



Photo by Langdon.

MAGAZINE COMMITTEE, 1913-14.

Back Row - H. A. Martin, A. McSweeney, R. G. Dunsenair (Art Editor), J. L. Baird (Evening Sub-Editor),
Second Row - M. Nelson (Registrar), E. M. Lawrence, G. K. Green, W. C. Kears
Front Row - W. J. Skilling (Day Staff-Editor), A. L. Rhind (Editor), L. M. Hailbeon, F.I.C. (Governor), J. La S. Dapra (Hon. Secretary),
D. S. Clerk (Assistant Finance Manager).

TV INVENTOR John Logie Baird is always thought of as a brilliant scientist . . . but he had another talent, writing.

His forays into fiction, as an enthusiastic contributor to the Royal Technical College Magazine,

won him admirers amongst his student peers.

Writing under the pseudonym of 'H₂O' — the chemical formula for water — Baird published eighteen stories, articles and features in the magazine between 1909 and 1914.

In his final year at the College, popularly known as 'the Tech', these literary efforts were rewarded with a position on the committee in charge of the magazine.

The editor, Alexander Rhind, wrote to Baird on October 12 1913: "Many thanks for your welcome contributions. Keep it up.

"By the way, I have been chasing you nearly all over Glasgow. I want to tell you that you are evening sub-editor . . . and will be pleased to hand over your badge of office if you will let me know when I can see you in the Tech."

The position was readily accepted, and the image above shows a proud Baird (back row, first on the right) with his fellow Magazine Committee members for session 1913-14.

One of his most atmospheric pieces, 'The Invisible Man', appears in the Royal Technical College Magazine for December 1912.

Though subtitled 'A Creepy Christmas Drama', the story seems equally appropriate, if not more so, for Hallowe'en.

Working late and absorbed in trying to finish an exercise for his engineering drawing class, a lone student finds himself accidentally locked in the College buildings overnight. Suddenly, he detects a muffled footfall within the empty room, followed by a rustling and a clanking noise . . .

Baird the fiction writer

Written by Donald Fullarton - Last Updated Wednesday, 13 November 2013 19:02

As well as injecting a nicely-judged degree of suspense, Baird incorporates some of his own experiences of College life into the tale, including a familiarity with the classroom layouts.

He also makes a wry reference to the heavy workload of the engineering students: "There is the drawing to finish, and the maths. exercise, and the mechanics problem for Friday, and the Thermodynamics for Tuesday, and the Chemistry and Motive Power exercises for Wednesday, and the Natural Philosophy and Strength of Materials examples for Thursday."

Intrigued? Why not read the full story below!

THE INVISIBLE MAN.

A CREEPY CHRISTMAS DRAMA.

In One Act.

THE janitor had, as usual, walked through the College to clear out any belated students before closing up. But on this particular night he had omitted to visit class-room 219, the large class-room on the third floor, at the end of the passage, just past the place where they used to store the drawing models, the connecting rod end, the ordinary plumber block, the inclined plumber block, and so on; you may remember the things if you were at the College four or five years ago.

If the janitor had looked into this room he would have found a student still working, head on hand, by the light of a shaded table lamp. He was worrying over one of those brain-racking drawing problems.

"Find the true shape of the section made by a plane cutting the given cone at an angle of 35 deg. to the horizontal." He had made a model with pins and a piece of drawing paper, and was trying to find the section by drawing the line of cutting on the cone and then unrolling it. It had just dawned on him that this was not a section but a development, when the unnatural quiet of the College attracted his attention. He took out his watch, and, glancing at it, gave a slight exclamation; it was nearly midnight.

Ah well, thought he, if it's so late as that I might as well just make a night of it, there is the drawing to finish, and the maths. exercise, and the mechanics problem for Friday, and the Thermodynamics for Tuesday, and the Chemistry and Motive Power exercises for Wednesday, and the Natural Philosophy and Strength of Materials examples for Thursday. I will finish the lot. Not such a bad stunt getting locked in after all! But somehow when he turned again to his work, he found it difficult to con-

Marvel, 2s 6d, with battery complete and he had got bitten with the craze. Electric Lighting for Amateurs, 6d net; and regular purchase of "The Model Engineer" followed. He had had glorious visions of the future, himself standing surrounded by and directing the operation of wonderful machines, or in his laboratory inventing something to startle the world; and here he was, a physical drudge by day, and a mental drudge by night; how many poor fools had been lured to their destruction by these toys and handbooks!

All the time he was thinking in this way, he was aware of a growing sensation of uneasiness, of fear; the kind of fear which makes one afraid to look round, and was almost subconsciously trying to, one might say, think it down.

He glanced nervously round the room, half expecting to find a pair of eyes glaring at him from the darkness, which piled itself up beyond the range of his lamp; seeing nothing, he attempted once more to return to his drawing, a slight, indefinable sound arrested his attention. The next moment he had leapt to his feet with a gasp of fright. Someone or something was walking down towards him from the end of the room.

There had been no sound in the passage, no sound of the door opening. All of a sudden, from blank stillness, had come this muffled footfall, and the room was empty, absolutely empty. The footsteps continued, to stop seemingly not a dozen yards from him. Whatever it was it appeared to have halted behind one of the benches at the other side of the room. He could hear a rustling; then suddenly came the clank of metal against metal, and with it he found his voice.

"What is it! Who's there?" he called.

Baird the fiction writer

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