. Articles intended for insertion to be sent in not later than the 20th of the month previous to publication.
> 8. The Society to be divided into two sections, and one copy of the Magazine to be allotted to each. Members to be allowed four days for perusal. A fine of Three pence to be imposed for each day it is kept beyond time.
> 9. The Association to appoint four Members to review each number of the Magazine, on the dates specified in the Syllabus.
> 10. Alterations may be made on the By-Laws, and Rules of the Magazine, from time to time as the Association shall find occasion – notice having been given at the previous Meeting.[401]

Not only the name had changed, but the subject range of the articles too. The rules appear to give precedence to 'scientific and general subjects'—subjects that figured last in the previous list—and latterly to 'critiques on literary works'. The magazine was to feature 'original articles only'. This might suggest that transcribed works, a feature of commonplace books, would not be accepted.

Rule 9 of the previous list, which implied the magazine was a forum to develop and encourage literary skills, was notably dropped. Instead, a new rule was added wherein four members would be appointed to review each issue, and these reviews would be part of the syllabus. This rule highlights the role that criticism of the magazine was assigned from early on. In February 1894, it was decided '[a]fter a good deal of discussion […] that the contents of each Number be subjected both to the verbal or written criticism of any member of the Association.'[402] At the very

[400] 'Second Annual Report', p. 69.
[401] 'Rules of the Magazine', Prospectus, Session, 1864-65, in Minute Book, No. 1, p. 70.
[402] Minute entry, 19 February 1864, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 54.

next meeting, this motion to drop this rule was 'carried by a large majority.'[403] It was during this meeting that a 'Review of the Magazine' was introduced.

The first four members that were selected to give reviews read them aloud at meetings held for the purpose in October, December, February and April in the 1864-65 session. These reviews themselves were also subject to criticism by the members. While James B. Laurence's 'Review of part II of the Manuscript Magazine […] was written with considerable ability and fairness', George Drever's review of the third part (see above), for which he had insufficient time to prepare, elicited 'dis-satisfaction' and 'regret'.[404]

It appears that the considerable labour that was involved in the production of eight copies in total per year along with their belated reviews induced Mr Wood, one of the initial fervent supporters of the magazine, to give notice that he would propose a motion that would reduce the amount of work in the production and reviewing of the magazine.[405] The magazine was then singly issued three times a year and their reviews were dropped from the syllabi. In 1873, a motion was passed for the magazine to be 'published' only twice a year 'and contain the essays read during the session and other papers of interest.'[406] According to the session's Annual Report, it was 'hoped that by this method, papers of permanent value, which would other wise have been lost, will be preserved for future reference.'[407] Articles were no longer written specifically for the manuscript magazine but were first and foremost papers and essays to be read aloud—and criticized—within the association's meeting. This set the precedent for the rest of the magazines produced up to (at least) 1914.

The inclusion of criticisms within the magazines began with the January 1869 issue (see further discussion below). A few blank pages were usually left at the back of the magazines, but this was most likely due to space being left over after all the contributions were assembled. It does appear that these pages were the result of an editorial decision to encourage readers to add their responses. Only one of the two copies of the January 1869 issue has survived, and in this copy, there are only three short comments which appear to be written by the same author. Unlike later

[403] Minute entry, 04 March 1864, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 57.
[404] Minute entry, 15 December 1864, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 93; minute entry, 02 February 1865, Minute Book, No. 1, p. 103.
[405] Minute entry, 29 April 1865, Minute Book, No. 1, pp. 128-9.
[406] Minute entry, 21 October 1873, Minute Book, No. 2, pp. 277-78.
[407] 'Twelfth Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary & Scientific Association', Session 1873-74, in Minute Book, No. 2, p. 305.

issues, there is no formal heading of 'Criticisms' at the top of the page. This suggests that these comments were the result of one readers' decision to annotate their copy.[408] The April 1869, October 1870, and another issue produced in (March?) 1870 all include blank pages at the back but do not have any written criticisms.

The editorial practice of leaving space for criticisms was more formally introduced at some point between a year-and-a-half and two years later, perhaps as early as January 1871. The Annual Report for 1870-71 tells us that the magazine was 'improved' during this session, and that a new 'feature of interest' was the space for criticisms. Changes were also made to the material format, and both improvements were designed with contributors and readers in mind:

> The MSS. Magazine has been improved this Session, a larger and more suitable size of paper being substituted for the old edition; also a feature of interest, and one conducive to the improvement of contributors and readers, is the space left for criticisms.[409]

Among the extant issues, only the April 1871 and January 1872 issues include a formal section entitled 'Criticisms', the latter being the last surviving copy of the manuscript magazines. It is unknown if the practice continued much beyond this session. The magazines continued to be produced in manuscript up to the 1872-73 session (at least), with Honorary Members also contributing articles to its numbers.[410] Thereafter, the magazine seemed to fall out of favour with the members and mention of it in the minutes and annual reports is omitted.

The institution is picked up again in the 1897-98 session after a lapse of twenty-four years. There remains the possibility that the magazine continued to be produced in some form during this time, and the fact that the issues no longer exist might be explained as being due to the Property Committee's purging of the Secretary's Box in 1906 (see above). However, given the consistency

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[408] Here, I am tempted to think the reader who annotated their copy of the association's magazine at the very back without being directed by a formal, editorially-sanctioned space was perhaps familiar with other manuscript magazines of similar organisations of about the same period. For example, Kent Road United Presbyterian Church Young Men's Institute produced a manuscript magazine in April 1872, and there are known to be two issues that were produced prior to this date. The extant issue demonstrate that there was a very well-developed critical voice established amongst its members: the criticism section covers 20 pages at the back of their magazine in addition to having a separate 'Correspondents' Column' (MLSC, Kent Road U. P. Church Young Men's Institute, Kent Road Quarterly, No. 2, Vol. 3, 1 April 1872, Mitchell (AL) 725431).

[409] 'Ninth Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary & Scientific Association', Session 1870-71, 2 May 1871, in Minute Book, No. 2, p. 199.

[410] 'Eleventh Annual Report of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary & Scientific Association', Session 1872-73, in 'Literary Scraps and Cuttings Book', p. 17.

and general rigour of the association's secretaries in recording the minutes of the meetings, it seems unlikely. The Annual Report for the 1897-98 session supports this conclusion in announcing that:

> a Magazine night was introduced with a view to encouraging younger Members to take part in the work of the Association. This proved an entire success, a large number of contributions having been received by the Editor.[411]

Instead of a producing a material product, a Magazine Night—a night wherein papers of 'lighter' subject matter were read aloud by the Secretary and criticised by members as a form of entertainment—was introduced into the syllabus.

In the following session, an evening was set aside in the syllabus for a Ladies' Magazine Night. The introduction of a separate night for women members might have been offered to encourage others to join the already growing number of women members of the association. The 1898-99 session had 11 women (11.22%), an increase of 4 members from the previous session, from whence their numbers continued to grow. The association may have hoped to extend the popularity and success of the Magazine Night. Notwithstanding the special arrangements, the Ladies' Magazine Night held on 28 January 1899 was not a success, at least this was the implication of William Slater, the Secretary. In the Thirty-Seventh Annual Report, Slater informs us that amongst the meetings held during the session, there was one 'Social Evening, which was intended for a Ladies' Magazine Night.'[412] Instead, the ladies organised a 'Social', at which:

> Songs, Games, & a varied programme was discoursed the meeting breaking up at 10 o clock after all had joined in singing "Auld Lang Syne"[.] All present testifying to the enjoyable evening.[413]

This 'Social' became the ladies' 'Social Parlour', which was held every year until the 1914-15 session (and beyond).

Early in 1900, a motion was carried to have the articles read aloud on Magazine Nights collected and preserved:

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[411] 'Thirty-Sixth Annual Report', Session 1897-98, D58/4a/9.
[412] 'Thirty-Seventh Annual Report', Session 1898-99, D58/4a/10.
[413] Minute entry, 28 January 1899, Minute Book, No. 5.

> Mr G A H Douglas moved, seconded by Mr Robt Wilson, that in future the papers shall become the property of the Assocn., that each be written on the same size of paper for the sake of uniformity, the paper being supplied by the Association, and that along with each, a letter of identification be sent in by the author. This was agreed to.[414]

From an oral medium, the magazine became a material object once again. Anonymity disappeared and personal accountability was restored, and the uniformity of the paper allowed for a consistency in their material presentation. The collected papers from 1900 until the end of 1903 have not survived. A motion passed in February 1906 was perhaps fortuitous in the preservation of the magazine articles from 1903 onwards:

> Mr C. Thomson moved that the various magazine articles now in the possession of the society be typewritten on paper of uniform size, and that the typewritten copies be bound for circulation while the originals remain in the societies archives[.] Mr Gavin Goudie seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.[415]

At the following meeting, it was decided that the job of typing all the articles was to be handed to the library committee.[416] The typed articles were then bound and placed in the library where they could be circulated amongst the members. This decision most probably lead to the preservation of the typescript magazines now in the possession of the Shetland Archives, and include the articles from Magazine Nights dating intermittently from 6 February 1904 through 30 November 1912, as well as eight beyond the period under study.

The re-introduction of the magazine into the syllabus in 1897 as a form of entertainment proved to be a success, and it remained a fairly regular feature on the syllabi until well beyond 1914. Type-script magazines of papers read on Magazine Nights, then collected, typed and bound together, were produced up to the mid-1950s.

MS Magazines: Their Materiality and Manufacture

Generally, contributors hand-wrote their submissions twice. The Editors would then edit and correct any mistakes in spelling and grammar. While the first set of rules in 1863 state that mistakes

[414] Minute entry, 03 February 1900, Minute Book, No. 5.
[415] Minute entry, 03 March 1906, Minute Book, No. 5.
[416] Minute entry, 10 March 1906, Minute Book, No. 5.

were to be corrected, re-written by the author, then presumably re-submitted, this was simply not the case. There are several articles that clearly show the Editor's penciled annotations next to what appears to be corrections in the author's own handwriting. A good example is the essay entitled 'The Advantages of Criticism', by James Louttit, in the very first issue of March 1864. In his essay, Louttit advocates the necessity and importance of criticism—both verbal and written—in a person's improvement. He writes:

> This is my first paper for any magazine, [annotation, comma crossed out] and its readers will, I doubt not see in it very many defects, which I may not be able to detect […] will it not be pleasanter for me to have my errors pointed out and explained in a friendly spirit, by those qualified to detect them, when I will endeavor [annotation, 'u' added above, between the 'o' and the 'r'] to avoid them in future, than to have the same defects sneered at every time I am ambitious enough to attempt any humble contribution to the magazine.[417]

While Louttit understood the need for feedback or criticism in the meetings *and* in the magazines, 'criticisms' as a feature were largely absent from the magazines. Thus, this society differs from the Wellpark Free Church Young Men's Literary Society discussed in Chapter 4, in that the latter group saw the readers' written responses to the contributions in the magazines as an essential part of the 'improving' process.

Criticisms were only officially included in the April 1871 and January 1872 issues, and even then only a few readers responded (see below). Not daunted by what he might have seen as an omission prior to these dates, an 'unofficial' criticism section appears at the back of the January 1869 issue, where one anonymous reader took the liberty of starting his own section for this purpose. On the other hand, annotations that reflect readers' responses and critical voices feature intermittently in the early magazines. After the anonymous article, 'Friendship', in the July 1864 issue, one reader (or Editor?) wrote 'Good' at the end of the essay, while a reader of 'A Summer Holiday in Rousay' clearly disliked a particular descriptive passage regarding the roar of the waves, adding in pencil next to the text 'Bosh'.[418]

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[417] James Louttit, 'The Advantages of Criticism', *The Manuscript Magazine of the Glasgow Orkney & Shetland Literary & Scientific Association*, March 1864, re-issued May 1865, pp. 29-34 (pp. 29-30) (SA, The Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, *Pole Star*, Manuscript Magazine, May 1865, D58//2/2).
[418] [Anonymous], 'Friendship', *The Manuscript Magazine of the Glasgow Orkney & Shetland Literary & Scientific Association*, July 1864, re-issued May 1865, pp. 29-39 (p. 39), D58/2/2; 'Jupiter Fring', 'A Summer Holiday in Rousay', *The Pole Star. A Quarterly Manuscript Magazine. In Connection with the Glasgow Orkney & Shetland Literary & Scientific Association*, January 1869, pp. 1-12 (p.5), D58/2/3.

Readers of the MS Magazines

From a combined total of 21 manuscript magazines, and magazines consisting of articles collected from 'Magazine Nights', there are only six—the January 1869, April 1869, [March?] 1870, October 1870, April 1871, and January 1872 issues—that contain lists of readers or members. The October 1870 issue has the highest number of (listed) readers, with 28 members (see *Figure 5.7*). The other five lists were relatively stable, with each issue (in theory) having approximately 20 readers. Most of the readers continued to be listed over the three year period, which suggests that the association's membership during this time was fairly stable.

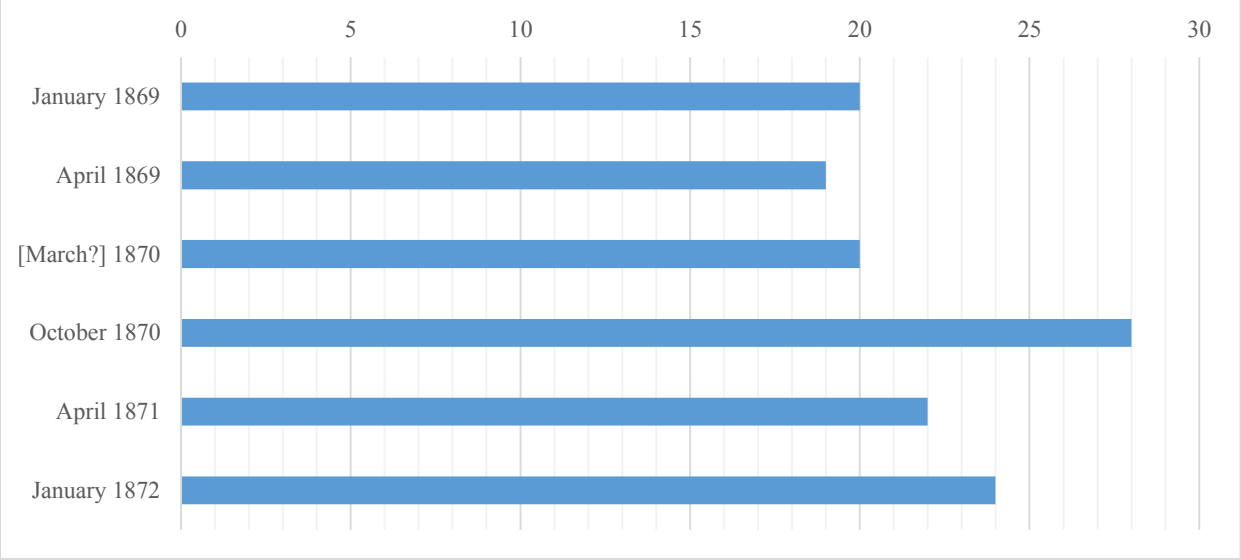

Figure 5.7: Number of Magazine Readers, Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, 1869-1872

Future work on this society could include a full search for the biographical details of each of these readers. However, a preliminary search of the Glasgow Post Office directories provided some information on two members of the association that were listed as readers of their magazines. James Louttit, quoted above, was one of the founding members of the association when it formed in 1862. The Post Office Directory for 1863-64 gives his address as 56 George Street in the city centre, and tells us that he was 'boot and shoemaker'.[419] In 1862, Wemyss Walls worked as a

[419] 'General Directory', *Post Office Glasgow Directory for 1863, 1864,* p. 179. Provided he did not have a son of the same name who was also a member, Louttit continued to be a member until the 1907-08 session (until his death?), which was the last time his name appears in the roll of Ordinary Members. This would mean that he was a member

warehouseman for the merchants J. & W., & Co. on Ingram Street in the commercial district of the city.[420]

From an association that was founded in part by working-class members, within the first two decades of the twentieth century, it appears the association became more prominently composed of middle-class members. The Post Office Directory for 1913-14 lists J. R. L. Corrigal, a member of the association since the 1895-96 session, as an agent for the Union Bank of Scotland.[421] Similarly, in 1914, Robert Deerness, a member since at least the 1893-94 session, was a 'machinery, metal and hardware agent'. While working in the city centre, his residence was listed as being 17 Highburgh Road, in the more affluent West End of Glasgow.[422]

Some of the female members also held jobs during this period. Two sisters, Bella and Jeannie Frisken, joined the association in 1903. In 1914, they appeared to have had their own shop, where they worked as drapers and dressmakers.[423] While the Friskens were running their own business, Lilias Williamson Halcrow was earning her Master's degree from the University of Glasgow, graduating in 1914.[424] Halcrow was a fairly recent member of the association, only first appearing in the list of Ordinary Members in the 1913-14 session. This would mean she had already commenced her studies by the time she joined.

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for 45 years, a term that was not particularly extra-ordinary for this association. Four other original members—W. A. Clouston, Thomas Stout, Wemyss Walls and Adam G. Horne—also remained members until their deaths in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[420] 'General Directory', *Post Office Glasgow Directory for 1862, 1863*... (Glasgow, William MacKenzie, 1862), p. 84; 'Street Directory', *Post Office Glasgow Directory for 1862, 1863*, p. 385). Even though his name does not appear in the list of Ordinary Members from the 1893-94 session onwards, it seems he might have kept his connections up with the association since his participation in the early years of the group: the minute entry for 6 January 1912 records that along with two other founding members, William Muir and A. G. Horne, he was elected as an Honorary Member of the association (Minute entry, 06 February 1912, Minute Book, No. 6).

[421] 'General Directory', *Post Office Glasgow Directory for 1913-1914, Arranged as General, Street, Commercial, and Suburban, with an Appendix Containing Useful Local and General Information* (Glasgow, Aird & Coghill, Ltd., 1913), p. 183. Corrigal continued in this profession for at least the next two years, as the listing remains the same in the subsequent Directories.

[422] 'General Directory', *Post Office Glasgow Directory for 1914-1915*... (Glasgow, Aird & Coghill, Ltd., 1914), p. 207.

[423] *Ibid*, p. 260.

[424] University of Glasgow Archive Services, Records of the University of Glasgow, Scotland, p. 73, GB 0248, R3/2/1.

Contributors and Contributions to the Magazines

One objective in my study of the magazines was to see if there were any patterns in the type of materials that were included in them during the fifty-two years under study. I first sub-divided all the materials into the following categories: table of contents; list of readers/ members; editorial contributions; original contributions, which were divided into prose and poetry; transcriptions of materials, either in whole or in part, beyond very short quotations; any other various types of materials; and criticisms.

The largest number of contributions to any issue were submitted for the Magazine Night held during the 1910-11 session (see *Figure 5.8*). This did not correspond with the session with

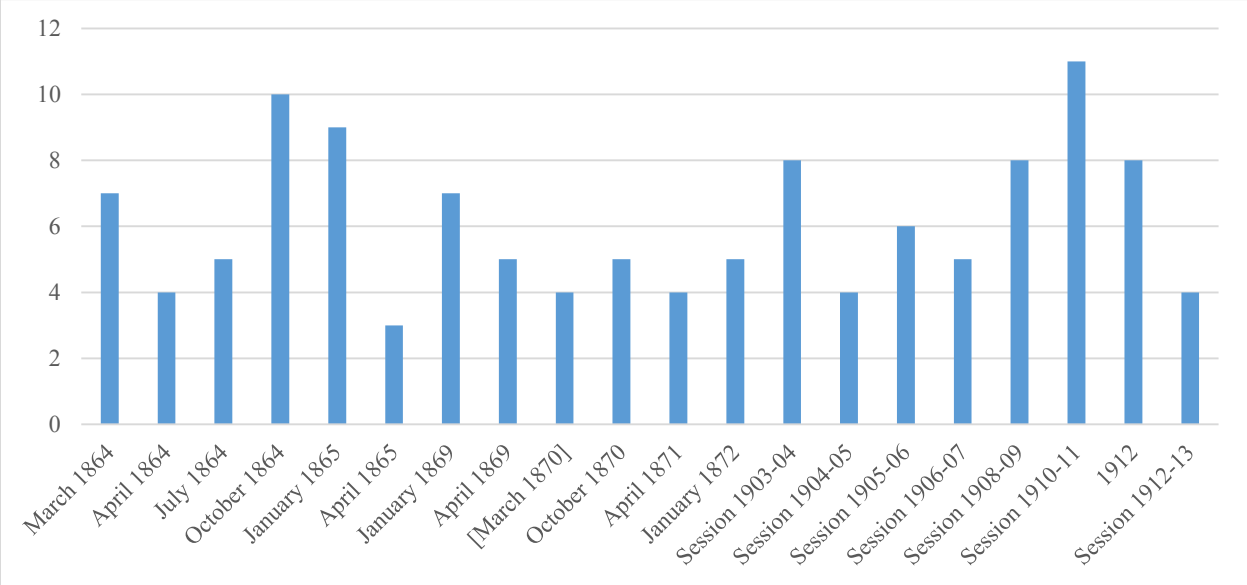

Figure 5.8: Original Contributions to the Literary Magazines of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, 1864-1913

the largest membership, which was in 1907-08. The magazine with the second highest number of contributions was the fourth magazine produced in October 1864, at the very beginning of the association's history. More generally, the number of contributions dropped slightly in the late 1860s and early 1870s, but rose slightly in the first decade of the twentieth century, which corresponded only marginally with the substantial rise in membership during these later years. In effect, it suggests that the vast majority of new members in the early twentieth century did not

attach the same importance to the association's magazine as they did not feel compelled to contribute to it. Indeed, it appears that the value attached to the magazine had changed.

This conclusion gains further support when I compare the percentage of the total number of members to the number of contributions for each issue. It is not possible to determine exactly how many members there were between March 1864 and April 1865 as the membership rolls for these years are no longer extant. This was a period of intense activity when a total of six magazines were issued. Nonetheless, if I take the average of the members from the years before and after (i.e. the 1862-63 session, and the list of readers/members from the January 1869 issue), and use the lists of readers/members where available, I can get a rough idea of the percentage of members who contributed to the magazine for all the issues.[425] The results are interesting, but not particularly surprising (see *Figure 5.9*).

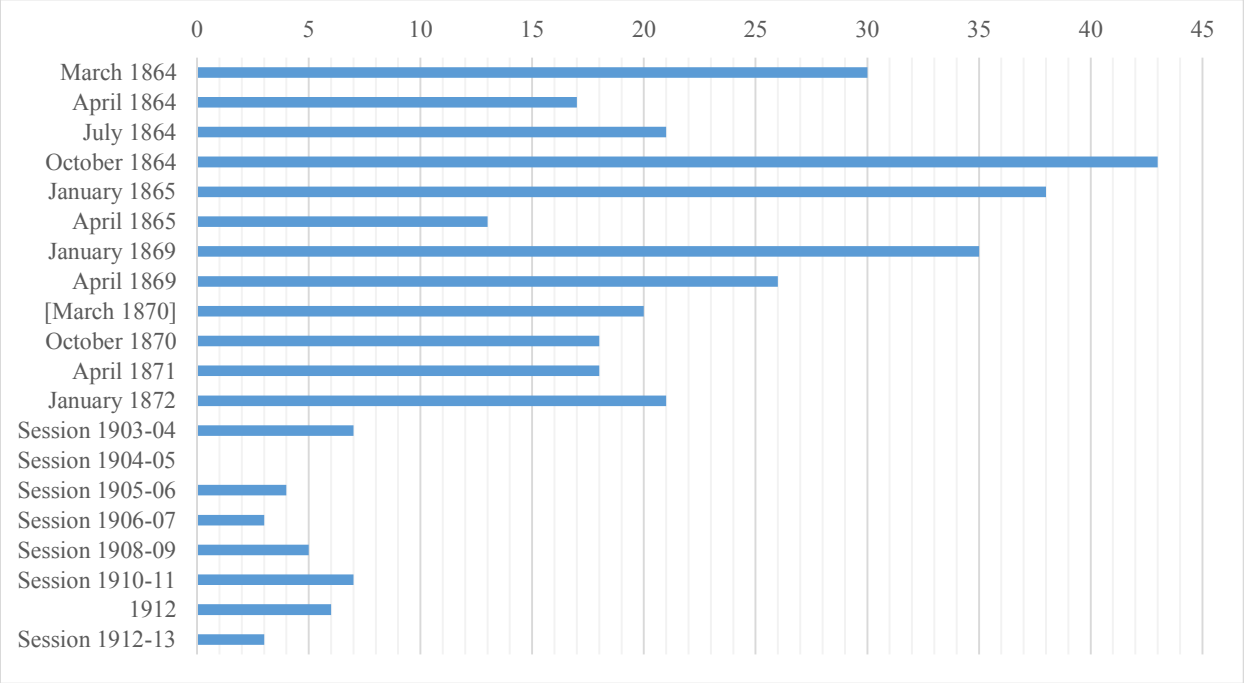

Figure 5.9: Percentage of Members of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association who Contributed to their Literary Magazines

[425] It must be noted that these numbers are only an approximation used in order to draw some general conclusions from an imperfect dataset. All of the magazines include at least some contributions by authors who are anonymous or use pen-names, and I found it was not possible to determine whether a single author might have made multiple contributions under more than one name.

This table suggests that there was a one to one correlation between the number of members and contributions, but there was not: there are several cases throughout the run of the magazine where members (or friends) submitted more than one contribution to a magazine using the same name or pen-name. Even so, there is a pronounced difference in the percentages of members who contributed to the magazines before and after the January 1872 issue. While the early years of the magazine's existence represent the most active period of the association's members, at no point did over half of them contribute, but approximately one-fifth *did*, and with consistency. After 1872, the percentage of contributions never reached ten percent, with the nadir of the magazine's existence being the 1904-05 session, when the percentage of members contributing was negligible. Not only did the format change from a quarterly material magazine, to an annual event where contributions were read aloud, but the magazine's significance within the association appears to have decidedly altered. The reasons for this might be found in my assessment of the genres and subjects of the magazines' contributions.

I assessed the twenty issues of the association's magazine in a similar manner to the Prospectuses in the analysis described above. The genre and subject matter of each article was quantified, and in the case that an article covers multiple subjects, it was counted in each category accordingly. The results are shown in *Figure 5.10*. The table shows that throughout the course of the magazine's existence, members (or friends of members) used the magazine as a means to publish their original poetry. This trend was most pronounced in the first years of the magazine's publication, and towards the end of the period under study, during the 1910-11 session. This contrasts with the incidences of original prose, which never reached more than one fictional piece in any magazine.

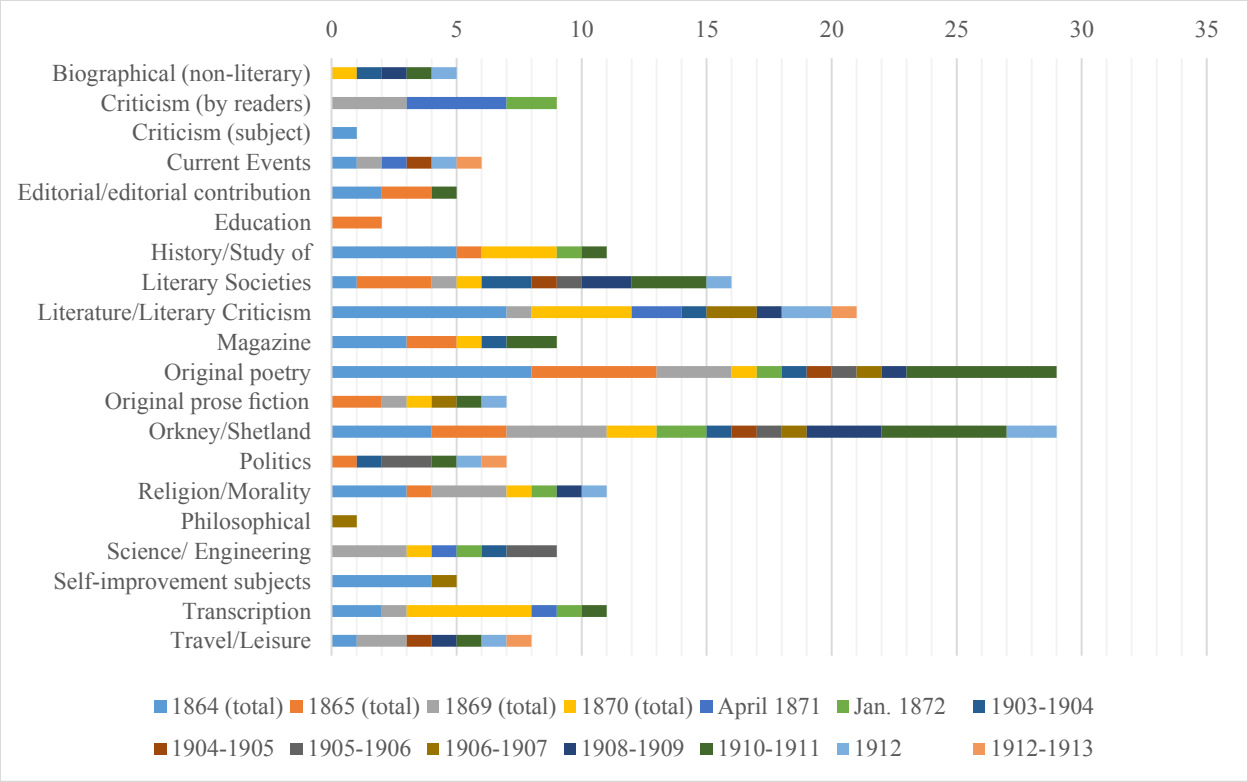

Figure 5.10: Subjects of the Literary Magazines of the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Literary and Scientific Association, 1864-1913

In terms of subject matter, Orkney and Shetland topics were the most frequently represented. This contrasts with the subject matter for the meetings in both the first and last decades of the period under study discussed above. While 'Northern' topics were not uncommon as the subject of the association's meetings, members used the magazine to frequently discuss their 'patriotism', or their love of their former homes in Orkney and Shetland, and to indulge their feeling of nostalgia and homesickness, particularly through the medium of poetry. Literature and literary criticism was the second most frequent subject of the contributions, and this is comparable with the subjects of their meetings during the early and later decades. This bears testimony to the 'literary' objectives and aspirations of the association, and both their meetings and magazines upheld these.

The magazines were also a medium for members to discuss the function and purpose of literary societies like their own. In the issues after 1900, contributions on this topic most frequently discuss the members' lack of motivation and failure to contribute to the 'work' of the society. Essays that lament 'The Good Old Times' (as one contributor entitled his/her article) often offer suggestions regarding the society's improvement. Magazine Nights, and later, the typed articles

that were potentially circulated between members, offered a platform for these (mostly anonymous) views to be aired. As with the majority of this association's meetings, the articles read on Magazine Night were also subject to criticisms, which followed each reading.

Readers' Responses: 'Criticisms'

As noted above, there are only two (consecutive?) magazines that include a separate section for criticisms, those issued in April 1871 and January 1872. This number increases to three if I include the 'unofficial' section started at the back of the January 1869 issue. On a blank page after the last article in this issue, there are three lines of anonymous criticism in the same handwriting:

> No 1 good subject, ill expressed.
> 49 "Hope". Seen worse, but not much
> No 4 A powerful & spirited attack on the subject it treats on[426]

The first criticism refers to the first essay in this issue by 'Jupiter Fring' entitled 'A Summer Holiday in Rousay'. This is the same essay that was annotated, and the handwriting is not dissimilar to this criticism. Thus, it may be that one reader found not only the descriptions but the grammar and syntax to be 'ill expressed'. '49' refers to the poem, 'Hope', by 'Aspirant', on page 49. This contributor has two poems in this issue, the other, 'Song', which follows the first, is not commented upon.

In the first poem, the speaker is in his room and it is dark and stormy outside. He is lonely, remembering the past and fretful about his future. He hears a voice and thinks it's 'Him' telling him to cheer up. He is comforted and thanks God for giving him hope. The second poem uses the metaphor of being in a boat on the ocean of life, but Hope, like a lighthouse, shows the way, thus the message is that we must look to the future and not the past. Hope is seen here to be from God or Heaven. While the sentiments are clichéd and the rhyme scheme is simple, the criticism in this case seems rather harsh. It may be that its jarring effect was intended to be humorous, aimed at a selective audience delimited by the magazine's circulation.

With 'No 4', the critic refers back to an earlier essay entitled 'Modern Spiritualism' by 'X.Y.Z.', and he seems to approve of the author's vehement, moralistic attack on his subject.

[426] [Anonymous 'criticisms'], *The Pole Star*, Manuscript Magazine, January 1869, [p. 87], D58/2/3.

'X.Y.Z.' denounces the then contemporary interest in spiritualism as being the work of 'the great enemy of our race', or 'the Evil One'. The essay advocates the use of one's rationality and reason so that we do not become another one of Satan's 'numerous and easy prey':

> we would act like fools were we to rush to the conclusion that those "manifestations" were caused by spirit agency without first giving them a careful investigation in the light of reason, science, and scripture.[427]

When considered with the previous line of criticism, the anonymous critic's comment on the essay's 'powerful & spirited attack' could just as well be tongue-in-cheek.

The first official 'Criticisms' section appeared in the back of the April 1871 issue. There are four criticisms from three identifiable members of the association, and one unlisted 'Reader' identified as 'R.D.'. The Editor begins the section by requiring that 'Criticisms must be signed by the critic[.]'[428] Underneath this, 'R.D.' wrote 'If so – why should the articles not be signed by the Authors – '.[429] His humorous riposte is a (negative) response to the decreasing tendency for the articles to be signed by the authors with their own names. The Criticisms section may have been seen as an appropriate site for humorous as well as more 'serious' commentary, offering an opportunity for a critic to display his wit as well as apt his literary criticism.

Following 'R.D.' was a lengthy criticism by 'W.R.' that covered over five-and-a-half pages. This critic was likely to be William Reid, one of the listed readers since the March 1870 issue. Reid takes issue with one line in the essay, 'Memory Imagination & Association', by 'PR':

> "But it is only in a restricted sense that the term "creative" can be applied to imagination, for imagination does not create or originate any new elements"[.][430]

Reid argues at length that creativity is most definitely a product of man's imagination and not an 'appropriation' of the work of God:

> Where is the original model in any of the things that are? I ask. From which was copied that ideal of perfection existing in a locomotive. Will Adam find it in Eden & hand it down to posterity? Was there anything in a single element in nature to suggest it? Thereby making

[427] 'X.Y.X.', 'Modern Spiritualism', *The Pole Star, a Quarterly Manuscript Magazine*, January 1869, p. 6.
[428] Editor [either Samuel S. Eunson or David Holland], 'Criticisms', [*The Pole Star*], April 1871, [p. 105].
[429] 'R.D.', 'Criticisms', [*The Pole Star*], April 1871, [p. 105].
[430] 'PR', 'Memory Imagination & Association', [*The Pole Star*], April 1871, p. 19.

> it a second rate production. No I say it is the embodyment of an imagination which might truly be said to have no image or parallel in the heaven above or the Earth beneath. You may say it is a production of the physical & not the imaginative, but I say again that it is the physical embodying the creation of the imagination. […] Giving man credit for such as creative power might be thought at variance with the prerogatives of the Creator, but I think not seeing that such is only the display of those talents he has got which can never fail to glorify rather than be looked on as an appropriation.[431]

He ends by applying his argument to literature:

> Let anyone read Byron's "Manfred" & when they are done say if the imagination ere created anything or not. But it is useless to enumerate Authorities as Sir William Hamilton may say no, but no matter the heading (criticism) tells me that I may have my say. The field is open ~~follow~~. [annotation in pencil:] advance[.][432]

This last statement is a defense of his own critical voice. Under the rubric of Criticisms, Reid invokes and flouts the spirit of diplomacy, citing such 'Authorities' as Sir William Hamilton, the eighteenth-century Scottish diplomat, who may deny him what he sees as his right. It is a provocative challenge to its readers. But while Reid sees himself as a leader, directing others to 'follow', this challenge is met by another reader, who corrects and, in effect, nullifies Reid's bid.

Hereafter, the next reader, 'DH', possibly David Holland, one of the magazine's Editors, adds his (editorial?) criticism that 'Mr Wm Reid has had too much to say.'[433] Holland's reply points up a particular unwritten rule that criticisms are to be kept short. The fourth and last criticism follows this injunction. 'TLL', possibly Thomas L. Leask, wrote what could be seen as a conciliatory comment in the form of a rather nebulous nicety: 'I think the latter part of the book decidedly the best[.]'[434] While Leask's use of the term 'book' might be a slippage in language, it equally might be an eliding of the two media, which suggests that a manuscript magazine might have had a slightly fluid definition amongst its readers.

The January 1872 issue was the last to include Criticisms as a feature. Here again the Editor requests readers' appellations, but the tone is decidedly more deferential: '(Members are respectfully requested to affix their own name to their criticisms)'.[435] From a total of twenty-four

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[431] 'W.R.', 'Criticisms', [The Pole Star], April 1871, [pp. 107-09].
[432] *Ibid*, 111.
[433] 'DH', 'Criticisms', [*The Pole Star*], April 1871, [p. 111].
[434] 'TLL', 'Criticisms', [*The Pole Star*], April 1871, [p. 111].
[435] [Editor], 'Criticisms', *The Pole Star*, Part 4, January 1872, p. 101, D58/2/8.

listed readers, there are only two criticisms at the back of this issue. Both of them are identifiable but only one is a member. The first is by Peter Wick, who is not listed as a reader nor a member. He criticises the essay, 'Reminiscences', by James M. Mcbeath of Kirkwall, for his slightly 'strained' style: 'The Author might write pleasantly did he not strain too much after effect.'[436] Wick then records his own affective response: 'His language is painfully sublime at times.' In addition, he affects outrage for the author patronising his readers:

> Unfortunately he [the author] falls into one unpardonable error – he writes for "school-boys" not for grown men – take for example page 98. The sentence commencing – "One word more to our youthful readers. Every boy should act &c" Fie! fie! Mr Essayist – on page 94 you tell us your mind reverts to a period rather more than twenty years in the past when as yet your school-boy days were only commencing – & judging from this we must come to the conclusion that you are lecturing your elders & equals as school boys –[437]

The second criticism is by 'WR', who is possibly William Reid as in the former issue. Reid once again assumes the role of a literary critic. He points out what he sees to be various faults in the anonymous poem, 'Orcadian Antiquities II'. Specifically, he critiques the author's imagery:

> The term "everlasting waters" is a very wide and ambiguous one. Had it went that the flow of water was continual or everlasting there would not have been much wrong with it. The hills or Rock around which it flows might be said to be everlasting: an appellation well known. It is very doubtful though whether the water there then, has returned yet, or may ever Return!
>
> Might not the word evercircling be supplied or eversurging &c whereby the couplet would be rendered unique as the following one which is beautiful.
>
> We trust "Antiquities" will stick a little better to his text in production No III[.][438]

Here again, Reid uses the Criticisms section as a forum designated for the offering of 'serious' critical advice for the poem's 'improvement'. Peter Wick's previous comments would seem to reinforce this, for what could be seen as a general perception among the magazine's readers. However, the 1869 and April 1871 issues demonstrate that humour could also be one of the functions of, as well as a foil to, the 'serious' literary criticism in the magazines.

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[436] Peter Wick, 'Criticisms', *The Pole Star*, Part 4, January 1872, p. 101, D58/2/8.
[437] *Ibid*.
[438] 'WR', 'Criticisms', *The Pole Star*, Part 4, January 1872, pp. 101-2, D58/2/8.

By debating and ultimately choosing not to include criticisms at the back of most of their magazines, the Glasgow Orkney and Shetland association was different from other literary societies in Glasgow. For example, as discussed in Chapter 4, the Wellpark Free Church Young Men's Literary Society had an established critical community for their literary magazines from 1883-88, with many of its readers offering criticism on individual contributions as well as the magazine itself. For the Glasgow and Orkney society, there were very few criticisms for the number of readers, and these were only officially included in two of the extant twenty issues. Criticisms were predominantly, if almost exclusively, an immediate, interactive and public phenomenon which took place in their meetings, and were by and large not considered an appropriate feature within a material medium.

Future Work, and Future 'Improvement': Glasgow Orkney and Shetland Society's Legacy

The magazines offer an excellent means by which to explore not only the literary aspirations of its members, but also their personal motivations for joining the association and for contributing to the magazines. There are several essays in the various issues that tell us a good deal about their motivations, indeed, what it meant to them to be 'literary'.[439] This aspect could be explored in more detail in future, along with a more detailed look at the fluid notion of reading in this association at the *fin de siècle*: the elision from material magazines to Magazine Nights back to material magazines, and from solitary reading to public readings, reviews and discussions, then back again to solitary reading.

The Glasgow Orkney and Shetland society differs from the Wellpark society in that it was a county society (as defined in Chapter 2) rather than a church group. From the evidence we have, it appears to have been running for over twenty years before the Wellpark society was running. The momentum in its larger membership and very pro-active methods of recruitment allowed the society to continue well beyond the life of the smaller group in the East End of Glasgow whose

[439] A particularly good example is an anonymous two-part story entitled, 'Education & no education [or George & William – In two Parts]', that follows the story of two young boys. George's father does not want his son to be better than himself and therefore does not let him learn his letters. William, on the other hand, receives encouragement from his father to educate himself. William soon becomes a monitor in the 'Institution for Mutual Instruction', and ultimately becomes a lawyer. He successfully defends his childhood friend, George, who gets arrested due to an entanglement he gets in from not being able to read ('Education & no education [or George & William – In two Parts]', *Pole Star*, Manuscript Magazine, May 1865, pp. 9-19, pp. 12-22, D58/2/2).

membership was largely confined to its congregation. Nonetheless, members' 'improvement' was squarely at the heart of both societies, whose 'objects' were almost identical even if they ultimately differed in one means by which it was brought about, namely, through the inclusion of 'criticisms' in their magazines or not.

Glasgow Orkney and Shetland society's magazines also helped to consolidate a critical community of readers whose moral ethos of improvement (as opposed to Wellpark's specifically religious one) was enhanced by their feelings of loyalty and nostalgia, a reverence even, for their former northern homes. Members expressed these feelings in their manuscript magazines. Even while ultimately rejecting written criticisms, the magazines nonetheless were seen to be an essential, material means by which members' improvement was facilitated. This was a powerful, long-standing belief evidenced by the continuation of their production (albeit in typescript) until 1956. This society, too, is a case study of a Scottish way of consuming texts within Glasgow's culture of 'improvement'.