

A.J. MacVicar, *Hebridean Heritage. Autobiography of a west Highland minister by Angus J. MacVicar, M.A., J.P., Minister emeritus of Southend* (Oban Times, 1966), 36-38. 40.

“...as was expected of one studying for the ministry of the Church of Scotland, I became a member of the Ossianic Society and continued as such for as long as I was at the University. This Society for fellowship and debate was formed in 1818 (sic) by students of Highland descent studying for the professions, especially for the ministry. Originally their Friday evening meeting place was the vestry of St Columba Church, Hope Street, but latterly, this was a room in the students’ Union, University Avenue.

After working hard during the week, what a joy it was to have an evening off and to foregather with our fellow Highland students. I have many happy and pleasant memories of those meetings – and nostalgic ones too. When I joined the University [1899] it was confined to men, but before I left the University it was opened to female members. I must confess the innovation justified itself. The ladies enlivened our debates and attracted more male students. Today the Ossianic Society has a big membership, one of the largest at Gilmorehill.

For a session I acted as its secretary and in 1904-05, I was appointed President. The office bearers for that year were Hon. President, Professor Kuno Meyer, PhD.; President Angus J. MacVicar, M.A.; Vice-presidents, Dugald MacCallum, M.A. (Gaelic) and Donald MacPhee (English); Secretary Neil Archibald Johnson’ Asst. secretary, John Cameron M.A.; Treasurer, Alexander Silver; Bard, Hector Cameron; Committee, Elizabeth MacMillan (convener), Archd. Campbell, Allan Macdonald, Neil MacPhail and Donald Mackinnon,

Here is the syllabus of the society for that session:

Oct 28	Business meetin
November 4	Union debate
November 11	Address: ‘the Celtic movement in Scotland’ – the President
November 18	Deasbairachd: ‘Am bheil chipuaid a call a buaidh?’ Tha. P. J. Maciamhair. Chan eil, D. MacCallum, M.A. (“Is the pulpit losing its power?” Yes Maclamhair, no, MacCallum.)
November 25	Social night
Devember 2	“Is the Highlander better today than yesterday?” Affirm., A. Dawson. Neg, Charles Maclean.
December 9	Composite symposium: A. Campbell, Hector MacFadyen.
December 16	Debate: “That N. Munro portrays Highland character better than W. Black”. Affirm., A. Silver. Neg., John Cameron, M.A.
January 13	Union debate.
January 20	Ladies’ symposium.
January 27	Social night
February 3	Address: “Old Gaelic poetry” – the Hon. President.
February 10	Union debate.
February 17	Debate: “Is the Celtic Renaissance more imaginary than real?” Affirm. F. MacRae. Neg., D. MacPhie.
February 24	Paper on M. Luther. H. Cameron.
March 3	Composite Symposium: Gaelic satire, N. Macinnes, M.A. Gaelic elegy, A. Mackinnon, M.A.
March 10	Business meeting...

...There was a close connection between the Ossianic Society and the Shinty Club, and eventually, between them, there emerged a lively Gaelic community within the framework of the University which made its own special contribution to the social life at Gilmorehill. The concensus of opinion among the students of my day [1899-1906] was that without the Ossianic Club and the Shinty Club life at the University for Highland students would have been dull and monotonous...”