

## XI

# Coffee Houses and Book Clubs in Northumberland

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TODAY the bibliophile can rapidly ascertain whether a book is in print, on the shelves of a local bookshop, or in a library, but this has not always been the case. For the knowledgeable layman, the interested artisan or the practising professional, access to printed matter during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century could become extremely frustrating. The barriers which had to be surmounted included finding out what was published, obtaining details of forthcoming titles and examining them prior to purchase. Whilst middle-class journals such as the *Gentleman's Magazine* contained book reviews and local newspapers advertised new books this was no guarantee that the items would be available locally. The potential purchaser would have to rely either on colleagues or relatives visiting bookshops in London, or visit local booksellers themselves. This could involve a time-consuming visit to Newcastle, Durham or Edinburgh or, perhaps paying a pre-publication subscription to an unseen forthcoming title. All of this assumes that the cost of printed matter was within the reach of most interested purchasers, an assumption which becomes increasingly difficult to justify from the late eighteenth century onwards. The price of paper, the rise in wages and the problems of distribution all become significant factors in the unit-cost of printed matter. The cost of newspapers also became prohibitive and regular purchase was beyond the pocket of all but the wealthiest.<sup>1,15</sup> For the man in the street the most readily available literature was the chapbook which ranged in subject and content from the Arthurian legend to the lurid confessions of the condemned criminal on the gallows, but failed to provide information on

current events, parliamentary happenings or controversial topics.

From the mid-eighteenth century onwards we see the development of the subscription library as the middle-class requirement for more leisure reading and instructional material increased. This trend was to be repeated by the more active members of the working class in the early nineteenth century which in turn stimulated the expansion of the commercial circulating library and the newspaper reading room. Both subscription and circulating libraries evolved slowly in the North East, but had nevertheless become established by 1800 in most towns. They were, however, by no means the first attempt at providing "community literature" in the area, and the role of the coffee house, public house, book club and book society which has frequently been overlooked merits the more detailed analysis which follows.

### THE COFFEE HOUSE

The Coffee House as a focal point for the exchange of news, where persons of like political and social mind could meet, and where early collections of tracts and pamphlets were housed, has been described by the library historian Paul Kaufman as the forerunner to the book club and subscription library. He also drew attention to the close association between some coffee houses and the book trade and the fact that subscriptions had to be paid at some establishments to use the library facilities.<sup>2</sup> The earliest coffee houses were recorded in the university towns of Oxford and Cambridge and in London in the 1650s, and by the last decade of the century were to be counted in their hundreds in the capital.<sup>3</sup> A considerable

amount of evidence for the coffee house in the provinces has also been collected by Ellis,<sup>4</sup> clearly demonstrating that the phenomenon developed most rapidly in the south of England and in the larger ports on the western side of the country, but by the late 1750s had spread to even the smallest market towns. Their existence, however, does not automatically signify the provision of newspapers or other forms of literature.

In North Eastern England the coffee house does not appear to have been as popular as elsewhere in the country, but like those in Edinburgh<sup>5</sup> was more likely to be attached to a public house rather than have temperance associations. The Edinburgh coffee houses also had a reputation for their strong political character and were frequently in conflict with the authorities, although whether this was the case for the coffee houses in this area is impossible to determine due to the paucity of surviving documentation. In Newcastle five "Coffee and Punch" houses were listed in the 1778 Directory, all being on or near the waterfront,<sup>6</sup> and for Gateshead there were references to the meetings of coal owners and proprietors in local coffee houses as early as 1710.<sup>7</sup> In Northumberland the earliest reference to a coffee house appears to be that at Alnwick where Bell's Coffee Rooms was the venue for a number of eminent townsmen during the 1780s. Quite when they began to meet or for how long they continued to hold gatherings is unclear, the sole evidence for their existence being preserved in a contemporary document which refers to gaming, "papers" and the group's regular dinner engagement.<sup>8</sup>

Nearly twenty years later descriptions of various coffee houses in the town of Berwick are recorded by Fuller.<sup>9</sup> Writing in 1799 he described the principal inns of the town and for two of them made specific reference to their coffee rooms. At the Red Lion the

Coffee room is 49 feet in length, 16 breadth, and 11 feet in height . . . Two daily London papers, an Edinburgh paper three times a week, and the Newcastle Weekly Hue and Cry [Newcastle Courant], are taken in the coffee room, the expense of which is defrayed by an yearly subscription.

For the Hen and Chickens public house Fuller merely noted that "it has a coffee room upon a similar plan with that of the Red Lion". Confirmation that the Hen and Chickens and the Angel took the "London and county papers" also occurs in 1811.<sup>10</sup> The availability of reading matter was also alluded to by a later historian of Berwick<sup>11</sup> who deplored the fact that whilst a subscription library had been lately formed that

towns in the neighbourhood which do not contain half of its population have each one, and many of them two coffee rooms, Berwick has not one, or a single newspaper in it, but what is found at the back of an inn, or in the house of individuals.

The coffee rooms in Berwick seem to have been associated more with the coaching trade than with shipping and commercial interests, and it is perhaps no surprise to find that the other large coastal port in the county, North Shields, only appears to have had one coffee house, and that at the late date of 1823.<sup>12</sup>

## THE PUBLIC HOUSE

The provision of newspapers, pamphlet literature and even books in early public houses during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has also been commented on by several authors<sup>13</sup> and appears to have been a common practice in some Northumberland towns. An illuminating reference to the Star and Garter at Blyth stated that Sheraton's Parlour served as the newsroom where Lloyd's Evening Post was taken, and that "all who took an interest in public affairs repaired [there] to hear the news".<sup>14</sup> In reporting this activity the author was referring to the "times of the French Revolution" and went on to recall that

Old Ebenezer Kell, a custom house officer read the paper aloud, while the company sipped their grog and smoked their pipes. Mr Kell sustained the Office of Reader for many years, and in this fashion made known to the lieges of Blyth, the wonderful campaigns and startling events in the history of the first Napoleon, as well as the naval victories of Nelson.

The communal reading of newspapers was perhaps not so much a reflection of the level of literacy as of the exorbitant price of the products of both the London and the provincial presses. The heavy taxes made most newspapers far too expensive for the man in the street to purchase<sup>15</sup> and if access to the coffee house or public house was not possible the reader desirous of obtaining the news could join a newspaper club or society, or hire old newspapers, an illegal but widely practised habit. Evidence for the existence of newspaper clubs in the early nineteenth century was given by the historian William Robb, who, although writing in the 1880s, was reminiscing about Hexham sixty years earlier.<sup>17</sup> He commented that almost the

sole source from which the citizens of Hexham derived their little knowledge of national or foreign affairs was the Newcastle Courant . . . It was published weekly and . . . was charged seven pence to the buyer . . . To make this cost easier to the readers, companies of seven were formed, each person to enjoy the paper one day, and though the news were to the last man a week old, that did not matter . . .

No doubt the above practice was repeated in many North East towns and villages and, although the evidence of these informal clubs has rarely survived, it is revealing that the *Newcastle Courant* itself undertook a market survey of its readership in 1841<sup>18</sup> and claimed that each copy of the "Hue and Cry" was read by a considerable number of people. Every paper bought by a "professional or commercial" reader was read by at least five people, in the rural areas at least six persons read each copy, and in the newsrooms and public places upwards of fifty people saw each copy of the paper.

The association between the public house and library provisions in Northumberland lingered into the late nineteenth century. The local tavern was frequently the only "communal" building other than the church in many parishes, and the continued provision of literature by the publican no doubt encouraged trade. At Longhirst near Morpeth there was a

library and reading room at the Half Moon public house in 1858,<sup>19</sup> and in the same year at Wooler one room at the Sun Inn was used as a reading room.<sup>20</sup> The latest reference located is to the Murray Arms at Otterburn where a small library was kept until about 1910.<sup>21</sup>

### THE BOOK CLUB

The development of the book club and the subscription library from the coffee room meetings was a logical step. Many specific links have been noted, although frequently the examples quoted are not from the northern counties.<sup>22</sup> Only a handful are known in the United Kingdom before 1750 with the earliest local one being the Kendal Book Club, operating in 1760. By the turn of the century book clubs were in existence in Stockton (1776), Carlisle (pre-1786), Appleby (1790), Penrith (n.d.) and Sedgefield (1797).<sup>23</sup> An essential characteristic of the book club was that membership was normally small, often consisting of less than twenty members, each of whom paid an annual subscription. Members would meet socially at regular or irregular intervals and suggest new titles to be purchased. No standing collection of books was retained; instead the items were circulated amongst members and then auctioned off each year. Some book clubs were called literary or reading societies and in many instances membership was restricted to a specific professional group such as clergymen or physicians. As the vogue gained popularity in the second half of the eighteenth century membership broadened, the number of subscribers increased, and permanent collections were formed—the pre-cursor to the subscription library. By 1820 contemporary sources suggest that there were over five hundred book clubs and seven hundred and fifty magazine clubs in the United Kingdom, and not less than five thousand newspaper societies in the whole of the Empire.<sup>24</sup> The figures must be interpreted with care but nevertheless indicate that such clubs and societies were common, and that compared with the figure given for permanent libraries by the same source, were much more active and numerous.

References to book clubs in Northumberland are meagre with nothing before the nineteenth century. A brief note by the historian Eneas Mackenzie relating to Morpeth in 1810 recalls that there was

a book club, supported by the clergy and the principal gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood. Each member pays two guineas at entrance and one guinea annually. The subscription is applied to the purchase of books, which are annually sold by auction<sup>25</sup>

In the second edition of his *History*, published in 1825, Mackenzie referred to the same clerical book club and noted that "there is another similar institution on a small scale".<sup>26</sup> This, however, was not the case in Hexham where A. B. Wright noted in 1822 that

there is no book club, public subscription library, news-room, or reading-room, and we are sorry we cannot say that the encouragement afforded to the caterers for the mind's appetite reflects credit on the literary taste of the inhabitants of Hexham.<sup>27</sup>

Two smaller rural towns, however, did establish book clubs, although in both instances, at Bellingham and Rothbury, they became subscription libraries after a few years. The Bellingham Book Club was founded in 1809, and two years later Mackenzie was able to record that there were fifty subscribers.<sup>28</sup> By 1825 he noted that "the library or book club" now had four hundred volumes,<sup>29</sup> and this is confirmed by the existence of a *Catalogue of books added to Bellingham Subscription Library* (October 1823) preserved in the County Record Office.<sup>30</sup> Mackenzie is again the source for Rothbury Book Club established in 1815 which he described as "very well supported: the library is small, but select".<sup>31</sup> A copy of the *Rules* for the Rothbury Book Club was issued in 1825 and clearly shows that by this date it had become a subscription library.<sup>32</sup> Of the membership of the two book clubs we can now only speculate, but if the preponderance of light literature in the Bellingham *Catalogue* was any indication, then the subscribers were certainly not limited to one profession or occupational group.

## THE ALNWICK BOOK CLUB

A more successful book club was that in Alnwick, flourishing in the mid-1830s. A list of the year's books, together with the names of the town and country members, and the rules for 1834 have been preserved in a copy of N. J. Winch's *The botanists guide through the counties of Northumberland and Durham*.<sup>33</sup> The Alnwick *Rules* state that the fee on joining the Club was one guinea, and that the annual subscription was also to be a guinea. Two meetings were held each year, in February and August, and at the latter the year's books were to be auctioned. Members could recommend the purchase of a new title at anytime, provided the costs did not exceed four guineas, but had first to procure the signatures of eleven subscribers in support of the proposed new book.

The list of eighty-three titles issued in March 1834 only contained six novels, the bulk of these titles circulating were biographies such as Disraeli's *Memoirs of Charles I*; *Life of Sir J. E. Smith*; *Lee's Life of Cuvier*; or travel books like *Recollections of Mauritius*; *Stuart's America* and Inglis's *Norway*. Philosophical and religious works were not represented but this was not the case for scientific subjects as the Club possessed: Lyell's *Geology*; Herschel's *Astronomy*; Wood's *Catalogue of shells* and Johnson's *Flora of Berwick*.

The thirteen "town members" and twenty-three "county members" represented the respectable, middle class, element in the area. They included two clergymen, a physician and a military officer, with twenty of the subscribers being female readers.

Unlike the Bellingham and Rothbury Book Clubs which developed rapidly into permanent libraries the Alnwick Book Club operated alongside an existing subscription library which had been established as early as 1783 but was disbanded by 1833.<sup>34</sup> Immediately on the demise of the first subscription library a second was established the following year<sup>35</sup> and it would seem that some of the Book Club members, who belonged to both libraries, regularly donated books purchased at the Book Club

auctions to the subscription library. A further link between these three literary ventures, and the later Alnwick Medical Book Club, was Mark Smith, printer and stationer, who served as an honorary officer for all of them.

### THE TILL-SIDE BOOK CLUB

A somewhat more exclusive book club also appears to have been operating a few years later in the Alnwick area in the form of the Till-side Book Club for which a copy of their *Rules*, issued in 1858, and a list of members has survived.<sup>36</sup> There were twelve subscribers, all but one of them being listed in the "Court" section of the Northumberland *Post Office Directory* for 1858.<sup>37</sup> They included Lady Olivia Ossulston, wife of the 6th earl of Tankerville, Archdeacon Coxe, the Church of England vicars for Alnwick, Chillingham and Chatton, and the wife of the vicar of Ellingham. Other female members included Mrs Collingwood from Lilburn Tower, Mrs. Roddam of Roddam Hall, Mrs. Cresswell of Harehope Hall, and a Miss Dinsdale from Eglingham. Two substantial landowners—Mr. Langlands of Old Bewick and R. Ogle, JP of Eglingham—completed the membership. The Till-side membership was clearly very exclusive and conservative in its outlook. Each member was allowed to order one book to the value of £1.11.6, or two members could, in conjunction, order to the sum of 3 guineas. Fines were levied at the rate of one penny per day for exceeding the loan periods, and a further sum of one shilling was levied for failing to enter the dates of receiving and forwarding the volume or for sending it to the wrong person on the list. Books were sold annually, but items which did not realise one third of their cost price had to be taken by the person who had ordered them. The printed *Rules* were dated 4th January 1858, and Archdeacon Coxe, the Archdeacon for Lindisfarne, who was third on the circulation list, died in 1865. Whilst this provides some indication of the approximate operating dates for the Club, it is now impossible to be any more precise.

Rather oblique references have been found to the Ovingham Book Club established before 1825 and still in existence in 1851,<sup>38</sup> but the presence of a subscription library and a reading society in the same small village obscures the issue. This is also the case for the much later Bamburgh Book Club recorded in 1887,<sup>39</sup> where a large endowed library (Sharps) and a separate library and reading room were also flourishing. Whether this was the St. Cuthbert's Book Club noted as being defunct in 1915<sup>40</sup> is no longer clear. Similar problems arise with a number of other literary or reading societies in Northumberland. They include the Coanwood Reading Society, Humshaugh Reading Society and Longhirst Reading Society all of which were recorded in the 1851 *Census*. Many, such as the Belsay Reading Society (fl. 1871), North Sunderland Book Club (fl. 1884), Stamfordham Reading Society (fl. 1886), and Wheelbirks Reading Society (fl. 1883) were later foundations and would seem to have been more akin to parish subscription libraries or reading rooms and for this reason have been excluded from this account.

### MEDICAL BOOK CLUBS

Like the Alnwick and Till-side Book Clubs where membership lists have survived there is no doubt about the names of subscribers to the Alnwick Medical Book Club which was flourishing in 1847. It was an example of a book club which catered for a specific category of reader, a feature which both Kelly<sup>41</sup> and Kaufman<sup>42</sup> refer to as existing from the late eighteenth century, but see as being more closely linked to subscription libraries rather than the less formal book club. This would apply to the Alnwick example, for whilst there were a limited number of members who met at monthly intervals, a permanent library was maintained.

The Alnwick Medical Book Club had its precursor in the Newcastle Medical Book Club formed in May 1790,<sup>43</sup> and in both instances their establishment can be seen as a direct reflection on the lack of provision for expensive, specialist, scientific works by other types

of library. Evidence for the Alnwick Club has been preserved in a four-page leaflet which contains the rules, a list of members and a catalogue of the library.<sup>44</sup> In 1847, the year of the leaflet's publication, there were eleven members at least three of whom were residents in Alnwick. The others resided at Glanton, Embleton, Belford, Rothbury and Warkworth, all being listed in the directories as physicians.<sup>45</sup> The duties of librarian, secretary and treasurer were undertaken by Mark Smith of Alnwick, and each member, having paid the annual subscription of one guinea, was encouraged to recommend new titles at the monthly meetings. Rule IV specifically stated that the Committee was empowered to order such titles in "Medicine, surgery, anatomy, physiology, midwifery, chemistry and medical botany as they shall think best". The 122 titles in the library certainly reflected this as all were exclusively medical, although some of the periodicals taken were of a more general scientific nature.<sup>46</sup>

It was no coincidence that the years prior to the formation of the Alnwick Medical Book Club saw the erection of the Glendale Union Workhouse at Wooler in 1839,<sup>47</sup> the opening of a new Alnwick Workhouse in 1841<sup>48</sup> and the steady expansion of the Alnwick Infirmary founded in 1815.<sup>49</sup> Further health developments included the establishment in August 1850 of the Alnwick Board of Health,<sup>50</sup> and by 1858 waterworks companies were in operation in the town.<sup>51</sup> The need for a medical book club where members could meet and discuss common problems and current legislation, and to provide the appropriate literature, was clear. The Alnwick Medical Book Club appears to have fulfilled this role with considerable success.

## CONCLUSIONS

Library development in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Northumberland clearly followed the national pattern, albeit somewhat more slowly than in some more populated northern counties. The larger towns of Aln-

wick, Berwick, North Shields and Morpeth each had early coffee houses or book clubs which later developed into active middle-class subscription libraries. This was not the case however for the towns along the Tyne Valley which seem to have resisted "community libraries" until well into the nineteenth century. For readers in both the more isolated rural areas and for specialist interest groups the book club continued, until the mid-nineteenth century, to be an essential social and literary asset. As communications improved however, particularly the railway network and its accompanying bookstalls, the opportunities to gain access to printed matter greatly increased. Not only could "mail order" books be obtained by the rural reader from national subscription libraries such as Mudie's,<sup>52</sup> but later in the nineteenth century a book-box scheme was introduced by the Northern Union of Mechanics' Institutes<sup>53</sup> to service the many newly created parish reading rooms.

The early attempts at providing communal reading material in Northumberland were reasonably successful even if only a small number of readers benefited from the limited range of agencies. For the middle-class reader at least some provision was attempted, although for those members of the so-called working-class it was not until the Mechanics' Institute movement began in the 1820s, reaching its peak in Northumberland in the 1860s, that some attempt was made to cater for their needs. In fact the working-class reader had really to wait until the 1880s and the emergence of the rate-supported public library. Even then a county-wide service could not be implemented until the 1920s, and many rural towns failed to adopt the public library acts until the 1940s. In many respects rural centres such as Alnwick and Morpeth had better literary facilities in the period between 1820 and 1870 than they had in the succeeding fifty year period. It must however be stated that during the latter period the unit price of newspapers and books dropped dramatically as cheap paper and faster printing presses evolved. By the 1880s the price of most printed matter was no longer exorbitant and the wide range of titles available was now

within the pocket of the average man in the street.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Average new book prices in 1750s 4to = 10-12/-; 8vo = 5-6/- by 1830s 4to = 2 guineas; 8 vo = 10-14/- Plant, M. *The English book trade* 2nd ed. (London, 1965).

The above should be compared to everyday goods, e.g. 1 lb bacon in 1750 cost 5-6d. and in 1790 8-9d.; mens shoes/boots averaged in 1750 4/6-5/-; 6/6-7/6 in 1790 and by the 1830s 10-12/-.

The average national income per head of the population per year has been calculated as 1750s £12-13; c. 1800 £22; 1867 £27. Specific wages though vary from region to region—skilled labourers in the 1830s could earn 30/- a week in London but only 14/- in Glasgow; in the same period a weaver might only earn 5-6/- per week. A calculation of the daily rate for the Northumbrian miner suggests 2/6-3/- in 1800; 3/6-4/6 in 1834 and between 4/6 and 5/- in the mid-1850s—it should also be remembered that living conditions were more tolerable in the North East, there was often access to a vegetable plot, and the cost of some essential daily goods was cheaper here than in the south. Figures from Burnett, J. *A history of the cost of living* (London, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> Kaufman, P. *Coffee Houses as reading centres in Libraries and their users* (London, 1969), pp. 115-27.

<sup>3</sup> Ellis, A. *The penny universities* (London, 1956), pp. 20-30. Lillywhite, B. *London coffee houses* (London, 1963).

<sup>4</sup> Ellis op. cit., ch. 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215-17.

<sup>6</sup> Nelly's; Katy's; Turner's and Walker's all in The Sandhill, and Wharton's in The Side *The first Newcastle directory 1778* (reprint Newcastle, 1889), p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Hull's; Shepherd's; Percival's and Hutchinson's noted in Hughes, E. *North country life in the eighteenth century* (London, 1952), p. 168.

<sup>8</sup> Alnwick Castle archives. Bell Collection, Vol. 343.

<sup>9</sup> Fuller, J. *The history of Berwick upon Tweed* (Edinburgh, 1799), pp. 452-4

<sup>10</sup> Mackenzie, E. (1811). A historical and descriptive view of . . . Northumberland, Vol. 1 (Newcastle, 1811), p. 376.

<sup>11</sup> Johnstone, T. *The history of Berwick-upon-Tweed* (Berwick, 1817), p. 158.

<sup>12</sup> The Jerusalem Coffee House, Low Street in *Commercial directory of Ireland, Scotland and the four most northern counties* 2nd edn. (Manchester, c. 1823), p. 309.

<sup>13</sup> Ellis op. cit., pp. 160-2: 214. Kelly, T. *Early public libraries* (London, 1966), p. 125. Altick, R. D. *The English common reader* (Chicago, 1957), pp. 323-4.

<sup>14</sup> Wallace, J. *The history of Blyth*, 2nd ed. (Blyth, 1869), p. 59.

<sup>15</sup> Altick op. cit., p. 322: 341—for London newspapers the average daily prices were 6d. or 7d. a copy between 1800 and 1815, and even when the taxes were lowered in 1836 were still 5d. or 6d..

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>17</sup> Robb, W., *Hexham fifty years ago* (Hexham, 1882), p. 24.

<sup>18</sup> *Newcastle Courant*, 1 January 1841. First part, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Post Office directory of Northumberland and Durham* (London, 1858), p. 36.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>21</sup> *Kelly's directory of Durham and Northumberland*, Volumes for 1902; 1906 and 1910.

<sup>22</sup> Kelly op. cit., pp. 136-43; 218-20. Varma, D. P. *The evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge* (Washington, DC, 1972), Ch. 5.. Altick op. cit., pp. 218-19. Kaufman, P. *English book clubs and their social impact in Libraries and their users* (London, 1969), Ch. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Kaufman. *English book clubs* op. cit., pp. 39-42. Marshall, J. D. The rise and transformation of the Cumbrian market town in *Northern History* Vol. XIX, 1983, p. 177. [Marshall also notes clubs at Ulverston (pre-1815); Backbarrow (1775); Cocker-mouth (1785) and Dalton in Furness (1774)].

<sup>24</sup> Anon. correspondence in *Monthly Magazine* Vol. LI, 1821, pp. 397-8.

<sup>25</sup> Mackenzie (1811) op. cit., Vol. 11, p. 165.

<sup>26</sup> Mackenzie, E. (1825). *An historical, topographical and descriptive view . . . of Northumberland* 2nd ed. Vol. 11 (Newcastle, 1825), p. 182.

<sup>27</sup> Wright, A. B. *An essay towards a history of Hexham* (Alnwick, 1823), p. 31.

<sup>28</sup> Mackenzie (1811) op. cit., Vol. 11, p. 278.

<sup>29</sup> Mackenzie (1825) op. cit., Vol. 11, p. 248.

<sup>30</sup> Northumberland Record Office [NRO] Davison Collection DMZ/167 31/110.

<sup>31</sup> Mackenzie (1825) op. cit., Vol. 11, p. 58.

<sup>32</sup> *Rules and regulations of the Rothbury Book Club*. 1825 Alnwick Castle archives. Bell Collection, Vol. 327.

<sup>33</sup> Information kindly supplied by Dr. D. Gardner-Medwin from the bookplate pasted into his copy of

Vol. 2 of Winch's *The botanists guide*, 1807.

<sup>34</sup>Tate, G. *History of the borough . . . of Alnwick*, Vol. 2 (Alnwick, 1869), p. 217.

<sup>35</sup>*Rules of the Alnwick Public Library* (Alnwick, 1834) NRO 530/20/170b.

<sup>36</sup>*Rules of the Till-Side Book Club* (1858), NRO 817.

<sup>37</sup>*Post Office directory* op. cit. The exception is a Miss Dinsdale, resident at Eglingham, recorded in the 1868 *Mercer and Crocker Northumberland directory*.

<sup>38</sup>Great Britain. Census. *Education: England and Wales* 1854, p. 254. Mackenzie (1825) op. cit. Vol. 11, p. 362. "Even the book-club here languishes, and has disappointed the expectations once formed of its success and utility".

<sup>39</sup>Bulmer, T. F. *History, topography and directory of Northumberland* (Preston, 1887), p. 733.

<sup>40</sup>Clark, R. W. *Bracing Bamburgh* (Newcastle, 1915), p. 33.

<sup>41</sup>Kelly op. cit., pp. 131-2.

<sup>42</sup>Kaufman. *English book clubs*, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>43</sup>Watson, R. S. *The history of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne* (London, 1897), p. 33.

<sup>44</sup>Alnwick Medical Book Club 10 June 1847 Newcastle University. Burman Collection, No. 59.

<sup>45</sup>From Alnwick Geo. Wilson, Philip Dennis and

Thomas Bradley; from Embleton R. C. Embleton; from Glanton Henry Crea; from Wooler Jas Alexander; from Belford Henry Hunt; from Felton John Grahamsley and from Warkworth Mr. Leitherd all listed in Whellan, W. *History, topography and directory of Northumberland* 1855. A Mr. Hedley of Rothbury was also a member of the Club in 1847 but whether this was Arthur Hedley, surgeon at Felton in 1855, or Edward Hedley, physician at Alnwick in the same year, is not clear. Likewise Mr. E. Summers, a member in 1847, may be the surgeon of the same name listed at Alnwick in the 1858 *Post Office directory*.

<sup>46</sup>The periodicals were the *British and Foreign Medical Review*; *Edinburgh Medical Journal*; *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*; *Trans. of London Medical Society*; *Trans. of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association*.

<sup>47</sup>*Post Office directory* op. cit., p. 242.

<sup>48</sup>Tate op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>49</sup>Mackenzie (1825) op. cit., Vol. 11, p. 442.

<sup>50</sup>Tate op. cit., p. 354.

<sup>51</sup>*Post Office directory* op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>52</sup>Griest, G. L. *Mudie's circulating library and the Victorian novel* (London, reprint 1970).

<sup>53</sup>*Annual reports of the Northern Union of Mechanics' Institutes* 1872-1913, Newcastle Central Library.